



*Uncommon Interest, Training, Compassion*

WINTER 2010

## Expanding our views: Oncology Massage and Cancer

Andrea Constand, BA, RMT, LMBT

Approximately 1.5 million people are diagnosed with cancer each year in the U.S., and it is estimated that one half of all men and one third of all women in America will develop Cancer at least once during their lifetimes. The statistics and literature continue to grow on the number of people affected by cancer in North America, and now, more than ever before, Massage Therapists are realizing their roles in assisting doctors, physicians, oncologists, surgeons, nurses, and their patients in treating many of the negative side effects of cancer. Massage Therapy is now a recognized and insurance-eligible member of mainstream health care in many provinces in Canada, as well as select states in the US. Many physicians are referring their patients for Massage Therapy to alleviate soft tissue dysfunctions and the associated side effects of cancer and post-operative surgeries. Additionally, many hospital services (inpatient and outpatient) are offering Oncology Massage Therapy in an 'Integrative Medicine' setting, catering to their patients desires for a prescription free healing plan, including a long list of complementary medicine treatments such as acupuncture, yoga, and music therapy.

New organizations are surfacing such as the Society for Oncology Massage (S4OM), and they are helping to validate the need for Massage Therapy for cancer patients, and host a number of medically trained massage therapists on their website from all over the United States and internationally as well. This is the place you want to go to find a Massage Therapist who has the know-how, skills and training and confidence as well as levels of competencies in Oncology Massage. In this introductory article, I want to talk about the emergence of Oncology Massage (OM) and the role it is playing in the medical system specifically integrative medicine clinics across the US and Canada. I will also share with you some program information and continuing education available in Toronto. I often get emails from friends in Canada and the US, mainly visitors to my website with regard to what is being offered for ongoing study in OM. I will then share some thoughts on the importance of mentorship in this new and emerging field of massage therapy, and the crucial role mentorship will play in the cancer and Massage Therapy field for Massage Therapists, who need

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## Call to the 2010 Oncology Massage Healing Summit....

I am delighted to extend an invitation for you all to attend the Second Oncology Massage Healing Summit on April 29 – May 1, 2010 at Northwestern Health Sciences University in Bloomington, MN.

This event promises to be an exciting and enriching experience for everyone. The two-day program has a variety of offerings that will contribute to your continued learning in our field. We have two valuable post-conference offerings on Sunday May 2nd taught by two dynamic and experienced teachers, and a pre-conference forum specifically for educators, just prior to the Welcome reception on Thursday April 29th. Our speakers and keynote presenter are leaders in our field. We are also excited to present "Jonna's Body", which has received rave reviews from around the country. Between sessions you can visit various vendors who will be sharing their products and services.

You will also have multiple opportunities to network with colleagues from around the world. To that end, S4OM will be hosting a lunch on Friday to make new friends, get reacquainted with others and to share our journey since the 2007 Toledo Summit.

The S4OM Board and committee members are looking forward to being available and supportive of summit events throughout the conference. It is our hope that we will meet and learn from you, that we will grow as an organization, and that we will leave the summit with a renewed sense of community. Please join us at the second Oncology Massage Healing Summit and contribute your voice to our growing field.

**Namaste,  
Meg**

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**At the Toledo Summit in 2007, we broke out into smaller groups to address a wide variety of oncology massage-related topics. Many of S4OM's current initiatives (and S4OM itself!) grew out of these discussions. We'd like to have a similar opportunity for discussion, problem solving and action at the upcoming summit.**

**Please email your Table Topic ideas to: [info@s4om.org](mailto:info@s4om.org).**

**Do you have ideas about topics in our field that need further exploration?**

**What about things that you would like to see S4OM doing?**

**What are the "hot topics" in your community related to oncology massage?**

## **We Need You!**

The newsletter is in need of articles, topics you want addressed and opinions.

Send your ideas to [newsletter@s4om.org](mailto:newsletter@s4om.org)

## **Peek at the Summit 2010**

**Ann Simmons, CMT, NCTMB**

Well ladies and gents, less than 2 months and counting until the April 29th Reception to kick off the 2nd Oncology Massage Healing Summit in Bloomington, MN. Our newsletter is full of great information so that you can finalize your plans to attend. We have tried to introduce a few of the presenters you will have the opportunity to meet at the conference and now I would like you to meet Isabel Adkins, BA, CMT and Toni Muirhead, LMT.

Isabel developed and is the primary instructor for the 300-hour certification program in Oncology Massage-Blending East with West at the Massage Therapy Institute, Davis, California. Her work included integrating comfort-based massage with Eastern bodywork modalities to strengthen the body during cancer treatment, disease and its trauma. She directed and supervised the Oncology Massage Program at Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital and has been a keynote speaker at the UC Davis Cancer Center forums on Complimentary Medicine. Isabel contributed a chapter to the 2nd edition of *Medicine Hands: Massage Therapy for People With Cancer* on the topic of using a Chinese Medicine approach to Oncology Massage.

Isabel's presentation at the Summit:  
***Strengthening Immunity with Bodywork:  
A Blend of East and West***

This session will explain different ways comfort oriented bodywork naturally enhances immunity. The presentation will

also include basic Chinese Medicine theory and principles that relate to immune function along with specific acupressure points and techniques. Massage therapists will be able to integrate these into their work to address immune deficiency symptoms related to both disease and treatment.



**Antoinette Muirhead, LMT**  
has been an oncology massage therapist for 10 years. She initiated the Massage Therapy Program at Memorial Cancer Institute

**Antoinette Muirhead, LMT**

9 years ago. Toni focuses on evidence-based massage for patients during cancer treatment; surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. She teaches relaxation techniques, movement therapy, and caregiver massage.

Toni's presentation at the Summit:

***The LeBed Method, Focus on Healing***

Understanding the needs of patients, she became a LeBed Movement instructor 5 years ago, which is a movement and dance program originally designed for breast cancer. The LeBed Method teaches patients about proper exercise when surgery includes nodal dissection. The LeBed Method also creates an opportunity to enjoy dance and socialize, while educating patients about the risks and prevention for lymphedema.

## **Why be a member of a professional organization?**

**Mary Lou Ross, LMT, NCTM, CNMT, MLDT**

Professional organizations offer a variety of different things; one of the most obvious is the association of like-minded people. By belonging to more than one organization you expand your framework. This is extremely important, since one organization could have a single objective; which could limit your efficiency in your chosen path.

Networking with colleagues through your professional groups is a great form of support. Exchanging information within every aspect

of your work sometimes translates into friendships outside of the organization. When people are looking for competency they will look at the organizations that you belong to. So take a look at the groups you belong to and make sure you have a well-rounded portfolio. It can serve you well.

# Conference Schedule

## April 30, 2010

8 – 8:45 am

Registration/Continental breakfast/Visit Vendors

8:45 – 9 am

Welcome/Conference Overview

Gayle MacDonald, Dale Healey

9 – 9:15 am

In Honor of Cynthia Delano Myers

Tracy Walton, MS, NCTMB

9:15 – 10:15 am

Hope, a Dynamic Process in Living

Cathy Fanslow-? Brunjes, RN, MA

10:15 – 10:45 am

Break/Visit Vendors/Poster Sessions

10:45 am – 12:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

12:45 – 1:45 pm

Catered Lunch in cafeteria

1:45 – 3:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

3:45 – 4:15 pm

Break/Vendors/Posters Session

Book signing with Cathy Fanslow-?Brunjes

4:15 – 6:15 pm

Breakout Sessions

End of the first fabulous day

## May 1, 2010

8 – 9 am

Continental Breakfast/Visit Vendors

9 – 10:15 am

Jonna's Body –

Sponsored by Abbott Northwestern Hospital's

Penny George Institute of Health and Healing

10:15 – 10:45 am

Break/Visit Vendors/Poster Sessions

10:45 am – 12:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

12:25 – 1:45 pm

Catered Lunch

1:45 – 3:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

3:45 – 4:15 pm

Native American Blessing of the Hands

All participants join together to adjourn the conference.

For the complete listing of all conference presenters and topics go to [www.nwhealth.edu/continuingeducation/seminars](http://www.nwhealth.edu/continuingeducation/seminars)

### Registration Information:

call (952)885-5445

or (800)888-4777 x446

or send in the form – you can download from the above listed site.

## 2010 Oncology Massage Healing Summit

*April 30 – May 2, 2010*

An opportunity to meet fellow oncology massage therapists, educators in the field of oncology massage, attend workshops that will add tools to your practice and most importantly renew your spirit for this valuable work and opportunity to earn CEU credit for attending.

The host for the summit is Northwestern Health Sciences in Bloomington, MN and our Society for Oncology Massage (S4OM), is proud to be the cosponsor for this event.

### General Conference Information:

#### Location:

Northwestern Health Sciences,

2501 84th St, Minneapolis, MN 55431

4 blks. south of Interstate 494 on the corner of 84th St & Penn

Ave. Free parking on campus. Approximately 8 miles from the

Minneapolis St Paul airport – airport shuttles are available to the

hotel. <http://www.nwhealth.edu/aboutnw/direct.html> for directions

#### Accommodations:

Hilton Minneapolis/Bloomington Hotel

3900 American Blvd West, Bloomington

(952) 893-9500

Room rates for summit attendees: Mon – Thurs (\$119) per night;

Fri – Sun (\$89) per night. When calling please mention North-

western Health Sciences University to receive a discounted rate.

#### Tuition Options:

\$329 Main Conference (Fri/Sat) – includes welcome reception,

breakfast and lunches. Post Conference seminar \$159 (limited to

20 people at each) *Gentle Techniques for Working with Post*

*Mastectomy Scars and Adhesion OR Mastectomy Massage*

#### Welcome reception at the Hotel:

Thurs, Apr 29, 2010

5:30 – 8:30 pm

#### Main conference (includes lunch each day):

Fri, April 30, 2010

Register/Breakfast: 8 – 8:45 am, Classes: 9 am – 4 pm

Sat, May 1, 2010

9 am – 4 pm

**Post Conference:** Sun, May 2, 2010, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

(one hour lunch on your own)

#### CE HOURS:

Main conference (12.5 hours);

Post conference (8 hours)

**EXPANDING OUR VIEWS** *continued from front page*

continuous training to fulfill ongoing education requirements. Over the past several years, there has been an increase in scientific research supporting the neuro-chemical benefits and physiological effects of Massage Therapy as a whole. Many Integrative Medicine doctors are now supporting the practice of Massage Therapy as an adjunctive therapy to modern day cancer treatments. They truly are supporting one another, and no one believes this more than Barrie Cassileth, PhD, Chief of Integrative Medicine Services at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, who states: "Massage is an effective and highly appreciated therapy for cancer patients and their families. It is physically and emotionally relaxing; it reduces stress, and it provides substantial comfort." She goes on to say that "scientific studies show that cancer patients receiving massage have lower anxiety scores than those receiving no massage therapy and although patients say that the release of muscle tension sometimes leads to pain relief and enhanced energy, feelings of deep relaxation, calm, and wholeness are most commonly reported...massage therapy is exactly what the cancer patient needs". Nothing could be more true, and what a way to sum up where research and science into Massage Therapy is going; we are finally getting some headway here!

Oncology Massage Therapy in Canada is available in unique and different ways, we, do not call ourselves "Oncology Massage Therapists", we are all called Registered Massage Therapists, in Ontario. One thing RMTs all have in common is the ability to work with cancer survivors and play a role in their treatment in some way. In our educational program at Sutherland-Chan, in Toronto, Ontario (at which I attended and graduated in 2006), we must fulfill a program of just over two thousand hours. We discuss Cancer in a second-year neurology course, and we discuss cases and have group discussions. The amount of dialogue which comes about is incredible. Treating a person with cancer is a big "it all depends" when you think about it, it all depends on what is actually going on with a patient, where they are at in their diagnosis and recovery, what their doctors and family members are saying, how they feel, what their tests are saying, for example, what their platelet levels have been, so you can adjust pressures. In this particular class, we come up with treatment plans in all stages of cancer, through to end life. We also have additional opportunities to work with cancer patients in school in our "senior's clinic and breast massage clinics". We also have other courses where we learn lymphatic drainage and scar tissue techniques (MFR), and we integrate these techniques into whatever our clients and patients are presenting with, everything from not sleeping or having nausea to, advanced neurological disorders and working on surgical scars, which is a common occurrence in cancer treatments which involve surgery, such as mastectomies.

Taking courses in Oncology Massage with educators such as Tracy Walton, (Taking Care of the Cancer Patient) Wendy Miner (Medical Massage for the Cancer Patient, MSKCC), Gayle McDonald, (Medicine Hands) and Debra Curties (Cancer and Massage Therapy) can be one of the most beneficial steps a

Massage Therapist who is interested in OM can take. Gaining the knowledge, having the ability to critically assess a patient's situation, and developing the confidence to step in a play a role in a human's life and understanding their process are all important factors in treating a person who is surviving cancer. Devising treatment plans for patients is one of the most critical parts of the process, as well as maintaining records, which you may need to share with doctors, nurses, PAs and family members. Getting comfortable with your communications and dialoguing with other professionals/caretakers is a must, especially if you are working in a hospital atmosphere. You need to be comfortable with yourself, so you translate this energy and confidence in your hands to the patient. As you develop your abilities in providing safe and effective treatments to patients and clients, you will see your business grow!

Many students are graduating Massage Therapy School and realizing that they want to pursue OM, which I think says something about where the profession is going. They are getting out on the internet and seeing what is out there, and asking the questions. In May, at Sutherland-Chan in Toronto, Pam Hammond, a new and emerging cancer educator in the area, will be teaching a course on Massage and Late Effects of Cancer and Cancer Treatment. It is a three-day course designed for the interested OM MT. Tracy Walton has released her 2010 schedule, and she will be appearing in several cities across the US, from Seattle to New York City. She will be teaching her advanced and intensive courses, and you will not want to miss her class! In my opinion she conducts the most well-rounded and informative seminars, theoretically, practically, and the opportunity for true personal growth will most likely present itself, and this is such an opportunity to develop compassion. The storytelling and personal sharing of cancer survivor's stories among the participants are very touching, and Tracy provides the ultimate setting for healing.

Unfortunately, we are at a bit of a standstill with the availability of some other OM courses in the US, although the on-line presence is increasing. The AMTA has an online course, "Cancer and Massage: Essential Contraindications," created by Tracy Walton. Many of our teachers and current mentors are also interested in research and education, and these important but necessary endeavours can take their time away from classroom/hands on teaching. Our teachers are also researchers and pioneering the work that we so direly need to get Massage Therapy the credibility it deserves in the CAM field. The Society for Integrative Oncology (JSIO), and S4OM are two organizations that really care about getting the message and research out to the public. If you are a Massage Therapist who is interested in focusing on Oncology Massage training, these are two organizations that you should explore. Become a member now, and let us know you are out there! Perhaps there is a message here, that we need to expand, and educate, step up the awareness and availability of courses, and make a serious attempt at making sure we are teaching standards and testing our future OM Therapists both practically and theoretically.

In closing, I would like to say that I am so excited to be a part of the growth of the OM profession, and every day I am so grateful

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# Making Connections...

## Meet Mia Harper, Membership Chair

My name is Mia Harper and I've been a massage therapist for just a few years. It was a mid-life change for me after traveling around the world for my husband's job with the Foreign Service, teaching people how to meditate along the way. A couple of years ago I began working as a massage therapist in a downtown Baltimore hospital and found that more and more of my clients had been touched by cancer in some way, either currently going through chemo or having had lymph nodes removed years ago. So in an effort to "do no harm" (!) I took Lauren Muser Cates' six- day course, Compassionate Clinical Service, and it opened my mind and my heart to how I could practice my passion



**Mia Harper**

(massage) and truly be of service. Since then my focus has opened to include not only comfortably working with those who are living with cancer but with those who are in transition from this journey to the next via hospice. My involvement as a volunteer expanded then even further to include working with S4OM when the opportunity presented itself, and I have enjoyed my growing involvement with the membership committee. Mostly I enjoy doing my part to maintain the high standards on which S4OM was originally founded, to support the therapists who have educated themselves in order to perform the highest quality of work on those who are so vulnerable. I look forward to meeting many of you at the healing summit in May.

## EXPANDING OUR VIEWS *continued from front page*

to my teachers who have given me the gifts of knowing, feeling, and giving. It makes my practice much richer, and enriches my patients lives. Every cancer survivor that I meet and share stories and life experiences with inspires me and deepens my awareness of just how much cancer can benefit from healing touch and Massage Therapy.

*Health and Blessings,  
Andrea*

## REFERENCE FOR WEBSITES

www.sutherland-chan.com  
www.medicalmassagecharlotte.com  
www.tracywalton.com  
www.s4om.org

## List Your Website on Ours

Send your website address to  
**webmaster@s4om.org**  
to have your site listed in the  
For Consumers section of s4om.org

## April is Coming:

Please remember to go online at **HYPERLINK:**  
[http://www.s4om.org/div1/renewal\\_annual.htm](http://www.s4om.org/div1/renewal_annual.htm) and  
renew your membership!

This newsletter is published by the Society for Oncology Massage for information only - it is NOT medical advice. If you are a patient, be sure to consult and follow the advice of your doctors on all medical matters. If you are an oncology massage therapist, treat this information as opinion - S4OM and its representatives make no warranty as its suitability for any particular purpose.

## NEWSLETTER 4 Oncology Massage

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## Mission Statement

S4OM is grounded in a philosophy of compassion and service. We are focused on connecting cancer patients, their families and their caregivers with skilled oncology massage therapists.

An oncology massage therapist is a massage therapist who, following comprehensive training in general massage therapy, has completed additional "post-graduate" training addressing the full spectrum of cancer-related issues: the physical consequences of cancer, the side effects of various treatments, the psycho-social and emotional consequences. Therapists learn to adapt the extensive repertoire of standard massage therapy techniques to work safely and effectively with people living with cancer.

*S4OM is an all volunteer organization.*