

Utah Massage Therapy Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice

As Adopted September 2005

Taken from NCBTMB Standards of Practice and modified for use in UTAH

Standard I: Professionalism

The therapist must provide optimal levels of professional massage and bodywork services and demonstrate excellence in practice by promoting healing and well being through responsible, compassionate and respectful touch. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) adhere to the Utah Law, Rules, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice, policies and procedures
- b) comply with the review process conducted by the Utah State Massage Board regarding any alleged violations against the Utah Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- c) conduct themselves in a manner in all settings meriting the respect of the public and other professionals
- d) treat each client with respect, dignity and worth
- e) use professional verbal, nonverbal and written communications
- f) provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for the client and which, at a minimum, meets all legal requirements for health and safety
- g) use standard precautions to insure professional hygienic practices and maintain a level of personal hygiene appropriate for practitioners in the therapeutic setting
- h) wear clothing that is clean, modest, professional, and appropriate for street wear
- i) obtain voluntary and informed consent from the client prior to initiating the session
- j) if applicable, conduct an accurate needs assessment, develop a plan of care with the client, and update the plan as needed
- k) use appropriate draping to protect the client's physical privacy and DRAPING is defined as the covering of a client with an opaque material that is sufficiently large to protect their personal privacy. The genitals of any patron and the breasts of a female patron must be covered at all times, except as outlined in 58-47b-501-b. When clients remain dressed as in seated chair massage, sports massage in sporting attire, and limited area spot massage, draping is not required.
- l) be knowledgeable of their scope of practice and practice only within these limitations
- m) refer to other professionals when in the best interest of the client and/or practitioner
- n) seek other professional advice when needed
- o) respect the practices of other professionals and foster collegial relationships
- p) not falsely impugn the reputation of any colleague

Standard II: Legal and Ethical Requirements

The therapist must comply with all the legal requirements in applicable jurisdictions regulating the profession of massage therapy and bodywork. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) obey all applicable local, state, and federal laws
- b) refrain from any behavior that results in illegal or unethical actions
- c) accept responsibility for their own actions
- d) report to the proper authorities any alleged violations of the law by other therapist
- e) maintain accurate and truthful records
- f) report to the DOPL any criminal convictions or acts that reflect adversely on the practitioners competence to practice massage therapy or a practitioner that engaged

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in conduct that creates a risk of serious harm to the physical or mental well being of a recipient of massage therapy regarding him/herself and other therapists

- g) report to DOPL any pending litigation and resulting resolution related to his/her professional practice and the professional practice of other therapists
- h) respect existing publishing rights and copyright laws.

Standard III: Confidentiality

The therapist shall respect the confidentiality of client information and safeguard all records. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) protect the client's identity in social conversations, all advertisements, and any and all other manners unless requested by the client in writing, medically necessary, or required by law
- b) protect the interests of clients who are minors or who are unable to give voluntary consent by securing permission from an appropriate third party or guardian
- c) solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/therapist relationship
- d) share pertinent information about the client with third parties when required by law
- e) maintain the client files for a minimum period of five years
- f) store and dispose of client files in a secure manner.

Standard IV: Business Practices

The therapist shall practice with honesty, integrity, and lawfulness in the business of massage and bodywork. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) provide a physical setting that is safe and meets all applicable legal requirements for health and safety
- a) it is advisable, but not mandatory, to maintain adequate and customary liability insurance
- b) maintain adequate progress notes for each client session, if applicable
- c) accurately and truthfully inform the public of services provided
- d) honestly represent all professional qualifications and affiliations
- e) promote his/her business with integrity and avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest
- g) advertise in a manner that is honest, dignified, and representative of services that can be
- f) delivered and remains consistent with the Utah Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
- g) advertise in a manner that is not misleading to the public by, among other things, the use of sensational, sexual or provocative language and/or pictures to promote business
- h) comply with all laws regarding sexual harassment
- i) not exploit the trust and dependency of others, including clients and employees /
- j) co-workers
- k) display/discuss schedule of fees in advance of the session that are clearly understood by the client or potential client
- l) make financial arrangements in advance that are clearly understood by and safeguard the best interests of the client or consumer
- m) follow acceptable accounting practices
- n) file all applicable municipal, state and federal taxes
- o) maintain accurate financial records, contracts and legal obligations, appointment records, tax reports and receipts for at least four years.

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Standard V: Roles and Boundaries

The therapist shall adhere to ethical boundaries and perform the professional roles designed to protect the client, the practitioner, and safeguard the therapeutic value of the relationship. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) recognize his/her personal limitations and practice only within these limitations
- b) recognize his/her influential position with the client and shall not exploit the relationship for personal or other gain
- c) recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter-transference between the client and therapist
- d) avoid dual or multidimensional relationships that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of the client or employees and/or co-workers
- e) not engage in any sexual activity with a client
- f) acknowledge and respect the client's freedom of choice in the therapeutic session
- g) respect the client's right to refuse the therapeutic session
- h) refrain from practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substances (with the exception of prescribed dosage of prescription medication that does not significantly impair the therapist)
- i) have the right to refuse and/or terminate the service to a client who is abusive or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance.

Standard VI: Prevention of Sexual Misconduct

The therapist shall refrain from any behavior that sexualizes, or appears to sexualize, the client/therapist relationship. The therapist recognizes that the intimacy of the therapeutic relationship may activate practitioner and/or client needs and/or desires that weaken objectivity and may lead to sexualizing the therapeutic relationship. In his/her professional role the therapist shall:

- a) refrain from participating in a sexual relationship or sexual conduct with the client, whether consensual or otherwise, from the beginning of the client/therapist relationship and for a minimum of six months after the termination of the client/therapist relationship
- b) in the event that the client initiates sexual behavior, clarify the purpose of the therapeutic session, and, if such conduct does not cease, terminate or refuse the session
- c) recognize that sexual activity with clients, students, employees, supervisors, or trainees is prohibited even if consensual
- d) not touch the genitalia
- e) only provide therapeutic breast massage as indicated in the plan of care and only after receiving informed voluntary consent from the client.

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Glossary of Terms Used in This Document

- **Acceptable Accounting Procedures:** Rules, conventions, standards, and procedures that are widely accepted among financial accountants.
- **Boundary:** A boundary is a limit that separates one person from another. Its function is to protect the integrity of each person.
- **Competency:** Study and development of a particular professional knowledge base and skills associated with and applied in practice within that knowledge base.
- **Counter-Transference:** A practitioner's unresolved feeling and issues that are unconsciously transferred to the client.
- **Dignity:** The quality or state of being worthy, honored or esteemed.
- **Dual Relationships:** An alliance in addition to the client/therapist relationship, such as social, familial, business or any other relationship that is outside the therapeutic relationship.
- **Genitalia, Female:** Labia majora, labia minora, clitoris and vaginal orifice.
- **Genitalia, Male:** Testes, penis and scrotum.
- **Impugn:** To assail by words or arguments, oppose or attack as false.
- **Integrity:** Honesty. Firm adherence to a code of values.
- **Multi-dimensional Relationships:** Overlapping relationships in which therapist and client share an alliance, in addition to the therapeutic relationship. Multi-dimensional relationships suggest a more complex interweaving of roles.
- **Progress Notes:** Notes written, by a practitioner certified by the NCBTMB, and kept in a separate client file that indicates the date of the session, areas of complaint as stated by client, and observations made and actions taken by the practitioner.
- **Sexual Activity:** Any verbal and/or nonverbal behavior for the purpose of soliciting, receiving or giving sexual gratification.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment consists of unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
 2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals; or
 3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- **Scope of Practice:** The minimum standards necessary for safe and effective practice and the parameters of practice determined by therapist, professional training and education, and, when applicable, regulatory bodies.
- **Transference:** A client's unresolved feelings and issues that are unconsciously transferred to the practitioner.