

# BEING A PROFESSIONAL

## OUTLINE

### **Professionalism: Inspiration, Intention, and Intuition**

*Inspiration*  
*Intention*  
*Intuition*

### **Professionalism and Therapeutic Massage**

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### **Summary**

## KEY TERMS

Administrative skills  
Anomaly  
Closure  
Communication  
Conceptual skills  
Conflict  
Continuation  
Cultural diversity  
Etiquette  
Evaluating  
Gestalt

Horizontal communication  
Human relations skills  
Implementing  
Inspiration  
Intention  
Intuition  
Organizing  
Planning  
Professional etiquette  
Proximity  
Rapport

Recognition  
Remuneration  
Respect  
Responsibility  
Similarity  
Standard  
Standards of practice  
Task  
Technical skills  
Time management

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Mastery of the content in this chapter will enable the reader to:*

- Define glossary terms
- Determine goals and objectives for a massage therapy practice
- Demonstrate professional etiquette
- Identify the five Rs of good management
- Manage interpersonal communications in the professional setting
- Explain employee empowerment
- Discuss procedures for conducting a staff meeting
- Define time management
- Describe how to manage time efficiently
- Explain the purpose of an office procedural manual
- Identify components of an office procedural manual
- Describe recruitment and hiring practices
- Describe the contents of a personnel policy in an office procedural manual
- Explain the use of pre-employment testing
- Describe new employee orientation
- Access and use information available from U.S. government Web sites, such as the Small Business Administration (SBA).

## PROFESSIONALISM: INSPIRATION, INTENTION, AND INTUITION

Inspiration, intention, and intuition provide the foundation for a successful massage career. These three intangibles create the motivation and desire to become a professional. They also are the basis of management decision making.

### Inspiration

*Inspiration* can direct you to the right path. The source of this direction takes many forms, but the outcome is the same: motivation. Inspiration typically takes the form of a vision of the totality of an end result.

*Gestalt* describes a structure, configuration, or pattern of physical, biologic, or psychological phenomena that are integrated to constitute a functional unit, with properties not derived by the sum of its parts. The *whole* of inspiration that is experienced is more structured and cohesive than the separate components. In this context, *gestalt* means a “unified whole.” Initially, *gestalt* referred to theories of visual perception developed by German psychologists in the 1920s. The theories attempted to describe how people tend to organize separate visual elements into groups or unified wholes by applying certain principles. Over the years, the term has taken on a more abstract meaning and is used to indicate a philosophy of the nature of wholeness. For example, a sugar cookie takes on its own existence separate from its components of butter, flour, and sugar. Anatomy and physiology provide an example relevant to massage. Anatomy consists of the various parts of the body, but each human being has a unique physiology, with functional integration of all the parts.

Structure and chaos coexist simultaneously. This concept is important for being successful in business. Moreover, this is how the mind seems to work. The complex behavior of the brain seems to be random and chaotic, but it does have

order. Freeman (1991) thinks this is the very property that makes perception possible. He speculates, “Chaos underlies the ability of the brain to respond flexibly to the outside world and to generate novel activity patterns, including those that are experienced as fresh ideas.” As you consider your unique abilities and professional goals, your ability to generate fresh ideas comes into play as you seek to market your massage business.

Actions often result from inspiration. Where, who, or what does inspiration come from? Because inspiration is related to perceptual processes in the brain, it is useful to better understand how we perceive and process information. Perceptual elements include the following:

*Similarity:* When objects look similar to one another, people can perceive them as a group or pattern. In Figure 2-1, the example, 10 distinct objects appear as a single unit because all of the shapes have similarity. Unity exists because the triangular shapes at the bottom of the eagle symbol look similar to the shapes that form the sunburst pattern.

*Anomaly:* When similarity occurs, an object may be emphasized or considered anomalous if it is dissimilar to the others (Fig. 2-2).

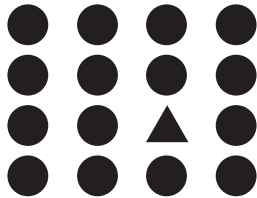
*Continuation:* Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object. Continuation occurs because the viewer’s eye naturally follows a line or curve (Fig. 2-2).

*Closure:* Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information (Fig. 2-3).

*Proximity:* When objects are placed a distance apart without pattern, they are perceived as separate (Fig. 2-4). When elements are placed close together, they tend to be perceived as a group (Fig. 2-5).



**FIGURE 2-1.** Example of the concept of similarity. (From <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>)



**FIGURE 2-2.** Example of the concept of anomaly. The triangle becomes a focal point because it is dissimilar to the other shapes—*anomaly*. (Courtesy of John Smith, *Graphic Design, Spokane Falls.*)

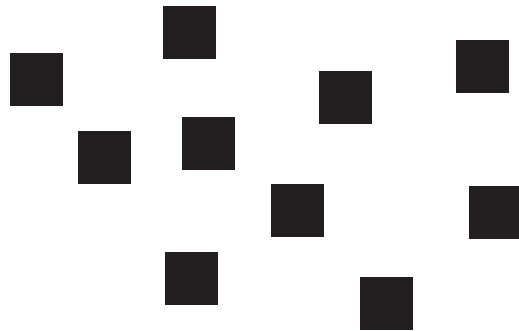
Inspiration occurs when a certain combination of ideas suddenly reveals a simple underlying pattern. When this occurs, you typically have an intellectual, emotional, and physical response that often results in clarity and in motivation to bring ideas into tangible form. People seem to be wired to see a pattern and make sense of it.

Inspiration is difficult to explain but easy to recognize because it enlivens us and creates passion and energy. Inspiration is the big picture, and in its simplicity, the complicated becomes uncomplicated. It is like a cookie. The cookie is the whole, and the flour, sugar, eggs, butter, and vanilla are the pieces. They do not form a cookie until combined and baked.

Being inspired can be likened to a spiritual experience, including the moment of clear understanding resulting in a deep sense of peace. More than the “aha” moment or gut feeling of intuition, being inspired is the beginning of purpose.



**FIGURE 2-3.** Example of the concept of closure. Although the client on the massage table is not complete, enough is present for the eye to complete the shape. When the viewer’s perception completes a shape, closure occurs. (Courtesy Clipart.com [28610/KJ Pargeter])



**FIGURE 2-4.** Example of the concept of proximity. The 10 squares are placed without proximity, and they are perceived as separate shapes. (From <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>)

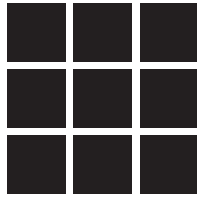


## SELF-REFLECTION

At some level, you were inspired to learn to be a massage therapist. How did that process occur? How did all the pieces come together?

For example, you might have watched a family member or a friend rub her neck at the end of a long day. Perhaps you noticed the security of a puppy being licked and groomed by its mother. Someone might have rubbed your shoulders after you carried boxes for him. You begin to recognize that touching is everywhere. It relieves pain, creates comfort, and provides connection, and these effects are important.

You realize that this is something you can do to make life better. In thinking about how to achieve this goal, you have an inspiration—you can be a massage therapist.



**FIGURE 2-5.** When the nine squares are set with proximity, unity occurs. Although they continue to be separate shapes, they are perceived as one group. (From <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>)

## Intention

*Intention* is knowing what you want and knowing comes from inspiration. For example, if you are looking for a red ribbon, you will eventually find it because you are focused on it. We have all experienced a moment when we find what we are looking for, but we have to know what it is we seek. If you have been inspired to be a massage therapist, you will seek skills and knowledge and will find a teacher and a school. The same process occurs when building a massage clientele. If you are inspired to work for a specific group, such as the military, first responders, or the elderly, you will seek what you need to build the practice.

## Intuition

*Intuition* is the conscious awareness of the collected and integrated subconscious information that is processed through the environment, experience, and circumstances. We have all experienced an intuitive thought to give someone a call, and when we do, the person says, “I was hoping you would call.” Intuition, sometimes called gut instinct, is an important guide, and the intuitive process is more concrete than it appears. Although science does not totally understand the phenomenon, there is little doubt that intuition is an aspect of survival mechanisms. With development, intuition can become a valuable source of information for important personal and professional decision making.

You may experience intuition as a feeling, a gut reaction, images that reoccur, a dream, or an internal voice with a message. You need to figure out how your inner self communicates with your conscious self. You can get in touch with your intuition in several ways:

1. Ask the question: What is the next step I need to take to expand my massage skills? At some level of consciousness, you already know what you need to do. Trust yourself. Gather factual information about the area you are exploring, and then let the process happen. Intuition cannot be forced; you need to be patient. You can do several things to build a factual database, including reading, asking people questions, and talking to experts.

2. Be quiet, and perform repetitive mundane tasks, such as weeding the garden, folding massage linens, meditating, knitting, doing dishes, soaking in a tub, or going for a walk. Let the thoughts flow.
3. Be aware of the thoughts and dreams that come to you. For example, how did you decide on which massage training program to attend? Did you research the various schools? What criteria influenced your choice—cost, location, schedule, reputation? How did the final decision moment feel? Was it solid or iffy? As you develop your massage career, the same process may occur in deciding on what location to rent or which position to take.

As you learn to recognize and trust inspiration, intention, and intuition you will achieve a level of confidence with professional decision making. Although these concepts appear abstract, they are not. We all have these abilities that evolved from basic survival mechanisms. To survive, we need to have an instinct about what is safe, what path to take, and who to build relationships with for mutual benefit. The gut instinct, new idea, and aha moment are manifestations of the gestalt whole of knowing. All it takes is a little practice, increased awareness, and observation of the results. These internal mechanisms of self-awareness become powerful tools for professional development.

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## PROFESSIONALISM AND THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

The subjects of ethics and professionalism are important for the therapeutic massage profession. In any professional practice, the ambiguity of ethics and the concreteness of professionalism and standards of practice converge to form the basis for ethical decision making. A profession is different from a job, and a professional does more than go to work. A professional has the following:

- A specialized body of knowledge
- Extensive training
- An orientation toward service
- A commonly accepted code of ethics
- Legal recognition through certification or licensure by a professional association
- A professional association

## Elements of Professionalism

### SPECIALIZED BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Massage therapy methods are grounded in a specialized body of knowledge (some of this knowledge base is presented in this textbook). Historical foundations and current research validate this body of knowledge.

## EXTENSIVE TRAINING

Questions have arisen about the duration of massage training and the information and technical skills to be included in the training. The area of professional development for therapeutic massage requires elements of some standardization to allow continued progress toward professionalism. No agreement has been reached on the difference between a wellness orientation to massage and a medical or rehabilitative orientation. Three distinct career tracts for massage are emerging: spa; sport and fitness; and medical, clinical, and rehabilitative paths.

The evolving spa environment encompasses a range of massage services for wellness- and pleasure-based massage that overlaps with sports and fitness. Massage is directly related to health care in the so-called medical spa.

The sport and fitness career tract encompasses a range from wellness to medical intervention that is typically based on issues related to the environment (i.e., exercise and sport performance). The importance of exercise in the management of most lifestyle-related diseases (e.g., diabetes, weight management, cardiovascular care, mental health) is well documented. Massage can support physical changes related to exercise and manage the discomfort related to physical activity and injury for those beginning an exercise program and the extensive performance demands of entertainers and professional athletes.

The medical, clinical, and rehabilitative career paths have a common thread of integration with health care systems, which include stress management and prevention, chronic disease and pain management, acute care palliation before and after surgery, prenatal care, elder care, and hospice care.

The current standard for massage therapy education of 500 to 750 contact hours (i.e., 15 to 20 credit hours) appears to be sufficient for entry-level massage practice. Although 350-hour programs exist, the trend is toward a higher amount. Judging from data collected from actual job duties and current trends in licensing requirements, 1000 contact hours (i.e., 30 to 40 credit hours) probably is more appropriate for supporting professional development in the future. It does not seem reasonable to expect that programs of 500 to 1000 contact hours provide sufficient time for integration of clinical reasoning methods, extensive physical assessment procedures, and the study of pathophysiology, pharmacology, psychology, and other information. These topics must be integrated into the programs so the massage professional can work effectively with other health care professionals and with complicated, multifaceted health concerns. The same can be said for sports massage or working with athletes. To work effectively with athletes, the professional must have an in-depth education in the dynamics of sports activity, the injury process, and rehabilitation.

Trends in employment education focus on the development of two professional tracks in therapeutic massage: (1) vocationally trained wellness massage service professionals and paraprofessionals in the health care area and (2) degree-holding professionals in the allied health care system.

The model for service professionals (e.g., those in the field of cosmetology) and paraprofessionals (e.g., those trained to assist a professional) in health care and in sports and fitness calls for 300 to 1800 contact hours (i.e., 7 to 40 credit hours) of vocational training in technically based programs, after which the student is granted a certificate or diploma. There is wide variation in training standards.

A professional usually is considered to be one who has a degree; it may be an associate's degree (usually requiring 64 credits), a bachelor's degree (usually requiring 124 credits), or a master's or doctoral degrees, such as those held by teachers, physicians, athletic trainers, and mental health professionals.

Most educational models for therapeutic massage in the United States fall into realm of the vocational services professional or paraprofessional. However, more massage programs have begun offering programs leading to an associate's or higher degree. Some Canadian provinces, Australia, England, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, and other countries require or offer training that meets the current definition of a professional degree. Individuals who already have professional degrees are obtaining massage therapy training and combining the two skills to function effectively in the health and athletic worlds. Examples of these combinations are nurse plus massage therapist, athletic trainer plus massage therapist, respiratory therapist plus massage therapist, physical therapy assistant plus massage therapist, occupational therapist plus massage therapist, and social worker or psychologist plus massage therapist. Career options are increasing in the areas of medical and specialty massage (e.g., sports massage).

## ORIENTATION TOWARD SERVICE

For this discussion, *service* is best defined as meeting a need. Although reimbursement is expected for services rendered, the desire to meet a need takes precedence over financial return in a service orientation. Observation of those who practice massage professionally and of the attitudes of students indicates that providers of therapeutic massage definitely have an orientation toward service, sometimes to the detriment of sound business practices. Although it is important to care for the people we serve, it is just as important to generate the necessary and appropriate income base to support the professional practice and a reasonably comfortable lifestyle for the professional.

## ACCEPTED CODE OF ETHICS, CERTIFICATION, AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Although general agreement exists about what a code of ethics for massage therapy entails, no agreement has been reached on a specific code of ethics to serve the entire massage profession. Legal recognition through certification and licensure by a professional association are important parts of the ethical development of the profession.

About two thirds of the United States and one half of the Canadian provinces have formal licensing or legislated



certification for massage professionals. Legal recognition in various other countries ranges from extensive licensing requirements to no legal control. The trend is for licensure. It is just a matter of time before there are regulations in all 50 states in the United States and in other countries.

Several organizations attempt to represent the therapeutic massage profession, and each of the various bodywork methods (e.g., reflexology, shiatsu, polarity) has its own professional organization. Although diversity is good for a profession and supports professional development, the lack of coherence in the field of therapeutic massage confuses the public, the massage therapists, and other professionals.



### SELF-REFLECTION

Does massage therapy meet all the criteria of a profession? If not, what needs to take place? How will the process influence my own professional development? What can I do to help the transition? How would I want the process to evolve?

### Therapeutic Massage Standards of Practice

The *standards of practice* for a profession describe what and how well a professional is expected to perform and therefore become the foundation of competency-based education. The massage therapy community does not agree on a unified standard of practice. There is ongoing discussion about this situation but no agreement. When the massage profession as a whole agrees on standards of practice, it will form a dynamic document that can evolve as changes in practice evolve.

A *standard* is a description of a minimum level of performance required to demonstrate achievement of a task. A *task* is a description of what a therapist is expected to accomplish. A standard is stated in observable and measurable terms. It must be precise and clear to the individual who is held accountable for accomplishing it. It must also be clear to the clients and the public, who assess the therapist's ability to accomplish a task as measured by the required standard.

When formally developed, the standards of practice will serve as a tool to determine whether a massage therapist can do the job at an acceptable level. These standards serve as a reference tool for many people and procedures:

- Therapists, to better understand their job requirements
- Educators, to address as objectives in curriculum design
- Regulation in the form of licensing or certification
- Investigation of complaints
- Discipline hearings
- Fitness to practice
- Quality assurance

- Client relations
- Protection of the public by providing objective standards for assessing the quality of treatment

### Role of the Massage Therapist

Massage professional roles vary based on job expectations at the spa, wellness clinics, sport and fitness facilities, and various health care settings. Massage therapists can specialize in more than 80 types of massage, called *modalities*. Swedish massage, deep tissue massage, reflexology, acupressure, sports massage, and neuromuscular massage are a few of the many approaches to massage therapy. Most massage therapists specialize in several modalities that require different techniques. The vast number of styles is confusing, and a trend in the profession is beginning to consolidate massage application based on the effects of mechanical force and the physiologic response of the body. In this approach, massage application is based on client outcomes instead of massage methodology.

Massage therapists work by appointment. Before beginning a massage therapy session, therapists conduct an interview with the client to determine the person's medical history and desired results from the massage. This gives therapists a chance to discuss which techniques could be beneficial to the client and which could be harmful. Based on the person's goals, ailments, medical history, and stress- or pain-related problem areas, a massage therapist concludes whether a massage would be harmful, if the client should be referred, and if the session should move forward by implementing necessary adaptation in application based on cautions for massage while concentrating on any areas of particular discomfort to the client.

Most massage therapists, particularly those who are self-employed, supply their own table or chair, sheets, pillows, and body lotions or oils. Most modalities of massage require clients to be covered in a sheet or blanket, and they require clients to be undressed (typically underclothing is left on to cover the groin area) or to wear loose-fitting clothing. The therapist exposes only the body part that he or she is massaging, and the groin area is never exposed. Some types of massage are done without oils or lotions, and they can be performed with the client fully clothed.

Massage therapists work in an array of private and public settings, including private offices, studios, hospitals, nursing homes, fitness centers, sports medicine facilities, airports, and shopping malls. Some massage therapists also travel to clients' homes or offices to provide a massage. It is not uncommon for full-time massage therapists to divide their time among several different settings, depending on the clients and locations scheduled.

Because massage is physically demanding, massage therapists can succumb to injury if efficient body mechanics are not used. Repetitive motion problems and fatigue from standing for extended periods are common. This risk can be limited by the use of good technique, proper spacing between sessions, exercise, and in many cases, by the therapists

themselves receiving a massage on a regular basis. With proper training, a massage therapist should be able to work a typical 40-hour work week and provide 25 massage hours. Because the massage application can vary from 10 minutes to 90 minutes, the number of people seen each week can vary. A typical 8-hour day consists of 6 hours of massage.

## Employment Opportunities

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes319011.htm>), employment for massage therapists is expected to increase faster than average until 2014 as more people learn about the benefits of massage therapy. In states that regulate massage therapy, therapists who complete formal training programs and pass the required licensing examination are likely to have very good job opportunities. In states that do not require licensing, the most commonly used outcome measure for professional practice is the National Certification Examination.

Massage therapists must develop a rapport with clients to support retention. Because those who seek a massage therapist tend to make regular visits, developing a loyal clientele is an important part of becoming successful. Referrals are an important source of work for massage therapists, and networking therefore can increase the number of job opportunities. Joining a state or local chapter of a professional association can also help build strong contacts and further increase the likelihood of steady work.

Massage is an increasingly popular technique for relaxation and reduction of stress. As workplaces try to distinguish themselves as employee-friendly, providing professional in-office, seated massages for employees is becoming a popular on-the-job benefit.

Increased interest in alternative medicine and holistic healing means increased opportunities for those skilled in massage therapy. Health care providers and medical insurance companies are beginning to recognize massage therapy as a legitimate treatment and preventative measure for several types of injuries and illnesses. The health care industry is using massage therapy more often as a supplement to conventional medical techniques for ailments such as muscle problems, some diseases, and stress-related health problems. Massage therapy's growing acceptance as a medical tool, particularly by the medical provider and insurance industries, will greatly increase employment opportunities.

Older citizens who are in nursing homes or assisted living homes are finding benefits from massage, such as increased energy levels and reduced health problems. Demand for massage therapy should grow among older age groups because they increasingly enjoy longer, more active lives. Persons 55 years old or older are projected to be the most rapidly growing segment of the U.S. population over the next decade. However, demand for massage therapy is greatest among young adults, and they are likely to continue to enjoy the benefits of massage therapy as they age.

## Income Potential

It is important to be realistic when anticipating income. You can expect to earn \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year at full-time, entry-level employment or in the first couple of years of self-employment. Current wage information is provided on the Internet by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-2009 edition, Massage Therapists (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos295.htm>).

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## ESTABLISHING PRACTICE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It is time to decide how you want to develop your massage career. You will benefit from putting thought in planning a professional philosophy and establishing specific objectives for the career plan. A lack of goals and objectives results in lack of direction in professional development. As you mature in the massage profession, these goals and objectives will evolve. A common sequence for establishing objectives includes the following steps:

1. *Develop a practice philosophy.* The massage therapist identifies in a broad statement the basic concepts about client focus, business management, and continuing education for the practice. This is sometimes called a mission statement. For example, *massage outreach will be targeted to the military, police, fire fighters, and first responders.*
2. *Develop practice objectives.* Each broad goal is broken into a series of specific objectives for the career plan. These objectives should be specific, positive action statements that indicate the expected results. For example, *the massage practice will be located near Selfridge Air National Guard base.*
3. *Develop business policies.* These are statements of basic policy that will affect the massage therapist, staff, and clients. For example, *payment for massage services will be made at the time of service by cash or credit card.* These statements may be covered by broad headings (e.g., fees) and followed by specific policies.
4. *Develop procedural policies.* Each broad statement can be broken down again into specific objectives and further defined as specific tasks for all of the common office procedures. For example, *to ensure sanitation, all surfaces will be wiped down with disinfectant every day.* This effort should result in a formal procedural manual.
5. *Develop business principles.* These objectives place emphasis on the business activities of the office. The massage therapist outlines in numeric terms the budget process for the practice and procedures for managing business activities. For example, *the gross income will support one massage therapist at \$35,000 and one staff member at \$25,000.*
6. *Develop practice standards.* It is necessary for the massage therapist to identify quality standards that define a self-performance level and a performance level expected of the

staff. The massage therapist should provide for the staff an explanation of how these standards are to be maintained. For example, *clients who schedule massage every other week will constitute 60% of the massage appointment schedule.*

As you work through the development of objectives for the practice, these objectives become rules by which the office is managed and the basis of policy and procedure statements. If you plan to seek employment, you can evaluate the integrity and stability of the business by reviewing these policies. As the massage practice expands and matures, it will be necessary to review and revise these goals and objectives.



### LEARNING ACTIVITY

Using the six steps previously described, develop a sample outline for a policy and procedure statement.

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## PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

*Professional etiquette* refers to business manners. *Etiquette* is the proper mode of conduct or procedure within a certain social realm. Being aware of business manners gives you a professional and attractive look. Rules that applied to social graces 25 or 10 years ago may no longer work in our society. Many former rules of etiquette were formal and rigid and often do not apply to the more casual lifestyles of modern society. However, in a professional world, your actions and behavior will be observed by clients, coworkers, and those who have the potential to promote your professional development. Although practicing good etiquette alone will not move you up the business ladder, it can give you a boost. Good manners can lead to promotions over equally qualified persons with less poise; create a self-confident, successful, professional person; help professionals handle their superiors; and lessen awkwardness among people. They are essential to building good relationships.

For a massage therapist who is also an employer, the potential for practice growth and client acceptance depends on the etiquette of the staff and her or his own behavior. Specific applications of etiquette are applied to different types of business activities. A good point to remember is that everyone should be treated with equal courtesy and respect (Box 2-1).

### Developing Professional Etiquette

Several points are important to consider in developing professional etiquette.

#### BOX 2-1 Suggestions for Improving Staff Etiquette

- Determine the office code of behavior.
- Extend a friendly greeting to coworkers each day.
- Make introductions when individuals are not acquainted.
- Extend friendly greetings to people who enter the office; stand when you greet the person, and introduce yourself.
- Extend a cordial “thank you” or “good-bye” when someone leaves the office for the day.
- Maintain good relations with your peers.
- Learn how to handle your rivals with tact.
- Be a team player.
- Avoid becoming a do-gooder who seeks constant recognition.
- When conflict exists, learn to mend fences.
- Dress and act professionally when representing the office at conferences or seminars.



FIGURE 2-6. Greeting, handshake, and introductions.

### GREETING

When meeting someone, rise if you are seated, smile, extend your hand, and repeat the other person’s name in your greeting. A good handshake is important; it should be firm and held for 3 to 4 seconds. In the business world, it is not necessary to wait for a woman to initiate the handshake. Men and women should be ready to initiate the handshake (Fig. 2-6).

### INTRODUCTIONS

Introducing people is one of the most important acts in business life, but few people know how to do it. Introduce a younger person to an older person; introduce a nonofficial person to an official person; and in business, introduce the junior to the senior. Be sure to explain who people are and use their full names. Do not assume that everyone wants to be called by his or her first name; wait until you are told to use a first name.

### TELEPHONE

Telephone or cell phone manners are very important (Fig. 2-7). Have a definite purpose for calling someone, because telephone calls are an intrusion into a busy day. Identify yourself, and speak clearly into the phone. Never chew gum, eat, drink, or smoke while using the telephone.





FIGURE 2-7. Cellphone with extra instant messaging. (2005 ©Gustava Fadel. Image from BigStockPhoto.com.)



FIGURE 2-8. Telephone with an answering machine and voicemail. (From Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)

### VOICEMAIL AND ANSWERING MACHINES

When leaving a message on voicemail, state your name, organization, and reason for calling; slowly give your telephone number; and then slowly repeat the number (Fig. 2-8). Voicemail is most efficient if you leave a concise but detailed message. Many times, the person receiving the call will be able to get the information you need and leave it in the return call or message to you. Place a concise, professional greeting on your answering machine or voicemail system.

### TEXTING AND INSTANT MESSAGING

This area of business communication is evolving, and the manners for business texting are ambiguous. It is convenient to use texting to relay basic data such as appointments, schedules, time changes, and reminders. Some prefer text messaging to a phone call for the exchange of this type of information. Suggestions include keeping the message brief and spelling out all words because many do not understand the abbreviations and do not text during conversations (see Fig. 2-7).

### E-MAIL

E-mail can be a quick and effective means of business communication (Fig. 2-9). Always put identifying information in the subject line to help the individual receiving the message know what it is in reference to. The text box of the e-mail message should begin with a salutation such as “Dear Ms. Jones” or “Hello Larry,” depending on the relationship. After the salutation, drop down to the next line to begin the message. Use complete sentences and appropriate capitalization and punctuation, as you would use in a business letter. The casual e-mail exchange that occurs with family and friends is not appropriate for business. Do not use all caps

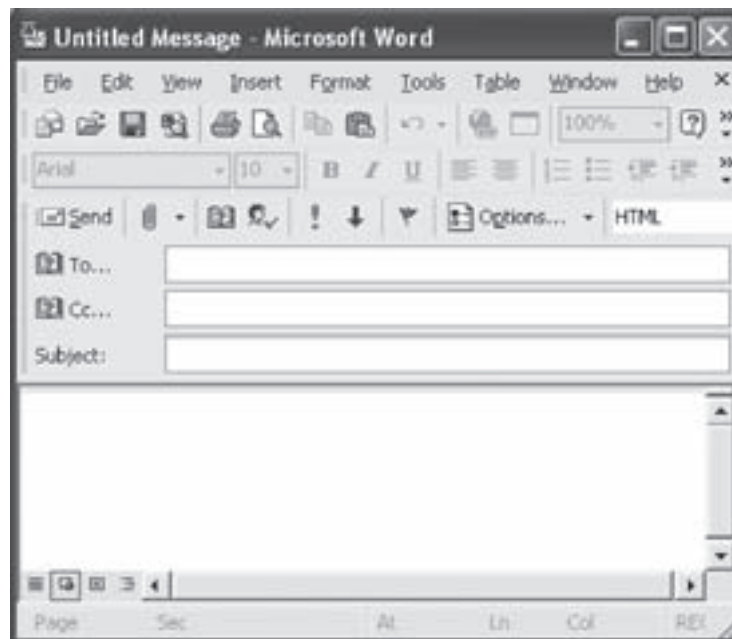


FIGURE 2-9. E-mail. (Microsoft product screen shot reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation.)

or the symbols for happy faces in the message. Even if you have automatic signature on your e-mail, you should still close the message (e.g., “Thank you, Eli Stone”). Remember to read your message through after you have written it and to run spell check before you click on the send button.

### PUNCTUALITY

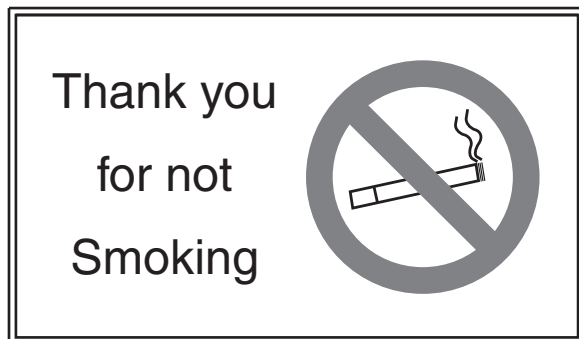
Be on time. No one wants to be kept waiting (Fig. 2-10). If it is an unavoidable delay, try to contact the person.

### SMOKING

Be aware of smoking policies (Fig. 2-11). You should never smoke during an interview, at a meal, or when you are aware that the other person’s pleasure does not include tobacco smoke. Nonsmokers can smell smoke on clothing and hair, and it is offensive.



**FIGURE 2-10.** Example of the concept of punctuality. The client is pleased to be greeted professionally and on time by the massage therapist. (From Fritz S: *Mosby’s Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage*, ed 4, St. Louis, 2009, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 2-11.** No smoking sign.

### HYGIENE

It is necessary to maintain excellent hygiene, meaning that you must bathe regularly, maintain dental health, and prevent breath or body odor (Fig. 2-12). Do not use perfumes or after shave or other strong-smelling products. Clothing and shoes must be clean, modest, and appropriate to the environment. Always wash hands after using the restroom, and make sure you leave the facilities neat. Clean up after yourself after eating. Do not chew gum. Do not clip nails or perform other personal care activities in the work setting. Do not wear jewelry, including piercings, that can be a safety or sanitation hazard.

### APPEARANCE

Professional appearance is necessary, including modest hair, makeup, and jewelry if allowed (Fig. 2-13). If you do not have tattoos, avoid getting any on areas of the body that would be exposed in typical business attire. If you do have visible tattoos, develop a strategy for camouflage during business operations. Avoid wearing jewelry and piercings.

### Respect for Diversity

Diversity issues relate to race, gender, age, disabilities, religion, job title, physical appearance, sexual orientation, nationality, multiculturalism, competency, training, experience, and personal habits. Success in life and in business is based on valuing diversity. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC; <http://www.eeoc.gov/>) provides information related to diversity issues in the workplace. Box 2-2 lists available publications. Reading through the topics in the box provides an overview of the many aspects of diversity in the business setting.

*Cultural diversity* encompasses the cultural differences that exist between people, such as language, dress, and traditions, and the way societies organize themselves, their conception of morality and religion, and the way they interact with the environment. Cultural courtesy is becoming very important as the world becomes a global community. You should always be aware of these cultural differences. Be sensitive to others’ rules of etiquette. Research the customs and culture of those you interact with.



### SELF-REFLECTION

What comes to mind as I read Box 2-2? How comfortable with diversity am I? What has been my experience with a diverse population? How could I expand my understanding of different cultures? Based on the definition of diversity, where do I fit? In one area or more? How does it feel to be categorized? How will diversity increase or interfere with my path to career success?

Remember to say please, thank you, excuse me, nice job, and well done.



FIGURE 2-12. Examples of hygienic practices. (Modified from Zakus SM: Mosby's Clinical Skills for Medical Assistants, ed 4, St. Louis, 2001, Mosby.)



FIGURE 2-13. Professional appearance. (From Fritz S: Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage, ed 4, St. Louis, Mosby, 2009.)

## PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

The term *management* has many definitions. For our purposes, it is the process of getting things accomplished in the business environment through self-discipline and with other

people by guiding and motivating efforts toward common objectives.

Some people say that managers are born, not made. However, individuals can nurture their natural skills into sound management skills through experience, effort, and learning. If the skills and discipline required to provide effective business management in the self-employed career path fall into your weakness category, it may be a wise decision to pursue a career as an employee and to target your energy into being a solid team member. You will make mistakes, but you can learn from mistakes as well as successes. If you are choosing to be an employee, your place of employment needs to be well managed for you to achieve your career goals.

### The Five Rs of Management

Successful management can be attributed to five Rs: responsibility, respect, rapport, recognition, and remuneration.

*Responsibility* denotes duty or obligation. It also denotes follow-through and completion of a project. If you are delegated responsibility, it is important to focus energy to meet the obligations of the responsibility. If you delegate responsibility to another person, make sure he or she has the skills and resources to be able to complete the project.

*Respect* is consideration or esteem given to another person. Respect is earned. If an individual is not honest, ethical, responsible, and motivated to excellence, he or she is not working on being respected.

**BOX 2-2** Publications You May Wish to Order from the U.S. Employment Opportunity Commission

General information on all statutes, in the form of fact sheets and various other documents, are available at <http://www.eeoc.gov>. Following is a list of the publications you will find available on that site to order:

- Equal Employment is the Law (poster)
  - Federal laws prohibiting job discrimination: questions and answers
  - Policy statement on mandatory binding arbitration of employment discrimination disputes as a condition of employment
- Employment rights of immigrants under federal antidiscrimination laws
  - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforcement guidance: vicarious employer liability for unlawful harassment by supervisors
  - Questions and answers for small employers on employer liability for harassment by supervisors
  - Compliance manual on retaliation (section 8)
  - Fact sheet on national origin discrimination
  - Fact sheet on age discrimination
  - Fact sheet on pregnancy discrimination
- Fact sheets on religious discrimination
  - Fact sheet on race or color discrimination
  - Get the Facts series on mediation
- Get the Facts series on small business information
  - Fact sheet on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) discrimination:
  - Fact sheet on disability-related tax provisions
  - Facts about compensation discrimination
- Age discrimination in the Employment Act
  - Fact sheet on age discrimination
- Job advertising and pre-employment inquiries under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
  - ADA: questions and answers
  - ADA: your responsibilities as an employer
  - ADA: your employment rights as an individual with a disability
- ADA resource list
  - Enforcement guidance on pre-employment disability related inquiries and medical examinations
  - Compliance manual definition of the term *disability* (section 902)
  - Questions and answers: enforcement guidance on disability-related inquiries and medical examinations of employees under the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - EEOC enforcement guidance on disability-related inquiries and medical examinations of employees under the ADA
  - ADA enforcement guidance: the Americans with Disabilities Act and psychiatric disabilities
  - EEOC enforcement guidance on the effect of representations made in applications for benefits on the determination of whether a person is a qualified individual with a disability under the ADA of 1990
  - EEOC enforcement guidance: reasonable accommodation and undue hardship under the ADA
  - Small employers and reasonable accommodations
  - ADA: a primer for small business
  - Fact sheet on the ADA
  - Fact sheet on disability-related tax provisions
- ADA guide for people with disabilities seeking employment
  - EEOC enforcement guidance on workers' compensation and the ADA
  - Fact sheet on the Family and Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Federal Register Part V: 29 CFR Part 1630; EEOC for Individuals with Disabilities; Final Rule 29 CFR Parts 1602 and 1627 Record-keeping and Reporting Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the ADA, Final Rule
- National origin
  - Fact sheet on employment discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, or country of origin
  - Fact sheet on questions and answers about the workplace rights of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs under the EEOC laws
  - Fact sheet on questions and answers about employer responsibilities concerning the employment of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians, and Sikhs
- Harassment
  - Fact sheet on sexual harassment discrimination
  - EEOC enforcement guidance: vicarious employer liability for unlawful harassment by supervisors
  - Policy guidance on current issues of sexual harassment



*Rapport* is a mutual trust or emotional relationship with clients, peers, and coworkers. The massage therapist sets the tone for the rapport in professional setting. Good rapport generates the energy that draws and retains clients and supports team members working together to enjoy each other's professional friendship.

*Recognition* of achievement is important. A person can be recognized for a task well done, for special achievements, and for loyalty. Recognition can come in the form of verbal praise or other forms of acknowledgment, such as personalized notes and rewards. Clients can be recognized for progress made in the management of their stress or for their loyalty as long-term clients. Staff and coworkers can be recognized for a job well done or for going the extra mile for you by helping beyond the scope of their job description.

*Remuneration* is a monetary recognition of achievement. Most employees say that they are willing to work hard if they are compensated for their efforts. Remuneration should be based on education, merit performance, longevity, and cost of living. Employers who affirm that their employees have worked with them for many years with repeated job satisfaction reviews are those who delegate responsibility; create good rapport in the office; respect, trust, and recognize their employees; and provide compensation similar to other small massage therapy businesses.

If you are the employee, you deserve fair remuneration if you have worked for the employer for many years, received repeated job satisfaction reviews, increased and perfected your massage skills, continually created good rapport in the business, earned respect and trust, have been loyal and willing to go the extra mile, and have been compassionate, understanding, and a team player.

More and more massage therapists are pursuing their careers as part of a team and are employees. Bob Adams, in his book *Streetwise Managing People: Lead Your Staff to Peak Performance*, declares, "Empowered employees attempt to work above and beyond their anticipated capabilities." If you expect to be an empowered employee, you need to act like one:

- Behave as an owner of the job and company.
- Behave in a responsible manner.
- See the consequences of the work done.
- Know how other employees are doing and how they are valued in the practice.
- Strive to be included in determining solutions to problems.
- Seek to have direct input into the way in which the work is done.
- Spend much time smiling.
- Ask others if they need help.

Many concepts that Adams introduces seem to show common sense. When applied to a massage practice, these concepts seem to fit like a glove. Box 2-3 lists concepts that can easily be adapted to any business setting to empower each member of the business to become a meaningful member of the team.

## BOX 2-3 Management Skills

### DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Individuals can nurture their natural skills into sound management skills through experience, effort, and learning.
- Develop human relations skills, which aid in understanding people and interacting with them.
- To be successful, the massage therapist must be able and willing to recognize the value that each employee brings to the office.
- The staff meeting provides an opportunity to define and review the goals for the practice.

### CREATING POSITIVE STAFF INTERACTIONS

- Good manners begin with the staff.
- Help others to be right rather than criticizing them for being wrong.
- Whenever possible, have fun.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Seek ways for new ideas to work rather than reasons for why they cannot.
- Be bold and courageous; take chances.
- Help others achieve success.
- Maintain a positive mental attitude.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Verify information given to you before you repeat what you hear; avoid gossip.
- Speak positively about others whenever the opportunity arises.
- Say "thank you" for kind gestures or a job well done.
- Express a happy attitude in your nonverbal communication.
- If you have nothing positive to say, do not say anything.

## Management Planning, Organizing, Implementing, and Evaluating

Management requires several skills:

- *Planning* is identifying what should be done in the future. The goals and objectives discussed earlier are vital to planning.
- *Organizing* is determining how the work will be delegated and scheduled.
- *Implementing* involves putting the plan into action.
- *Evaluating* is a process of investigation to determine if the plan is achieving the intended outcomes. Evaluating occurs after the plan has been implemented for some period to see if it is accomplishing the intended goals.

## Basic Skills for Business Success

At this point, you may be wondering what basic skills you need to function in the professional world successfully. You need conceptual skills, human relations skills, administrative skills, and technical skills.



*Conceptual skills* involve the ability to acquire, analyze, and interpret information in a logical manner. These skills allow you to put an idea or concept into perspective and to perceive how this idea would affect the whole practice.

*Human relations skills* aid you in understanding people and allow you to interact with them effectively. These skills are vital in a health profession and involve communication, motivation, and an ability to lead.

*Administrative skills* help you to use all of the other skills effectively in performing administrative functions. They include the ability to establish and follow policies and procedures, to process paperwork in an organized manner, and to coordinate business activities.

*Technical skills* include the ability to use all of the knowledge of massage therapy plus business and technology skills that allow you to perform day-to-day operations. It is necessary to be able to use computer software programs. This textbook and Evolve site feature various screen shots of the software program on the CD provided with this text, which was developed by Island Software. The Web site is [www.islandsoftwareco.com](http://www.islandsoftwareco.com). There is a fully functioning massage office software program on the CD. Follow the instructions carefully because there is a time limit on how long access is allowed. You will be instructed to activate the CD in another chapter. Until then, visit Island Software's website for more information on the software.



## SELF-REFLECTION

What are my strengths—planning, organizing, implementing, evaluating, conceptual skills, human relations skills, administrative skills, technical skills? What are my weak points? What can I do to maximize my strengths? What can I do to get help with the areas where I struggle? How do I find the help I need?

## PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

*Communication* is an essential element in management. It becomes a vital link in establishing a meaningful relationship with other members of the staff and the client.

The definition of communication is to understand and to be understood by another person. In his book *Streetwise Managing People: Lead Your Staff to Peak Performance*, Bob Adams states, "Quality Communication Leads to Positive Interaction." When you are transmitting information to another person, a good relationship supports understanding. To support communication, consider the steps suggested in Box 2-4.

### Channels of Communication

The pathway of communication is simple in a one-person massage practice. However, as soon as more than one person

### BOX 2-4 Concepts to Empower Employees

- Create a communication process that is complete, consistent, and clearly understood by all members of the staff.
- Ensure that all employees understand what is expected of them in their respective job positions.
- Provide each employee with the appropriate training, information, and materials to successfully accomplish their job duties.
- Clearly define and establish evaluation instruments for the responsibilities for each job.
- Create controls that are guidelines that allow flexibility.
- Encourage and practice behaviors that promote encouragement, support, and clear feedback to employees.
- Encourage and promote a sense of responsibility in each employee.
- Encourage and promote continuing education and credentialing.
- Create opportunities for staff members to work together in teams.
- Make it easy for people to praise each other. Make the office an environment that recognizes and acknowledges praiseworthy actions.
- Listen to employees at all times, and make the office systems listen to the employees.
- Trust the employees.

is involved, the channels of communication become more complicated.

Communication may be formal or informal. A formal communication channel is dictated by the type of management that exists in the massage practice. Formal communication may be downward, upward, or horizontal.

Downward communication occurs when a massage therapist issues a mandate that is disseminated to the staff members at the next level. The basic channel is shown in Figure 2-14. A more complex system, as shown in Figure 2-15, illustrates an office as it increases in staff size, including several massage therapists and auxiliaries. Downward communication includes instructions, explanations, and communication that can aid the employee in performing work.

Upward channels of communication are vital in a formal setting. Employees should be free to express their attitudes and feelings. This type of communication reverses the flow of information (see Figs. 2-14 and 2-15) and is generally of a reporting nature. It may include suggestions, complaints, or grievances. A lack of upward communication may result in frustrated employees.

Horizontal communication is essential for a larger organization. This type of communication involves transmittal of information from one department to another, and it exists within large offices, clinics, and spas.

Informal channels of communication can also be referred to as the *grapevine*. Frequently, the grapevine carries rumors,

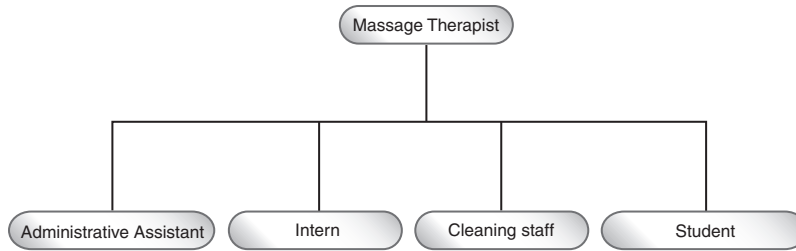


FIGURE 2-14. Employees and employers in a massage practice.

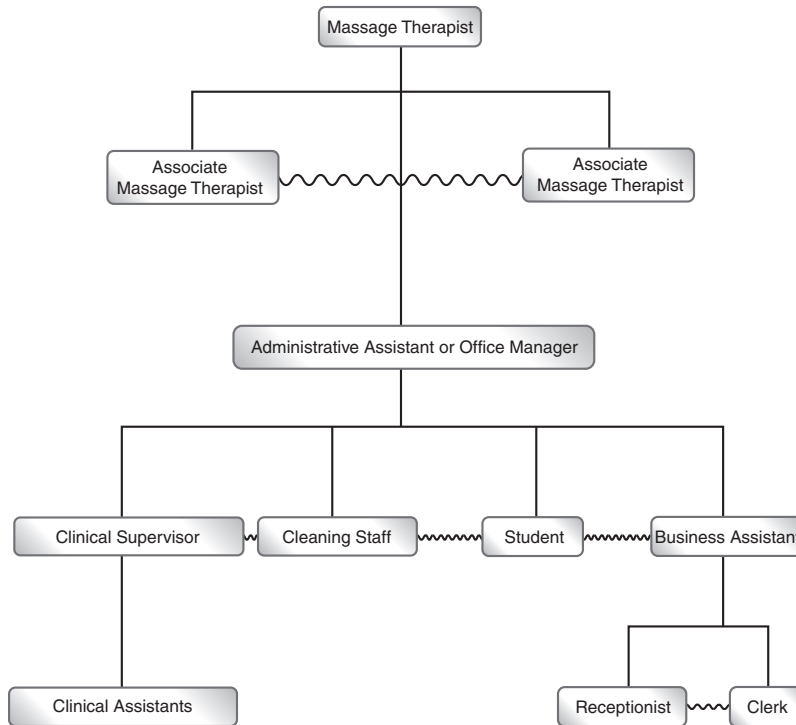


FIGURE 2-15. Employees and employers in a massage practice. Notice that the levels of the massage therapists may vary according to the organization of the practice.

personal interpretations, or distorted information. Fear often produces an active grapevine. If you are part of a group-type practice, do not feed the grapevine; there is nothing more damaging to a business than misinformation, gossip, and rumors (Fig. 2-16).

**SELF-REFLECTION**

Do I gossip? Do I listen to gossip? What can I do to make sure the grapevine does not interfere with my business?

**Barriers to Communication**

Barriers that exist in client communication are prejudice, poor listening, preoccupation, impatience, and impaired hearing. Additional barriers, such as status or position,

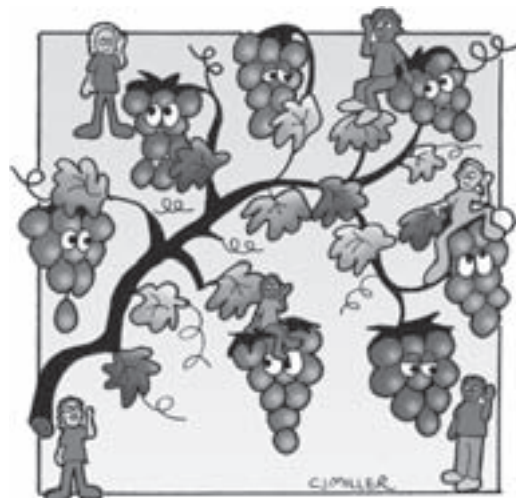


FIGURE 2-16. Do not feed or rely on the grapevine because it damages business. (Modified from Zerwekh J, Claborn JC: Nursing Today: Transition and Trends, ed 5, Philadelphia, 2006, WB Saunders.)

resistance to change and new ideas, or attitudes about work, compound communication difficulties in the professional world. Because these barriers exist, never assume that the message being sent will be received as it was intended. Be aware of potential misinterpretations, and work to overcome barriers to improve channels of communication.

## CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

*Conflict* is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference from the other party in achieving goals. Conflict is common, and it arises from several sources:

- Varied perspectives on a situation
- Different belief systems and values, which have arisen from the involved parties' accumulated life experience and conditioning
- Different objectives and interests

Conflict and conflict resolution play important roles in individual development and social evolution. Many cultures value harmony, compatibility, satisfaction, and independence. Because of these values, there has been a tendency in the past to avoid conflict. Conflict arises when people view the current system as not working. At least one person is sufficiently dissatisfied with the status quo that he or she is willing to speak up in the hope of influencing the situation to arrive at an improved condition. Through conflict, we have opportunities to do things differently in the future.

Conflict exists at two levels. In addition to interpersonal disputes among individuals, some measure of intrapersonal conflict usually exists within us. This inner conflict may be evidenced by confusion, inconsistency, or lack of congruity.

People in conflict share common ground as well as differences. Areas of common ground include overlapping interests, interdependence, and points of agreement. The common ground can serve as the starting point for conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution does not necessarily resolve tensions between people. Conflict resolution may align matters sufficiently to allow each person to make progress toward his or her goals rather than stall in an uncertain and stressful state of disagreement.

Many people think that the best way to resolve conflict is to "do battle," and they believe that the one who "wins" ends the conflict. This approach is more about power and control than conflict resolution. Doing battle and winning or losing supports a corresponding belief that every situation involves a "right" and a "wrong." If we respond to conflict this way, we have limited our awareness and understanding of the nature of conflict and of alternative means of responding to conflict, such as mediation and negotiation. Factors and

influences necessary for mediation and negotiation include the following:

- Concern about the impact of the dispute on the relationship
- Time concerns
- Expense
- Impact on others
- Lost opportunities
- Stress
- Lack of closure
- Uncertain compliance
- Areas of existing common ground

## Types of Conflict

The decision-making process provides a format for mediated and negotiated types of conflict resolution. Various types of conflict exist, and if we can pinpoint the type of conflict, we are more likely to be able to resolve it.

### RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS

Relationship conflicts, often called personality conflicts, occur as a result of strong negative emotions, misperceptions or stereotypes, poor communication or miscommunication, or repetitive negative behaviors. Relationship problems often lead to an unnecessary escalation in destructive conflict. Conflict resolution supports the safe and balanced expression of the perspectives and emotions of each person involved, leading to acknowledgment and understanding of another person's point of view. Gaining a broader perspective of diversity of culture and individual operational style is very helpful.

Evaluations exist for identifying different personality styles, and using these evaluation tools can help conflict resolution. One of the most researched methods is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions. These evaluations help individuals with opposite perspectives to interact well, rather than allowing conflict to develop. The more we personalize another's operational style, the more likely it is that conflict will develop.

### DATA CONFLICTS

Data conflicts occur when people lack information necessary to make wise decisions, are misinformed, disagree on which data are relevant, interpret information differently, or have collected data differently. Some data conflicts may be unnecessary because they are caused by poor communication between the people in conflict. Other data conflicts may be incompatibilities associated with data collection, interpretation, or communication. Most data conflicts have data solutions, and after the information has been corrected, the conflict can resolve, unless it has developed into a relationship conflict.

## INTEREST CONFLICTS

Interest conflicts are caused by competition over perceived incompatible needs. Conflicts of interest result when one or more people believe that to satisfy their needs, the needs and interests of an opponent must be sacrificed. This often occurs during times of scarcity or when it is perceived that there is not enough to go around. Interest-based conflicts may occur over things such as money, physical resources, or time; over procedural issues, such as the way a dispute is to be resolved; or over psychological issues, such as perceptions of trust and fairness and the desire for participation and respect. For an interest-based dispute to be resolved, those involved need to define and express their individual interests so that all these interests may be addressed jointly. Interest-based conflict is best resolved through maximum integration of the parties' respective interests, positive intentions, and desired experiential outcomes. A third person, such as a mediator, is often necessary to successfully resolve this type of conflict.

## VALUE CONFLICTS

Values give meaning to our lives. Values explain what is considered to be just or unjust. Different values need not cause conflict. People can live together in harmony with different value systems. Value disputes arise only when people attempt to force one set of values on others or lay claim to exclusive value systems that do not allow for divergent paths. It is useless to try to change values and systems during relatively short and strategic mediation interventions. However, supporting each participant's expression of his or her values and beliefs for acknowledgment by the other party can be helpful. Belief systems are more amiable to change than values. Values are like the ethical principles described earlier, whereas belief systems are like standards of practice. Belief systems are often superimposed on us during our childhood years. We are taught what is right or wrong, good or bad. Because we learn our belief systems, we can change them through education and a willingness to be open to new possibilities.

## Dealing with Conflict

There are five common ways of dealing with conflict. Learning about the alternative means of handling conflict gives us a wider choice of actions to use in any given situation and makes us better able to respond to the situation. Although the following methods are common ways of increasing the chance of success, we use each of these ways of dealing with conflict at least some of the time. We approach conflict in the way we believe will be most helpful to us. Our style for dealing with conflict changes with the circumstances. Conflict-handling behavior is not a static procedure; rather, it is a process that requires flexibility and constant evaluation to be effective.

## DENIAL OR WITHDRAWAL

With denial or withdrawal, a person attempts to eliminate conflict by denying that it exists and refusing to acknowledge it. Usually, however, the conflict does not go away; instead, it grows to the point that it becomes unmanageable. When the issue and the timing are not critical and the issue is short-lived and will resolve itself, denial may be a productive way to deal with conflict. The effectiveness of this approach depends on knowing when to use denial.

## SUPPRESSION OR SMOOTHING OVER

A person using suppression plays down differences and does not recognize the positive aspects of handling the conflict openly. Instead, the situation is acknowledged (unlike with denial), but it is glossed over. The source of the conflict rarely goes away. However, suppression may be used when preserving a relationship is more important than dealing with a relatively insignificant issue.

## POWER OR DOMINANCE

Power is often used to settle differences. Power may be inherent in a person's authority or position. Power may take the form of a majority (as in voting) or a persuasive minority. Power strategies result in winners and losers. The losers do not support a final decision in the same way the winners do. Future meetings of a group may be marred by the conscious or unconscious renewal of the struggle previously "settled" by the use of power. In some instances, especially when other forms of handling conflict are not effective, power strategies may be necessary. Parents often say to children, "Because I said so." This use of power works in the short term, but over time, it results in deeper relationship conflict.

## COMPROMISE OR NEGOTIATION

Compromise (i.e., "You give a little, I'll give a little, and we'll meet each other half way.") has some serious drawbacks. Such bargaining often causes both sides to assume initial inflated positions, because they are aware that they are going to have to give up something and want to reduce the loss. The compromise solution may be watered down or weakened to the point that it cannot be effective. There may be little real commitment by any of the parties. However, compromise makes sense in some cases, such as when resources are limited or a speedy decision needs to be made.

## INTEGRATION OR COLLABORATION

The integration or collaboration approach suggests that all parties to the conflict recognize the interests and abilities of the others. Each individual's interests, positive intentions, and desired outcomes are thoroughly explored in an effort to solve the problems in a maximizing way. Participants are expected to modify and develop their original views as work progresses. This sounds like the ideal way to manage and resolve conflict; however, for collaboration to be successful,

those involved need a nonthreatening and collectively supportive system. This process takes time, openness, and energy.

### Conflict Climate: Defensive or Supportive

A defensive climate reflects the type of atmosphere characteristic of competition—an atmosphere that inhibits the mutual trust required for effective conflict management. A supportive climate reflects collaboration—an environment that leads to mutual trust and to an atmosphere conducive to managing differences. Participants in conflict resolution hopefully come to appreciate that the apparent presenting problem does not need to limit their discussions. Participants are encouraged to express the full breadth and depth of their interests, with each participant seeking to identify a value that he or she can bring to the discussion and the maximized satisfaction of underlying interests and intentions.

Conflict is important. If managed well, it identifies and supports effective change. Conflict can foster avoidance, or it can expand our experiences. Making good decisions about managing and resolving conflict can pave the way for greater understanding and well-being.

During the process of resolving a conflict, written documentation should be maintained about the nature of the conflict, the type of resolution attempted, the success of the conflict resolution, and the outcome. Because conflict already exists, interpretation of the requirement for resolution can become confused. Objective documentation that is agreed on by the parties helps maintain clarity. If the conflict cannot be resolved independently, documentation of the nature of the conflict is essential in case the situation escalates to legal action.

### Managing Conflict

Although it is common to react defensively and in an irritated manner when confronted with a complaint, it is a poor business strategy. Some people think that a complaint is a reflection on them personally. However, conflicts are common, and learning how to respond can change the distress of conflict into opportunity. Concern should be raised if numerous complaints arise, because this may indicate a serious problem.

Regardless of the nature of the complaint, it is important to review the details of the complaint and seek to resolve the problem quickly. Problem resolution can involve the following steps:

- Make time available as soon as possible to discuss the problem. A delay may result in additional conflict or may be interpreted as disinterest in the problem.
- Listen patiently to all of the issues, and keep an open mind.
- Determine the real issue. Frequently, a complaint is made about a problem, although a deeper concern is the real issue. For example, a person may be complaining about unfair work assignments, but the source of the problem is a personality clash between two staff members.

- Exercise self-control. Avoid arguments or expressions of personality conflicts between the complaining parties. Emotional outbursts do not lead to constructive resolution of the problem. If this results, it is wise to terminate the meeting until a future meeting can be scheduled and the problem can be discussed in a calm manner.
- Avoid a delay in decision making, but do not make rash decisions.
- Maintain a record. Documentation of meetings or discussions is helpful in case a conflict arises in the future about the same problem. It is impossible to recall all of the issues about an incident, and the documented information should be retained for future reference.

It is not easy to resolve conflict. Most of us wish to avoid it. However, conflict may arise whenever two or more people interact. You should try to be fair and objective. This can be difficult when you are one of the parties in the conflict situation. If you follow these suggestions, you will have at least attempted to resolve the complaint in a professional manner and will possibly avoid minor conflicts that can escalate into major crises.

### Communicating When Dilemmas Arise

The following steps can be used to resolve ethical dilemmas:

1. Carefully examine the facts, possibilities, logical causes, effects, and your feelings about the situation.
2. Speak with a mentor, peer, or a supervisor about the situation in a peer review or support context.
3. Plan a time to talk about the situation with the other person or people involved.
4. Begin the conversation by identifying the problem as you see it.
5. Use the standard I-message format to provide information and professional disclosure about your inability to work with or be comfortable with the situation. Use reflective listen skills to make sure you understand the viewpoint of all parties concerned.

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## THE STAFF MEETING

A staff meeting is an effective means of keeping communication channels open. In a staff meeting, all members of a business staff get together to discuss business operations. The staff meeting provides an opportunity to define and review the goals for the practice. Although criticism may be part of a staff meeting, a meeting should not be designed as a gripe session. The time and length of a staff meeting varies according to the needs of the staff. Some offices schedule an hour per week, others close the office for a half or a full day for a retreat session, and still others find luncheon or breakfast meetings effective. Several suggestions for an effective staff meeting follow.



Begin with an agenda, which is a plan for how the meeting will proceed. An agenda is used in planning a staff meeting. Obtain suggestions for items to be placed on the agenda. Determine the priority of the agenda items. Distribute the agenda to the staff before the meeting.

- Notify each staff member of the time and place of the staff meeting.
- Request a return reply for attendance.
- During staff meetings, adhere to the agenda items.
- Review outcomes of the meeting, and provide keyboarded minutes to the staff.
- Maintain a strict meeting schedule.
- Do not allow one person to monopolize the meeting.
- Do not turn the meeting into a gripe session.

All of the business etiquette and communications skills previously discussed come into play in staff meetings.



### LEARNING ACTIVITY

Develop a fictitious staff meeting agenda based on the following scenario. You are in charge of conducting a staff meeting to evaluate the past three in-service sessions for six massage therapists working in the sport and fitness center in your community. Because there is a cost for in-service presenters, it is necessary to have management personnel for the center in attendance along with the massage therapist. Efficiency is important. The goal is to find in-service content and presenters who will also benefit the four personal trainers on staff.

## PROFESSIONAL TIME MANAGEMENT

A vital aspect of successful business practice is *time management*. There is more to working efficiently than just knowing how to perform a specific task. Understanding the relationship of time to production is also important. All of these concepts together make up time management.

Time management involves planning and scheduling your work and avoiding wasted time. Behaviors that waste time are failing to plan and budget time, giving in to interruptions, failing to follow through and complete a task, slowness in reading and making decisions, performing unnecessary work, and failure to delegate. Other time wasters are lack of privacy and desk clutter. Solutions to many common time wasters are resuggested in Box 2-5.

To determine the effectiveness of your own time management, you must assess the way you are working. Determine ways to use your time more effectively, or confirm that you are already using your time efficiently. Evaluation of time management is an ongoing process and can

### BOX 2-5 Solutions to Eliminate Time Wasters

TIME WASTER	SOLUTION
Lack of goals	Prepare a to-do list, and use it.
Telephone or e-mail interruptions	Use an answering machine or voicemail system during specified work times.
Procrastination	Do it first!
Feeling tired, stressed, or irritable	Schedule a thorough physical examination; develop a wellness plan; enroll in stress-management course; get a massage.
Lack of future plans	Develop short- and long-range plans.
Disorganized work area	Purchase organizers; put away work when finished; do not begin a new project until one is complete.
Accepting too many jobs	Learn to say no!
Waiting for information or return calls	Use an answering machine or voicemail system.
Incomplete work	Plan time to finish projects with no interruptions.
Socializing with coworkers	Avoid the situations; restrict others from too much socializing.
Unnecessary work	Analyze the task; eliminate it if not necessary.

be done routinely by recording the way you spend your time; analyzing how you spend your time; determining what activities can be adjusted to make you a more effective worker; scheduling your activities daily, weekly, monthly, and long-range; and adhering to the schedule. Efficient time management requires that you organize individual tasks, maintain daily schedules, analyze daily tasks, schedule major projects, establish deadlines, and organize workflow.

### Maintaining Daily Schedules

To efficiently maintain a daily schedule, it is necessary to use a calendar of activities and tasks and a to-do list, determine priorities, show flexibility, use free time, and review the schedule with other members of the staff if you are the employer or with your supervisor if you are an employee.

The use of a calendar, personal appointment book, and the office appointment book is necessary in maintaining a daily schedule. A desk or electronic calendar provides a method for keeping track of your daily schedule, and it is used for short- and long-range scheduling. Make entries neatly if done manually, be consistent in making entries, and avoid making confidential entries if you use an electronic calendar that is accessible to others.

A to-do list should provide a summary of all pending tasks, not just those to be done on a specific day. This list need not include routine daily tasks, such as opening and closing the office or opening mail. Delete each task on completion, and transfer tasks not completed to a list for the following day.

Determine priorities by ranking each task on the list by its priority or its level of urgency and importance. Items on the list can be ranked by giving a 1 to tasks that must be completed immediately, 2 to tasks that must be completed that day, and 3 to tasks that must be done whenever you have time.

Be flexible in your plans for the day, because emergencies arise and new priority tasks will be identified. In addition to the routine to-do list, another list could be kept that details various tasks that should be completed when time permits. This list provides tasks to do during a slow period or when no clients are scheduled.

Do not overschedule or underestimate how long some tasks will take. It is better to underschedule than overschedule. Plan for the unexpected.



## LEARNING ACTIVITY

Complete an analysis of your time management abilities. For one typical work or school day (24 hours), maintain an hour by hour log of what you did and how long it took. Include all time for travel, phone, text, computer, breaks, eating, and sleeping. Analyze the log for areas where time management could be improved. Identify at least three areas, then list improvements in the space provided:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## DESIGNING A PROFESSIONAL PROCEDURAL MANUAL

The procedural manual is a valuable instrument in maintaining maximum efficiency in the massage practice while providing a means of communication. A well-planned procedure manual prevents problems. It includes the massage therapist's philosophy of the business practice and defines the job responsibilities for each team member. If you are being hired for a position, you should read the procedure manual to make sure you are able to be in compliance with the rules and regulations of the business.

### Guidelines for a Procedural Manual

The following list provides subjects to be included in an office procedural manual. You can purchase basic office manual formats and add inserts for the massage therapist's philosophy and specific duties relating to the practice.

- I. Statement of purpose or objective of the manual
- II. Statement of philosophy for the practice
- III. Table of contents
- IV. Office communications
  - A. Vocabulary
  - B. Telecommunications
  - C. Reception techniques
  - D. Written communication
  - E. Client education
- V. Staff policies
  - A. Conduct
  - B. Grooming and appearance
  - C. Dress codes: clinical and business office attire
  - D. Staff meetings
- VI. Employment policies
  - A. Probationary period
  - B. Promotion
  - C. Hours of work
  - D. Overtime
  - E. Holidays
  - F. Vacations
  - G. Absences and leaves
  - H. Salaries
  - I. Insurance
  - J. Additional benefits
  - K. Termination of employment
  - L. Personal telephone calls and personal mail
- VII. Safety and infection control
  - A. Infection-control policy
  - B. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines
  - C. Health risk categories
  - D. Nomenclature (i.e., set or system of names or terms used in a particular science or art and used by an individual or community)
  - E. Disinfection and sterilization guidelines
  - F. Waste management
  - G. Standard precautions
- VIII. Office records
  - A. Medical history procedures
  - B. Client records
  - C. Employer records
  - D. Transfer of records
  - E. Accounts receivable
  - F. Accounts payable
  - G. Filing
- IX. Massage practice procedures
  - A. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance
- X. Professional organizations

## Writing a Personnel Policy

As part of the office procedure manual, a well-defined personnel policy must be established. A fair and equitable personnel policy may help to eliminate conflicts that could arise among team members. The material in Box 2-6 illustrates a suggested personnel policy. This policy may be altered to satisfy the needs of an individual office.

## THE MESSAGE PROFESSIONAL AS AN EMPLOYER OR EMPLOYEE

Your career goals may include having employees. You may hire a receptionist or a staff of massage therapists. If you plan on working for someone, it is valuable to understand what to expect from the employment process. Whether you are the employer or employee, the process begins with the job description.

## Job Description

A current, accurate job description should exist for each position in the business structure. These job descriptions aid employers in telling prospective employees what will be expected of them on the job and can aid in training new staff members.

To write a job description, you need to do a job analysis. A job analysis involves gathering information about the job and includes a list of the tasks that make up the job, and determining the skills, personality characteristics, and educational background needed for the employee to perform the job satisfactorily. Existing staff or a mentor then reviews the job description. It is revised as necessary and placed in the procedural manual. An outline for a job description is shown in Box 2-7.

If you are applying for a massage position, you need to be informed of the job description to determine employment expectations and duties. If you intend to employ massage therapists as an aspect of your business plan, it is necessary to concisely determine what will be expected of the employee.

### EXPERT OUTLOOK



#### EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

*C. G. Funk*

**Vice President of Industry Relations and Product Development, MassageE nvy**

The massage therapy profession has changed much in the past 10 years. One of the most visible changes has been the rapid increase in employment opportunities for massage therapists.

Historically, the massage profession was private practitioner driven, which means the majority of therapists in the country were self-employed. Massage therapists were in private practice either by choice as their desired path or by default from a lack of available job/career opportunities.

Currently, our profession is shifting to an employer-driven market. Today, there are more job opportunities than ever before because of the growth of the spa/resort industry, the spread of national franchise massage clinic businesses, and the integration of massage services into medical and holistic health facilities.

For massage therapists, being an employee varies greatly from being a private practitioner. A massage therapist employee is a member of the team as opposed to working solo. Employees must adhere to all the company's policies and procedures, and they are held accountable for their actions and behavior.

Similar to other service industry jobs, employees are hired based on their education, experience, and skill set. Employers will look to fill positions with individuals that present a professional demeanor, facilitate effective and safe hands-on sessions, and exhibit the ability to develop positive relationships with clients.

Although your hands-on talent will get you part of the way toward securing a position, showing your excellent customer service skills during the interview process is just as important.

As a representative of the largest employer of massage therapists in the United States, I can share with you some inside information on what employers look for in a massage therapist applicant. During the verbal interview, an employer will assess your resume, interest in the position, communication skills, and performance standards. Furthermore, during the practical interview the employer will observe not only your flow, techniques, draping, and body mechanics, but also your interaction with her or him as a client before, during, and after the massage session. This is the time where the employer experiences the level of service you are capable of offering.

As employees, therapists will find a different work environment than in a private practice. All employers have set expectations of their staff, and therapists will need to understand their role and responsibilities. A therapist will be accountable for offering great customer service, presenting a professional image, and contributing to the team's operational goals. In addition, most employers have policies and procedures specific to massage therapists that include client interaction, draping, standards of touch, code of ethics, and intake procedures.

There are numerous benefits to being an employee versus being self-employed. You will be working in a safe, controlled environment with supportive management staff. You will have the opportunity to meet and build lasting relationships with fellow team members. You will have a set schedule and a consistent flow of clients, which results in a reliable source of income. In addition, an employer typically takes the responsibility for marketing, client scheduling, supplies, and payroll so therapists are able to focus solely on what they love best—massage therapy. For many therapists, it doesn't get much better than that!

**BOX 2-6** Personnel Policies for the Health and Wellness Massage Therapy Office**PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Your first 3 months are considered a probationary period, during which the owner can evaluate your progress with the new work. During this period, your employment may be terminated without notice. The massage therapist creates a Merit Rating Report at the termination of the probationary period and periodically thereafter. This report is used as the basis for salary increases and promotions.

**PROMOTION**

Your demonstrated ability to perform your job well, your attendance and punctuality record, and your relationships with employees have a bearing on your opportunities for promotion and advancement in salary. Any outside courses of study that result in skills in addition to those listed on your application are added to your record to ensure complete information when reviewing your record for advancement. All employees are reviewed every 6 months.

**HOURS OF WORK**

The office is open from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Monday and Wednesday and from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM on Tuesday and Thursday. On Fridays, the office is closed. Lunch hour is from 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM. The basic week of 35 working hours is assigned to each massage therapist.

**OVERTIME**

Overtime salary is paid for units of 30 minutes (0.5 hour). Fractions of less than 0.5 hour of overtime are not reported. If your salary is less than \$2150 per month, compensation for work authorized by the massage therapist in excess of 35 hours is at the rate of time and one half beyond 35 hours in any week or for work on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

**HOLIDAYS**

You are paid for the following legal holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. When the office will be closed for a religious holiday or other holiday, an announcement is made in advance.

**VACATIONS**

Requests for vacation time in excess of 1 day must be made 30 days in advance. You will be entitled to 2 weeks of vacation after completing 12 months of continuous employment and 4 weeks of vacation after 10 years of employment. A legal holiday that falls within the vacation period adds 1 day to your vacation. When a vacation falls within a vacation period, your salary is paid in advance to the latest regular salary payment date falling within the vacation period.

**ABSENCES AND LEAVES**

Regular attendance and punctuality are necessary for smooth functioning of the massage office, and your record in this respect is considered in determining your advancement and salary adjustment. However, there are certain absences that are unavoidable and for which provision will be made. In each case, the massage therapists should be notified in advance when possible or before 7:30 AM on the day of your absence. If you fail to make proper notification, the unadvised absence will be counted as absence without salary.

When absence is for your own illness, salary is paid for up to 1 day for each month of employment, for a cumulative amount up to 30 days. If you need sick leave in addition to this amount, a request should be made to the owner for additional time without pay.

If you are required to serve as a juror or witness in court, your absence is considered as a leave with salary.

If there is a death in your immediate family, up to 3 days of leave may be granted with salary.

If you request a leave of absence for reasons other than those previously described or for a longer period than is provided with salary, several factors will be taken into consideration, including your previous work and attendance records, the length of leave you are requesting, the work needs of the office, and any other pertinent issues.

**SALARIES**

Your salary is paid by check on a weekly basis and covers the period through Wednesday of the current week. Salary checks are distributed each Friday. Salary increases are considered every 6 months. The quality of your work, the amount of responsibility you assume, your attendance and punctuality records, your attitude toward the staff and clients, and your length of service are factors that enter into the consideration. Deductions from salary regularly include federal and state withholding taxes and Social Security. Deductions for group insurance, hospital care, and other benefits are made only on written request.

**INSURANCE**

To help provide security in times of sickness and hospitalization, health insurance is available. Membership in a group health insurance plan is available to all those employed up to 1 year and is billed on a payroll deduction basis. Staff members may select this insurance at their own expense for the first 12 months of employment. Deductions for hospital care are made the first payday of each month. Coverage of your spouse and dependent children younger than 19 years may be included in your hospital care contract.

Social Security is provided through payments by you and the owner to the U.S. government. Your share of the cost is deducted from each salary payment.

**ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

In addition to regular salary increases, the members of the staff are eligible for several additional benefits.

**Uniform:** The owner will provide uniforms. All massage therapists will wear blue scrubs with the business insignia and white gym shoes. The owner will provide the two uniforms but will not provide shoes.

**Linens:** All linens used for massage will be provided and laundered by a professional laundry service.

**BOX 2-6** Personnel Policies for the Health and Wellness Massage Therapy Office—cont'd**INFECTION-CONTROL POLICY**

An effective infection-control program has been implemented in the office for the protection of staff members, clients, and family members. It is recommended that you adhere to the provisions in the *Infection Control Policy Handbook* and that you are aware of all updates of this manual as they occur.

In the past, there have been three categorizations of tasks to differentiate exposure contact with blood, body fluids, and tissues. In reality, there are only two categories: A person has no contact with blood or has some or continuous exposure.

Category I: Tasks that involve exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues

Category II: Tasks that involve no exposure to blood, body fluids, or tissues

Massage therapists are in category II.

**TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT OR RESIGNATION**

You are asked to give 2 weeks' written notice of resignation. If you have been employed for 6 months or more and you resign during the vacation period after giving 2 weeks' notice, you will be compensated for your vacation according to the vacation schedule.

**PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS AND PERSONAL MAIL OR E-MAIL**

Personal telephone calls affect the workload in two ways. They prohibit incoming calls from clients, and they take time from your job. Limit the number of personal calls, and receive incoming calls only in an emergency. Personal cell phones should be turned off or set on silent mode during office hours. Similarly, the volume of mail is heavy at the office; therefore, do not use the office address for personal mail or e-mail.

**BOX 2-7** Business Responsibilities of the Massage Therapist

- Answering phones as necessary
- Client scheduling and appointment confirmation
- Conferring with clients about health histories
- SOAP (subjective, objective, assessment, and plan) notes or other types of documentation
- Daily maintenance of massage room, including emptying of garbage container
- Developing client treatment plans
- Filing records
- Greeting clients
- Maintaining treatment records
- Massage room preparation, including sanitation, preparing the draping material, and maintaining bolsters
- Preparing and blending massage oils
- Preparing clients for tests, therapy, or treatments
- Providing clients with rehabilitative exercises
- Upkeep of the restrooms and waiting area as needed

**LEARNING ACTIVITY**

In the space provided, develop a job description for your ideal job.

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It is in violation of federal law to hire an unauthorized (illegal) alien. An employer must require proof of an applicant's legal status, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) must be filled out before employment. Documents accepted for verification include an original U.S. passport, a certificate of U.S. citizenship or naturalization, an alien registration card with a photograph, a state-issued driver's license, a Social Security card, or a birth certificate.

**Legal Considerations in Hiring**

Legal factors that must be considered when hiring an employee include application forms, citizenship status, and testing. An employer must ensure that application forms avoid any questions regarding race or ethnic background. Each applicant who completes an application form must be provided with the same type of form. Be certain that the application form used in the office does not violate any state requirements. For example, a state may consider it unlawful to use a lie detector test, and a question on an application asking the applicant to take a lie detector test would be in violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (EEOA) (Fig. 2-17).

**Pre-employment Testing**

Employment testing may include standardized tests, polygraph tests, and drug and alcohol tests. Although a small massage therapy practice seldom uses all these tests, an institution such as a hospital or a large spa chain may use many tests.

Tests used to screen applicants can become discriminatory when they serve to disqualify members of a minority culture who are unfamiliar with the language or concepts but are fully qualified for the job. Many private-sector employers are considering drug and alcohol testing as a pre-employment requirement, which is likely to be part of a pre-employment physical examination.



An employer refusing to hire someone with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) violates federal and state disability discrimination laws. Protection under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has been extended to disabled persons, including those infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) virus or who have tested positive for HIV.

## Employment Interview

If you are seeking employment as a massage therapist, you will participate in an employment interview as the potential candidate (being interviewed). If you intend to be an employer, you will conduct employment interviews.

The employment interview is important for the person seeking a position and the employer. If you are interviewing

for a position as a massage therapist, you are able to collect information during the interview about the employer and the business structure.

Before conducting an interview, the employer gathers information about each candidate (typically using the candidate's resume), develops an outline of questions, and determines the physical setting for the interview (Box 2-8).

As the interview begins, the employer should establish rapport with the candidate by introducing himself or herself, explain the purpose of the interview, and generate a relaxed atmosphere. This is not always the case because not all employers are effective interviewers. If you are the candidate being interviewed, you should establish rapport with the employer; introduce yourself; and maintain a relaxed, confident, and professional demeanor.

### Application for Employment

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

If employed and you are under 18 can you furnish a work permit?  Yes  No

Are you legally eligible for employment in the U.S.A.?  Yes  No

Have you worked here before?  Yes  No If Yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any hours, shifts, or days you cannot or will not work? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to work overtime if required?  Yes  No

List friends or relatives working here. \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?  Yes  No (A conviction record will not necessarily be a bar to employment)

**EDUCATION**

Circle Highest Grade Completed	Grade School 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	High School 9 10 11 12	College 1 2 3 4	Graduate 1 2 3 4	Degree Received	Course of Study	
High School	Name and Address						
College(s)							
Graduate/Professional							
Specialized Training, Apprenticeship, Skills							
Honors and Awards and Accreditations							

**MILITARY SERVICE RECORD** Have you served in the U.S. Armed Forces? \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of duty \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITION(S) APPLIED FOR:** 1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

You must indicate a specific position. Applications stating "ANY POSITION" will not be considered.

Wage or salary requirements \$ \_\_\_\_\_ When can you start? \_\_\_\_\_

FIGURE 2-17. Employment application. (Modified from Gerdin J: Health Careers Today, ed 4, St. Louis, 2007, Mosby.)

The main part of the interview consists of asking questions, listening to responses, answering questions, and providing a transition from one discussion topic to another. Typical inquiries include the following: “Tell me about your previous job experiences.” “What is your attitude toward your previous working experience?” “What do you feel your strengths and weaknesses are for the position available?”

Common types of questions asked during an interview include direct, indirect, and hypothetical. The direct question usually elicits an expected response. An indirect question does not seek a “yes” or “no” response. The following examples illustrate the differences in these types of questions:

**Direct:** Would you be opposed to traveling to a satellite office?

**Indirect:** How would you feel about traveling to a satellite office?

**Hypothetical:** If one of our clients told you he did not like the way he was treated by a different massage therapist in the company, how would you respond?

A hypothetical question describes a situation and elicits a response from the candidate. This type of question is valuable because it is the closest the interviewer will get to observing the candidate’s behavior.

During the interview, the interviewer intends to gather information about the candidate’s qualifications for the job in a nondiscriminatory manner and to convey information to the candidate about the business and specific job responsibilities (see Box 2-7). There are certain legal considerations

### Application for Employment—cont’d

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**WORK HISTORY**

If presently employed, may we contact your employer?    Yes    No

<b>(1) Present or Most Recent Employer</b>	Address	Phone
Date Started	Starting Salary	Starting Position
Date Left	Salary on Leaving	Position on Leaving
Name and Title of Supervisor		
Description of Duties		Reason for Leaving
<b>(2) Previous Employer</b>	Address	Phone
Date Started	Starting Salary	Starting Position
Date Left	Salary on Leaving	Position on Leaving
Name and Title of Supervisor		
Description of Duties		Reason for Leaving
<b>(3) Previous Employer</b>	Address	Phone
Date Started	Starting Salary	Starting Position
Date Left	Salary on Leaving	Position on Leaving
Name and Title of Supervisor		
Description of Duties		Reason for Leaving

FIGURE 2-17, cont’d

(Continued)

related to interviewing. Rules of thumb for appropriate interview questions are shown in Box 2-9. Guidelines by the U.S. Department of Labor and the EEOC prohibit discriminatory hiring based on race, creed, color, sex, national origin, handicap, or age. Questions related to any of these topics or to marital status, children, ownership of a house or car, credit rating, or type of military discharge can also be considered discriminatory. Questions that should and should not be asked during an interview include many of those shown in Box 2-10, and topics that should be avoided are listed in Box 2-11.

The interview should include information for the prospective candidate from all of the following areas:

- Specific job responsibilities
- Orientation procedures

- Opportunities for advancement
- Management procedures
- Professional responsibilities
- Work hours, salary, and fringe benefits

After all candidates have been interviewed and the decision made about each, the person to be hired should be contacted promptly. A letter of confirmation should be sent to the new employee stating the conditions of employment (e.g., wages, hours, promotions, starting date) and other conditions agreed on during previous discussions. The letter should identify probationary periods, which allow either party to terminate employment within an established period without fear of penalty. It is wise to have the new employee sign the letter. A copy is then

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**OTHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Summarize special job-related skills and qualifications acquired from employment or other experience.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIALIZED SKILLS (CHECK SKILLS/EQUIPMENT OPERATED)**

___ CRT	___ Fax	Other (list):
___ PC	___ Lotus 1-2-3	_____
___ Calculator	___ PBX System	_____
___ Typewriter	___ WordPerfect	_____

State any additional information you feel may be helpful to us in considering your application.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note to Applicants: DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING.

Are you capable of performing in a reasonable manner—with or without a reasonable accommodation—the activities involved in the job or occupation for which you have applied? A description of the activities involved in such a job or occupation is attached.  Yes  No

**REFERENCES**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Address)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Address)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Address)

**UNDER MARYLAND LAW, AN EMPLOYER MAY NOT REQUIRE OR DEMAND, AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT, PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYMENT, OR CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT, THAT AN INDIVIDUAL SUBMIT TO OR TAKE A LIE DETECTOR OR SIMILAR TEST. AN EMPLOYER WHO VIOLATES THIS LAW IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$100.00.**

By my signature below, I certify that I have read the above and understand it completely.

Date

Signature

FIGURE 2-17, cont'd

**BOX 2-8** Suggestions for Job Interview Preparation

- Perform a task analysis of the proposed job.
- Determine the competencies needed to fulfill the job requirements.
- Prepare a well-defined job description.
- Have the applicant complete a job application.
- Determine how to measure an applicant's ability. Tests may be used to measure certain abilities, such as performing a demonstration or essay.
- Explain the requirements of the job completely.
- Determine key questions to ask in the interview.
- Review reactions toward the applicant. Were you comfortable? Was the applicant an active participant in the conversation? Was the individual shy or domineering?
- Make accurate observations about the applicant's answers, grammar, and nonverbal cues during the interview. Use a check-off form to ensure that each candidate is evaluated on the same basis.
- Record evaluations as soon as the interview is completed to ensure that you do not forget the responses.
- Investigate the references provided by the applicant. This confirms the accuracy of the applicant's statements.

**BOX 2-9** Three Rules of Thumb for Interviewing

1. Ask only for information that you intend to use to make hiring decisions.
2. Know how you will use the information to make a decision.
3. Recognize that it is difficult to defend the practice of seeking information that you do not use.

retained by the employee, and a copy is placed in the employee's file.

A letter should be sent to candidates not being hired, and their applications may remain on file if desired. Understanding how an interview is conducted and what factors influence the decision to hire an individual can help the person seeking employment respond effectively during the employment interview.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY**

Pairing with a partner and using your ideal job description, practice interviewing each other for that job. Play the roles of interviewer and interviewee. Pair with a different partner, and repeat the process. Complete the process at least three times. More is better. Make sure to follow the criteria for conducting a thorough and legal interview. Information available on the Small Business Association Web site is helpful.

**BOX 2-10** Appropriate Questions to Ask and Inappropriate Questions Not to Ask During an Interview**APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS**

1. What was your absentee record at your prior place of employment?
2. Do you know of any reason (e.g., transportation) why you would be unable to get to work on time and on a regular basis?
3. Are you available to work overtime?
4. We are looking for employees with a commitment to this position. Are there any reasons why you may not stay with us?
5. What are your career objectives?
6. Do you foresee any reasons why you could not be assigned to a branch or satellite office?
7. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

**INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS**

1. Where were you born?
2. Where and when did you graduate from high school?
3. Do you have any handicaps?
4. What religious holidays do you practice?
5. Are you married?
6. Do you plan to have children? How many?
7. Do you own a home?
8. Do you own a car?
9. Do you have any debts?
10. Can you provide three credit references?
11. Is your spouse likely to be transferred?
12. Is your spouse from this area?
13. How old are you?
14. How do you feel about working with members of a different race?
15. What languages do your parents speak?

**BOX 2-11** Topics to Avoid During the Interview Process

- Arrest records
- Marital status
- Maiden name
- Spouse's name
- Spouse's education
- Spouse's income
- Form of birth control
- Child care arrangements
- Lawsuits or legal complaints
- Ownership of car or residence
- Loans
- Insurance claims
- National origin
- Mother's maiden name
- Place of birth
- Disabilities
- Weight
- Age
- Date of high school graduation
- Religion
- Social organizations

## New Employee Training

After you are hired, it is important to participate in an orientation and training procedure. An employee handbook provides guidelines along with responsibilities and policies that assist in the new position (Box 2-12). A well-organized business can provide a smooth transition for the new employee into the practice. Time for the new employee to become well established in the office varies according to the individual business. New employee training includes the following:

- Describe how the practice is run and what standards are required of the staff.
- Explain the organizational chart and job descriptions.
- Complete employee documents, including federal and state tax forms.
- Review procedural techniques.
- Allow time for observation, but let the skills and responsibilities of the new employee be used as soon as possible.
- Evaluate the performance of the new employee regularly. This allows changes to be made in performance and provides the employee with knowledge of his or her status.
- Review progress with adequate promotion by means of benefits or a pay increase.

### BOX 2-12 Sections for Employee Handbooks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Company Logo and Company Name</li> <li>■ Title Page</li> <li>■ Welcome to XYZ Massage Therapy Business</li> <li>■ Disclaimer</li> <li>■ Introduction</li> <li>■ XYZ Massage Therapy Business Mission Statement</li> <li>■ Career Opportunities</li> <li>■ Code of Conduct</li> <li>■ Employment</li> <li>■ Equal Opportunity Employment</li> <li>■ Eligibility for Employment</li> <li>■ Part-Time Employment</li> <li>■ Minimum Wage</li> <li>■ Criminal Convictions</li> <li>■ Violence</li> <li>■ Weapons</li> <li>■ Alcohol, Drugs, and Illegal Substance Abuse</li> <li>■ Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment</li> <li>■ Domestic Violence Statement</li> <li>■ Job Posting</li> <li>■ Seniority</li> <li>■ Employment Evaluation</li> <li>■ Personnel File</li> <li>■ Policies and Procedures</li> <li>■ Attendance</li> <li>■ Parking</li> <li>■ Schedule</li> <li>■ Staff Meetings</li> <li>■ Bulletin Boards</li> <li>■ Suggestion Box</li> <li>■ Time Cards</li> <li>■ Lunch Break</li> <li>■ Breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Dress Code</li> <li>■ Medical Attention</li> <li>■ Compensation</li> <li>■ Overtime</li> <li>■ Commissioned Sale</li> <li>■ Wage and Salary Disclosure</li> <li>■ Payroll Schedules</li> <li>■ Your Paycheck</li> <li>■ Payroll Deductions for Taxes, FICA, and Medicare</li> <li>■ Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)</li> <li>■ Working Away from the Office</li> <li>■ Performance and Evaluation Reviews</li> <li>■ Reimbursement of Expenses</li> <li>■ Reporting Personal Information Changes</li> <li>■ Gifts, Entertainment, and Meals</li> <li>■ Visitors</li> <li>■ Personal Property</li> <li>■ Personal Safety</li> <li>■ Food and Beverage</li> <li>■ Smoking</li> <li>■ Office Parties</li> <li>■ Solicitation</li> <li>■ Moonlighting</li> <li>■ Company Property</li> <li>■ Facilities Security</li> <li>■ Office Supplies, Postage, and Company Accounts</li> <li>■ Company Equipment</li> <li>■ Phone Systems, Voicemail, and Personal Calls</li> <li>■ Conservation and Recycling</li> <li>■ Computers and Related Equipment</li> <li>■ Internet, E-Mail, and Electronic Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Policies for Leave of Absence</li> <li>■ Eligibility</li> <li>■ Personal Leave of Absence</li> <li>■ Sick Leave</li> <li>■ Personal Time</li> <li>■ Short-Term Disability Leave</li> <li>■ Unpaid Family and Medical Leave</li> <li>■ Funeral Leave</li> <li>■ Jury Duty</li> <li>■ Military Duty</li> <li>■ Severe Weather Closings</li> <li>■ Benefits</li> <li>■ Eligibility</li> <li>■ Group Medical Insurance</li> <li>■ Retirement</li> <li>■ Worker's Compensation</li> <li>■ Holidays</li> <li>■ Vacations</li> <li>■ Vacation Schedules</li> <li>■ Education and Tuition Reimbursement</li> <li>■ Employee Discounts</li> <li>■ Discipline Policies</li> <li>■ Problem Resolutions</li> <li>■ Violation of Company Policy</li> <li>■ Termination of Employment</li> <li>■ Termination</li> <li>■ Severance</li> <li>■ Acknowledgement</li> <li>■ Notice</li> <li>■ Drug Testing Policy and Consent Form</li> <li>■ Noncompete and Nondisclosure Agreement</li> </ul> <p>Examples are posted on Evolve at <a href="http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business">http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business</a>.</p>
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## Good Stuff from the Government

### SMALL BUSINESS TRAINING NETWORK ONLINE TRAINING

All web links mentioned below are annotated on the Evolve site at <http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business>.

The Small Business Training Network (SBTN) is a virtual campus providing quality and targeted online training to meet the information needs of prospective and existing small business owners. It is an electronic government initiative, powering a comprehensive menu of business courses that are designed to serve more customers more efficiently. The SBTN operates like an electronic umbrella, under which many SBA and agency resource training programs are captured, aggregated, sorted by content, and made available in multiple formats.

The SBTN is a customer-focused SBA strategy designed to enrich, educate, and empower small businesses. It is an Internet-based learning environment that operates like a virtual campus by offering online courses, workshops, publications, information resources, learning tools, and direct access to electronic counseling and other forms of technical assistance that support professionals. Not all training can be effectively achieved or is best suited for an online environment. In addition to a robust selection of online offerings, the SBTN serves as a window to all of the traditional, face-to-face technical assistance programs offered by the agency. Traditional training opportunities offered by SBA and its resource partners around the country can be easily identified by clicking on the National Training Events site (<http://www.sba.gov/news/calendar/>).

When you log on, check out the course on strategic planning and execution. This course presents the fundamental devices used in crafting a strategy for a business venture. The course presents the innovative mechanisms of internal and external strategies. These innovations are based on the findings of a new body of research into the strategy-making processes of successful growing ventures. The course shows how to craft missions, visions, goals, and strategies for your business. It shows you how to best present and execute your

strategy through strategic stories, the act of organizing genius, and tipping point leadership tactics (<http://www.sba.gov/training/index.html>).

The SBA also offers information on management of employees. Log on to find out more about the following topics (<http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/manage/manageemployees/>):

Writing effective job descriptions

Employees versus contractors: what's the difference?

The interview process: how to select the "right" person

When potential employees lie

Immigration FAQs

Hiring employees FAQs

The U.S. Department of Labor's employment law guide

Verify a Social Security Number

Plain English guide to employee handbooks

Planning for the future

Another great resource is the find a mentor feature.

Never think you can do it alone! One of the best ways to insulate yourself against business failure is to find and work with a mentor, someone with business experience who can guide and assist you.

Another great government site is [www.business.gov](http://www.business.gov). It is the official link to the U.S. government business portal to many different helpful sites. Log on and explore employment and labor laws and workplace safety and health.

The Department of Labor site also has useful information. The Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) offers a small business handbook that can be downloaded. It can provide content for office procedural manuals.

Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure the safety and health of America's workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. The entire text of the *Small Business Handbook* is available on OSHA's Web site.

### SUMMARY

Professionalism emphasizes the importance of learning to identify and trust your inspiration, intention, and intuition, which provide a pathway for developing massage practice goals and objectives. Business office etiquette includes respect for diversity and demands self-assessment to identify areas that need improvement. Effective management is related to communication skills, conflict management, time management, and thoughtful hiring practices. Employees benefit from a procedure manual, which consolidates the policies and procedures of the office for smooth and successful business operations.

Using professional associations and governmental resources can help professional message therapists investigate areas of interest and expand learning beyond the pages of this textbook.

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Thill JV, Bovée CL: *Excellence in Business Communication*, ed 5, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2002, Prentice-Hall.

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: <http://www.eeoc.gov/>

Employment and labor laws and workplace safety and health: <http://www.business.gov/>

Delaware Technical and Community College employee handbook: [http://www.dtcc.edu/stanton-wilmington/documents/faculty\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.dtcc.edu/stanton-wilmington/documents/faculty_handbook.pdf)

New Mexico State University: <http://www.grants.nmsu.edu/pub/documents/safety.pdf>

U.S. Small Business Administration online courses: <http://www.sba.gov/training/index.html>

U.S. Small Business Administration small business planner, managing employees: <http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/manage/manageemployees/index.html>

### Evolve Annotated Web Links



<http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business>

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-2009 edition: [www.bls.gov/oco/ocos295.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos295.htm)

## Workbook

1. Write job descriptions for a massage therapist in a spa setting, a chiropractic office, and for a part-time massage therapist sharing a massage office with a sole massage practitioner.

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2. Create an interview outline that lists the sequence of events of an interview. Develop a series of questions that can determine a candidate's skills for a job. Interview fellow classmates to practice being the interviewer and the candidate.

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3. Describe how you would handle the following conflicts in situations:

A massage therapist reprimands a coworker for wearing facial piercings, which is a violation of the office procedural manual for clinical assistants. What is your response?

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Office hours for the staff are 8:15 AM to 5:00 PM. The receptionist is chronically late, arriving 15 to 20 minutes after the assigned time each day. This person always leaves by 5:00 PM and seldom is late leaving for lunch. Friction is occurring among the staff. Is this really a problem? What are the issues involved? Can there be a resolution? What action should be taken, and who should take action?

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# FOCUS ON THE CLIENT

## OUTLINE

### Understanding Client Needs

*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*  
*Rogers' Client-Centered Therapy: Reflective Listening*  
*Barriers to Communication with Clients*  
*Recognizing Nonverbal Cues*  
*Improving Verbal Images*

### The Client

*Clients' Rights*  
*Managing the Client's Special Needs*  
*Recognizing Abuse*

### Sexual Appropriateness

#### The Reception Room

*Role of the Receptionist*  
*Reception Room Appeal*  
*The Greeting Process for On-Site Massage*

#### Client Policy and Procedures Brochure

*Purpose*  
*Brochure Contents*

#### Recourse Policy

#### Summary

## KEY TERMS

Client-centered therapy  
 Clients' rights  
 Defense mechanisms

Hierarchy of needs  
 Implied outcomes  
 Nonverbal cues

Office policy  
 Stated outcomes  
 Open-ended questions

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*Mastery of the content in this chapter will enable the reader to:*

- Define glossary terms
- Understand clients' needs
- Explain the special needs of clients
- Identify barriers to communication
- Recognize nonverbal cues
- Manage interpersonal communication in the reception area
- Design an office policy statement
- Understand client rights

People are an essential part of the massage practice. It may be a cliché, but the most important person in a massage practice is the client. This is a service profession based on a professional relationship. The key words are *service*, *professional*, and *relationship*. You must never overlook the fact that each client has a different background and different needs. While communicating with clients, it is important that you recognize each as an individual with specific needs and that you determine how to be sensitive to those needs.

Therapeutic massage is a helping profession, and every effort needs to be made to achieve appropriate outcomes for the client. *Stated outcomes* are determined during the development of the massage care plan. *Implied outcomes* are more ambiguous. The reasons for and results of massage often go unstated, but they may be the motivation for the massage sessions. For example, a stated outcome is that the client wants to be able to run a marathon, but the implied outcome is different: help me believe in myself. In another example, the stated outcome is pain management, but the implied outcome is something else: Help me be more in control of my life. The implied outcomes typically emerge over time and through ongoing communication. The topic of communication continues to appear because it is important. In Chapter 1, communication content included listening described in the context of a service profession and the importance of focused listening to understand the client. Chapter 2 dealt with communication skills, especially in terms of conflict resolution. In this chapter, we discuss communication in more depth and review interpersonal relationships.

Clear, concise, and friendly communication is essential. Communication is difficult if a person is behaving in a defensive way. Defense mechanisms are psychological methods of dealing with stressful situations, and they include sarcasm, denial, making excuses, blaming, and other forms of ineffective communication. Listening is one of the most important skills in communication. Listening involves silence and active feedback. Open-ended questions help to restate what the client, coworker, or supervisor is saying to be sure that the message is understood clearly.



## SELF-REFLECTION

What are the defensive mechanisms I use when stressed? Defense mechanisms include sarcasm, denial, making excuses, blaming, crying, stomping off, refusing to talk, bringing up the past, being a victim ("poor me"), lying, exaggerating, and pouting. Which of these behaviors bother me when others act out? How do I respond to others' defensive behavior? How do others respond to my defensive behavior? How may these behaviors interfere with my massage career?

## UNDERSTANDING CLIENT NEEDS

Each person who comes in contact with the massage clients should have an understanding of the basic drives involved in motivating clients. Unless the massage therapist and others in the work environment understand these drives, they will become discouraged after many attempts fail to motivate clients to maintain a regular appointment schedule and participate in self-help activities.

Massage embraces the concepts of wholeness, and appreciation of the human experience supports business success. It therefore seems appropriate for massage therapists to be aware of the contributions of two humanistic psychologists, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow described a hierarchy of needs (Fig. 3-1) to assist in understanding how a person's needs motivate his or her behavior. Maslow identified five levels of needs, ranging from basic biologic needs to complex social or psychological drives.

1. *Physiologic or biologic needs*: Bodily needs are the first to be satisfied. Physical needs must be satisfied to sustain life. If you are healthy, eat regularly, and are housed adequately, you can advance to the next level of the hierarchy with a sense of well-being.
2. *Safety or security needs*: After the basic biologic needs are met, you are ready to explore your environment. Just as small children begin to explore their environment after their food and comfort needs have been met, adults begin to explore issues concerning safety and freedom from danger, threats, or other deprivation. If you have a job that is nonthreatening and live in a safe environment, you will feel secure and will be able to advance to the next level.

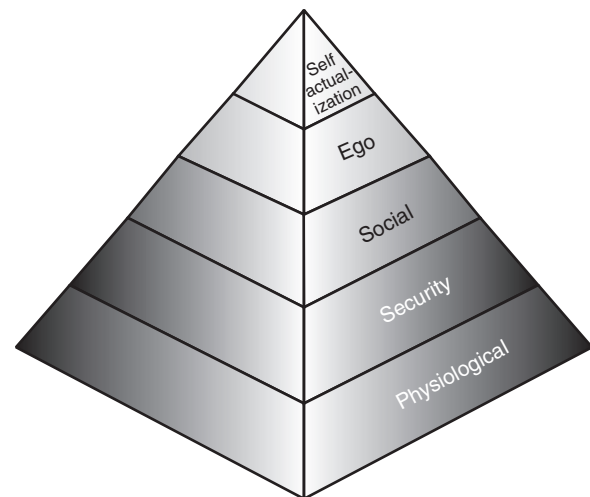


FIGURE 3-1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)

3. *Social or love needs:* After you are secure in your environment, you can advance to the level of social interaction. The poet John Donne wrote, “No man is an island, complete to itself.” Donne realized that to be human means to interact with others. Maslow realized that you need to interact with others who share similar beliefs and who provide you with reinforcement to continue your social relationships. Love or social interaction gives you confidence to advance to the next level on the hierarchy.
4. *Ego or esteem needs:* From interaction with others, you will generate goals for yourself. These ego needs relate to your self-esteem, reputation, and recognition. You look forward to achieving your goals, and from accomplishment, you derive self-esteem. Typically, the self-satisfaction achieved from accomplishing these goals provides an impetus to establish new goals and begin the cycle again.
5. *Self-actualization needs:* Self-actualized people are motivated by the need to grow. They must have achieved self-esteem and self-confidence. Maslow explained that to achieve this level of self-actualization, people must be relatively free of illness, sufficiently satisfied in their basic needs, positively using their capacities, and motivated by some existing or sought-after personal values. A person at this level often wants to help others achieve their goals by sharing what he or she learned in the earlier stages of development. Some people never reach this level because they have not aspired to its recognition.

Relating this hierarchy to massage therapy allows massage therapists to better understand clients and coworkers. Before a massage therapist can motivate a client to embrace massage as an important aspect of self-care, it must be understood where the client is on the hierarchy of needs. For example, one of your clients is a bank president who is respected for his civic activities and has a warm, loving family and a fine home. The client develops low back pain. The pain has moved from the acute stage to the chronic stage. It is difficult for him to sit for extended periods, sleep is interrupted, and he is irritable. This person has dropped from a self-esteem level to the physiologic level, and you must satisfy the physiologic needs for pain management, sleep restoration, and daily function before attempting to suggest further intervention. This amounts to helping the client return to the previous level on the hierarchy of needs.

Setting fees for massage services and payment plans for a client often exposes a conflict of needs. A client must ensure that basic needs of food, housing, and clothing are met, but there may be a desire to meet social and touch needs because the person is going through relationship transitions. A conflict arises in the decision-making process when the client is confronted with conflict over how to satisfy all of these needs within a specified income. A primary business goal is to support a satisfied, retained client. The massage therapist needs to make an effort to determine the client’s needs, realize the client’s potential conflict areas, and present an alternative treatment

plan that provides some options. For example, a single mother who is cashier at a grocery store is in pain from standing in one spot for extended periods. She is barely making ends meet. You (a practicing massage therapist charging \$50 per session) and she know massage can help, but she cannot justify the cost. An alternative is to refer her to the local massage school clinic where massage is offered by students at a reduced fee. Although the student at the school clinic has limited skills, the availability of massage at a fee that is affordable is a viable option.

The hierarchy of needs also can be applied to interactions between coworkers. Typically, all have the same needs, and each is concerned, like a client, about security today and in the future. When there are enough clients and resources to meet the needs of all concerned, conflict is reduced, but if there is competition for clients or limited resources, the need for security can fuel conflict. Consider the referral in the previous example. If the massage therapist was struggling financially as much as the potential client, the massage therapist may consider reducing fees to retain the individual, rather than referring her. Where you are on the hierarchy of needs influences the decision you make.



## SELF-REFLECTION

Where am I on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in my professional world? What about my personal world? What could occur to move me down the hierarchy? What is my plan if that happens? What do I need to do to move up to the next level? What resources are available to support personal and professional growth?

Conflict often arises when a person becomes fixed at one level on the hierarchy of needs. There may appear to be no change in motivation, and the person’s perspective remains unchanged. This pattern becomes evident when a person has an interest in making money or increasing a social status without regard for other people’s levels of motivation.

One of the best lessons you can learn from Maslow’s theory is that an individual has a choice in determining his or her behavior. Although basic physiologic and environmental needs have a strong influence, an individual makes choices voluntarily. A similar thought process affects people experiencing pain and suffering. Pain occurs in our lives. How we deal with pain determines how we live our lives. Suffering is a choice. We can choose to not suffer by countering the pain with a focus on life’s purpose and by regaining an internal sense of control in our lives.

## Rogers’ Client-Centered Therapy: Reflective Listening

Carl Rogers, another humanistic psychologist, believed that it is “the client who knows what hurts, what direction to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply



buried.” Rogers also suggests that you must accept the client or other person as a genuine person with his or her own set of values and goals and that these people must be treated with “unconditional positive regard.”

Client-centered therapy assumes that clients know how they feel, what they want, and what their priorities are. Applied to therapeutic massage, this philosophy encourages you to listen to the client. This means that they talk more than you do. This concept suggests that you must respect clients as human beings, not just numbers, case studies, or research projects. The combined concepts of Maslow and Rogers provide the groundwork for a humanistic, caring attitude, which should be a requisite for all health care providers, including massage therapists.

### Barriers to Communication with Clients

We often are unable to communicate with clients because barriers have been established, and one of the first may create be prejudging a person. A massage therapist may hesitate to set an appointment because of the way the individual dresses or the type of car he or she drives. As a result, the person is not considered a possible retention client because his or her economic status has been prejudged. People with disabilities often are prejudged. When an individual who has an artificial limb, is in a wheelchair, or has a visible birthmark on the face comes in for a massage session, the first noticeable feature frequently is the disability. If this individual is with a spouse or another person, the potential client may go unnoticed while questions are directed to the accompanying person. Massage professionals must treat people with disabilities as they would treat any other clients and direct all communication to them.

Another barrier occurs when the massage therapist hears but does not *listen*. A massage professional should never be too busy to listen with understanding to a client. You must listen to the *meaning* of the words and recognize the feeling behind the meaning. Before presenting your point of view, you must be able to restate what has been said to the client’s satisfaction (i.e., reflective listening). This is not as easy as it sounds. You may be too eager to present your own point of view and fail to understand the real meaning of what the client is attempting to say. When the client says, “I think I’ll just call later when I think I need another massage,” what is she really saying? If you respond, “Oh, that’s okay, Mrs. Gates, I understand,” you will not discover the true intentions of the client. You may cut off communication. The client may really be saying, “I can’t afford it,” or “I don’t like the way you treat me.” The best way to arrive at the real meaning is to continue the dialog until you discern the client’s true feelings, as in the following example:

*Massage therapist:* Mrs. Romano, do you feel that you want to call later for the next appointment?

*Client:* Yes.

*Massage therapist:* Do you want to wait because you are too busy now? (The client may say “yes” and terminate the conversation at this point, or the conversation may continue.)

*Client:* No, it’s just that I don’t know if I should spend the money right now.

*Massage therapist:* Do you feel that weekly massage sessions are more than you can afford just now?

*Client:* Well, it’s not that I can’t afford it. I guess what it boils down to is being comfortable with spending money on me when my daughter is ready to go to college.

*Massage therapist:* In other words, there is a concern about the need to support your daughter and importance of caring for you?

*Client:* Yes, I guess that’s it. I have always taken care of the kids first.

The hidden meaning becomes evident in the last response. Notice in this dialog that the massage therapist never offered a solution to the problem, such as an alternative payment plan or a later appointment date. Instead, the dialog with the client is encouraged, and content is rephrased to arrive at the real meaning.

A third barrier is preoccupation. During daily routines, many demands are placed on your time, and you may begin to think about other activities while trying to communicate with a client. Everyone has been in that position at one time or another. A client is trying to explain how his leg became bruised, and you suddenly realize you have not heard a word that was said because you were concentrating on another problem. Unfortunately, clients are quick to recognize such preoccupation and may suddenly stop talking or may even stop coming for massage. This type of situation emphasizes the service model illustrated in Chapter 1. The client is the most important person in the massage practice and should be given your complete attention. When you do lose focus on the client, admit it, and apologize. For example, “I apologize for not concentrating on what you just told me. Please tell me again.”

Unawareness of importance, impatience, and even hearing loss are barriers to communication. You may not realize how important the problem is to a client and ignore it as a whim. You may inadvertently find yourself becoming impatient with a chatty young child or an older person who is slow. You may not be hearing everything a person says because of an unrecognized hearing loss.

To prevent or correct these barriers, you must be willing to evaluate yourself. Before each contact with a client, decide to ignore extraneous activities and be willing to listen and understand a client’s problem before you offer a solution. Following Rogers’ concept of listening to the client long enough can provide the solution. Practice asking good questions to elicit responses:

- If you could massage yourself, what would you do?
- Show me what you think needs to be done.
- What do you think the underlying cause is?

## Recognizing Nonverbal Cues

Many books have defined and guided the reader to recognize nonverbal communication cues. *Nonverbal cues* refer to the gestures and body movements a person makes in a given situation. Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, a gesture can give meaning to a person's inner feelings. Nonverbal communication provides feedback on the client's reactions.

The alert massage therapist is able to pick up these cues and interpret them while communicating with a client. Care should be taken not to be misled by one gesture. A series of gestures usually gives a more realistic indication of a person's attitude. Therapeutic massage presents many opportunities



**FIGURE 3-2.** A client displays nervousness. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)

to use and to receive nonverbal cues because the practice is body oriented, but you must be careful to avoid prejudging, assuming, and stereotyping. Although crossing an arm over the chest may mean closing off communication, it can also be a way of supporting the low back when it is aching. Do not jump to conclusions, and keep an open mind.

Nonverbal cues include the following:

**Nervousness:** A client who enters the reception room and sits down, locking the ankles together and clenching the hands, may be expressing fear by holding back emotions (Fig. 3-2). When the client relaxes, he or she will automatically unlock the ankles.

**Defensiveness:** A client or coworker may use a gesture of crossed arms and clenched fists as signals to indicate disagreement or defensiveness. This gesture may even indicate the person has withdrawn from the conversation (Fig. 3-3).

**Touching:** The massage therapist has many opportunities to use this gesture, which indicates compassion and support (Fig. 3-4). A hand on a small child's shoulder may show concern, or an arm around the shoulder of a senior citizen may give assurance (Fig. 3-5).

**Openness:** During intake and assessment, the massage therapist should express openness rather than assume an authoritative posture behind a desk. Having the client seated beside the desk removes this barrier and allows the massage therapist an opportunity for more open gestures (Fig. 3-6).

**Embarrassment:** Clients may pull on clothing because they are attempting to cover some area of the body they are embarrassed for the massage therapist to see or touch (Fig. 3-7).

It is important that you become aware of the meaning and the potential of nonverbal communication. Although



**FIGURE 3-3.** A client who is being ignored crosses his arms defensively. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 3-4.** A massage therapist displays caring by touching a child. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 3-5.** Assisting an elderly client with her coat indicates caring. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)

the previous suggestions can provide a place to begin understanding nonverbal communication, learn to use your intuition to read between the lines. No one tool or technique can ensure successful communication, and becoming an effective communicator is a lifelong pursuit. These efforts, combined with a sincere interest in satisfying a client's needs, will provide a successful communication system in the massage office.

### Improving Verbal Images

A massage professional has an obligation to allay fears and hesitancy about getting a massage and to comfort clients. The best way of accomplishing these tasks is to create a good



**FIGURE 3-6.** A massage therapist consults with a client. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)



**FIGURE 3-7.** A massage client holds draping to keep sensitive areas covered. (From Salvo S: Massage Therapy: Principles and Practice, ed 3, St. Louis, 2008, WB Saunders.)

image about massage in the client's mind. In a massage practice, you need to eliminate the use of words or phrases that conjure negative thoughts. For instance, when you say, "I don't care what you look like," you have told the client there is a possibility that you do notice. If you had said, "Draping is used to maintain warmth and modesty," you would have let the client know you were there to help him or her be comfortable. In Chapter 10, terms and phrases frequently used to support clients are discussed in greater detail. Try replacing discomfoting terms with words that create a more positive environment. When discussing treatment, use language the client can understand. You had to learn the scientific and

medical terminology in school, but it does not impress clients who have no clue what you are talking about.

## THE CLIENT

The most important person in the massage practice is the client. Although massage is a business, it should never be forgotten that it is first a health care service profession. Much is expected of a client: following directions, keeping appointments, and paying fees promptly. In return, we must take time to recognize the client as a person and realize that the client has some special needs and inherent rights.

### Clients' Rights

The phrase *patients' rights* is used often and is the result of most health care professions' decisions to design a patient's bill of rights. In some health care agencies, the care unfortunately has become so impersonal that it is necessary for a professional association or agency to formally document the things that are naturally considered to be patients' rights. Some health care workers see this action as confirmation of an individual's inherent rights, not the result of a lack of consideration. The massage profession has yet to develop a client's bill of rights, but the various codes of ethics in the profession imply a foundation of respect for the individual.

As our society becomes increasingly concerned with individual rights, members of the massage health care team cannot afford to neglect clients' rights. Take time to recognize the client as a person, and consider the list of rights in Box 3-1 as rights of the client and not as threats to the profession of massage. The content in the box is adapted from client rights used in health care.

### Managing the Client's Special Needs

Many individuals with special needs seek massage therapy services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 sets specific guidelines for businesses. This topic was introduced in Chapter 2. Several issues regarding the structural design of a building for access are discussed in Chapter 6. Other factors in the ADA require the massage therapist not to discriminate against a person who requests massage services. If they can get into a treatment room, most disabled persons can receive treatment. Perhaps the biggest challenge a massage therapist faces is attempting to give a massage to a client who struggles to mentally or physically cooperate, such as when a client has cerebral palsy or is a quadriplegic whose high-level neck injuries make moving from a wheelchair to a massage table dangerous. An individual with early-stage dementia may forget to tell you about some medication that he or she is taking. It is necessary to be creative in how you solve these problems.

#### BOX 3-1 Client Rights

- Clients in a massage practice are entitled to
- Be treated with adequate, appropriate, compassionate care at all times and under all circumstances.
  - Be treated without discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, or source of payment.
  - Be informed of all aspects of treatment.
  - Be informed of appointment and fee schedules.
  - Review their financial and clinical records.
  - Obtain a thorough evaluation of their needs.
  - Be treated as a partner in care and decision making related to treatment planning.
  - Receive current information and be assured of quality treatment.
  - Be able to refuse treatment to the extent provided by law and to be informed of the medical/massage consequences of that refusal.
  - Expect confidentiality of all records pertinent to their massage care.
  - Be informed if the massage therapist participates in different third-party payment plans.
  - Request and expect appropriate referrals for consultation.
  - Expect continuity of treatment.
  - Be charged a fair and equitable fee.
  - Have appointment schedules and times maintained.
  - Be treated by a staff of professionals who maintain good health and hygiene.
  - Be respected for requesting a second opinion.
  - Be respected as human beings who have feelings and needs.

It may be necessary for you to make a special effort in communication with some clients. For instance, if the disabilities include vision or hearing impairments or the client uses a wheelchair or walker, you may find it necessary to take special care when communicating. For clients who have difficulty hearing, you may need to stand in front of them when talking to ensure that they are able to read your lips. For clients with poor vision, you may need to read the questions on the history form and fill in the information. For people using wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches, it may be necessary to take extra time when asking them to move about or lie on them as they are able.



#### LEARNING ACTIVITY

In the space provided, write a massage client's bill of rights for your future professional practice.

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## Recognizing Abuse

In our society, abuse is evident in many forms but is most commonly noticed in children, adult women, and the elderly. Each year, more than 2.7 million children are abused or neglected by caregivers, relatives, or strangers. More than 1000 children die annually as a result of this abuse. Child abuse may be classified as physical, sexual, emotional, or neglectful. Those who are elderly and dependent on others for care and adults in volatile relationships may also be victims of abuse.

Although uncommon, massage therapists may be faced with reporting an abuse situation. Abused children or adults may show overall signs of neglect, abnormal fears or neuroses, or evidence of scarring or bruises of various colors on exposed areas of the body. Reports of suspected abuse should be made to the state or county social services office. Individual states vary in their requirements for reporting, and it is necessary to contact the appropriate state agency to find out the specifics for your area.

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## SEXUAL APPROPRIATENESS

Sexual behavior by the therapist toward the client or by the client toward the therapist is always unethical and inappropriate. It is always the responsibility of the therapist or health professional to ensure that sexual misconduct does not occur. If inappropriate sexual behavior occurs by the client or the massage therapist, the incident should be reported immediately to supervisory personnel. If a supervisor or manager is unavailable, the incident should be written up with documentation and the session ended. If the massage therapist is at fault the charge for the massage is to be refunded. If the incident could be considered solicitation for prostitution, the client should report to the police. If the client acts inappropriately, he or she should be refused massage services based on sexually inappropriate behavior. If there is concern about appropriate behavior, it should be addressed with a statement in the policy and procedures brochure. The statement could read as follows: Massage therapy is a professional health service and a nonsexual environment. Sexual impropriety is not tolerated.

Sexual impropriety includes the following behaviors:

- Engaging in any conduct that is sexual or reasonably may be interpreted as sexual
- Any behavior, gestures, or expressions that are seductive or sexually demeaning to a client or by a client toward the massage therapist
- Disrobing or draping practices that reflect a lack of respect for the client's or massage therapist's privacy
- Inappropriate comments about or to the client or by the client about the massage therapist, such as
  - Sexualized or sexually demeaning comments

- Comments concerning sexual orientation
- Discussion of potential sexual performance
- Conversations about sexual preferences or fantasies
- Therapist–client sex, whether initiated by the client or massage professional

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## THE RECEPTION ROOM

The reception room creates an impression of the massage environment and the massage therapist. Business success is influenced by how you set up and maintain the reception area. If you have your own business, the design of the reception area is your responsibility. You must also take on the role of receptionist. If you are employed, the employer is responsible for the business environment, including the reception room and designating someone who takes care of the receptionist duties. You may be able to have productive input about improving and maintaining a reception process.

### Role of the Receptionist

In the small, single-person massage practice, you assume many roles, including receptionist. If you are working in a larger setting, a receptionist may be hired to handle the responsibilities of the reception room.

The receptionist usually is the first person to greet clients as they enter the office, and he or she should appear neat and professional. In health care business offices, the receptionist can wear appropriate business dress or a uniform. The receptionist's clothing or uniform should be clean, shoes should be well polished and clean, and hair should be neatly styled. The positive image of the receptionist indicates a clean and well-organized office (Box 3-2). Because the image portrayed in this role must remain with the client, this is no place to try out new clothing styles, experiment with garish jewelry, or wear facial and oral piercings.

As the client enters the office, the receptionist acknowledges the client immediately with a pleasant smile and a cheerful "hello" and calls him or her by name. Everyone likes the feeling of being recognized. Even if the receptionist is busy with a telephone call, she or he should look up and smile to acknowledge the client.

### Reception Room Appeal

A bright, cheerful, and pleasantly decorated office usually makes a favorable impression on the client. If the room appears to have a warm and friendly atmosphere, the client will relax. Design of the reception room for the client's comfort is discussed in Chapter 6.

The reception room should have a good selection of reading material that is current and appeals to a wide variety of interests. Health-related magazines, cookbooks, and recipe



### BOX 3-2 Tips for Professional Etiquette in the Massage Office

- Use correct grammar; pronounce words correctly; expand your vocabulary.
- Explain technical terms in understandable language without being demeaning.
- Make clients feel important; discuss issues of interest to them.
- Perform proper introductions of the client and staff members.
- Introduce yourself to a new client; shake hands heartily to extend a warm welcome.
- If a client is engaged in a conversation with another person, avoid standing within hearing range. If you wish to talk to one of them, leave the area and return later.
- Don't eat or drink in front of clients.
- Say "Thank you" when a client is helpful, has cooperated during treatment, or has complimented you.
- Send thank-you notes for referrals or other thoughtful acts.
- Respect the client's privacy.
- If the telephone rings while you are talking to a client, excuse yourself to answer it. If a lengthy conversation is expected, ask the caller if you can return the call, then complete the business with the client.

cards for jotting down information that clients find interesting and helpful (Fig. 3-8).

Avoid dirty carpets, frayed furniture, and unsightly plants. Children's books and quiet games and toys should be available if children are part of the massage practice. An area designated as a children's play area is helpful. If background music is played in the office, be sure to select music that has a soothing effect rather than loud rock or heavy concert music. A drinking fountain or water cooler with paper cups should be available for clients while they wait and after their appointments.

One of the responsibilities of the receptionist is to keep clients informed about delays or to indicate what the waiting time will be. Unexpected delays or emergencies should be explained honestly, and the client should be contacted if possible about the length of wait time.

### The Greeting Process for On-Site Massage

If your massage business is based on going to a client's home or business location, you still need to attend to the concept of the reception room. You need to announce your presence by knocking, ringing a doorbell, or talking with the client's business receptionist. You then enter the area in an unobtrusive manner. The area you set up for massage needs to be pleasant. When the client is ready for massage, the initial greeting needs to be professional. This is more difficult in the relaxed atmosphere of a client's home. You may be the one waiting because the client is more likely to be delayed by a family or business concern. Always carry with you a book

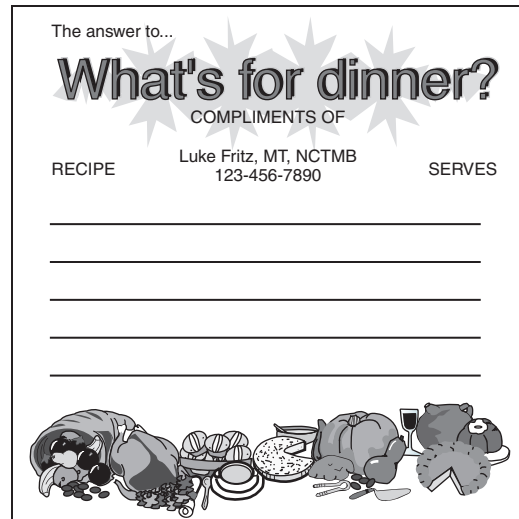


FIGURE 3-8. A recipe card is available in the reception room for copying information from magazines. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)

or magazine related to massage therapy to read so that your wait time is productive.

## CLIENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES BROCHURE

### Purpose

The client policy and procedures brochure is the key to establishing an understanding between the client and the massage therapist and staff. The brochure should be a written statement of the philosophy and policies, defining the responsibilities of the client and those of the massage staff. It is given to a new client at the first visit and serves as an informational device and a good public relations tool.

A new practitioner often neglects to establish a client policy and procedures document, only to be confronted with misunderstandings with clients at a later date. The client policy and procedures brochure should be implemented when the business is first opened and should be revised as the practice grows and changes. However, the policy can be integrated into an established practice with minimal effort. If you are considering employment as a massage therapist, make sure that the business you are considering working with has reasonable policies and procedures written down and that you are willing and able to be in compliance with them.

### Brochure Contents

Each practice has specific needs, but all brochures should include the following elements (Box 3-3):

*Philosophy:* This is a statement of the massage therapist's attitude toward the practice of massage and, more

**BOX 3-3** Developing a Client Brochure and Policy Statement

A massage professional should cover the following important points in developing a client brochure and policy statement.

**TYPE OF SERVICE**

- Explain the type of work you provide.
- Explain the benefits and limitations of this particular style of massage.
- Specify whether you specialize in working with a particular group, such as elderly people, athletes, or people with specific problems such as headaches or back pain.
- Indicate any situations or conditions with which you do not care to work, such as pregnancy or certain medical conditions.

**TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE**

- If your state requires licensing or if you are nationally certified, provide documentation.
- State how long you have been in practice, what school you attended, whether the school was approved by any state or accrediting body, and how many classroom hours were required for graduation.
- Provide information about continuing education you have pursued.
- Provide information about any additional education; for example, that you are also an athletic trainer.
- Provide the names of any professional organizations of which you are an active member.

**APPOINTMENT POLICIES**

- Specify the length of an average session.
- Inform the client of the days you work, your hours, and whether you do on-site residential or business work.
- Inform the client that the first appointment for intake will be longer than subsequent appointments; also state whether you take emergency appointments and how often you suggest that clients come for massage sessions.
- Be clear about the cancellation policy and your policy for late appointments.
- Explain to the client any change in or restriction on physical activity before or after the session.

**EXPECTATIONS OF CLIENTS AND PRACTITIONERS**

- Explain in detail what happens at the first massage session (i.e., paperwork, medical history, other preliminaries).
- Make sure that clients know they can partly undress or undress down to their underclothes and that they are always covered and draped during the session.
- Explain the order in which you massage (face up or face down to begin), the parts of the body on which you work and in what order, whether you use oils or creams, if a shower is available before or after the massage, and if bathing at home before the massage appointment is expected.
- Make sure the client understands whether talking is appropriate during the session and that you should be informed if anything feels uncomfortable.
- If you have low lighting and music during the session, be sure the client is comfortable with that atmosphere.
- Make sure the client understands when a reaction might be expected, such as tenderness over a trigger point when direct pressure methods are used.
- Tell clients that before the session you will discuss with them the goals for the massage, as well as the proposed styles and methods of massage, and that consent must be given for all massage procedures.
- Inform the client that your profession has a code of ethics and explain your policy on confidentiality.
- Let clients know that if they are uncomfortable in any way, a friend or relative may accompany them.

**FEES**

Make sure your fee structure is clearly defined regarding the following:

- How often you raise your fees
- Whether you have a sliding fee scale
- Whether you take only cash or will accept money orders, checks, or credit cards
- Whether you bill
- Whether you accept insurance
- How often insurance covers your services
- Different fees for variations in the length of a session
- Whether a series of sessions can be bought at a discount

specifically, the moral and ethical obligation to the client. In this section, the massage therapist can make a statement about how the practice is unique and what special features are likely to attract and retain clients.

*Office hours:* Although business hours may occasionally vary, specific hours should be listed for the client's benefit.

*Appointment control:* A statement should be included designating the person who makes appointments. A broken appointment policy should be included in the office policy and should be adhered to consistently.

*Payment policy:* The massage therapist should outline acceptable payment options, and they should be described in detail. The person responsible for implementing the payment options should be identified.

*Hygiene:* The value of hygiene before receiving a massage can be emphasized by statements such as, "Please bathe before the massage appointment."

*Attitude toward children:* The treatment of children must be explained. A parent or guardian must be present during them assage.

*Infection-control policies:* These policies should be explained to assure clients that the latest barrier techniques and preventive concepts are being used for their protection.

*Quality assurance:* This is an explanation of efforts taken to ensure that procedures and techniques used in the office are routinely evaluated to maintain good quality.

*Continuing education:* Clients appreciate knowing that the massage therapist makes efforts to update his or her skills.

*Office data:* The massage therapist's name, address, phone number, fax, and e-mail address should appear on the cover or be easy to find within the policy for the client's convenience.

The style of the brochure should be attractive, well organized, brief, and sized to be easily handled by clients (Fig. 3-9). Many businesses prefer to use a printing service to achieve a professional-looking pamphlet. In Figure 3-10, the policy has been printed on both sides of heavy, 8.5 by 11 inch bond paper that is folded in half. A simpler, less expensive statement printed on business letterhead is shown in Figure 3-11. The business policy and procedures pamphlet

has two primary purposes: it is a practice builder, and it informs the client about office procedures and the massage therapist's philosophy. When it achieves both purposes, the office policy becomes a valuable public relations device.



## LEARNING ACTIVITY

Using the components listed in this chapter, develop a client policy and procedures brochure. Each practice has its own specific needs, but the brochure should include the following elements:

- Philosophy
- Office hours
- Appointment control
- Payment policy
- Hygiene
- Attitude toward children
- Infection-control policies
- Quality assurance
- Continuing education
- Office data

## RECOURSE POLICY

If a client is unhappy or dissatisfied, how do you plan to deal with the situation? Do you offer a refund or a free session, do nothing, or discuss it with the client? You do need to let the client know that if the matter is not handled satisfactorily, complaints can be registered at a professional organization or licensing board.

Some professionals send out client policy and procedures booklets before the scheduled appointment. If this is done, include a personalized cover letter asking the client to read the booklet carefully and stating that you will discuss it with him or her at the first appointment.

The policies you set for your business practice demand serious thought. If you are self-employed, you have discretion about what policies you set and how to enforce them. If you are employed, the employer is responsible for this task.



**FIGURE 3-9.** A client reads the office policy. (Modified from Finkbeiner BL, Finkbeiner CA: Practice Management for the Dental Team, ed 6, St. Louis, 2006, Mosby.)



A place of therapeutic  
comfort, relaxation,  
and serenity



Peaceful ~ Relaxing  
Tranquility

#### All Services Are by Appointment Only

##### Available Hours

Monday–Friday: 10 AM–8:45 PM  
Last message starts at 7:30 PM  
Saturday: 9 AM–5:30 PM  
Last message starts at 4 PM  
Sunday: 10 AM–5 PM  
Last message starts at 3:30 PM

##### Forms of Payment Accepted

Cash, checks, and money orders are accepted. Credit cards are not.

##### Travel to Client

An additional charge for travel to the client depends on the time and distance involved. The minimum additional charge is \$30.00.

##### Contraindications to Massage

Massage or bodywork may not be advised for certain medical conditions, such as a fever, which indicates an infection. If a massage is potentially harmful to a client's condition, the massage therapist has the right to decline to perform the massage.

##### Insurance Claims

I do not handle insurance forms but will provide a receipt for you to submit to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

1. *Appointment cancellation.* A broken appointment that is not caused by an emergency 24 hours before the appointment may result in a cancellation fee of \$25.00.

2. *Hygiene.* Please bathe before the massage appointment.

3. *Children.* A parent or guardian must be present during the massage.

4. *Infection control.* The latest barrier techniques and current preventative concepts are being used for everyone's protection.

5. *Quality assurance.* The office policies and procedures are routinely evaluated to maintain good quality.

6. *Training.* Every year, the minimum of 3 credit hours of education is obtained to stay current on research, trends, and treatment.

#### What to Expect during Your Bodywork or Massage Session

Your massage or bodywork session takes place in a warm, comfortable, quiet room. Soft music usually is played, and you may request a particular style of music, including classical, nature sounds, new age, or jazz.

No two massages are exactly alike. Because the body is always in a state of flux and what you may want to address in one session may not be relevant in another, you may request the massage therapist use a certain technique or modality. Most massage and bodywork sessions are traditionally performed with the client unclothed, with underwear left on. However, you may decide what amount of clothing you prefer to wear for your own comfort. The massage practitioner leaves the room so you can undress in privacy and then lie underneath the top draping material. You will remain properly draped during the massage session, which is performed with you underneath a set of sheets and perhaps a blanket for extra warmth. A typical full-body session includes work on your back, arms, legs, head, neck, and shoulders. The buttock area is massaged in relation to the back and legs unless you request differently. You are not touched

#### YOUR MASSAGE SESSION



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inappropriately—on or near your genitals (male or female) or breasts (female). A light oil or massage cream (with or without aroma therapy essential oils) may be used to permit muscles to be worked on without causing excessive friction on the skin. In a general full-body massage, the session may start with broad, flowing strokes that help to calm the nervous system and relax exterior muscle tension. As your body becomes relaxed, pressure may gradually be increased to relax specific areas and to relieve muscular tension. You should communicate with the therapist immediately if you feel any discomfort or pain. Therapy sessions are 35, 70, or 90 minutes long. Many people prefer the longer sessions for optimal relaxation. Always allow relaxation time before and after the massage session. After a massage, most people feel very relaxed, and some experience freedom from long-term aches and pains caused by tension or repetitive activity. An initial period of feeling slowed down is often replaced by an experience of increased energy, heightened awareness, and greater productivity, which can last for days.

FIGURE 3-10. Example of a brochure explaining the massage therapy office policy. (Modified from *Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals*.) © Brochure templates for your use are located on the Evolve Web site at <http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business>.

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 2050 Leisure Lane, Lapeer, MI 48446  
 (123) 456-7890 / leisurelymassage@hec.com

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**All Services Are by Appointment Only**

**Available Hours**

Monday–Friday: 10 AM–8:45 PM	Last message starts at 7:30 PM
Saturday: 9 AM–5:30 PM	Last message starts at 4 PM
Sunday: 10 AM–5 PM	Last message starts at 3:30 PM

**Forms of Payment Accepted**  
 Cash, checks, and money orders are accepted. Credit cards are not.

**Travel to Client**  
 An additional charge for travel to the client depends on the time and distance involved. The minimum additional charge is \$30.00.

**Contraindications to Massage**  
 Massage or bodywork may not be advised for certain medical conditions, such as a fever, which indicates an infection. If a massage is potentially harmful to a client's condition, the massage therapist has the right to decline to perform the massage.

**Insurance Claims**  
 I do not handle insurance forms but will provide a receipt for you to submit to your insurance company for possible reimbursement.

**What to Expect during Your Bodywork or Massage Session**  
 Your massage or bodywork session takes place in a warm, comfortable, quiet room. Soft music usually is played, and you may request a particular style of music, including classical, nature sounds, new age, or jazz.

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A typical full-body session includes work on your back, arms, legs, head, neck, and shoulders. The buttock area is massaged in relation to the back and legs unless you request differently. You are not touched inappropriately—on or near your genitals (male or female) or breasts (female). A light oil or massage cream (with or without aroma therapy essential oils) may be used to permit muscles to be worked on without causing excessive friction on the skin.

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FIGURE 3-11. Massage therapy office policy example: simple piece of paper. (Modified from *Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals*.) © Templates for brochures are located on the Evolve Web site at <http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business>.



You need to be informed about the policies and procedures of the employer to be able to explain them to clients. One criterion for a good employment fit is whether you agree with the office's policies and procedures and are willing to support their enforcement. If the policies are similar to those that you would set for yourself, it is an indication that you will be comfortable in the environment. However, if you have a disagreement about how clients are cared for, it will be difficult for you to be comfortable and, therefore, to be a productive member of the team.

## SUMMARY

The importance of meeting clients' needs can be understood in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Rogers' client-centered therapy. Not all communication is verbal. Nonverbal communication is often a more accurate projection of feelings, but it is important to not assume the meaning of body language. The rights of clients permeate many aspects of professional behavior, such as respect, confidentiality, quality care, and accommodation for those with special needs.



## Good Stuff from the Government

### SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION: CUSTOMER SERVICE IS AN IMPERATIVE

The Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you—may seem self-evident in the way we try to conduct our personal lives. However, this axiom is assuming new importance as a guiding principle in the world of business. The climate of the recession-ridden early 1980s, when customers blithely traded away high-quality service in exchange for price reductions or convenience, no longer exists. Customers are again demanding service. Companies of all sizes realize that their strongest selling point can boil down to treating customers as they would like to be treated or better. "Consumers are beginning to feel that their needs haven't been met," explains Bonnie Jansen of the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs. "They're sick of getting poor service all the time."

The message is getting through. According to John Goodman, president of the Technical Assistance Research Programs Institute (TARP), "In the past few years, companies began to realize that service was really a competitive factor, and they began to view it as an integral part of their product."

The growing significance of meeting or exceeding customer demands for quality service has special implications for small businesses. In this arena, small companies can in the least expensive way set themselves apart from the competition.

A 3-year study by the National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) in Washington, DC, showed that small businesses that strongly emphasized customer service were more likely to survive and succeed than competitors who emphasized advantages such as lower prices or type of product.

#### GOLDEN RULE 1: PUT THE CUSTOMER FIRST

"A strong customer ethic must guide your business from the inception," writes author and business owner Paul Hawken in his book *Growing a Business*. "No matter whether you manufacture, grow, produce, distribute, or sell, you are 'in service.'"

Quality customer service begins with your employees. An owner of a successful chain of hair salons advises that the first step is to set standards and then ensure that everyone in the company understands them. He recommends rewarding employees for achieving your service goals. Be sure to seek and solve any annoyances employees have that may lead to poor

morale. An employee with a complaint cannot be completely effective in dealing with customers. Hawken says, "If you take care of your employees, they will take care of your customers." However, he also warns that if your employees are not customer oriented, no standards or goals can change the situation: "We concentrate on hiring people who embody the quality of service for which we strive. It is difficult to teach someone to be helpful and serve others if he or she is misanthropic to begin with."

Hiring the best people means trusting them. Your employees should be able to do what is necessary to make the customer happy without fear of reprisal. Hawken says, "Policies and procedures are helpful only as guides toward an end result. When employees run out of possibilities to make the customer happy, they must have the latitude to improvise to make it right. Most employees operate in a state of fear that their own generosity with a customer will be viewed as foolishness by their boss. This situation will stifle flexible customer service."

#### GOLDEN RULE 2: STAY CLOSE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS

In the smartest companies, asking questions and listening carefully to the answers is an important part of customer service. These firms train their employees to focus on what the customer is saying and then tailor products or services to meet customers' needs. Says one corporate executive whose words also hold true for smaller firms, "Knowing what's on the customer's mind is the smartest thing we can do."

It is also cheaper than attracting new customers. According to the Customer Service Institute, 65% of a company's business comes from existing customers, and it costs five times as much to attract a new customer than to keep an existing one satisfied.

Losing a customer is even more expensive. According to studies by the TARP, 91% of unhappy customers will never again buy from a company that has displeased them; they will also voice their dissatisfaction to at least seven other people.

The responsibility to be receptive does not lie solely with your employees. If you want your business to be successful, you must listen to and talk with customers. There is no substitute for getting out and learning from the customers themselves how you may serve them better. The best business owners are committed to staying close to their clientele, and they identify with them. Owners give their customers the



## Good Stuff from the Government—cont'd

level of service the owners would expect to receive. A good relationship with customers necessitates paying attention to every link in the distribution chain; this means listening to everyone who helps get your products to market and asking them for suggestions on improving your service. Be sure to take advantage of feedback from employees, especially those whose everyday job is dealing with customers. They can serve as tremendous reservoirs of information.

“Our goal as a company is to create customer service that is not just the best, but legendary,” Paul Hawken asserts. “‘Legendary’ gives everyone who deals with customers a rich sense of the possibilities.”

### **GOLDEN RULE 3: PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS**

Many owners search for a special touch that will make them stand out from the crowd. Discount coupons, longer hours, home delivery, or free coffee, for example, show customers you want to take that extra step to please them.

Some of the most effective extras are really basic ages of conducting good business, although customers are often surprised when they take place. These actions include answering the phone by the third ring, treating customers respectfully and courteously at all times, greeting them by name, promptly answering their questions (and if you cannot, getting back to them with an answer as quickly as possible), and manufacturing high-quality goods that work the first time and keep working.

### **FIVE RULES OF CUSTOMER CARE**

Essential to keeping customers happy is understanding the way they think. For example, customers do business on the basis of emotional desire—they want what they want when they want it. Customers also tend to gravitate toward a company or group of people they like. Most customers have a strong tendency to stick with businesses with which they are familiar, and they are slow to change buying habits unless given a good reason. However, when they are displeased, even by a small disappointment

or discourteous word, various surveys have revealed that customers tell 7 to 11 people about their dissatisfaction.

An important key to serving customers well is this: do not try to change them. Here are five specific steps to help you take full advantage of the critical element of customer care:

1. Conduct your own survey. Profit from the ideas, suggestions, and complaints of your present and former customers. Meet and talk with your customers. Ask questions. Learn their attitudes, what they want, and what they dislike.
2. Check employees' telephone manners periodically. This is particularly important for small businesses, because bad telephone handling can undermine other constructive efforts to build a profitable enterprise.
3. Rules such as prompt answering and a cheerful attitude of helpfulness are essential. Have someone whose voice is unfamiliar play the role of a customer or prospective customer, preferably a difficult one.
4. Make customer service a team effort. Use group meetings, memos, posters, and in-house publications to build customer consciousness throughout the organization. Continually drive home the crucial rule that getting and holding customers requires team play, and invite employees' ideas.
5. Extend your efforts after hours. It is the friendly feelings people have that drew them to you and your business. Take advantage of the relaxed atmosphere of social occasions or a neighborly chat over the back fence to turn friends into customers or to reinforce the loyalty of existing ones.

Customer service is enjoying a resurgence, and no business can afford to take customers for granted. To succeed, you must give your customers what they want, not what you think they want. That means providing courteous, friendly service to your customers, your suppliers, and others with whom you come in contact. If you want to keep customers coming back for more, practicing the Golden Rule in all domains of business makes sense.

From The U.S. Small Business Administration, available at <http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/manage/marketandprice/>.

The client's perception of the business may be based on the appearance of the massage facility and the demeanor of the welcoming staff. Clients also have obligations, which should be carefully outlined in the policy and procedures brochure provided to the client. Clients are the most important persons in the massage business operation, and when satisfied, they are your best form of marketing. The good stuff from the government allows you to view interviews with successful business people to learn how to develop your massage therapy business.

## **Bibliography**

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### **Evolve Annotated Web Links**

<http://evolve.elsevier.com/Fritz/business>

Small Business Association: <http://www.sba.gov/tools/audiovideo/deliveringsuccess/index.html>

American Massage Therapy Association: [www.amtamassage.org](http://www.amtamassage.org)  
Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals: [www.abmp.org](http://www.abmp.org)

**Workbook**

1. Identify a ndgi veexa mplesofba rriersi nc ommunication.

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2. Describe the duties of a receptionist in communicating with clients and putting them at ease.

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3. Explain Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Carl Rogers' client-centered therapy as they relate to therapeutic massage.

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4. List five rights of the client that should be considered during a treatment procedure.

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5. Observe nonverbal behavior. During your daily activities, become aware of nonverbal cues given to you. What types of facial expressions, hand movements, and torso movements do you notice? Do they affect your behavior?

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6. List the preconceptions that a client may have about a massage practice and any associated staff.

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7. List attitudes that a massage therapist may have about a client. Are there similarities or differences in the perceptions of each of these people?

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