



Code of Ethics

Amended January 1, 2022

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Massage Therapist Association of Alberta

Code of Ethics

Preface Statements

A Code of Ethics is a set of statements which express the primary ethical values, obligations and goals of the members of an organization. The MTAA Code of Ethics gives definition to our commitment as association members in ethical terms. It lays out the MTAA's values and explains them in terms of how members are responsible for conducting themselves in order to promote positive outcomes and prevent harm in the practice of massage therapy.

As practitioners, we have a commitment to our clients, our colleagues, society, and to ourselves to accept the responsibility and maintain the trust with which we have been invested. A therapeutic relationship refers to the relationship between a healthcare professional and a client. Interactions are positive and boundaried, and focus remains on the client. It is the responsibility of the MTAA member to establish and maintain the therapeutic relationship, respecting the client's vulnerability.

Accountability

Massage therapists who are members of the MTAA are expected to maintain a commitment to the values expressed in this Code of Ethics by applying the ethical principles to all areas of their massage therapy practice. By integrating these principles into daily practice, MTAA members conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, and fairness in all professional relationships, and maintain good standing with the association. MTAA members are accountable for abiding by this Code of Ethics and for assuming responsibility for all actions and non-actions taken in relation to their massage therapy practice.

Principles Which Guide the Practice of MTAA Members

Principle I - Respect for Autonomy

Principle II - Intent to Benefit

Principle III - Do No Harm

Principle IV - Equal Treatment



Principle I - Respect For Autonomy

Meaning:

To value clients' inherent right to make their own decisions regarding their healthcare. Clients are respected as self-governing decision makers in seeking and receiving massage therapy services.

Application:

Respect for client autonomy is demonstrated by:

- a) Practicing a client-centred approach, recognizing that the client's wishes take priority in the planning and implementation of their care.
- b) Providing complete and accurate information in a sensitive and timely manner to enable clients, or when necessary a client's substitute decision maker, to make informed choices.
- c) Recognizing that clients have ethical and legal rights to make decisions regarding their healthcare.
- d) Acknowledging and respecting the capability of a mature minor to provide informed consent.
- e) Listening to and respecting a client's values, opinions, needs, and cultural beliefs.
- f) Encouraging and being responsive to a client's choice to accept, augment, modify, refuse or terminate treatment at any time.

Principle II – Intent to Benefit

Meaning:

To provide care with the clear intention of benefiting the client and promoting a positive outcome in all massage therapy practices.

Application:

Maintaining an intent to benefit is demonstrated by:

- a) Establishing and maintaining the therapeutic relationship in the best interest of the client.
- b) Seeking assistance when conflicts arise in professional relationships.
- c) Recognizing and referring the client to other health care providers when it is in the client's best interest to do so.
- d) Collaborating with other health care providers to facilitate optimal outcomes.
- e) Approaching and co-operating with substitute decision makers in assessing the client's wishes and best interests as necessary.
- f) Protecting the client's physical and emotional privacy, inquiring about and collecting only that information which is relevant.
- g) Acknowledging and respecting client confidentiality, safeguarding all personal and health information unless otherwise required by law.
- h) Striving for professional excellence through regular reflection and self-assessment as well as continued professional development.



Principle III – Do No Harm

Meaning:

To avoid causing any harm and to proactively prevent harm from occurring whenever possible by considering all potential negative consequences.

Application:

Avoiding and preventing harm is demonstrated by:

- a) Being competent, conscientious and empathetic.
- b) Representing ourselves honestly to clients, colleagues, and the public.
- c) Integrating the values and principles of this Code of Ethics in our daily practice.
- d) Practicing only within our Scope of Practice and applying only those modalities which we are qualified to perform.
- e) Ensuring that all equipment is in safe working condition.
- f) Being aware of and accounting for any relevant precautions and/or contraindications.
- g) Upholding the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship, never engaging in sexual behaviours or harassment of any kind.
- h) Recognizing and responding appropriately to situations where the safety and well-being of a client is in jeopardy.
- i) Reporting to appropriate authorities if we believe that a child's circumstance requires intervention.

Principle IV – Equal Treatment

Meaning:

To value the dignity and worth of all persons regardless of age, race, culture, sexual identity, gender, ability, and/or health status, and to treat all clients fairly, impartially and equitably.

Application:

Equal treatment is demonstrated by:

- a) Ensuring that all persons' basic rights are upheld at all times.
- b) Being committed to promoting the welfare and well-being of all persons.
- c) Respecting the integrity of all persons by honoring their verbal, physical, sexual, and financial boundaries.
- d) Making every reasonable effort to ascertain that our practice environment will permit provision of care regardless of any client limitations.
- e) Providing a consistently high quality of care regardless of individual client circumstances.
- f) Effectively managing any dual relationships or conflicts of interest in order to provide impartial treatment.
- g) Being aware of our personal values, beliefs and assumptions and recognizing then responding appropriately if these interfere with our ability to provide equal treatment.
- h) Continuing to serve clients in the therapeutic relationship to our best ability unless one of the following conditions applies:
 - i. The client threatens or endangers the massage therapist;
 - ii. The client sexualizes or attempts to sexualize the treatment or environment;
 - iii. Massage therapy is no longer indicated or wanted; or
 - iv. Another healthcare professional has assumed responsibility of care.

Ethical Decision-Making Framework

