



# Guidelines for Professional Boundaries

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## Massage Therapist Association of Alberta Guidelines for Professional Boundaries

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The professional touch of the massage therapist could be misinterpreted. A practicing MTAA member is required to create and maintain a safe and comfortable environment, inclusive of trust and mutual respect.

The following guidelines define the boundaries of the professional client-practitioner relationship and specify appropriate verbal and physical interaction to maintain those boundaries.

#### ***The Professional Massage Practitioner:***

1. Will in no way allow or encourage any kind of sexual activity in their professional setting, be respectful of the therapeutic relationship and maintain appropriate boundaries.
2. Will at any time during the professional relationship, *never* have sexual contact of any kind with a client before, during, or after a massage session, or.
3. Will terminate the professional relationship prior to engaging in any sexual or romantic behavior. Treatment notes should indicate the discharge date of the professional relationship.
4. Is always responsible and liable for their actions, even if the client initiated the situation.
5. Gives the client clear choice as to their state of dress under drape.
6. Does not flirt with clients verbally or in any way create a flirtatious atmosphere.
7. Uses appropriate clinical terminology when speaking about body parts to the client.
8. Does not make untoward comments about the client's body
9. Does not probe intrusively for information about the client's emotional/sexual history or in any way imply that the client must give such information.
10. Stays within the MTAA scope of practice and training of massage therapy when dealing with sexual issues, (e.g., suspected sexual abuse) and refers client to an appropriate health care practitioner.



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**The following guidelines have been developed to identify what is considered appropriate body contact during a massage session.**

### **The Professional Massage Practitioner:**

1. Never uses the chest, head, face, lips, hair, pelvis or breasts to massage a client.
2. Never uses the face or front of pelvis for bracing or supporting a client.
3. Never works in the nipple area, genitals, or the anus.
4. Never applies any part of their body to the client's genitals.
5. Seeks informed consent from the client to work on the chest around breast tissue, buttocks, front of the hip near genitals, and stomach.

### **The components of informed consent are:**

1. Practitioner informs client about the nature and duration of the proposed techniques (e.g. body part, type of stroke, pressure, etc.)
2. Practitioner gives reasons for the proposed technique.
3. Practitioner and client create and understand a shared objective for the outcome of the treatment.
4. Client is advised of their right to accept or reject the proposed treatment or parts of it, either before, during or after the treatment.

***These guidelines are not all-inclusive, but will be used in the event that Disciplinary action is required.***