

## Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice

### Code of Ethics

#### Preamble

This Code of Ethics is a statement about appropriate and expected standards of professional conduct of AAMT members and as such reflects the values of the Association. This Code describes the professional conduct expected of members to preserve and enhance their professional reputation as well as the general reputation of the massage industry in Australia. Further the Code of Ethics seeks to protect the general public. The Code has been developed to inform and guide the decisions and behaviour of all therapists and others involved in the provision of massage and related services under the provisions of the Association. This Code of Ethics applies to all massage therapists who are members of the Australian Association of Massage Therapists Ltd.

This Code of Ethics is not intended to, and could not possibly provide easy answers, formulae, or prescriptive solutions for the complex professional dilemmas massage therapists face in their work. It does provide a basis

for critical reflection. It also provides some assistance with the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas arising in the workplace.

The Board of Directors of AAMT reserves the right to amend the Code of Ethics, as and when it is deemed necessary.

#### Adherence to this Code involves a commitment to 5 principles

- The primary factor in all treatment decisions is the client/patient's well-being.
- Maintain Client/Patient/Therapist confidentiality
- Treat the client/patient according to competent application of accepted techniques and principles.
- Maintain a commitment to the development of the industry/profession.
- Maintain a supportive professional attitude to our colleagues and the industry.

#### 1. Statements to the 5 principles

- Treatment decisions should be consensual between the therapist and client and the therapist should provide explanation to the client/patient in any changes of methods of treatment used.
- Confidentiality is to be maintained between client/patient and therapist. Clinical information shall be stored in a confidential manner and communication, unless otherwise specified, between therapist and client shall remain confidential.
- Members will conduct their practice in an accepted professional manner as set out in the Standards of Practice.
- Members will not wilfully misrepresent their qualifications, training or experience.
- Members are required to uphold the law and the rules, regulations and values of the AAMT. If a member has breached these rules and regulations, they may be brought before an ethics committee and/or may have their membership revoked.

## Code of Ethics continued

### 2. Propriety

- 2.1 Confidentiality of client information must be observed. Consent must precede information disclosure.
- 2.2 Members will honour the clients' right to personal privacy and modesty.
- 2.3 Members will maintain professional ethical standards and comply with generally accepted standards of professional behaviour.
- 2.4 Members will maintain fair and reasonable business principles for clients.
- 2.5 Members will avoid any interest or activity which might put him or her in conflict or potential conflict with their obligation to act in the best interests of the client at all times.

### 3. Competence

- 3.1 Members will demonstrate competent therapeutic decision making and treatments, within the scope of practice and will not misrepresent their qualifications, training or experience.
- 3.2 No member shall perform any work or action that contravenes any Australian Federal or State Legislation.

### 4. Responsibility

- 4.1 Members are personally responsible for their professional decisions.
- 4.2 Members must give due consideration to the foreseeable consequences of their actions.
- 4.3 Members should have a working knowledge of and practice within the relevant principles of laws and policies that relate to their work.
- 4.4 Support the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the practice of massage.

- 4.5 When working with or for other persons or organisations, members shall maintain the highest integrity and standard of the profession.

### 5. Therapist – Relationship

- 5.1 Australian Association of Massage Therapists' members are required to keep adequate and relevant client records in line with Clause 2.4.
- 5.2 Clinical, consulting and evaluative information must be kept confidential and communicated only for professional purposes to persons legitimately involved in the client/patient's case with client consent.
- 5.3 Records must be stored and, where necessary, disposed of in a confidential manner and kept/archived in accordance with Federal and State/Territory Legislation.
- 5.4 Where clients/patients are unable to give informed consent, due to age, psychological state, medical condition etc. consent must be obtained from the legal guardian.
- 5.5 When treating minors (under 16 years of age) they must be accompanied for treatment by a parent/guardian and have written permission for such treatment.
- 5.6 A member shall not engage in sexual misconduct or conduct or practices of a sexual nature or offer services that are sexual in nature with a client/patient.
- 5.7 A member should not exploit the position of power of a therapist over a client.
- 5.8 If a member and consenting client wish to conduct an intimate relationship, that client should be referred to another member for treatment.

- 5.9 Advance financial arrangements should be made and be understood by clients to safeguard their interests.

- 5.10 Unless a client/patient chooses to consult a member privately, a member shall not receive private remuneration for professional services to persons who are entitled to the member's services through an institution or agency.

- 5.11 Members may not receive remunerations for referring client(s) to other professionals for services.

### 6. Professional Conduct

- 6.1 Members will adhere to the Constitution, Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the Australian Association of Massage Therapists.
- 6.2 Members will not publicly criticise other members' in a manner that casts doubt on their professionalism and competence.
- 6.3 Members shall co-operate in any inquiry instituted by the AAMT over Code of Ethics breaches or any other issue.

### 7. Professional Development

- 7.1 Members must undertake continued Professional Massage Education on a regular basis. Required points are set by Board of Directors.
- 7.2 Members must maintain Public Liability and Indemnity Insurance.
- 7.3 Members must maintain currency at an appropriate level of First Aid Certificate and CPR as determined by the Board of Directors.

## Code of Ethics continued

### 8. Employer/Employee Relationships

- 8.1 All Australian Association of Massage Therapists members will ensure that any person in their employ:
- 8.1.1 Is adequately and appropriately trained/qualified to perform the work required of them.
  - 8.1.2 Is adequately covered by Professional Indemnity Insurance.
  - 8.1.3 Is not subject to harassment, including sexual harassment by the employer, other employees or clients.
  - 8.1.4 Is employed under such conditions as dictated by Australian Legislation.
  - 8.1.5 Abides by the AAMT's Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice where the primary operator is a member of AAMT.
- 8.2 The employee will not attempt to solicit the custom of any client of the employer.
- 8.3 If a client expresses the wish to transfer custom from the employer's clinic to the private practice of the employee, the employee/employer must observe transition of business principles.
- 8.4 The employer must ensure that there is no fraudulent use of health fund provider numbers.

### 9. Consulting Premises

Members of the Australian Association of Massage Therapists will ensure that professional premises:

- 9.1 Should display, or provide on request, member qualifications certificates, and the Australian Association of Massage Therapists Membership Certificate.

- 9.2 Have their fee structure, cancellation policies/penalties and other relevant conditions clearly displayed.

- 9.3 Must comply with Occupational Health & Safety Laws and Local Council By Laws in relation to hygienically maintaining bathroom and toilet and facilities.

### 10. Advertising

- 10.1 When advertising or making public statements AAMT members must:
- 10.1.1 Not make statements on behalf of AAMT and ensure that public statements are personal endorsements only.
  - 10.1.2 Register to use and comply with Association rules when using the Association's Logo.
- 10.2 AAMT members must:
- 10.3.1 Not falsely imply sponsorship or verification by any organisation.
  - 10.3.2 Ensure that advertisements or statements seeking research participants, clearly state the purpose and nature of the study and any costs and obligations accepted by the participants.
  - 10.3.3 Ensure that advertising complies with Australian Laws relating to misleading or deceptive conduct and other unfair practices such as discrimination.

## Standards of Practice

### Preamble

This Standards of Practice is a statement about appropriate and expected standards of professional conduct of AAMT members and as such reflects the values of the Association. This Standard describes the professional conduct expected of members to preserve and enhance their professional reputation as well as the general reputation of the massage industry in Australia. Further the Standard seeks to protect the general public. The Standard has been developed to inform and guide the decisions and behaviour of all therapists and others involved in the provision of massage and related services under the provisions of the Association. This Standard of Practice applies to massage therapists who are members of the Australian Association of Massage Therapists Ltd.

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### Standards of Practice

These Standards of Practice were developed from core values of the AAMT and are aimed at assisting the professional massage therapists to evaluate and adapt performance in their practice.

#### *In reference to Clients I commit to:-*

- Maintain strict confidentiality, privacy and accurate records
- Honour the client's right to personal privacy and modesty.
- Create and maintain a safe and healthy environment for practice.
- Engage in practices that are respectful of clients and not degrade, endanger, exploit or harm them.
- Not exploit my position of power/professional relationship with a client as a massage therapist

- Not engage in sexual misconduct or conduct or practices of a sexual nature or offer services that are sexual in nature to clients.
- Maintain fair and reasonable business principles when dealing with clients.
- Avoid any interest or activity which might be in conflict or potential conflict with my obligation to act in the best interests of the client at all times.

#### *In reference to Colleagues I commit to:-*

- Work with my colleagues to improve the standard of massage.
- Support and assist colleagues in their professional development.

#### *In reference to the General Public I commit to:-*

- Provide services that are responsive to community needs and refer if necessary.
- Promote and market services in a truthful, ethical and accurate manner.
- Support the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the practice of massage by working with Government, regulatory bodies and authorities.
- Be compliant with Federal, State/Territory and Local Government laws and policies that relate to massage.

#### *In reference to myself as a Professional I commit to:-*

- Update and improve my expertise and practice continually through formal and informal professional development.
- Work within the limits of my professional role, and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
- Be an advocate for my profession and behave in a manner that will enhance the good name and well being of the profession.
- Comply with applicable Federal and State/Territory legislation.
- Act in the community in ways that enhance the standing of the profession
- Abide by the rules of the AAMT.

A breach of the Standards of Practice may mean that the therapist has a case that is

brought before the ethics committee or has his or her membership revoked.

### Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Misconduct may include many different behaviours with a client. This includes, but is not limited to, sexually demeaning behaviour including any verbal or physical contact which may reasonably be interpreted as demeaning, humiliating, embarrassing, threatening or harming.

### Practices which may assist massage therapists in the prevention of sexual misconduct

Massage Therapists should:

- Provide clear, direct information regarding the extent of massage therapy treatment.
- Refrain from any behaviour that sexualizes, or appears to sexualize, the client/therapist relationship.
- Refrain from participating in a sexual relationship or any conduct of a sexual nature with a client, whether consensual or otherwise, from the beginning of the client/therapist relationship.
- In the event that the client initiates sexual behaviour, clarify the purpose of the treatment and, if such conduct does not cease, terminate or refuse treatment.
- Recognise that sexual activity with a client, student, employee, supervisor, or trainee is prohibited even if consensual.
- Refer the client to another massage therapist if an intimate relationship with a consenting client is proposed or commences.
- Not touch the client's genitalia.
- Not touch the breast area unless required for legitimate treatment purposes and only after receiving informed voluntary consent.
- Responding more definitely to inappropriate client behaviour
- Refer to the AAMT Guide for the Prevention and Management of Sexual Misconduct