



# Association of Biodynamic Massage Therapists

## CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

### Introduction

It is obligatory for any member of ABMT to follow this code of conduct.

As a set of statements explicitly aimed at establishing and maintaining an acceptable standard of practice and behavior from ABMT members, they have been devised in the best interest of clients, the general public and fellow members of the association. For practitioners it provides a supportive framework for professional conduct, as well as a means for discussing ethical issues and clearly identifying unethical behavior.

This code is not intended to replace codes of ethical and professional conduct for psychotherapists who utilise their biodynamic massage training in their work with clients and groups. It has been specifically developed for ABMT members who have successfully completed the foundation course to certificate level in biodynamic massage therapy and are offering this therapy to clients. Practitioners are reminded that they are also subject to behavior that does not breach Common and Criminal law in the UK (and European laws if applicable).

### 1. Duties to Clients

- 1.1 The practitioner has a primary duty to practice her/his skills to the best of her/his ability for the benefit of the client. This requires the practitioner to be honest in any written or verbal communication with clients and the general public about her/his competence to practice, boundaries of the therapy and level of training. If any advice or treatment is offered that falls outside the practice of BMT this should be made clear. The practitioner should also make it explicit in what capacity this is being offered e.g. as an aromatherapist or reflexologist. Where the therapist feels that the client's need would be better served elsewhere e.g. with a psychotherapist, or an osteopath, he/she should make a referral.
- 1.2 Practitioners must take into account the values, customs and spiritual beliefs of clients and must not discriminate on the basis of gender, sexual preference, race, colour, age, HIV antibody status, ethnicity, political or religious belief, class or societal status.
- 1.3 A contract between practitioner and a client for BMT involves clear non-ambiguous information about fees, appointment details, cancellation policy, data protection and GDPR compliance policy, method of payment, aspirations and intentions, methods and level of treatment, likely duration and process for finishing the contract.



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Ongoing consent is integral for the practice of BMT, a client must be free and able to stop, refuse or seek further information and explanation prior to and during any therapeutic activity or method. Any change in the agreed contract - such as a shift from massage to a psychotherapy contract - must be renegotiated and would need to be consistent with the client's goals and expectations at the time of this review.

1.4 A practitioner has an implicit duty to maintain a client's confidentiality. Information can only be given to a third party after due discussion and with the client's consent. Identifiable biographical details, e.g. name and address, must not be revealed at supervision meetings, which must also be bounded by the rule of confidentiality. Clients' records must be treated with the same respect, and practitioners must adhere to GDPR guidelines for the storage of personal data. They should be in a form that can be read by the client on request. Exceptions to the confidentiality principle are confined to:

- Disclosures required by due process of the law such as an order of the court or by statutory instrument.
- Clients who become a danger to themselves or society.
- In the case of a therapist's sudden death or incapacitation, a therapist's 'clinical will' would become activated. In these instances, a designated person - possibly a supervisor or fellow therapist - should have secure access to a coded list of the therapist's current clients, complete with contact details, so that clients can be informed of what has happened. As part of the clinical will, therapists and will executors should agree the protocol for broaching the subject with the client, and what the executor is willing to offer, if anything, in terms of support (a phone call, a face-to-face meeting etc). All ABMT therapists are required to have a clinical will in place.

The client should ideally be informed of this possibility first, and the practitioner should seek the guidance of a solicitor if required to breach confidentiality by law.

1.5 The practitioner uses her/his position to best empower the client in their further growth and autonomy. S/he will not use it for personal enhancement or to exploit the client financially, emotionally or practically. The practitioner does not enter into flirtatious, seductive or sexual relationships with a client. If a high sexual charge occurs within a session, this should be contained, clarity sought through clinical supervision and, if necessary, termination of the therapeutic contract considered.

1.6 All members are required to be in ongoing clinical supervision. Please refer to our supervision policy for further information.



# Association of Biodynamic Massage Therapists

## **2. Presentation of Self, Premises and Equipment**

- 2.1 A practitioner must ensure that her/his health and personal hygiene do not compromise her/his practice. A waterproof dressing must cover cuts and abrasions. Personal attire should be clean, well maintained and suitable for professional practice. Whilst in session with a client the practitioner must not eat, drink or smoke. Practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance likely to affect judgement is not compatible with ethical conduct. Nails should be kept short and clean, and hands must be washed and thoroughly dried before and after doing any form of massage or touch therapy. Any items of jewelry worn must be removed if they might conceivably injure a client.
- 2.2 The therapy room used to see clients must take into account privacy, safety, cleanliness, adequate lighting, ventilation, warmth and quietness. Ideally the room should be only used for therapy sessions with no access for other persons when in use. Any stairways should be kept clean, clear and well lit. Local and national by-laws and fire regulations must be adhered to at all times.
- 2.3 Hand washing facilities with a hot and cold water supply should be easily accessible for both practitioner and client. A toilet connected to public drainage system and working should be available. Their facilities must be clean and tidy, with toilet paper, soap and hand towels available for client usage.
- 2.4 All electrical equipment must be kept in good repair and serviced regularly. All massage couches must be of a sound construction, clean and in good working order. Blankets, pillows and cushions should be cleaned regularly and be in good condition. Paper roll and tissues disposed of appropriately.

## **3. Professional Relationships with Colleagues, the General Public and Other Professionals**

- 3.1 A practitioner should direct any criticisms and complaints about fellow colleagues to the association's committee, rather than to the general public or individual clients either verbally or in writing.



# Association of Biodynamic Massage Therapists

- 3.2 A practitioner must not knowingly enter into a therapeutic relationship with a client whose doctor has clearly stated that BMT would be contraindicated. If the client reveals that s/he is currently receiving medical treatment the practitioner must review the appropriateness of continuing with BMT. If at all unsure, encourage the client to first seek advice from their doctor. Likewise, if a client is seeing a psychotherapist, the massage therapist should stress to the client the importance of gaining the psychotherapist's agreement to the client receiving massage.
- 3.3 If a practitioner suspects that a client is suffering from a medical condition they should never give a medical diagnosis to the client, but they must advise the client to see her/his doctor and record this action.
- 3.4 The practitioner must take care in advertising her/his services in making no claims to cure diseases or problems. It should draw attention in a dignified way to the therapy available, the qualifications of the practitioner and general intention of the work so as not to bring discredit to the profession. Consideration should be made as to an appropriate place to advertise to avoid unwanted nuisance telephone calls.
- 3.5 A member must ensure that her/his professional practice is fully covered by substantial professional indemnity insurance. This is available through the ABMT or can be obtained individually from another source.

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