

# The Learning Company

## Communication & Ethics

### Basic Psychological concepts for Massage Therapy

#### Psychology of Self Esteem and Creating Value

1. Instinct to be integral, to be whole in all aspects of our being and to express this wholeness.
2. Instinct to connect and relate to others. Deep seated need to love and to be loved.
3. Instinct to make a contribution to life. To make a difference and become part of a greater spiritual purpose which provides us with meaning and significance.

Many people live the greatest portion of their lives not liking themselves and not even realizing that this is the case – LACK SELF ESTEEM

Often we feel stuck or have experienced pain in life and wonder why there is not more. French Existentialist Philosopher – Jean Paul Sartre quoted – We experience other people as hell. Other people often hurt us, frustrate us, let us down and reject us. We believe that if only we could change others, change the world, things would be different. But we know in truth as “Life Streams” –creators and facilitators, the world isn’t going to change, so it is up to us to become agents of change in our lives.

What is it about us that needs to be changed?

- the answer is usually how we feel about ourselves.
- We have to believe in ourselves, and value who we really are.
- If and only if we are able to value ourselves can we make a sincere commitment to any given belief or value system.
- If I believe I have no value and I am worthless, where is my incentive to keeping commitments?

Human experience tells us – it is much harder to disappoint someone we like and respect, as opposed to someone we merely tolerate or dislike.

If you value yourself, you have a fundamental investment in living up to your value system.

*I don't want to let me down. I count with me.*

With this step in place I can begin to behave ethically from a sincere foundation of commitment and responsibility.

*I stand for me – my values stand for me – commitments I make stand for me.*

It's important to try and internalize value as opposed to paying lip service to it and support laws and regulations, because you sincerely understand and believe in their value (CMTO), as opposed to fearing the consequences for failure to do so (punishment and retribution.)

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***ETHICS is really about VALUE and VALUE begins with SELF!***  
***FORMULA FOR INTEGRITY***

**Self Esteem + Commitment + Responsibility = Value**

### **POSITIVE SELF – TALK**

Everyone has inner conversations, that little voice that chats back and forth, helping to weigh the pros and cons of an issue or decision. Can you believe up to 77% of that talk is negative? You know the talk; *my slip is showing, is my fly open, I have the wrong clothes on for this eve, what I just said sounded so stupid.* No matter the root, cause or reason, that much self-deprecation has a wearing down effect. How do we manage to carry on, all of this is a self-fulfilling prophecy for failure. For every one negative thing we say or have said, it takes four positive statements to overcome this mental flogging. The following exercise helps to balance the talk and maintain self-esteem.

Healthy people take care of themselves. The more you manage your inner self, the more you enjoy life and those around you.

Take a minute, think of an issue in your life, and ask yourself.

- Is there a better way now to take care of me?
- Is there a better way now to involve the other person?
- Is there a better way now to take care of both of us?

Identify ways you take care of you on a regular basis.

### **Self expression**

*Each of Us Has Certain Assertive Rights*

Part of becoming assertive requires figuring out and believing that we are valuable and worthwhile people. It's easy to criticize ourselves for our mistakes and imperfections. It's easy to hold our feelings in because we're afraid that we will hurt someone else's feelings or that someone will reject us. Sometimes feelings that are held in too long will burst in an aggressive tirade.

A basic principle for self expression is that each individual is a valuable human being. Everyone, therefore, has certain basic rights. The following may be taken as some of your assertive rights.

*1. You have the right to express your ideas and opinions openly and honestly.*

Even if your opinion is in direct opposition to the majority, when expressed in a professional and respectful manner, it should be taken into consideration. Everyone has the right to be heard without fear of sarcasm, humiliation or condescension

*2. You have the right to be wrong. Everyone makes mistakes.* No one is perfect at what they do 100% of the time. If the mistake is genuinely acknowledged, then others should realize that this was not intentional. In order to balance the picture, however, it is important to note that genuine regret for the mistake includes altering

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attitudes and behaviors so that the error is less likely to occur in the future. Once you have acknowledged your mistake you must forgive YOURSELF as well.

3. *You have the right to direct and govern your own life. In other words, you have the right to be responsible for yourself* Every independent adult has the right to conduct their lives in the way they deem best. This is a tremendous freedom and an immense responsibility. If your convictions move you to act in a certain manner you have the right to do so and to bear the consequences of those actions, either in the positive or negative.

4. *You have the right to stand up for yourself without unwarranted anxiety and make choices that are good for you.* This concept is linked to the first in the list. Your choices and opinions should be heard. Your actions are your right and responsibility, your choices for your life should be for your positive improvement, as you see it.

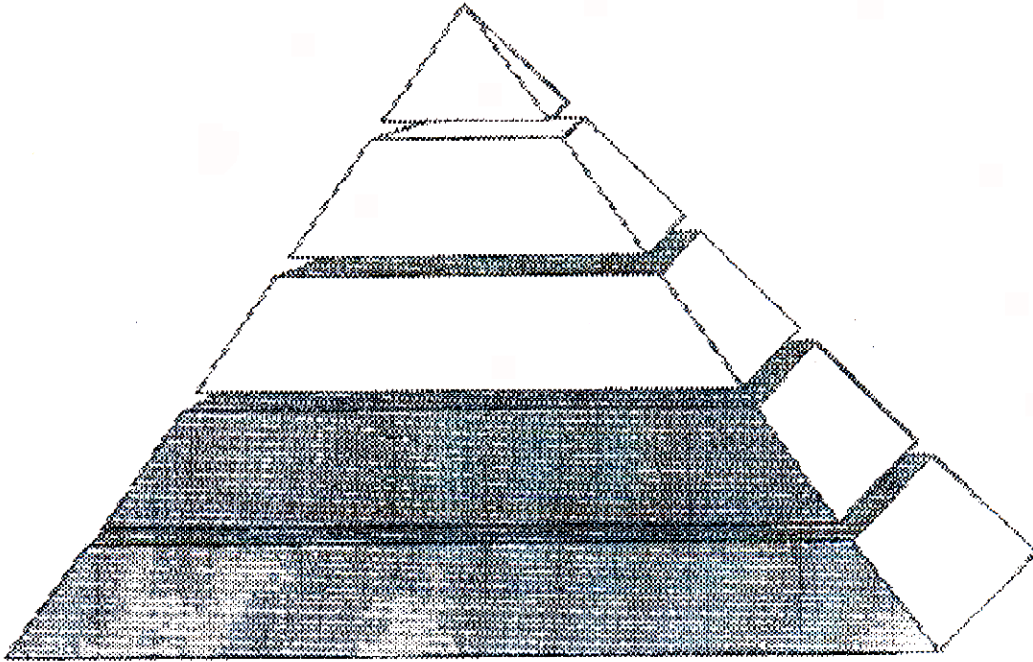
5. *You have the right to make requests or to refuse them without feeling guilty.* Often you will ask for help from people who may be able to assist in your activities. Others will ask the same of you. Each individual has the right to respectfully ask or refuse as a choice that seems good to them. It would be inappropriate to feel guilty for giving an answer contrary to the expected one. Likewise, it would be inappropriate to attempt to make someone else feel guilty for denying your request.

6. *You have the right to ask for information if you need it.* There are certain personal piece of information that you have the legal right to access (eg your credit rating) You also have the right to ask for information that is necessary for you to complete your job tasks, improve you life. Remember that information that you desire may also be safe guarded under new privacy regulations and hence not accessible to you. If however the information you seek is necessary and available, it should be provided to you without humiliation (Don't you know that?!) or aggression.

7. *You have the right not to exercise your assertive rights* This may seem like a contradiction in terms. However it links with point number 3. The choices that you make and that seem good to you at the time are your responsibility and right. If you wish to wave your rights for a cause that seems good to you, that too is your privilege and responsibility

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### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



It would seem that a key ingredient to emotional and mental health is to take responsibility for your state of balance. If all is equal, there is no pathology, no psychopathology, no one else can make you happy. Only you can take care of you. This does not mean unconditionally, or at another's expense. But, it is up to each individual to take the responsibility to take care and be happy.

For example, if you see your body image as the Goodyear blimp and really want to be a Twiggy, you could be setting yourself up for repeated failure. A realistic view of body size and type and comfort level is what is healthier both physically and mentally.

**OR**

Setting very high goals, only getting A+, considering work pressures, family commitments, full school load, social life, community involvement, can set you up to fail. Somewhere between an A and a C would maybe make life more liveable for you and everyone around you. It is necessary to set goals, but they need to be achievable and realistic. You need short-term ones and long-term ones.

There is a need to identify who you are and come to like that person.

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### Psychological disorders affecting Massage Therapy

#### *Mood Disorders*

A number of clients may present with a mood disorder. Mood disorders are a category of the DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – current edition) which involve disturbances in mood that do not seem to be a reasonable response to circumstances. These disorders include;

a) Major *depressive disorder* in which the person is extremely sad and discouraged and displays a marked loss of pleasure from usual activities. Clinically depressed people often have severe problems sleeping and experience weight loss and lack of energy. Individuals with depression often report a negative belief (cognitive) triad of thoughts about the future, the world around them and themselves. They tend to see themselves as worthless, helpless to change the events in their lives and hopeless about the future. Other thinking errors are over-generalization, all or nothing thinking and arbitrary inference (drawing a conclusion on the basis of skimpy evidence – He did not smile at me, therefore he dislikes me.

b) *Mania* – which is a condition in which a person seems extremely elated, more active and in less need of sleep, and displays flights of somewhat disconnected ideas, grandiosity (an illusion of personal importance that can lead to inappropriate behavior) and impairment in functioning.

c) Severity of mood disorders can vary in *bipolar* conditions both depression and mania are exhibited.

#### *Anxiety Disorders*

Anxiety is the predominant disturbance in this group of disorders. Individuals who suffer from an anxiety disorder may experience excessive fear, worry or apprehension.

- a) A person can have a fear of a specific object or situation, called a *phobia*, which usually leads to avoidance of the feared stimulus.
- b) In other anxiety disorders people may not be aware of the reasons for their extreme feelings of anxiety or they may exhibit *obsessions* (recurrent, intense thoughts ) or
- c) *compulsions* (strongly repetitive behaviors), which when not performed, cause overwhelming distress.
- d) Individuals may also experience a lingering anxiety reaction to extraordinarily traumatic events –*acute stress disorder and post traumatic stress disorder*.

Individuals with anxiety disorders may have episodes of high negative behaviors (affect) associated with a sense of uncontrollability and a shift in attention to a focus primarily on the self or a state of self-preoccupation. The sense of uncontrollability is focused on future threat, danger or other negative events. Some individuals may have their condition escalate into a panic attack. This is defined as a period of intense fear of discomfort accompanied by shaking, chest pain, fear of dying or going crazy or losing control.

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#### Dementia

- Dementia, a deterioration of mental capacities, is typically irreversible, and is usually associated with Alzheimer's disease, stroke, several other medical conditions, and substance abuse.
- It presents as a loss of ability to remember, think and / or reason.

#### Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders

- These disorders constitute some of the earliest recognized by mental health workers.
- The disorders known as *schizophrenia* are marked by severe debilitation in thinking and perception.
- People with schizophrenia suffer from a state of *psychosis* or a loose contact with reality.
- They often lose the ability to care for themselves, relate to others, and function at work.
- Speech may be incoherent, and the person often suffers from *delusions* such as believing that someone has placed thoughts in his or her head, *hallucinations*, such as hearing voices, *loose associations*, (unconnected pieces of thought) and *inappropriate behaviors* such as giggling when discussing sad events like someone's illness or death.
- Essentially people in a psychotic state have lost contact with the world and with others.

#### Benefits of Massage on Mental Health

Medical school students (*at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-New Jersey Medical School*) who were massaged before an exam showed a significant decrease in anxiety and respiratory rates, as well as a significant increase in white blood cells and natural killer cell activity, suggesting a benefit to the immune system.

Preliminary results suggested cancer patients had less pain and anxiety after receiving therapeutic massage (*at the James Cancer Hospital and Research Institute in Columbus, Ohio.*)

Women who had experienced the recent death of a child were less depressed after receiving therapeutic massage, (*according to preliminary results of a study at the University of South Carolina.*)

(*Studies funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have found*) massage beneficial in improving weight gain in HIV-exposed infants and facilitating recovery in patients who underwent abdominal surgery.

(*At the University of Miami School of Medicine's Touch Research Institute*), researchers have found that massage is helpful in decreasing blood pressure in people with

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hypertension, alleviating pain in migraine sufferers and improving alertness and performance in office workers.

An increasing number of research studies show massage reduces heart rate, lowers blood pressure, increases blood circulation and lymph flow, relaxes muscles, improves range of motion, and increases endorphins (enhancing medical treatment).

Although therapeutic massage does not increase muscle strength, it can stimulate weak, inactive muscles and, thus, partially compensate for the lack of exercise and inactivity resulting from illness or injury. It also can hasten and lead to a more complete recovery from exercise or injury.

Office workers massaged regularly were more alert, performed better and were less stressed than those who weren't massaged.

Massage therapy decreased the effects of anxiety, tension, depression, pain, and itching in burn patients.

Abdominal surgery patients recovered more quickly after massage.

Premature infants who were massaged gained more weight and fared better than those who weren't.

Autistic children showed less erratic behavior after massage therapy.