



Glossary of Terms

Introduction

This glossary is for guidance and convenience only and does not provide an exhaustive list of all terms referenced in MTANS documentation. For more detailed information or clarification on any of the terms listed, Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) should refer to the official Standard of Practice, policy, or guideline and their related acts and regulations.

- **Abuse:** An RMT is in a position of power in the client-RMT relationship. Abuse is a violation of that power. When an RMT abuses the power they hold, they violate the trust and respect of the client. Abuse occurs when an RMT utilizes the therapeutic relationship to meet their own personal interests or needs. An RMT who abuses a client acts outside of professional boundaries. Abuse may be financial, physical, sexual, verbal and/or emotional exploitation of the client.
- **Accountability:** To be answerable for the practice of massage therapy and to act in a manner consistent with an RMT's professional responsibility, as outlined in the *Massage Therapists Titles Protection Act*, Code of Ethics, standards of practice, and other relevant documents.
- **Active member:** An MTANS member who has successfully completed the application process, paid their dues in full and completed their necessary CEU requirements. Full (active), members have a vote during MTANS annual and semiannual general meetings (AGM/SAGM), and are eligible for nomination to the Board or may volunteer on MTANS committees. Only active members are covered by liability insurance and have direct billing privileges.
- **Address harvesting:** Generally refers to collecting electronic addresses, such as those for email, instant messaging, and social media using computer programs. These programs may harvest addresses, either by collecting them from external sources — for instance, by scraping websites — or by generating a list of such addresses. With very limited exceptions, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) prohibits address harvesting.

- **Advertisement:** Means the use of space or time in any type of public medium, including, but not limited to, the Internet, radio, television, or a commercial publication such as a brochure, to promote professional services, or enhance the image of the member.
- **Age of majority:** Under the Nova Scotia *Age of Majority Act*, a person ceases to be a minor when they reach the age of nineteen years. This age is recognized by some provincial legislation, while other provincial legislation provides for benefits and rights when an individual reaches a younger age. The *Personal Health Information Act (PHIA)* recognizes the common-law principle of “mature minors,” which recognizes that the capacity to consent is incremental and situational. The capacity of each individual minor must be considered in the context of each episode of care.
- **Associate member:** One who, though not eligible under the *Societies Act*, is by virtue of their professional interests committed to the purpose of the Association and include, but are not limited to, directors or educators of recognized schools of massage therapy and MTANS approved educators offering continuing education opportunities. After receipt of a written request to join and the prescribed dues, a majority vote of the Board of Directors will result in associate membership status.
- **Boundary:** A limit you can set on what you will accept of another person’s words or actions. Each person has boundaries which define their personal space. Physical boundaries determine responses to close physical presence and to touch. Individuals also have boundaries defining their psychological and emotional space. Each person interprets questions or remarks as appropriate/inappropriate, unobtrusive/intrusive, or comforting/discomforting. Personal boundaries can vary widely among individuals according to such things as life experience, gender, age, culture, and personal preference. Professional boundaries are defined by the professional role and the limits of the professional role. Boundary violations are an abuse of power.
- **Circle of care:** A term used to describe the various health practitioners involved in an individual’s treatment plan and health care.
- **Client(s):** The recipient of massage therapy treatment. A client will meet the definition of “client” if they are a client within the ordinary meaning of the word and will continue to be a “client” for one year after they cease to be the RMT’s client. A person is also a client if there is a direct interaction between the RMT and the person and any of the following criteria are met:
 - The RMT charged them or received payment from them (or a third party on their behalf) for health care service;
 - The RMT has contributed to a health record or file for them; or
 - The client consented to health care service by the RMT.

If the client is not capable, all aspects of client decision making may be supported by a substitute decision-maker.

- **Client autonomy:** The right of clients to make informed decisions regarding their medical care without their health care provider trying to influence their decision. Client autonomy does allow for health care providers to educate the client but does not allow the provider to make the decision on behalf of the client.
- **Client-centred care:** The manner in which RMTs are expected to function, including:
 - Ensuring that client and client wellbeing are at the centre of decisions they make;
 - Giving each client their complete attention and allowing sufficient time to fully address their needs;
 - Respecting client uniqueness and taking into account their views, preferences, and concerns; and
 - Actively involving clients in decision making and ensuring that they are fully informed about and consent to the services RMTs provide.
- **A client health record:** Any document related to the assessment or treatment of a client. Records must be maintained, stored, transferred, and disposed of in a way that keeps client information confidential and secure. It is critical that RMTs, and/or business owners, understand they are custodians of the file while the client is the sole "owner" of the information contained within it.
- **Clinical reasoning:** The process in which the RMT interacts with their client during the assessment to gather information to develop an appropriate clinical impression and treatment plan.
- **Competence:** The ability to apply the relevant knowledge, skills and judgement required to practice massage therapy safely and ethically.
- **Competencies:** Include the knowledge, skills, and professional judgement required to perform safely and ethically under the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy.
- **Complainant:** The individual who has filed a complaint. If the complaint is filed on behalf of an organization, the complainant will be the individual representing the organization for the purposes of the complaints process.
- **Complaint:** A notice submitted to the Association in a form approved by the Executive Director that advises of matters that may constitute professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming the profession, incompetence, or incapacity of a member.
- **Complementary modalities:** While this term can be a substitute for secondary modalities with respect to CEU assignment, this is a more comprehensive term that includes modalities used in the context of client care that is out of scope but still contributes to care.

- **Conduct unbecoming:** The conduct in a member's personal or private capacity that tends to bring discredit upon the practice of massage therapy.
- **Conflict of Interest:** An RMT is in a conflict of interest if their personal or financial interest conflicts, or appears to conflict, with the exercise of their professional judgment or duty to act in the best interest of the client. A conflict of interest can be potential, real, or perceived. If circumstances exist where a reasonable person would conclude that the RMT's professional judgment may be compromised, then a conflict of interest exists. Some examples of conflicts of interest include:
 - Accepting a referral fee, or any other benefit, for the referral of a client to another person or business; or
 - Advising a client to purchase a particular health care product if the RMT or a relative has a financial interest in that product (or is the vendor of that product), unless the RMT informs the client in advance about the nature of the financial interest (in which case the RMT should also provide the client with information on at least one other source for the product).
- **Consent:** Is not merely permission from the client to receive an assessment or a massage therapy treatment. It is a mandatory conversation between the RMT and the client that outlines all relevant information about assessment, treatment, techniques, draping, risks, benefits, expected outcomes, cost, home care etc. All information must be disclosed to the client, and they must comprehend it. The client's decision must not be coerced, and the client must have the capacity to make an informed decision and give consent or have a substitute decision maker present to give consent. Informed consent is ongoing and continuous throughout each and every massage treatment.
- **Continuing education:** The on-going and career-long act of acquiring and integrating knowledge, skills and judgement through additional education, training, and clinical experience above and beyond the core competencies obtained in entry level massage therapy education. Continuing education enables RMTs to practice safely and ethically.
- **Continuing Education Cycle (CEC)**
 - Active and inactive members: A CEC is the two (2) calendar years within which a member acquires CEUs, commencing on January 1st of the first year and ending on December 31st of the second year, and continues in two-year cycles thereafter, e.g., January 1, 2022 — December 31, 2023.
 - New MTANS members (including graduates and members transferring from another Association or jurisdiction): the continuing education cycle commences on the first day of membership and continues for the remainder of the first year of membership **plus** two (2) additional calendar years, e.g., July 15, 2022 — December 31, 2024.
- **Continuing education unit (CEU):** These are assigned a value of 1 CEU for every 2 hours of participation in either primary or secondary professional development activities.

- **Controlled acts:** RMTs are not authorized to perform any controlled acts under the regulation of other health care professions. If an RMT is registered with another health regulatory college or association, which has authority to perform a controlled act, the therapist should separate their practices and not hold themselves out to be an RMT when performing the controlled act.
- **Critical thinking:** The ability to carefully evaluate information from various sources. The process requires assessing assumptions and biases as well as appraising diverse evidence. Critical thinking is an essential component in health care because there is an ethical duty to engage in every way with clients using sound reasoning and best current evidence which results in competent decision making. In this practice RMTs must commit to an ongoing process of evaluating, learning, and unlearning.
- **Dignity:** The quality of being worthy of respect and esteem as human beings.
- **Dual professional designation:** Refers to members of MTANS who hold the protected title of RMT (or any of its derivatives), and members of another health care profession.
- **Dual relationship:** When an RMT has another type of relationship with a client in addition to the professional therapeutic relationship. The multiple relationships can become blurred or merged, making it difficult to maintain clear boundaries and distorting or compromising the therapeutic relationship. Examples of dual relationships include, but are not limited to:
 - Personal friendships with clients;
 - Bartering for goods or services with clients;
 - Treating family members and friends; or
 - Romantic or sexual relationships with clients (which is considered sexual abuse by MTANS).
- **Duty to report:** Every individual in the province of Nova Scotia has a legal obligation to report concerns of abuse or neglect of a child (under the age of 19), in order to ensure children are protected from harm. Failure to report is a criminal offence.
- **E-marketing:** Refers to sending marketing and promotional messages to recipients via email, instant messaging, social media, or other similar accounts.
- **Ethical decision making and care:** Require using ethical and moral judgment when faced with challenges in the client's care. This can relate to the client's rights, safety, conflict of interest, legal obligation, or informed consent. The RMT needs to put their own beliefs aside and treat in an ethical and just manner.
- **Evidence-informed practice and decision making:** Combines best practices and current research, clinician experience and expertise, and client values and needs, into all aspects of an RMTs practice. Evidence-informed decision making involves

integrating the best available research evidence into the decision-making process. Evidence integrated into massage therapy practice uses research findings from a variety of manual therapy and rehabilitation disciplines. RMTs are also able to interpret and apply relevant research within the environment in which they practice.

- **Fair and equitable access to care:** Requires that RMTs treat clients in an unbiased manner and provide every client with equal access to their care regardless of who clients are and their personal situations / circumstances.
- **Financial abuse:** Activities that exploit the power differential between the RMT and client and is often a monetary or equivalent gain for the RMT. Examples of financial abuse can include accepting gifts, borrowing money, exploiting an insurance plan's provisions, becoming a trustee of a client's account, accessing a client bank account, seeking financial benefits, or other services.
- **Honesty:** Being sincere and truthful, and refraining from any kind of deceit in the practice of massage therapy or communications with clients.
- **Inactive member:** One who is not permitted to practice massage therapy in Nova Scotia. While inactive, members must continue to collect and submit ongoing CEUs and maintain a current CPR/First Aid certification. Inactive members are not covered by liability insurance and are not permitted to use direct billing privileges. In order to become active, the member must notify the MTANS office and pay the full membership fee.
- **Integrity:** The quality of being sincere, honest, and trustworthy in making choices and decisions consistent with an RMT's professional values.
- **Health insurance fraud:** The intentional act of submitting false, deceiving, or misleading information for the purpose of financial gain. Some examples of health insurance fraud include double billing, charging more than once for the same service, or knowingly allowing a client to use another individual's benefits.
- **Honorary member:** One who is not otherwise a member of MTANS, and who, by meritorious service to MTANS, have distinguished themselves and, after being recommended to the Board of Directors in writing by two active members, have been approved as honorary members by a vote of no less than 75% of the active membership in attendance at AGM/SAGM meetings.
- **Incapacity:** A medical, physical, mental, or emotional condition, disorder or addiction that renders or rendered a member unable to practice with competence or who may endanger or has endangered the health or safety of individuals.
- **Incompetence:** The display of a lack of knowledge, skill or judgment in the member's practice of massage therapy that, having regard to all the circumstances, rendered it

unsafe for the member to practice at the time or renders it unsafe for the member to continue in practice without remedial assistance.

- **Infectious disease:** An illness or disorder caused by organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites that are transmittable to another person.
- **Mandatory reporting:** The obligation to complete an MTANS Investigations Complaint Form when certain circumstances arise. It is one of the ways MTANS attempts to protect the public's interest and to maintain the professional integrity and public trust in the massage therapy profession.
- **Marketing activity:** Includes an advertisement; promotional activity in any publication or communication in any medium with any client, prospective client or the public generally; a listing in a directory; a public appearance, or any other means by which professional services are promoted.
- **Member in good standing:** An MTANS member who meets all the educational, ethical, and financial requirements set forth by the association.
- **Mislead:** Leaving out important information or including information that is irrelevant or distracting.
- **Modalities within scope:** Techniques and treatment modalities that are directly linked to the definition of massage therapy and clearly defined under the professional scope of practice.
- **Modality:** A specific technique, method, skill, or competency implemented by an RMT during the course of massage therapy treatment such as Swedish Massage techniques, Manual Lymph Drainage techniques, or myofascial release techniques.
- **Pandemic:** A widespread occurrence of an infectious disease over a whole country or the world at a particular time.
- **Party** is the Association, or a respondent, as the context requires.
- **Personal health information:** Information about an identifiable individual that relates to the physical or mental health of the individual, the provision of health care to the individual, the individual's entitlement to payment for health care, the individual's health card number, the identity of providers of health care to the individual, or the identity of substitute decision-makers on behalf of the individual.
- **Personal information:** Any information about an identifiable individual and includes race, ethnic origin, colour, age, marital status, family status, religion, education, medical history, criminal record, employment history, financial status, address, telephone number, and any numerical identification, such as health provider policy and identification numbers.

- **Physical abuse:** An act which may cause pain or harm to another. Slapping, hitting, pushing, and use of force during a treatment are examples of behaviours which can be viewed as physical abuse.
- **Power differential:** The variance in power between the RMT and the client in a therapeutic environment. The RMT and client do not have equal power in the therapist-client relationship. The client seeks the assistance of the RMT who is considered to have knowledge and skill that the client does not have. The RMT may have confidential client information that they must use in the client's best interest. The RMT, as a health professional, may have influence with other members of the health care team to influence the care the client receives.
- **Prior learning assessment (PLA):** An assessment of a potential member's education and skill set in relation to MTANS educational requirements. The PLA may be used for people with post-secondary education from another country or for an RMT who has been away from practice for longer than three years.
- **Professional activity:** A course, lecture, seminar, or other professional activity in which a member participates to obtain Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
 - Primary professional activities are within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy and the core competencies as defined by the Federation of Massage Therapy Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FOMTRAC).
 - Secondary professional activities are complementary to Massage Therapy and are not considered part of the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy.
 - Bonus professional activities are awarded for participation in MTANS activities such as the annual general meeting (AGM), semi-annual general meeting (SAGM), or other such activities as approved by the Board of Directors. These are primary in nature unless otherwise stated.
- **Professional misconduct:** Includes such conduct or acts relevant to the practice of the profession that, having regard to all the circumstances, would reasonably be regarded as disgraceful, dishonourable, or unprofessional, including:
 - a) failing to maintain the Standards of Practice;
 - b) failing to adhere to any codes of ethics adopted by the association;
 - c) abusing a person verbally, physically, emotionally, or sexually;
 - d) misappropriating personal property, drugs or other property belonging to a client or an employer;
 - e) inappropriately influencing a client to make or change a legal document;
 - f) abandoning a client;
 - g) neglecting to provide care to a client;
 - h) failing to exercise appropriate discretion with respect to the disclosure of confidential information;
 - i) falsifying records;
 - j) inappropriately using membership status for personal gain;

- k) promoting for personal gain, any drug, device, treatment, procedure, product or service that is unnecessary, ineffective or unsafe;
 - l) publishing, or causing to be published, any advertisement that is false, fraudulent, deceptive, or misleading; and
 - m) engaging or assisting in fraud, misrepresentation, deception, or concealment of a material fact when applying for or securing membership with the association.
- **Professional judgment:** The ability to competently interpret and apply ethical and legal requirements within the unique circumstances of clinical practice, education, research, administration, and regulatory requirements.
 - **Professional responsibility:** Includes the duties that RMTs exercise to their clients as regulated health care professionals in line with their professional role and commitment.
 - **Provider identification (ID):** The number given to RMTs by their insurer. It is separate and distinct from an RMT's MTANS registration number.
 - **Receipt:** A financial record for a service provided, including a massage therapy treatment or a product.
 - **Reflective practice and self-evaluation:** The act of thinking about, writing about, discussing with colleagues or others, etc., aspects of professional practice with the goal of assessing competence. Through this practice, RMTs can set goals for learning and /or reviewing appropriate CE activities.
 - **Registered Massage Therapist (RMT):** An individual who has successfully graduated from a recognized massage therapy program, meets the minimum entry-to-practice competencies (as outlined by FOMTRAC in Inter-jurisdictional Practice Competencies and Performance Indicators), and is recognized by the Nova Scotia *Massage Therapists Titles Protection Act*.
 - **Respondent:** A person who is the subject of a complaint pursuant to MTANS By-laws and policies.
 - **Restricted activities:** Regulated health services that can by law only be performed by individuals authorized to perform them. RMTs are not authorized to perform any restricted activities or controlled acts from another regulated health care profession. If a therapist is a registrant of a Health Regulatory College in Nova Scotia, which has the ability to oversee the performance of a controlled/restricted activity, the RMT must separate their massage therapy practice from their dual profession when performing a restricted activity.
 - **Scope of Practice (SOP) of Massage Therapy:** The assessment of the soft tissues and joints of the body and the treatment and prevention of physical dysfunction and pain of soft tissues and joints by manipulation to develop, maintain, rehabilitate, or

augment physical function, or relieve pain.

- **Of the profession:** The roles, functions, and accountabilities an RMT is authorized to perform. The Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy sets the limits for the overall profession as the foundation upon which competencies and standards of practice are developed.
 - **Individual SOP:** While the individual scope of practice may be narrower than that of the profession, individual RMTs may have more specialized and in-depth knowledge and competence in a particular area of practice. The individual scope of practice and scope of employment may not exceed the professional scope of practice. The individual scope of practice does not define a level of practice, rather, it identifies the range or extent of practice within specified limits which encompasses the RMT's competency.
 - **Employment SOP:** The description of the RMT's role within the employment setting is defined by the employer through job descriptions, policies, guidelines, and context specific education. RMTs may have competencies to perform a treatment or particular modality which they are not authorized to perform in their current employment setting. Scope of employment changes from setting to setting and RMTs are accountable to know what is expected of them in their current role.
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- **Sexual abuse:** Is a boundary violation and abuse of power. Sexual abuse includes not only sexual touching, but behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature. Given the power differential, it is always the RMTs responsibility to ensure that an intimate relationship with a client does not take place.
 - **Social media:** Broadly understood to include social networking sites, blogs, wikis, message boards, chat rooms, electronic newsletters, online forums, and other sites.
 - **Spam:** Unsolicited email, also known as junk mail (received via email), or unsolicited commercial email.
 - **Student member:** An MTANS membership available to students enrolled in a recognized school of massage therapy. Student members are allowed to attend AGMs/SAGMs, but do not have a vote. Student members are not eligible for nomination to the Board of Directors and may not work on any committees until they become active members. Student members are not required to complete CEUs. Student membership is free of charge.
 - **Therapeutic relationship:** A purposeful client-therapist relationship designed to promote, support, and advance the health and best interest of the client. It is grounded in trust, respect, and the appropriate use of knowledge and power.
 - **Therapeutic touch:** Generally refers to physical contact between an RMT and client for clinical indications within the Scope of Practice of Massage Therapy, and with the

intention to facilitate their health and well-being. (Not to be confused with the therapeutic touch modality.)

- **Transference and countertransference**

- **Transference:** Redirection, to the RMT, of a client's feelings for another person who is significant to them. Transference can obstruct the goal of the therapeutic relationship.

- **Countertransference:** Redirection of an RMT's feelings towards the client, or when the RMT uses a client to meet personal psychological needs. Countertransference can change the focus or content of the therapeutic relationship, as the RMT's needs and / or unresolved issues become part of the therapeutic experience and impede the RMT's ability to be fully present for the client.

- **Transparency:** The quality of being open and honest.

- **Verbal abuse:** Language that demeans, humiliates, or insults the client. Verbal abuse can cause emotional abuse since the language may harm the client emotionally, culturally, or spiritually. Given that RMTs work with clients of many cultures and beliefs, it is important to recognize that personal remarks about a client's appearance, behaviour, language, beliefs, religious practices, etc., may be distressing. Behaviours such as sarcasm, teasing, swearing, or threatening are examples of behaviours that may be considered verbal or emotional abuse.

- **Witness:** Any individual who has first-hand knowledge relevant to a member's professional conduct, and who may be asked to provide either oral or written evidence in the course of an investigation. In professional conduct investigations, a witness may be asked to provide information regarding what another individual may have told them (i.e., hearsay).