

Communicating with Clients

Essential Communication Skills for Massage Therapy Success

Workshop Overview

Duration: 60 minutes

Format: Online/In-person

Target Audience: Massage therapists, bodyworkers, and holistic health practitioners

Learning Level: All levels

CE Credits: 5 NHPC credits (online format)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. **Establish rapport** quickly and effectively with new and existing clients
2. **Conduct professional intake conversations** that gather essential information while building trust
3. **Use active listening techniques** to understand client needs and concerns
4. **Communicate treatment plans** clearly and obtain informed consent
5. **Navigate difficult conversations** including boundary setting and addressing client concerns
6. **Apply professional communication standards** that enhance client satisfaction and retention

Workshop Agenda

Opening (10 minutes)

- Welcome and introductions
- Workshop objectives overview
- Quick poll: "What's your biggest communication challenge with clients?"

Module 1: First Impressions & Rapport Building (15 minutes)

The Power of the First 30 Seconds

- Voice tone and body language impact
 - Creating a welcoming environment
 - Professional greeting protocols
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Rapport Building Techniques

- **Mirroring and matching** communication styles
- **Finding common ground** through appropriate small talk
- **Reading non-verbal cues** to adjust your approach

Interactive Exercise: Practice greetings with different client personality types

Module 2: Effective Intake Communication (15 minutes)

The Art of Asking Questions

- **Open vs. closed questions** - when to use each
- **Layered questioning** to gather comprehensive information
- **Health history discussions** without overstepping scope of practice

Creating Psychological Safety

- Using empathetic language
- Normalizing client concerns
- Respecting privacy and boundaries

Sample Intake Questions:

- *"What brings you in today?"*
- *"How has this been affecting your daily activities?"*
- *"On a scale of 1-10, how would you describe your comfort level with pressure?"*

Case Study: Working through a complex intake scenario

Module 3: Active Listening & Treatment Communication (10 minutes)

Active Listening Fundamentals

- **Reflective listening** techniques
- **Clarifying and summarizing** what you've heard
- **Avoiding assumptions** about client needs

During Treatment Communication

- **Check-ins** during the session
 - **Pressure and comfort** communication
 - **Explaining techniques** as you work
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Key Phrases for Treatment:

- *"How does this pressure feel for you?"*
- *"I'm going to work on your shoulders now - let me know if you need any adjustments"*
- *"Take a deep breath here"*

Module 4: Difficult Conversations & Boundary Setting (10 minutes)

Common Challenging Scenarios

- Clients requesting inappropriate services
- Discussing pain that may require medical attention
- Addressing hygiene issues
- Managing client expectations

Professional Boundary Communication

- Using "I" statements
- Firm but compassionate language
- Referring when appropriate

Script Examples:

"I understand you're looking for relief, but what you're describing sounds like it would benefit from medical evaluation. I'd recommend seeing your doctor first."

"I want to make sure you're comfortable. For everyone's safety and comfort, I maintain professional boundaries during all sessions."

Module 5: Building Long-term Client Relationships (8 minutes)

Post-Treatment Communication

- **Aftercare instructions** and self-care recommendations
- **Scheduling follow-ups** appropriately
- **Follow-up communication** between sessions

Client Retention Through Communication

- Remembering personal details appropriately
 - Celebrating client progress
 - Professional check-ins and care
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Communication Tools:

- Treatment notes for continuity
- Professional follow-up templates
- Boundary-appropriate personal connection

Wrap-up & Q&A (7 minutes)

- Key takeaways summary
- Action planning: "One thing I'll implement this week"
- Q&A session
- Resource sharing

Key Communication Frameworks

The HEAL Method

- **Halt** and listen fully
- **Empathize** with their experience
- **Ask** clarifying questions
- **Lead** with professional guidance

The Professional Boundary Script

1. **Acknowledge** their request/concern
2. **Explain** your professional standards
3. **Offer** appropriate alternatives
4. **Redirect** to proper resources if needed

Practical Exercises

Exercise 1: First Impression Role-Play (5 minutes)

Partners practice greeting different client types:

- The nervous first-timer
- The regular client having a bad day
- The client with specific injury concerns

Exercise 2: Intake Conversation Practice (5 minutes)

Structured practice with sample client scenarios and feedback

Exercise 3: Difficult Conversation Simulation (5 minutes)

Practice using boundary-setting scripts in challenging scenarios

Resources & Takeaways

Communication Cheat Sheet

DO:

- Use open body language
- Speak clearly and at appropriate volume
- Ask permission before touching
- Explain what you're doing and why
- Listen more than you talk
- Respect client privacy completely

DON'T:

- Make assumptions about pain or conditions
- Give medical advice
- Share personal problems
- Rush through explanations
- Ignore client feedback
- Take things personally

Follow-up Resources

- Professional communication templates
- Continuing education recommendations
- Professional association resources
- Recommended reading list

Workshop Materials Included

1. **Participant Workbook** with exercises and templates
2. **Quick Reference Guide** for common scenarios
3. **Communication Scripts** for difficult situations
4. **Professional Development Planning** worksheet
5. **Certificate of Completion** (with all required information for NHPC credit)

Instructor Notes

Preparation Required:

- Review participant backgrounds if available
- Prepare role-play scenarios relevant to your audience

- Have backup activities for different group sizes
 - Test all technology for online delivery
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Materials Needed:

- Presentation slides
- Handout packets
- Name tags (in-person)
- Flipchart/whiteboard (in-person)
- Breakout room setup (online)

Assessment Methods:

- Participation in exercises
- Completion of reflection activities
- Q&A engagement
- Post-workshop evaluation

Certificate Information

Certificate of Completion includes:

- Workshop title: "Communicating with Clients: Essential Communication Skills for Massage Therapy Success"
- Instructor name and credentials
- Delivery format: Online/In-person
- Duration: 60 minutes (1 hour)
- Completion date
- Participant name
- Instructor signature

NHPC Credit Eligibility: This workshop covers practitioner support skills and professional development, making it eligible for 5 NHPC Continued Competency Program credits.

About This Workshop

This workshop is designed to meet the professional development needs of massage therapists and holistic health practitioners. Content is based on current best practices in therapeutic communication and professional standards in healthcare settings.

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About Jocelyn Stewart, RMT

Jocelyn is a Registered Massage Therapist with over 15 years of experience in therapeutic massage and client care. She specializes in outcome-based massages using a variety of techniques and modalities, including her signature Stamina Alignment therapy.

Jocelyn holds multiple certifications including:

- Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) - College of Massage Therapists of Alberta (2009)
- Advanced Therapeutic Massage Certification (2011)
- Deep Tissue Massage Certification (2012)
- Stamina Alignment Specialist (2015)
- Prenatal Massage Certification (2016)
- Accredited Workshop Facilitator (2018)

Her approach focuses on individualized treatment plans that address each client's specific needs while maintaining the highest standards of professional communication and therapeutic care.

This workshop content is proprietary and designed for continuing education purposes. All materials are created to support professional development in accordance with NHPC guidelines and massage therapy professional standards.