

ALABAMA MESSAGE THERAPY LICENSING BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 532-X-3
MESSAGE THERAPIST LICENSURE

532-X-3-.11 Code Of Ethics For Licensed Massage Therapists.

The licensed massage therapist shall comply with the following code of ethics. Violations of the code of ethics may result in disciplinary action:

1. The licensee must comply with all legal requirements in applicable jurisdictions. The licensee shall:
 - a. obey all local, state, and federal laws.
 - b. refrain from any behavior that results in illegal, discriminatory, or unethical actions.
 - c. accept responsibility for the licensee's own actions.
 - d. upon reasonable belief that another massage therapist has violated Chapter 43A of Title 34 of the Code of Ala. 1975, and any amendments thereto, or the Alabama Massage Therapy Licensing Board Administrative Code, inform the Alabama Massage Therapy Licensing Board within thirty (30) calendar days after the date the licensee discovers the activity.
 - e. maintain accurate and truthful records.
 - f. comply with Chapter 43A of Title 34 of the Code of Ala. 1975, and any amendments thereto, and the Alabama Massage Therapy Licensing Board Administrative Code.
 - g. perform only those services which are within the scope of practice of a licensed massage therapist in Alabama and for which the licensed massage therapist is qualified through education, certifications, and professional affiliations.
 - h. Accurately inform clients, the public, and other healthcare providers of the scope and limitations of the licensee's discipline.
2. In the licensee's professional role, the licensee shall:
 - a. Treat each client with respect, dignity, and worth.
 - b. Use professional verbal, nonverbal, and written communications.
 - c. Provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for the client and which, at a minimum, meets all legal requirements for health and safety.
 - d. Use standard precautions to ensure professional hygienic practices and maintain a level of personal hygiene appropriate for practitioners in the therapeutic setting.
 - e. Wear clothing that is clean and professional.

- f. Obtain voluntary and informed consent from the client prior to initiating the session.
- g. If applicable, conduct an accurate needs assessment, develop a plan of care with the client, and update the plan as needed.
- h. Use appropriate draping to protect the client's physical and emotional privacy.
 - 1. The massage therapist shall utilize clean drape material (towel, sheet, blanket, linen) for draping clients during the massage, use of which shall be explained to the client prior to the massage, and which shall cover the intergluteal cleft and genitals of a male client at all times during the massage, and which shall cover the intergluteal cleft, breasts, and genitals of a female client at all times during the massage.
 - i. The massage therapist shall not intentionally expose the intergluteal cleft and genitals of a male/female client or breasts of a female client.
 - ii. The massage therapist shall not inappropriately touch the mouth or genitals of a male/female client or breasts of a female client.
- i. Acknowledge the limitations and contraindications of massage therapy, referring to other state licensed healthcare providers when deemed appropriate.
- j. Seek other professional advice when needed.
- k. Respect the traditions and practices of other professionals and foster collegial relationships.
- l. Maintain professional boundaries with clients.
 - 1. The licensed massage therapist shall adhere to ethical boundaries and perform the professional roles designed to protect both the client and the practitioner, and safeguard the therapeutic value of the relationship.
 - 2. The licensed massage therapist must recognize the licensee's influential position with the client and not exploit the relationship for personal or other gain;
 - 3. Recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter-transference between the client and the licensee;
 - 4. Avoid dual or multidimensional relationships that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of a client, student, employee,

supervisee, mentee, trainee, or anyone else with whom a power differential exists;

- m. Refrain from practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance.
- n. Ensure that every appointment for massage therapy services is recorded in an appointment book (whether paper or electronic) which is available at the massage therapy establishment to which the licensed massage therapist is registered and through which the service will be performed.
 - 1. Appointments shall be documented prior to commencement of the massage therapy services.
 - 2. There shall be no undocumented massage therapy appointments.
 - 3. Documentation of appointments shall be maintained on the premises of the licensed massage therapy establishment and available for inspection.
 - 4. Documentation shall include the name of the client(s) who will receive massage therapy services at the appointment, the name of the licensed massage therapist(s) performing the massage therapy services, the location at which the massage therapy services will occur, the type and duration of the massage therapy services to be performed, and the date and time at which the massage therapy services will occur.
- o. Respect state licensed healthcare providers whose intent is to promote the health and healing of their clients.
- p. Conduct their business and professional activities with integrity.
- q. Refuse to unjustly discriminate against clients or other state licensed healthcare professionals, respecting the inherent worth of all persons.
- r. Acknowledge the confidentiality of all client information, respecting each client's right to privacy, unless disclosure is required by law, court order, written release to third parties by the client, or in the event it is objectively necessary to protect the public.
- s. Refrain from engaging in any sexual conduct, behavior, or activities involving a client, even if the client attempts to sexualize the relationship.
- t. Respect the client's right to refuse, modify, or terminate treatment.
- u. Have the right to refuse treatment to any person for reasonable and just cause.
- v. Provide treatment in an environment that ensures the comfort and privacy of the client.
- w. Respect the client's autonomy with regard to privacy, disclosure, beliefs, and emotional expression.
- x. Through continuing education, maintain and improve professional knowledge and competency.

- y. Adhere to and follow all policies, procedures, rules, regulations, codes, and requirements promulgated by Alabama laws regarding the practice of massage therapy, Act No. 2024-361, and amendments thereto.
- 3. The licensee shall respect the client's dignity and right to privacy. The licensee shall:
 - a. Protect the confidentiality of the client's identity and information in all conversations, advertisements, and any and all other matters unless disclosure of identifiable information is requested by the client in writing, is medically necessary, or is required by law.
 - b. Protect the interests of clients who are minors or clients who are unable to give voluntary and informed consent by obtaining prior written permission from a legal guardian;
 - c. Solicit only information that is relevant to the professional client/therapist relationship;
 - d. Securely retain client files for a minimum period of four years from the termination of the therapeutic relationship; and
 - e. Dispose of client files in a secure manner.
- 4. The licensee shall practice with honesty, integrity, and lawfulness. The licensee shall:
 - a. Provide a physical setting that is safe and meets all applicable legal requirements for health and safety.
 - b. Maintain adequate progress notes for each client session, if applicable.
 - c. Accurately and truthfully inform the public of services provided.
 - d. Honestly represent all professional qualifications and affiliations.
 - e. Include the license number of the licensee or establishment on any advertisements.

Author: Alabama Massage Therapy Licensing Board

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §34-43A-6.

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