Reducing the Physical and Emotional Symptoms of Brain Injury with Massage Therapy

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What do Massage Therapists Do?

What the world thinks I do
What I actually do

Spa Massage vs. Therapeutic Massage

Designed for Relaxation
Designed for Healing

Understanding of Massage Modalities and the benefits provided

Basic Swedish Massage

Most basic massage service. Stroking, kneading and tapping to warm and relax tissue and improve blood flow. Can gently reduce muscle pain, stress and depression while improving movement and flexibility. May temporarily reduce blood pressure and blood sugar.
Deep Tissue Massage

Works deeper into tissue layers. Addresses "knots" and deep muscle tissue stiffness. Works deep scarring, particularly around surgery sites. Generally addresses a specific area instead of a broader range.

Manual Massage Therapy

Connective Tissue Massage
- Also known as Myofascial Release
- Works fascia (substance which connects and separates all bones, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, etc.) to improve movement and decrease pain

Tractioning
- Subtle, steady force applied to head/neck, arms and/or legs to reduce myofascial restrictions and gently stretch muscle tissue

Research regarding Manual Massage Therapy

Concussion Treatment Using Massage Techniques
- Reduced concussion symptoms including balance
- Tracked cervical postural deviation and ROM
- Massage 2x
- Reduced concussion symptoms
- Improved balance
- Improved cervical ROM

Research regarding Massage Therapy

Impact of Massage Therapy for Fatigue, Pain and Spasticity in People with Multiple Sclerosis: a Pilot Study
- Tracked fatigue, pain & spasticity
- Patient overall health and quality of life
- BSM 1x/ wk for 6 weeks
- Reduction in all symptoms
- Improved perception of health and quality of life

Massage Therapy Treatment and Outcomes for a Relapsing-Remitting Patient’s Disease, a Case Report
- Tracked tremors associated with Parkinson’s Disease
- BSM 5x over 6 weeks
- Reduction in tremors

Manual Massage Therapy

Lymphatic Drainage
- Works the tendons (connects muscle to bone) and ligaments (connects bone to bone) to improve ROM

Scar Release
- Promotes new skin growth to reduce puckering of skin
- Releases scar from underlying tissue, improving movement

Specialized Modalities

Bowenwork
- Light pressure and rolling movements on muscles, tendons and fascia
- Stimulates proprioceptors (nerves that respond to position and movement), initiates nerve reflex signals

Cranial Sacral Therapy
- Gentle, noninvasive form of bodywork that addresses the bones of the head, spinal column and sacrum
- Release compression in those areas to alleviate stress and pain

Deep Tissue
Trigger Point
Neuromuscular Stripping
**Specialized Modalities**

**Thai & Shiatsu**
- Kneading, pressing, soothing, tapping, and stretching
- Performed without oils through light, comfortable clothing.

**Qigong or Tai Chi**
- Gentle exercise composed of movements that are repeated a number of times
- Stretches the body, increases fluid movement and awareness of movement of the body

**Research regarding Specialized Modalities**

- **Bowenwork for Migraine Relief: A Case Report**
  - Tracked incidence of migraines
  - 14 Week study
  - No migraines by Week 12
  - No pain by Week 13
  - No pain meds by Week 14

- **Effects of Traditional Japanese Massage Therapy on Various Symptoms in Patients with Parkinson’s Disease: A Case Series Study**
  - Tracked gait speed for ambulatory patients
  - Tracked ROM reduced by Frozen Shoulder Syndrome
  - Improved gait speed
  - Improved ROM

- **Treatment of Tactile Impairment in Young Children with Autism; Results with Qigong Massage**
  - Tracked touch in 97 patients with Autism
  - Daily by parents; Weekly by therapist
  - 25-35% improvement in touch

- **Zen Shiatsu: A Longitudinal Case Study Measuring Stress Reduction in a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder**
  - Immediate stress reduction Week 1 beginning at 4/5 to 2/5 at end of first session
  - Week 6 reduction beginning at 3/5 to 1/5 at end of session

**Complimentary Modalities**

**Reiki**
- Energy balancing technique
- Addresses energy centers of the body
- Practitioner may work with hands lightly on body or above energy center

**Infra-Red Technology**
- Increases circulation
- Temporarily reduces muscle & joint pain, muscle spasms and muscle strains

**Aromatherapy**
- Aromatic oils and oil blends used to create a different atmosphere
- Can relax or energize
- Can also be derived from candles and diffusers

**Music**
- Can be any type of music from nature sounds to classical to rock or rap
- Can relax or energize
- Totally individualized

**Research regarding Complimentary Modalities**

- **Significant Improvements in Cognitive Performance Post Transcranial, red/Near Infrared Light Emitting Diode Treatments in Chronic, Mild TBI**
  - Tracked symptoms of PTSD, inhibition and verbal learning
  - 11 patients w/TBI
  - Infrared treatment 3x/week for 6 weeks at 20 minutes/session
  - Reduction in PTSD symptoms and inhibition
  - Improved verbal learning

- **Lavender oil preparation Silexan is effective in generalized anxiety disorder – a randomized, double-blind comparison to placebo & paroxetine**
  - Tracked Generalized Anxiety Disorder
  - 539 patients; double-blind study for 10 weeks
  - Reduced GAD
  - Improved overall physical health
Research regarding Complimentary Modalities

The Effects of Music on the Human Stress Response

- Tracked cortisol levels related to stress
- 60 patients for 25 minutes
- Relaxing music, water sounds or none
- Pre-stress music – cortisol levels higher after music
- Post-stress music – cortisol levels decrease with music

How Massage Therapy can address the emotional and/or psychological symptoms of brain injury

Anxiety and/or Agitation

- Ask client how they are and just listen
- Therapist will speak softly and slower than usual
- Ask others to leave the area, especially if they are causing stress
- Dim the lights
- Put on music the client finds restful
- Ask others to leave the area, especially if they are causing stress
- Work with long, deep, purposeful strokes
- Redirect client to things that make them happy and peaceful

Depression

- Ask client how they are and just listen
- Therapist will be bubbly and upbeat
- Involve others, especially if they make the client happy
- Turn up the lights
- Put on music the client finds energizing
- Use invigorating scents if the client is not opposed to them
- Work with short, light, rapid strokes
- Redirect client to things that make them happy and energetic

How Massage Therapy can address the physical symptoms of brain injury

Headaches

- Ask client how they are and just listen
- Therapist will be quiet and speak softly
- Ask others to keep noise levels down
- Dim the lights
- Put on music the client finds relaxing, or work in silence
- Work on facial muscles as well as neck muscles
- Consider the use of Cranial Sacral Therapy
Spasticity and Contracture
- Ask client how they are and just listen
- Create an environment that is pleasing to the client
- Work the muscle bodies associated with the areas of spasticity or contracture
- Use slow, static stretching to reduce the symptoms
- Use resistive techniques to improve stretching
- Actively demonstrate the time it takes to stretch appropriately

Gait and Balance
- Ask client how they are and just listen
- Watch client walk as they come for services
- Have the client stand near a wall near a vertical line to assess posture. Can be done lying down as well
- Address postural issues by working muscles
- Do active and resistive stretching
- Use tractioning

Self-Help Massage Tips, Tools and Techniques
- Basic Swedish Massage
- Trigger Point Massage
- Deep Tissue Massage
- Stretching
- Qigong
- Hot/Cold Packs
- Infrared Therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Music Therapy

Stretching
- Static Stretching
- Active Stretching
- Resistive Stretching
- Qigong
- Yoga

Massage Tools
- Tennis Balls
- Foam Rollers
- Bongers
- Exercise Ball
- Trigger Point Tools
- Infrared Lights
- Hot Packs
- Ice Cups
Aromatherapy, Lighting and Music
- Figure out what makes you calm and peaceful
- Use scents you like
- Adjust the lighting to meet your needs
- Put on music that inspires you

How to find qualified LMT’s for working with individuals with brain injury

Licensed by the State of Michigan
- All Massage Therapists practicing in the state of Michigan are required to be licensed
- All Massage Therapists should have liability insurance
- All Massage Therapists should be willing to show you a copy of their current license and insurance certificate
- Licenses can be looked up online at www.MI.gov/LARA to see if there are any issues

References for Qualified LMT’s
- Contact local massage schools for references
- Contact AMTA
- Contact current rehab providers
- Contact current health care providers
- Contact your case manager

Interviewing Prospective LMT’s
- What training do they have?
- What experience do they have with clients with a brain injury?
- Do they take a complete medical history?
- Will they allow family members or caregivers to be present during the massage?
- How do they handle inappropriate behavior?

Questions?
- Take the time and find the right LMT
- Communicate with your LMT – let them know what you need or want
- Remember, the LMT is there for the client. Their needs and wishes come first
- GET MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR MASSAGE BEFORE YOU SEE A MASSAGE THERAPIST

Becoming a LMT in Michigan

Roles and Responsibilities
- What qualities do you need to be a LMT?
- How do you handle inappropriate behavior?
- How do you prepare for massage with a brain injury patient?
- What are the legal requirements for a LMT in Michigan?
Research References