

Virginia Board of Nursing

Guidance on Massage Therapy Practice

Documentation of Training and Education:

If modalities of bodywork and specialized massage are incorporated into massage therapy practice, the Board of Nursing recommends that the Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) maintain documentation of education and/or training in that area.

Appropriate Draping and Technique:

Areas that should be draped and not touched unless medically indicated for a condition referred by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant and with the written informed consent of the client include: Anus, penis, testicles, scrotum, vagina, labia, clitoris, breast, nipples, and areola.

Consent:

Signed parental consent is recommended for massage therapy clients under the age of 18 years.

County/City Requirements:

A LMT should be knowledgeable about local/city requirements in which they practice.

Practice of Massage Therapy and use of title “massage therapist”:

Pursuant to § 54.1-3000 of the Code of Virginia:

A “massage therapist” means a person who meets the qualifications specified in this chapter and who is currently licensed by the Board.

The practice of "Massage therapy" means the treatment of soft tissues for therapeutic purposes by the application of massage and bodywork techniques based on the manipulation or application of pressure to the muscular structure or soft tissues of the human body. The term "massage therapy" does not include the diagnosis or treatment of illness or disease or any service or procedure for which a license to practice medicine, nursing, midwifery, chiropractic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, acupuncture, athletic training, or podiatry is required by law or any service described in § 54.1-3001(18).

According to § 54.1-3008, it shall be a Class 1 misdemeanor for any person to:

Engage in the practice of massage therapy or hold himself out as practicing massage therapy unless he holds a license as a massage therapist issued by the Board.