



The Atlantic Canada Association of Reflexology Therapists

Introduction to Standards for Reflexology Therapy Practice

The Atlantic Canada Association of Reflexology Therapists (ACART) has developed these standards for Reflexology therapy practice to promote and direct the competent, consistent and responsible professional practice of its members, to serve and protect the public, and to promote the advancement of the profession and ACART within the community and the health care system of Nova Scotia.

Most professions are managed and controlled through the demonstrable application of common and consistent professional standards. We must also be prepared to work to similar appropriate standards.

To be recognized as a coordinated body of professionals with the ability to deliver consistent, quality-assured services to the public, ACART needs to be able to demonstrate that it has processes and controls in place against which we all agree to be regularly and objectively assessed.

If we are to have confidence that our members are delivering a consistently high level of Reflexology therapy to the population of this province and to gain public confidence and trust, we need methods that enable us to test and monitor our members and the services that they provide. These standards are intended to be used as a monitor of professional performance and a guide for excellence in the Reflexology therapist's scope of practice. ACART's practitioners are required to abide by these regulatory standards and are accountable for their professional conduct. ACART is accountable for the provision of quality services to the public by its practitioners. A professional conduct review and complaint process as well as disciplinary procedures are in place should these services be questioned.

These standards describe a level of achievement and develop the framework for professional practice. They, along with ACART's Codes of Conduct and Ethics, provide an outline for the performance expected of our registered Reflexology therapists who shall practice only within the limits of their professional training and competency. They also act as a guide to the knowledge, skills, and judgment needed to support safe practice and the quality delivery of Reflexology therapy services. These standards are not intended to be an all-inclusive list of criteria. As we learn from our own experiences, those of our clients and other interested parties in the province, these practice standards are reviewed and amended on a regular basis to accurately reflect current developments in the profession. We will also revisit them as we learn from the experiences of fellow practitioners across Canada and in other countries where applications of Reflexology therapy are wider and more advanced than our procedures.

As a self-regulating association, ACART's by-laws and membership programs are designed to maintain and enhance the delivery of consistently high quality professional Reflexology therapy services as evidenced by these standards for practice, its codes of conduct and ethics, educational and liability insurance requirements for registration, mandatory continuing education and professional development policies, research protocol and guidelines to a professional workplace environment. As previously mentioned, a professional conduct review and complaint process as well as disciplinary procedures are also in place.

In order to be able to deliver Reflexology therapy services as widely as possible across the province, we need to be recognized by four principle groups.

- 1) First and perhaps most importantly, we need to be recognized by the general public. They need to understand what it is that Reflexology therapy and hence Reflexology therapists have to offer and they need to have confidence that they will receive safe, consistent, high quality services when receiving therapy from an ACART registered practitioner.
- 2) We are keen to gain recognition for the therapeutic benefits of Reflexology treatment from the health care sector as has already happened in the UK, some European countries and other parts of the world. Once that recognition has been achieved, our services will be one more "tool" available to medical practitioners when considering the best way to care for their patients. It will also provide for the eventuality of Reflexology therapists working alongside other health care practitioners in hospitals and other places dedicated to the treatment of, and recovery from, illness.
- 3) We are working to become recognized by the insurance sector so that Reflexology therapy treatments are included as a modality in work-place insurance benefits plans. This recognition would insure that employees and their families covered by such plans would have access to Reflexology therapy where it is seen as a means of improving a diagnosed health problem or as an aid to healing or palliative care.
- 4) We are working towards having Reflexology therapy officially recognized by the government of this province. It needs to be acknowledged as a profession with its practitioners as health care providers by accomplishing the proclamation of a Reflexology Therapy Act of Legislation. This will legally allow us to serve the public interest and to protect our profession and its practitioners.

Definitions

- accountability - an obligation to be responsible for one's actions
- competent - the ability to apply the knowledge, skills and judgment necessary for safe, ethical and effective professional practice
- informed consent - one that is voluntarily made by a client after information about treatment, available alternatives and potential consequences has been explained
- professional - a specialist by their scope and depth of expertise
- recognized Reflexology therapy training program - a professional Reflexology therapy certification training program whose curriculum is recognized by ACART as meeting minimum educational standards
- Reflexology - a widely practiced manual treatment for relaxation and basic self-help for which the provider may or may not have formal training
- Reflexology therapist/practitioner - a professional who practices the art and science of Reflexology therapy
- Reflexology therapy - a highly developed health care discipline which requires knowledge of the complexity of illness to be applied by a skilled therapist in practice Reflexology therapy is the theory and therapeutic art and science of applying noninvasive systematic and precise hand, finger and thumb stimulus to specific locations and reflex zones of the body to affect a physiological change within the body. The profession requires a basic standard of knowledge and a minimum level of educational qualifications in theoretical and clinical training. Specialized techniques, methods and areas of application define the unique modality of Reflexology therapy as opposed to other health care professions. While Reflexology therapy is a distinct profession, it serves well as a valuable adjunct to other medical practices.
- Reflexology therapy practice – the provision of professional services for the assessment of a client's health concerns, planning a suitable course of therapy, treatment and evaluation of the results to promote and maintain good health and well-being and for the treatment of injury and illness
- Self-regulation - the recognition that the profession itself is best able to determine how it will be regulated and the commitment and relative autonomy to set the requirements and guidelines for both the practice and its practitioners within the realm of public accountability
- scope of practice - the functions in which members of a profession are educated and authorized to perform

- standard - an accepted example of something against which others are judged or measured (Collins English dictionary)
- Atlantic Canada Association of Reflexology Therapists(ACART) - the non-profit association providing provincial representation to professional Reflexology practitioners and students who are graduates of or enrolled in a recognized Reflexology therapy training program

Standards for Reflexology Therapy Practice are used as a reference by ACART's practitioners to better understand their responsibilities and scope of practice and as a guideline to developing appropriate professional relationships. They may also be used in conjunction with other resources to guide the Reflexology therapist. Amongst other purposes, standards serve to determine eligibility to practice and membership registration requirements and are used during the complaint and disciplinary process. They also serve the purpose of informing the public and other interested parties about what they can expect from ACART's registered Reflexology therapy practitioners so that they may assess the quality of practice.

Standard 1 - Accountability

The registered professionally practicing Reflexology therapist is accountable to the public for safe, competent and ethical Reflexology therapy practice.

Each practitioner:

1. Practices in accordance with:
 - a. ACART's By-Laws. - ACART's Standards for Reflexology Therapy Practice. - ACART's Codes of Conduct and Ethics. - relevant ACART policies, guidelines and other documents. - individual competence. - relevant legislation.
2. Is accountable and responsible for their actions and decisions at all times during the performance of their duties.
3. Ensures a safe, supportive and professional practice environment for both client and therapist.
4. Takes corrective action in situations where client or personal safety and well-being may be or has been compromised to prevent or minimize harm arising from such event.
5. Chronologically and timely records and maintains documentation that is clearly understood, accurate, reflective of observations, legible and permanent.

Standard 2 - Theoretical Knowledge

Before accepting applicants as professionally practicing members of ACART, we will examine their qualifications.

1. The training process will have included the acquisition of theoretical and clinical knowledge. How well the student has progressed will have been tested by written and practical examination and through the assessment of a significant number of case studies.
2. Where students have been through such an ACART approved program of training in Canada and have been certified as meeting the requirements of the examination process, ACART will accept that certification as evidence of competency.
3. When ACART receives applications for membership from practitioners who have received their training and certification from a non-ACART approved program or perhaps from another country, we will require detail about the curriculum that the training followed and will assess this to judge whether it has the rigor and the depth to match training in Canada. Where we decide that it does, we will accept those applicants for membership. Where we consider that the training received has deficiencies, we will identify those for the applicant and suggest what continuing education is required to meet qualifications for membership.

Standard 3 - Clinical Practice Skills

Clinical practice skills require more than the acquisition of knowledge to guarantee the delivery of consistent, high quality services.

There are a number of aspects of how knowledge is applied that have a significant effect on how a client perceives their Reflexology therapy treatment. The aspects that we wish to assess when considering clinical practice capability include:

- How the client is first introduced to Reflexology therapy through evaluation of their
- Health history and their reasons for considering Reflexology treatment as a solution to their needs.
- How the results of the Reflexology therapy assessment are presented to the client and what recommendations for treatment are made.
- Treatment planning with the client.
- How skills are applied in order to address perceived health issues and to deliver the agreed program for treatment.
- Regular review and discussion with clients about the effectiveness of the treatments.

While it will not be practical to closely monitor these aspects during the course of a client's treatment, they will be explored if there is a complaint or other disciplinary process initiated.

Standard 4 - Professional Relationships

The registered professionally practicing Reflexology therapist engages in professional therapeutic relationships with clients and protects the confidentiality of all information.

Each practitioner:

- Maintains appropriate boundaries between professional and non-professional relationships.
- Behaves in a professional manner with clients.
- Discusses relevant information with clients regarding their health.
- Protects the privacy of the client and the confidentiality of information gained during the professional relationship.
- Uses discretion in respect to the disclosure of confidential information.
- Respects clients' rights to partnership in the therapeutic process by supporting their informed decisions regarding their health.
- Obtains clients' informed consent to therapy prior to the initial treatment.
- Clarifies clients' expectations and corrects any misconceptions.
- Advocates for clients and the Reflexology therapy profession.
- Makes referrals as needed to other healthcare professionals.

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