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Sandra's experiences include every aspect of the industry; entire Spa/Salon projects; from inception to Grand Opening, and everything in between. Living, working and traveling internationally has allowed Sandra to personally experience and research the marketplace diversity and Spa/Salon Experiences. Sandra enjoys sharing her wisdom with writing articles for trade magazines and developing curriculum.

Inspiration and information, is what she is all about; with a passion and enthusiasm for life. Her book, "Spa & Salon Alchemy", published by Thomson/Delmar Learning, New York is available on www.kyrion.ca. Her 2nd book, Spa & Salon Alchemy: Step by Step Spa Procedures published by the same publisher is now available.

Massage and Bodywork Modalities

BY SANDRA ALEXCAE MOREN

Consumer demand is driving the spa explosion and our consumers of today are much more savvy, knowledgeable and demanding with regards to their *spa experience*. With increasing interest in holistic and preventative health care, the appeal of the spa industry has grown. As life spans increase individuals are recognizing the importance of health and wellness. Because our culture is gravitating toward greater inner exploration and integration of body, mind and spirit, consumers are open to new approaches to healing, longevity and youthfulness. The majority of individuals want to look good, feel good, and retain their youth and vitality as long as possible.

A changing marketplace challenges individuals in the spa industry to research, experience, understand and implement innovative processes to create business environments offering services, treatments and products that are aligned with new world views. A new set of views is forming creating a belief system that looks much like our ancient traditions, yet is reinforced and transformed by our modern sciences. An example is the recent medical theory, *energy medicine* or *vibrational medicine*, which is supported by the Einsteinium worldview; which states that all matter is really another form of energy. In other words, human beings are unique energy systems operating at different frequencies rather than just biological machines. Through and understanding of how our non-physical or energetic system affects the physical body's organization structure, you will begin to realize the cellular intelligence of the body. Integrating both the non-physical and physical anatomical aspects of the body will assist individuals working in the spa industry through offering unique services and treatments for the consumer.

The body is a unified energy field, an integrated whole, where body, mind and spirit are one.

Massage and bodywork allow us to explore our body, mind and spirit and shift our focus from thinking *to experiencing and feeling*. It includes traditional massage and other approaches to working with the body.

More than 2000 years ago, the Chinese practice of manipulating pressure points provided the first written reference to bodywork, whereas knowledge of spinal adjustment through massage was described in an ancient Egyptian papyrus from 1700 B.C. In the United States, massage was practiced in hospitals and included in physical therapy until the 1950's, when it evolved into a separate discipline. Later that decade, the space race spurred a scientific movement in popular culture, while advances in surgery and antibiotics swayed conventional belief that modern medicine could cure any illness. As a result, massage declined in popularity until the 1970's, when growth of the human potential movement rekindled interest in the practice. The Office of Alternative Medicine was established in 1992 by the U.S. Congress to evaluate complementary health care practices; within a year, bodywork projects were awarded the lion's share of research grants.

Massage happens to be the most popular spa treatment according to the majority of research. Touch in massage triggers the body's natural healing response. Body treatments are an excellent addition for the client before or after the massage depending upon the specific requirements of the product line you are using.

There are many types of massage and bodywork available; which when personally experienced allow you to assess the process and the benefits...then you can decide if you want to incorporate specific treatments into your business. Since clients are well traveled, educated and knowledgeable; one of the greatest challenges in the spa industry is to keep abreast of the changes. Consumers want something unique in terms of services, treatments and products. If you have the space in your facility you may want to integrate Yoga, Pilates, NIA and other body, mind and spirit modalities of movement.

With the growing number of Medical Spas and experts such as Deepak Chopra, Andrew

Weil, Bernie Siegel, Larry Dossey and other physicians endorsing the benefits of massage, bodywork and other touch modalities you may want to at least be aware of the modalities even if you do not offer them. With the focus shifting from the pampering and beauty aspect to addressing demands for services with therapeutic benefits, wellness, preventive medicine, energy medicine, alternative healing, and spiritual practices...we are seeing a blending of Eastern and Western, ancient and modern healing approaches. Embrace the transformations taking place in our society and gain insightful clarity on what you want to offer for spa services and treatments that will revitalize humanity. Have fun personally experiencing the wide array of modalities! ♦

Let us explore and perhaps one day you will experience some of the massage and bodywork modalities!

Swedish Massage

Swedish massage has the following characteristics:

- a basic therapeutic approach to healing, which incorporates a variety of massage strokes to the soft tissue structure.
- helps the body remove toxins and deliver nutrients to tissues and cells more quickly.
- helps recover from strains and trauma more quickly.

Sports massage, a specialty area of traditional massage, helps achieve maximum physical performance and protects against pain and injuries.

Trager Approach

The Trager approach has the following characteristics:

- reeducates the nervous system in more relaxed, less painful patterns.
- a typical psychophysical integration includes gentle rhythmic rocking, kneading, shaking, vibrating and stretching movements to increase range of motion and induce relaxation.

Trager practitioners are trained and certified at Trager Institutes.

Myofascial Release

Myofascial release has the following characteristics:

- it is a whole body approach to healing that seeks to restore balance to the body by releasing tension in the fascia. Fascia is a thin layer system of connective tissue that supports, surrounds and interweaves every organ, muscle and bone in the body.
- along with release of physical tension, clients report a release of emotional material.
- when energy has been blocked or locked in a place and is released, heat is given off.

It is especially effective for longer term relief of chronic pain and dysfunction associated with muscular tightness-including neck, jaw, and back pain; muscle tension and stress related disorders.

There is no separate licensing for myofascial release as it is taught in a series of intensive, sequential workshops to health professionals who already have licenses or certificates in related disciplines.

Rolfing

Rolfing has the following characteristics:

- structural integration is a technique of manipulating the soft tissue of the body to restore flexibility and ease of movement by freeing segments of the body, which become locked in patterns of tension.
- deep tissue massage or bodywork that focuses on myofascial release.
- to be aligned vertically, a plumb line is dropped from an individual's head to feet and should form a straight line, passing through the midpoints of five key landmarks: the ears, shoulder joints, hip joints, knees and ankles.
- Rolfing protocol includes having your photo taken before and after each session to chart the progress of change.
- a Rolfing series follows a systematic process that reflects progression to restructure the body.

Shiatsu

Shiatsu has the following characteristics:

- Finger pressure therapy is an Oriental healing method wherein a practitioner applies pressure to specified points on the body to restore energetic balance to the body, mind and spirit.
- every being is animated by a vital force or energy called *Ki* (in Japanese), which circulates in the body through a series of channels called *meridians*.
- disturbance or disharmony of the flow of *Ki* causes disease.
- pressure points used in Shiatsu are the same ones used by an acupuncturist to insert the needles.

Shiatsu is performed with the client lying on the floor on a comfortable futon or cushion. Specialized shiatsu designations include the following:

- Barefoot Shiatsu
- Magnetic Shiatsu
- Five-element Shiatsu

Thai Massage

Thai massage has the following characteristics:

- it resembles techniques of Shiatsu, with the practitioner applying pressure with the palms and fingers to release blockages and balance the energy along specified body pathways.
- the network of energy is more closely linked to the Hindu energetic system of nadis than to the Chinese system of meridians.

Jin Shin Do Bodymind Acupressure

- Jin Sin Do acupressure has the following characteristics:
- deep finger pressure on acupressure points with verbal body focusing and emotional processing techniques.
- it releases physical and emotional tension and *armoring*.

Rosen Method

- The Rosen method has the following characteristics:
- it is an approach to healing that uses gentle touch and verbal support to assist clients in unlocking old memories that can prevent them from *becoming* or realizing their full potential.
- in letting go of suppressed emotions, individuals report a release of chronic muscular tension.

Breath is the gateway between the unconscious and the conscious.

Certification includes intensive training plus a clinical internship.

Rubinfeld Synergy Method

- The Rubinfeld Synergy method has the following characteristics:
- it combines touch with verbal expression to promote healing and unify body, mind, emotions and spirit.
- gentle touch, verbal expression, and movement detect areas of emotional holding and tension.
- it includes training in the Alexander technique, the Feldenkrais method, gestalt practice and Ericksonian hypnotherapy.
- a *synergist* uses gentle touch, which is not invasive and does not inflict pain which encourages a client to a more pleasurable way of being.

Alexander Technique

The Alexander technique has the following characteristics:

- it is a system of aligning the spine and reeducating your body and mind.
- the neck is of prime importance because it is the area through which all the nerves that receive sensory input from and direct motor activity to nearly the entire body.
- all the vertebrae of the spinal column are interconnected through a series of complex joints; pressure on the neck vertebrae can cause pressure throughout the rest of the vertebral column.
- North American Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique (NASTAT) has established standards, training and certification of teachers.

Feldenkrais Method

- the objective is to bring unconscious movement into conscious awareness and provide options that enable us to choose patterns of movement and behavior.
- There are two formats in this method; private lessons called functional integration and awareness through movement with a group class through structured sequence of movement.
- The Feldenkrais training program is generally conducted over a period of 4 years, with several intensive sessions of several weeks each year.

Therapeutic Touch

- Therapeutic touch uses the first healing modality of its kind to be taught within a full accredited master's degree program.
- Dolores Krieger, PhD, RN, Professor of Emerita Nursing at New York University's prestigious Division of Nursing, and Dora Kunz, a noted metaphysician, developed therapeutic touch.
- Therapeutic touch is based on two fundamental principles:

Each human being is an open energy system in dynamic relationship with the environment and each individual is bilaterally symmetric, with the right and left sides of the body mirroring each other.

Lomi-lomi Massage

- This unique healing massage has been handed down through the Hawaiian families for generations and is profoundly healing and nurturing.
- Lomi-lomi can be given by a single practitioner or with two practitioners working together through the rhythmic application of thumbs, knuckles, forearms and elbows to release areas of congestion and tension.

Craniosacral Therapy

- Craniosacral therapy is a hands-on approach system that extends from the skull, face and mouth (the cranium) down and within the spinal column to the sacral and the coccyx.
- At the center of this network is the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), which circulated throughout the system within an envelope of meninges, bathing, nourishing, and protecting the brain, the spinal cord and the nerve roots.
- It originated early in the 19th century from a branch of the medical practice of osteopathy.
- The practitioner uses the bones and soft tissue of the skull and pelvis as handles to release tension areas.

Somato Emotional Release

- Somato emotional release is based on the belief that our bodies hold the energy of past traumas, both physical and emotional, in the form of memories in the body's physical tissue.
- with Somato emotional release the therapist finds and discharges energy that is embedded in congested areas as energy cysts.

Reflexology

- Reflexology is a technique of manipulating various reflex areas of the body, mainly the feet.
- Reflex zones in the feet are related to body parts, organs and glands.
- It can relieve areas of congestion through using your thumbs and fingers to apply a series of manipulative strokes, which relaxes the foot and breaks up areas of tension.

Reiki

- Reiki (pronounced Ray-key) is an energetic healing practice that uses hands-on touch and focused visualization.
- it is a Japanese word meaning *universal life force*.
- Reiki practitioners use reiki energy to balance and amplify an individual's energy to promote healing.
- it may be integrated with other modalities of massage therapy.

Aromatherapy Massage

- may be incorporated into nearly any type of massage technique.
- you may combine a pure essential oil in a carrier oil/massage oil.
- the oil is absorbed by the skin and transported through the body's blood and lymphatic system to organs, glands, nerves and soft tissue.
- it is imperative to become certified as an aroma therapist prior to advising on or using a particular type of oil.

Stone Therapy

- is one of the most popular treatments offered in spas throughout the world.
- combining massage strokes and alternating hot and cold stones, clients can enjoy a unique therapy.
- stones work by resonating a specific energy, which when placed on the body removes blockages, stress and negativity.
- regular Swedish massage, and any acupressure modalities are an excellent way to incorporate the stones.
- There are excellent training seminars on this particular type of bodywork modality.