

Anterior and Lateral Chest Massage

Preamble

The Massage & Myotherapy Australia Anterior and Lateral Chest Massage Position Statement and the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice governing massage therapy apply to anterior and lateral chest massage. This is particularly true with respect to assessment, therapeutic relationships, communication, consent and professional boundaries.

Massage of the anterior and lateral chest region can be personally and ethically complex for the client and the therapist. A high level of professionalism, self-awareness and interpersonal skill is required. The associated risk attached to incorrect, or poorly applied process and technique, can be serious for both the client and the therapist.

The following guidelines have been developed to assist the therapist specifically in the delivery of treatment of the anterior and lateral chest wall and the surrounding musculature and fascial structures.

Aim

These Guidelines serve as a context for therapists to work within an appropriate manual therapy practice. They provide a platform for the National Ethics Committee (NEC) and National Education Committee (NEdC) to make an informed determination in relation to any complaints that may arise.

These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Massage & Myotherapy Australia Code of Ethics and Standards of Practiceⁱ, the Anterior and Lateral Chest Massage Position Statementⁱⁱ and the Massage & Myotherapy Australia Draping Guidelinesⁱⁱⁱ.

The Company Board of Directors serves to protect both the membership and the public by adopting the Guidelines which are resolutely linked to the overall policy of the Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice^{iv}.

Principles of Practice

Massage of the anterior and lateral chest is often included as part of the Health Training Package (HLT) in the Certificate IV and the Diploma Remedial Massage qualifications. It is also included in specific modalities at more depth so as to address specific musculoskeletal and lymphatic disorders as well as in traditional Eastern sequences.

Professional Management

The therapist is required to follow certain guidelines to protect them self and their client.

As with all health care relationships, trust and rapport needs to be developed between therapist and client. This can take time and may be best achieved through open and honest discussions involving the client in their health care plan. Respectful behaviour toward the client at all times is paramount and will provide a level of comfort and security and an environment that will benefit the treatment received.

The entire process to be followed should be clearly explained to, and discussed with, the client prior commencement of the anterior and lateral chest massage. This includes the consultation and assessment process, the treatment session itself, and the take home self-care information, if required.

Special consideration must be given to the client post-surgery or in the event of painful breasts. Lying prone and, at times, in side-lying may be too painful or uncomfortable for the client.

It is Massage & Myotherapy Australia's position that under no circumstance is the nipple or areola to be touched or intentionally stimulated regardless of the gender of the client.

Communication

Communications with the client must include the possibility that a massage of the anterior and lateral chest may invoke emotional reactions or painful memories.

The client needs to be able to engage in dialogue with the therapist about treatment. Reluctance to discuss treatment may indicate that the client is inadequately informed^v. Information materials and options within the treatment protocols should be provided for the client prior to treatment commencing so the client can make an informed decision in their treatment session.

Both the client and the therapist need to be comfortable about the provision of treatment before the commencement of treatment.

Consent

At all times, the client/therapeutic relationship boundaries must be observed.

Full verbal and signed written consent must be obtained from the client following a full explanation of why an anterior chest or lateral chest massage is required and what techniques will be used in any treatment session.

Anterior and lateral chest massage is a type of treatment which must be consented to separately and specifically. The client must clearly understand they have the right, at any time, to alter or discontinue the treatment. Consent for anterior and lateral chest massage should be renewed prior to every session and documented accordingly.

Client consent^{vi} (The standard is for therapists to gain written consent at every treatment, however, documented verbal consent will suffice unless the treatment is vastly different.

Draping

Effective and appropriate draping is an essential component of the comfort of the client during treatment of the area.

Draping includes full cover of the anterior and lateral chest when not being treated. Use towels, sheets or sarong, or your client can wear a singlet or bra. At no time should both sides of the anterior chest be exposed. The appropriate use of draping to cover the other side, and to maintain warmth for the client, is important. The client may use their other hand (opposite to the treatment side) to hold the draping in place for added personal protection and a feeling of safety.

Technical Guidelines

Anterior and lateral chest massage should only be applied if the therapist has the relevant qualification in the specific modality or has been competently trained with the appropriate remedial techniques. The client is entitled to request to view evidence of qualifications.

The therapist should be familiar with the risks, adaptation, and techniques for treating clients with cancer and their considerations. It is a requirement the provides has written consent from the treating physician prior to any massage treatment commencing.

Specialised Training

Massage & Myotherapy Australia recommends remedial massage therapists who do not have specialised training in lymphoedema management should refrain from performing MLD on clients who present with lymphoedema. Massage & Myotherapy Australia recommends that you refer your client to an appropriately trained lymphoedema management therapist.

Other Documents

- Code of Ethics
- Standards of Practice
- Anterior and Lateral Chest Policy Statement
- Breast/Chest Massage Consent Form
- Statement - Informed Consent

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- i Massage & Myotherapy Australia Code of Ethics & Standards of Practice
 - ii Massage & Myotherapy Australia Anterior and Lateral Chest Massage Position Statement
 - iii Massage & Myotherapy Australia Draping Guidelines
 - iv ibid
 - v Ibid
 - vi Massage & Myotherapy Australia Informed Consent – Anterior and Lateral Chest Massage