THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE AND BODYWORK
HEALING THERAPIES

Oh, that the water softens the rocks with time,
may thy hands craft my body soft like the weathered rock.
—Anonymous

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Health care is evolving and integrating the healing therapies of alternative and allopathic medicine. Therapeutic massage and bodywork healing methods are being integrated in many healthcare organizations. This course will describe somatic and musculoskeletal therapies (therapeutic massage, which includes Swedish massage, sports massage, Esalen massage, neuromuscular massage therapy, and Aston patterning); Eastern, meridian-based, and point therapies (acupressure, shiatsu, Jin Shin Jyutsu, and reflexology); energy-based therapies (Therapeutic Touch, Reiki, and Healing Touch); emotional bodywork (Rolfing and Hellerwork); and manipulative therapies (chiropractic and osteopathy).

The outcome of this course is for the learner to describe the various types of therapeutic bodywork techniques and healing therapies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Describe cultural variations in bodywork.

2. List the principles or techniques of contemporary and traditional bodywork.

3. Describe the benefits of therapeutic massage.
4. Explain the therapeutic massage modalities of Swedish massage, sports massage, neuromuscular massage, and Aston patterning.

5. Describe the Eastern, meridian-based, and point therapies of acupressure, shiatsu, Jin Shin Jyutsu, and reflexology.

6. Discuss the energy-based therapies of Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, and Healing Touch.

7. Explain the emotional bodywork therapies of Rolfing and Hellerwork.

8. Describe the manipulative therapies of chiropractic and osteopathy.

9. Identify the cautions and contraindications for massage and bodywork.
INTRODUCTION

Human touch is one of the most primal needs. Research has demonstrated that touch can enhance health and heal the body and mind (Freeman, 2009). As health care evolves and integrates the worlds of alternative and allopathic practitioners, therapeutic massage and bodywork healing methods are being integrated with health care in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice centers, and other healthcare facilities.

Techniques for massage and bodywork vary among practitioners; however, the objectives are similar: to relax; soothe; stimulate; and relieve physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual discomfort (Delany, 2015).

Trivieri and Anderson (2002) define the term bodywork as “therapies such as massage, deep tissue manipulation, movement awareness, and bioenergetic therapies, which are employed to improve the structure and functioning of the body” (p. 119). They add that the benefits of bodywork include pain reduction, musculoskeletal tension relief, improved blood and lymphatic circulation, and the promotion of deep relaxation.

Massage is soft tissue manipulation, including holding, causing movement, and/or applying pressure to the body. In general, massage therapists press, rub, and manipulate the muscles and other soft tissues of the body. They usually use their hands and fingers but may also use their forearms, elbow, or feet (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health [NCCIH], 2018).

Massage has a complex and extensive history, with over 75 different types of massage and bodywork therapies. First practiced over 5,000 years ago in China and Mesopotamia, massage is a therapy that applies manual techniques and may apply additional alternative and complementary therapies with the intent to positively affect an individual’s health. One of the oldest forms of health practice, massage is derived from the Arabic, Greek, Hindi, and French words associated with touch, pressing, or shampooing (NCCIH, 2018).
Both the Bible and the Koran refer to anointing the skin with oil. Various techniques were used in Japanese and Middle Eastern cultures as part of their health and hygiene routines and by the Greeks and Romans when preparing their soldiers and gladiators for battle.

During the Middle Ages, religious dogma and superstition regarded massage as sinful because it was related to physical and emotional pleasure. Massage was introduced to the United States from Europe in 1879, and nurses and physiotherapists used massage on injured soldiers during both World Wars.

Although the techniques for massage and bodywork vary among practitioners, the objectives are similar: to relax, soothe, stimulate, and relieve physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual discomfort (Jackson & Latini, 2013). Touching and stroking are important to the health of infants, children, and adults. Regular massage improves overall health, eases tension in muscles, promotes circulation of the blood, and stimulates lymphatic drainage to encourage the elimination of waste from the body.

Most bodywork practitioners employ a combination of bodywork methods. Swedish massage, reflexology, shiatsu, sports massage, and Rolfing are some examples of massage and bodywork modalities used to promote general relaxation, relieve muscle tension, and improve circulation and range of motion.

Despite differences in techniques, all massage therapists must understand the following three concepts (Werner, 2012):

- How the human body works when it is healthy
- How the body works in the context of disease or dysfunction
- How a particular bodywork modality may influence those processes

Werner (2012) provides a comprehensive text entitled *A Massage Therapist’s Guide to Pathology* to help bodywork practitioners make informed choices when selecting modalities for clients who may not be in perfect health.

**CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN BODYWORK**

Both ancient and modern cultures have developed some form of touch therapy that involves rubbing, pressing, massaging, and holding. Although attitudes toward touch vary from one culture to another, the widespread use of bodywork practices indicates that these are natural manifestations of the desire to heal and care for one another (Jackson & Latini, 2013).
Nevertheless, cultural differences have influenced the development of touch. For example, whereas the Eastern worldview is founded on the concept of energy, the Western worldview is based on the reductionism of matter. This cultural difference has created a variety of different approaches to the use of touch, and the blending of Eastern and Western techniques has resulted in an explosion of new bodywork healing modalities. This may be due, in part, to a healthy response to the fast-paced technologic revolution and the desire to provide individuals with a sense of balance and caring (Jackson & Latini, 2013).

BODYWORK APPROACH TO AWARENESS AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Both contemporary and traditional bodywork therapies are based on one or more of the following principles or techniques (Clay & Pounds, 2008; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002):

- The individual is a whole organism (everything is connected).
- Shortened muscle tissue can do no work.
- The soft tissues of the body respond to touch.
- Pressure or deep friction can be used to alter muscular and soft tissue structures.
- Movement can be used to affect physiological structure and functioning.
- Education and awareness can be used to change or enhance physiological function.
- Breathing and emotional expression can be used to eliminate tension and change physiological functioning.

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE

Therapeutic massage is undergoing a renaissance, and massage therapy is one of the fastest-growing healthcare professions in the United States (Clay & Pounds, 2008). An overwhelming accumulation of scientific evidence supports the claim that massage therapy can be beneficial in healing injuries, treating certain chronic and acute
conditions, dealing with the stress of daily life, and maintaining good health. As individuals look for alternative or complementary therapies to supplement their medical treatments, many choose therapeutic massage.

The therapeutic use of massage has been around for centuries. It is one of the oldest known forms of healing. Massage was first practiced in a structured way in China and Mesopotamia more than 5,000 years ago. Hippocrates, generally recognized as the father of Western medicine, considered massage of prime importance in any health regimen. Most modern methods of massage are derived mainly from Swedish massage, originally developed in the late 18th century.

Today therapeutic massage includes Swedish massage, sports massage, Esalen massage, neuromuscular therapy, and Aston patterning, as well as deep tissue, trigger point, and myofascial massage.

**Definition of Therapeutic Massage**

Therapeutic massage is the systematic and scientific manipulation of the soft tissues and muscles of the body for the purpose of improving, maintaining, and assisting the body in healing. It can also be defined as organized, intentional touch (Eliopoulos, 2013; Salvo, 2015). Massage therapy is a profession in which the practitioner applies manual techniques and may apply adjunctive therapies with the intention of positively affecting the health and well-being of the client.

**Benefits of Therapeutic Massage**

**Systemic Benefits**

By the response it creates within the body, massage has the ability to affect the physiologic functioning of a number of systems. The scientific application of massage therapy can best be understood by examining its beneficial aspects on the following body systems (Eliopoulos, 2013; Freeman, 2009; Salvo, 2015):
• **Circulatory**: Massage is known to increase venous blood flow back to the heart, thus improving circulation.

• **Digestive**: Massage promotes the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, which stimulates digestion, helps promote evacuation of the colon, and promotes peristaltic activity in the large intestine.

• **Endocrine**: Massage decreases pain by releasing endorphins, enkephalins, and other pain-reducing neurochemicals.

• **Excretory**: Massage promotes autonomic nervous system functioning; an increase in the production of gastric juices, saliva, and urine; and general homeostasis.

• **Integumentary**: Massage improves the skin’s condition, texture, and tone by stimulating the sebaceous glands, causing an increase in sebum production.

• **Muscular**: Massage relieves muscular tightness, stiffness, and spasms; it promotes muscular relaxation and enhances blood circulation, thus increasing the amount of oxygen and nutrients available to the muscles.

• **Nervous**: Because massage activates the sensory receptors, the nervous system can be stimulated or soothed, depending on the massage stroke used and the amount of pressure applied. Massage also stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, resulting in relaxation.

• **Respiratory**: Massage slows down the rate of respiration by reducing the stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system. By decreasing tightness in respiratory muscles and fascia, massage may be used to increase vital capacity and pulmonary function.

• **Skeletal (connective)**: Massage is indicated for musculoskeletal discomfort. It can increase joint mobility and flexibility by reducing hyperplasia (thickening) of connective tissue and freeing fascial restrictions.

*Physical, Mental, and Emotional Benefits*

Many people use massage therapy simply for relaxation, restoration, and pain relief. To best understand how massage works, it is important to understand the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of therapeutic massage (Holey & Cook, 2011; Salvo, 2015; Seaward, 2018).

Massage has **physical benefits** because it:

- Relieves stress and aids relaxation
- Helps relieve muscle tension and stiffness
• Fosters faster healing of strained muscles and sprained ligaments, reduces pain and swelling, and reduces the formation of excessive scar tissue
• Reduces muscle spasms
• Increases joint flexibility and range of motion
• Enhances athletic performance
• Promotes deeper and easier breathing
• Improves the circulation of blood and the movement of lymph fluids
• Reduces blood pressure
• Helps relieve tension-related headaches and the effects of eyestrain
• Enhances the health and nourishment of skin
• Improves posture
• Strengthens the immune system

The **mental benefits** of massage include:

• Fostering peace of mind
• Promoting a relaxed state of mental alertness
• Helping to relieve mental stress
• Improving the ability to monitor stress signals and respond appropriately
• Enhancing the capacity for calm thinking and creativity

The **emotional benefits** include:

• Helping to satisfy the needs for caring
• Nurturing touch
• Fostering a feeling of well-being
• Reducing levels of anxiety
• Increasing awareness of the mind-body connection
Help with Medical Conditions

Individuals with the following medical conditions may benefit from therapeutic massage (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002):

- Allergies
- Anxiety and depression
- Arthritis (both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis)
- Asthma and bronchitis
- Back and neck pain
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Circulatory problems
- Digestive disorders, including spastic colon, constipation, and diarrhea
- Headache, especially when due to muscle tension
- Insomnia
- Reduced range of motion

Swedish Massage

Pehr Henrik Ling, a Swedish physiologist and gymnastics instructor, developed the system of Swedish massage (Salvo, 2015). The most widely known and widely used system of massage in the United States, Swedish massage involves the manipulation of soft tissues for therapeutic purposes (Freeman, 2009). This system uses long strokes, kneading, and friction techniques on the more superficial layers of the muscles, combined with active and passive movements of the joints.

Each stroke and manipulation of Swedish massage is intended to have a specific therapeutic benefit. Five basic strokes or movements are used to administer a Swedish massage (Salvo, 2015; Seaward, 2018):
• **Effleurage**: A light, purposeful, gliding movement that focuses pressure horizontally in the direction of the client’s muscle fibers

• **Petrissage**: A cycle of rhythmic lifting of the muscle tissues away from the bone or underlying structures with the hollow of the palm(s), followed by firmly kneading or squeezing the muscle with a gentle pull toward the therapist, and ending with a release of the tissue

• **Friction**: A brisk, often heat-producing compressive stroke that may be delivered either superficially to the skin or to deeper tissue layers of muscle

• **Tapotement**: An application of downward vertical pressure with an abrupt release

• **Vibration**: Shaking, trembling, or oscillating movements applied with full hands, fingertips, or a mechanical device for the purpose of inducing relaxation

The strokes and manipulations of Swedish massage have specific therapeutic benefits. One of the primary goals is to increase the speed of the venous return of unoxygenated blood and circulatory waste products and toxins from the extremities.

Other benefits of Swedish massage include:

• An increase in circulation without increasing heart load
• A shortened recovery time from muscular strain
• An increase in tendon and ligament suppleness secondary to stretching
• A reduction of emotional and physical stress
• A feeling of general relaxation
• An elimination of waste products from the tissues

**Sports Massage**

One of the most visible specialties in therapeutic massage today, sports massage is the specific application of purposefully timed massage techniques, hydrotherapy protocol, range of motion and flexibility procedures, and strength and endurance training principles for athletes in competitive and recreational settings. The techniques are similar to those used in Swedish massage and have been adapted to meet the athlete’s special needs.

Whether used by professional athletes or weekend exercisers, sports massage is an effective way to help people stay healthy and injury free (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002). Sports massage should be tailored to the individual (Salvo, 2015).

Common injuries that benefit from sports massage include the following:
• **Strain**: A partial or complete muscle or tendinous tear
• **Sprain**: A partial or complete ligamentous tear caused by an overstretch injury
• **Bursitis**: Inflammation of the bursa

Sports massage can help heal strained muscles and allow healthy ones to reach and maintain peak action, with less risk of injury.

The most commonly acknowledged purposes of sports massage include the following (Holey & Cook, 2011; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002):

• Improving athletic training
• Treating sports injuries and rehabilitation
• Enhancing athletic performance
• Reducing muscle soreness and recovery time
• Assisting recovery from fatigue
• Eliminating buildup of lactic acid
• Facilitating the healing of damaged tissues
• Restoring muscle tone and mobility after vigorous workouts
• Promoting local and general relaxation

The components of sports massage include an understanding of when and when not to petrissage a sore muscle; which specific techniques to use for treating tendonitis (and how to prevent its return); why delayed muscle soreness occurs; when to schedule a session for an athlete who works out 10 to 12 times per week; and where to look for adhesions, trigger points, or other ischemic pockets that are particular to a given sport.

**Neuromuscular Massage Therapy**

Neuromuscular massage therapy applies deep tissue massage to specific muscles using concentrated finger pressure.

Used to increase blood flow, reduce pain, and release pressure on nerves caused by injuries to muscles and other soft tissue, neuromuscular massage helps release trigger points, those intense knots of tense muscle that can also refer pain to other parts of the body. For example, relieving a tense trigger point in a client’s back can help to ease pain in his or her shoulder. Trigger point massage and myotherapy are varieties of neuromuscular massage (Salvo, 2015).

**Aston Patterning**

Aston patterning uses posture re-education and stresses physical fitness techniques. Working with Ida Rolf, the developer of Rolfing, Judith Aston developed Aston patterning in its current form in 1977. Aston patterning was developed to teach people to maintain the improved alignment they received through Rolfing. Unlike Rolf’s model and its focus on body symmetry and alignment, Aston noted that all movement is
naturally asymmetrical and that a healthy body develops asymmetrically through adaptation to the kinds of work, recreation, sports, and other daily activities it performs (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Aston patterning focuses on four areas:

- Movement re-education
- Massage and soft tissue bodywork
- Fitness training
- Environmental design (for example, altering the height of an office chair to suit a particular body type)

Aston patterning is beneficial for improved movement and coordination and for managing painful conditions such as backaches, headaches, and tennis elbow.

**EASTERN, MERIDIAN-BASED, AND POINT THERAPIES**

This category includes the bodywork modalities of acupressure, shiatsu, Jin Shin Jyutsu, and reflexology.

**Acupressure**

Unlike acupuncture, which uses needles, acupressure applies finger and/or thumb pressure to specific sites along the body’s energy meridians (the invisible channels of energy flow in the body) to relieve tension, reestablish the flow of energy along the meridian lines, and restore balance to the human energy system (Eliopoulos, 2013; Jackson & Latini, 2013).

Acupressure is older than acupuncture and continues to be an effective self-care and preventive healthcare treatment for tension-related ailments (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).
Acupressure may be even more effective than acupuncture for relieving everyday aches, pain, and stress such as headaches, backaches, sinus pain, neck pain, eyestrain, and menstrual cramps. Acupressure can also reduce the pain of ulcers, help heal sports injuries, relieve insomnia, and alleviate constipation and other digestive problems.

Research has demonstrated that acupressure is a preventive measure against nausea and vomiting after surgery, two common side effects of general anesthesia (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

**Shiatsu**

Shiatsu is an ancient form of pressure-point massage that has been practiced for centuries in Japan. The name literally means “finger pressure” or “thumb pressure” (Delany, 2015).

A contemplative form of massage, shiatsu is based on the theory of the circulation of energy (qi) and the principles of the Chinese discipline of acupuncture.

Delany (2015) explains shiatsu as follows:

> Although it has a strong root in energy-based medicine, the physical nature of its practice offers a quality more similar to massage than energy work. As with other Asian-derived systems, shiatsu employs the meridian or channel concept of the human body (p.267).

In shiatsu, the systematic use of the thumb, finger, and/or heel of the hand for deep pressure is exerted on specific points along acupuncture meridians, usually for 3 to 10 seconds. Unlike Swedish massage, shiatsu requires the client’s participation in coordinating breathing with the manipulations (Jackson & Latini, 2013; Salvo, 2015).

**Jin Shin Jyutsu**

Translated as the “art of compassionate spirit,” Jin Shin Jyutsu is a gentle acupressure-type of healing approach.

Developed in Japan by Jiro Murai, this Japanese form of self-help acupressure has the goal of harmonizing the body, mind, and spirit by touching 26 points known as safety energy locks and found along energy pathways in the body. This method involves gentle touching or cradling of the body rather than massage-like movements.

Treatment can involve a series of touches, or it can be as simple as holding one finger. Jin Shin Jyutsu is beneficial for relieving pain and muscular discomfort, correcting imbalances, and preventing illness. The system is a synthesis of acupuncture, acupressure, Taoist breathing exercises, and Western psychotherapeutic theory (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).
Reflexology
dates back to the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and possibly the Chinese and native peoples of North and South America. Modern reflexology stems from the work of two Americans, Dr. William Fitzgerald and Eunice Ingham. Dr. Fitzgerald proposed the theory that the body is divided into 10 equal zones that extend the length of the body from head to toe and that stimulating an area of the foot in one zone affects other parts of the body in the same zone.

Reflexology is the application of pressure to areas on the feet, hands, and ears. It is generally relaxing and may help to reduce stress. There are reflex areas in the hands and feet that correspond to every part of the body, including organs and glands, and these parts can be affected by stimulating the appropriate reflex areas (Mayo Clinic, 2018).

A specialized massage for the hands and feet, reflexology is also known as zone therapy and is based on the Chinese idea that stimulating particular points on the surface of the body affects other areas of the body. Reflexology relates specific zones of the hands and feet to specific organs in the body and is based on the theory that 10 equal longitudinal zones run the length of the body from the top of the head to the tip of the toes (Jackson & Latini, 2013). Congestion or tension in any part of a zone affects the entire zone running laterally throughout the body.

Reflexologists believe that energy pathways exist throughout the body. The entire body, including organs, glands, and body parts, has reflex points located on the feet and, to a
lesser extent, on the hands. More than 72,000 nerves in the body terminate in the feet (Jackson & Latini, 2013).

By applying pressure to these points, reflexologists release blockages around the corresponding body part and rebalance the entire body (Eliopoulos, 2013; Salvo, 2015).

Therapists use many methods to apply pressure to the reflex points, including rubbing and rotating movements, compression, and tissue rolling, but they usually begin with firm but gentle stroking movements over the feet.

Reflexology aims to correct the three negative factors involved in the disease process: congestion, inflammation, and tension. Reported results of reflexology include pain relief and relief from the effects of stroke, hypertension, anxiety, sinusitis, sciatica, menstrual disorders, digestive problems, stress, fatigue, and general aches and pains (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

**ENERGY-BASED THERAPIES**

The use of energy-based interventions such as Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, and Healing Touch is rapidly increasing, and new types of energy-based therapies are being used in bodywork.
Reiki

Reiki is a combination of two Japanese words, rei and ki, meaning “universal life energy.” This ancient healing technique involves the transference of energy between practitioners and their clients to restore harmony to the biofield, increase the client’s energy to heal, and balance the body’s subtle energies (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Reiki principles evolved from ancient Tibetan Buddhist healing practices and were handed down from teacher to disciple (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

There are many varieties of Reiki, depending on the particular beliefs and experience of the course teachers. Considered to be a spiritual system, Reiki has been used by practitioners of Christianity, Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and Islam.

Reiki is used for treating a variety of health conditions, including the effects of stress, chronic pain, and the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. It is also used to improve immunity, a sense of well-being, and recovery from surgery and anesthesia. Reiki has been demonstrated to decrease anxiety and promote relaxation, support the healing process, and ease distress.

Clients usually experience a deep feeling of relaxation after a Reiki session. Other experiences include a feeling of warmth, tingling, sleepiness, and being refreshed.

Reiki practitioners undergo a number of training levels. Although Reiki has not received the same degree of scientific study in the United States as Therapeutic Touch and Healing Touch, evidence of its efficacy does exist (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Therapeutic Touch
Therapeutic Touch is derived from the ancient technique of laying on of hands. It is a contemporary interpretation of several ancient healing practices that consist of a learned skill for consciously directing or sensitively modulating human energies (Krieger & Kunz, 2018).

Therapeutic Touch was developed in the early 1970s by Dolores Krieger, PhD, RN, and Dora Kunz, a gifted and respected healer. Both were contemporary pioneers in integrating the spiritual dimension of healing with mainstream professional nursing practices (Krieger & Kunz, 2018).

According to Krieger & Kunz (2018) several basic scientific assumptions guided the development of Therapeutic Touch:

- All the life sciences agree that, physically, a human being is an open energy system. This implies that the transfer of energy between people is a natural, continuous event.
- Anatomically, a human being is bilaterally symmetrical.
- Illness is the result of an imbalance in the individual’s energy field.
- Human beings have the ability to transform and transcend their living conditions.

Therapeutic Touch is based on the theory that the body, mind, and emotions form a complex energy field (Krieger & Kunz, 2018).

In this form of healing, there may or may not be contact with the client’s physical body, but contact is always made with the client’s energy field. Practitioners move their hands over the client’s body to become attuned to his or her condition, with the intent to strengthen and reorient the client’s energies.

Practitioners use the subtle energy fields in and around the body to identify energy imbalances. A typical session lasts 20 to 30 minutes, while the fully clothed client sits or lies down. Practitioners first center themselves to become harmonious and more deeply connected with the client. Then the practitioners perform an assessment and utilize their energy to affect the client’s recovery. Healing is promoted when the body’s energies are in balance (Freeman, 2009).

Clients report a variety of benefits including feelings of relaxation, improved energy levels, pain reduction, reduced stress, and a general sense of well-being (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002). Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of Therapeutic Touch in a wide range of conditions, including wound healing, pain, depression, immune function, hypertension, osteoarthritis, migraine headaches, and anxiety in burn clients, among others (Benor, 2004).

Therapeutic Touch is taught mainly by nurses but also by laypersons and it is currently used by doctors, nurses, and other health professionals in the United States and throughout the world (Seaward, 2018).
The most important aspect in healing is the compassionate, focused intentionality of the practitioner toward the client. Hundreds of research studies have been conducted documenting its efficacy for both mental and physical illnesses (Freeman, 2009; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Therapeutic Touch has been associated with relativity theory, quantum theory, and nursing theory.

**Healing Touch**

Developed by Janet Mentgen, RN, in 1981, Healing Touch is a variation of Therapeutic Touch. Using their hands with light or near-body touch, Healing Touch practitioners help to clear, balance, and energize the human energy system, thus promoting healing for the mind, body, and spirit.

Originally taught as a continuing education program for nurses, massage therapists, other healthcare professionals and laypersons, Healing Touch is now used in a wide variety of settings including hospitals, long-term care facilities, private practices, hospices, and spas. Healing Touch has increased in use internationally and is taught in universities, medical and nursing schools, and other settings (Healing Touch International, 2015).

The first session of Healing Touch involves a consultation with a trained healer as well as an energy session. Questions about the individual’s physical, mental, and emotional condition are asked. The individual usually lies, fully clothed, on a massage table while the therapist gently places his/her hands slightly above or on the individual. The session usually lasts 40 to 60 minutes. There is a cumulative effect of the benefits of Healing Touch over time and regular sessions are usually recommended. Most people report
feeling deeply relaxed and peaceful during and after the session (Healing Touch International, 2015).

It has been demonstrated to provide comfort in end-of-life care by providing increased calmness, improved breathing, increased relief of pain, and increased relaxation. Hospitals that support the practice of Healing Touch as part of their integrative healthcare system have found that it facilitates the return of compassion to the forefront of client care.

Both Therapeutic Touch and Healing Touch have been sanctioned by the American Holistic Nurses Association since 1989.

EMOTIONAL BODYWORK THERAPIES

Some of these modalities are derived from ancient traditions and others from established health fields such as chiropractic (Jackson & Latini, 2013). This category of bodywork includes techniques that combine psychotherapy and bodywork, such as Rolfing and Hellerwork, among other techniques.

Rolfing

Developed by Ida Rolf, this technique helps clients establish structural relationships deep within the body and manipulates muscles for balance and symmetry (Jackson & Latini, 2013). The cornerstone of Rolf’s work is the belief that the body’s structure profoundly affects all physiological and psychological processes and that human function is improved when the segments of the body (head, torso, pelvis, legs, and feet) are properly aligned (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Rolfing is a physically applied practice, administered by a qualified practitioner, usually in a series of 10 sessions, with the objective of maximizing the individual’s physical and emotional well-being (European Rolfing Association, 2015).

Rolfing attempts to reeducate the body about proper posture. Poor posture is reflected in a number of health problems, such as backaches, headaches, and joint pain. Rolfing seeks to realign the body by working and massaging the myofascia (the connective tissue that surrounds the muscles and helps to hold the body together) through the application of sliding pressure to the affected area with the fingers, thumbs, and occasionally elbows. Once considered painful, Rolfing now includes new techniques that are quite painless.
Rolfing reduces chronic stress, promotes changes in body structure, and enhances neurological functioning. Individuals suffering from pain and stiffness related to mechanical imbalances and poor posture often benefit from Rolfing (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

**Hellerwork**

Developed by Joseph Heller, Hellerwork combines deep touch, movement education, and verbal dialogue. Hellerwork can improve body alignment and flexibility and specifically addresses the mechanical, psychological, and energetic functioning of the body. The mechanical aspect of Hellerwork, patterned after Rolfing, is designed to properly align the body with the earth’s gravitational field.

Hellerwork includes emotional content as part of the treatment (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002). For example, the first of 11 Hellerwork sessions is designed to unlock tension and unconscious breath-holding patterns in the chest to allow for fuller and more natural breathing. The client engages in a dialogue intended to emphasize the emotions and attitudes that may affect the physiological process of breathing (Hellerwork International, 2015).

- Hellerwork adds both mental and movement re-education to the physical work.
- In the 11-session series, instruction is provided on the process of breaking bad posture habits.
- Hellerwork utilizes movement and awareness to teach clients how to sit, stand, walk, lift, or run in ways that are appropriate to the body’s natural design.
- In addition, massage focuses on returning muscles and other tissues to their proper positions.
- The results can be dramatic (Hellerwork International, 2015).

The benefits of Hellerwork include improved body alignment and flexibility, increased vitality, and greater emotional clarity. This form of therapy is beneficial for individuals suffering from stiff, painful muscles due to structural imbalances or conditions that may be the result of injury, emotional trauma, or sustained stress.

**MANIPULATIVE THERAPIES**

The goal of manipulative therapies is to restore health and well-being by looking at the relationship between the structure and the function of the body (Erickson, Rosner, & Rainone, 2013). Manipulative therapies include chiropractic and osteopathy.
Chiropractic Medicine

According to history, the Chinese used manipulation healing techniques as early as 2700 BC, the Greeks in 1500 BC, and Hippocrates in 460 BC.

Founded by David Palmer in 1895, chiropractic is the fourth largest health profession in the United States (Eliopoulos, 2013) and the second largest primary healthcare field in the world. The popularity of chiropractic is due to an increased interest in wellness and holistic health, the risks of many conventional procedures and drugs, and a very high client satisfaction rating (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Chiropractic is the science that investigates the relationship between the human body’s structure (primarily of the spine) and function (primarily of the nervous system) to restore and preserve health. Chiropractors do not use medications or surgery, but they do employ, in conjunction with manual spinal alignment techniques, a variety of complementary treatments such as exercise and lifestyle recommendations, nutritional counseling, and massage. They may also use laboratory tests and X-rays for diagnosis (NCCIH, 2018; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

Trivieri and Anderson (2002) state, “When there is nerve interference caused by misalignments in the spine, known as subluxations, tension and/or pain can occur and the body’s defense can be diminished. By adjusting the spine to remove subluxations, normal nerve function can be restored” (p. 154). Subluxations can be caused by five types of factors: physical (which includes trauma), mental (such as stress), genetic predispositions, chemical (imbalance or toxicity), and thermal (includes extreme changes in temperature) (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).
Chiropractic philosophy and practice emphasize four major points:

- The human body has an innate self-healing ability and seeks to maintain homeostasis, or balance.
- The nervous system is highly developed in humans and influences all other systems in the body, thereby playing a significant role in health and disease.
- Joint dysfunction and subluxation may interfere with the ability of the neuromusculoskeletal system to act efficiently and may lead to or be concomitant with disease.
- Treatment is based on the chiropractic physician’s ability to diagnose and treat existing pathologies and dysfunctions through appropriate manual and physiological procedures.

The word *chiropractic*, which means “manually effective,” describes a system of healing that believes humans are integrated beings with strong relationships between their spinal, musculoskeletal, neurological, vascular, nutritional, emotional, and environmental components. Pain and disease are considered the results of pressure on the nervous system caused by mechanical, chemical, or psychological factors. Through a series of special examination and manipulative techniques, chiropractic practitioners apply this knowledge to diagnose, treat, and rehabilitate structural dysfunctions affecting the nervous system without the use of medications or surgery.

Chiropractic may benefit many conditions, such as arthritic conditions, asthma, back pain, headaches, stiffness, digestive difficulties, muscle strains, joint sprains, and sciatica. It may also help relieve muscular pain in the neck, shoulder, or upper arm (Eliopoulos, 2013; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

**Osteopathy**

Osteopathy is the oldest complete system of health care to originate in the United States. It is a philosophy, an art, and a science, emphasizing soft tissue work, skeletal manipulation, and pulses (Jackson & Latini, 2013). A form of bodywork, osteopathy helps restore the structural balance of the musculoskeletal system by combining joint manipulation, physical therapy, and postural reeducation.

Trivieri and Anderson (2002) explain that “doctors of osteopathic medicine (DOs, also known as osteopaths) believe that the structure of the body is intimately related to its function and that both structure and function are subject to a wide range of disorders” (p. 413).

Like allopathic physicians (MDs), osteopathic physicians complete 4 years of medical school and can choose to practice in any specialty of medicine. However, osteopathic
physicians receive an additional 300 to 500 hours in the study of hands-on medicine and the body’s musculoskeletal system (National Institutes of Health [NIH], 2018).

Osteopathic physicians focus on preventive health care and the treatment of whole persons and their environments. Osteopathic physicians use their hands to diagnose injury and illness and to encourage the body’s natural tendency toward good health (Leddy, 2006; Delany, 2015). Their training incorporates osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT) as well as standard medical procedures; they are therefore accorded unlimited licensure and full medical and surgical privileges, serve as primary providers and medical specialists, and are frequently considered mainstream practitioners.

The effectiveness of osteopathic treatment depends on the following factors:

- The level of organic disease
- The level of musculoskeletal involvement
- The client’s nutritional status
- The effectiveness of the body’s healing mechanisms

Osteopathy is effective in treating spinal and joint difficulties, arthritis, digestive disorders, menstrual problems, and chronic pain. Osteopathy has also benefited clients with allergies, cardiac diseases, breathing dysfunctions, chronic fatigue syndrome, hiatal hernia, high blood pressure, headaches, sciatica, and various other neuritis disorders (Trivieri & Anderson, 2002).

The various types of manipulative approaches utilized in osteopathy include the following (Leddy, 2006; Trivieri & Anderson, 2002):

- **Gentle mobilization**: This involves moving a joint slowly through its range of motion, gradually increasing the motion to free it from restrictions.

- **Articulation**: When motion is severely limited, a quick thrust of movement is sometimes used.

- **Functional and positional release methods**: The client is placed in a specific position to allow the body to relax and to release muscular spasms that may have been caused by strain or injury.

- **Muscle energy technique**: This involves gently tensing and releasing specific muscles to produce relaxation.

- **Cranial manipulation**: Gentle and subtle cranial techniques are used to treat conditions such as headaches, strokes, spinal cord injury, and temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ). Cranial osteopathy can also benefit young children who suffer from hyperactivity, mood disorder, dizziness, or dyslexia.
The principles and philosophy of osteopathy emphasize the following major points about health and illness:

- **Structure and function are interdependent.** Behavior involves complex interactions in which psychosocial influences can affect both anatomy (structure) and physiology (function). All these relationships are fundamentally designed to work in harmony.

- **The body has the ability to heal itself and the role of the osteopathic physician is to enhance the healing process as much as possible.** Diseases, impairments, and disabilities arise from disruptions of the normal interaction of anatomy, physiology, and behavior.

- **Appropriate treatment is based on the practitioner’s ability to understand, diagnose, and treat by whatever methods are available, including manually applied procedures.** When hands-on procedures are used to identify somatic dysfunction, the practitioner determines whether the observed pattern of somatic dysfunction can be related to any visceral, neuromusculoskeletal, or behavioral dysfunction.

**CAUTIONS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS TO BODYWORK**

Bodywork is not appropriate for everyone. Individuals with the following conditions should check with their physicians before undergoing massage (Delany, 2015):

- **Vascular conditions:** Clients with vascular conditions have a tendency to bruise, form clots or thrombi, or rupture blood vessels, and they may be adversely affected by massage therapy. Contraindicated vascular conditions include varicosities, embolus, phlebitis, thrombosis, aneurysm, atherosclerosis, hypertension, and Raynaud’s phenomenon.
• **Infectious diseases**: Infectious diseases such as cold, flu, measles, mumps, and scarlet fever are caused by an infectious agent such as a virus or a bacterium and are highly contagious. They could be transmitted to the massage therapist or to other clients.

• **Certain forms of cancer**: Many cancers spread lymphatically, and massage increases circulation of the lymph.

• **Some skin conditions**: Conditions such as rashes, poison ivy, poison oak, sumac, impetigo, athlete’s foot, ringworm, scabies, blisters, abnormal lumps, warts, herpes simplex, herpes zoster, large or loose moles, and skin ulcerations should not be massaged. As well as being contagious, several of these conditions may be worsened and spread by massage therapy.

• **Some cardiac problems**: Massage increases circulation and may overburden a failing heart. It may also increase the risks of developing a thrombus or embolus.

In addition, bodywork may be contraindicated for the following conditions unless the client’s physician gives approval (Salvo, 2015):

• **Fever**: A rise in body temperature (fever) is often a symptom of other conditions, such as infections caused by the presence of foreign bacteria or viruses. There is a risk of spreading such an infection as a result of increased circulation during bodywork.

• **Recent injury**: Because of the possibility of internal vascular bleeding, individuals should wait at least 72 hours after minor injuries before having a massage.

• **Recent surgery**: After surgery, a physician’s medical clearance is necessary before massage therapy can begin.

• **Multiple sclerosis**: Alteration in sensation occurs in many clients with multiple sclerosis, and they may be sensitive to touch. The typical hour-long massage may be too long for these clients, causing them to feel overstimulated. Because of their nerve damage, external heat is not used when massaging these clients.

• **Diabetes**: Clients with diabetes are prone to atherosclerosis, hypertension, and edema. A medical referral is necessary because these clients typically lose sensation in extremities in advanced stages of diabetes, and any loss of sensory nerve function must be taken into consideration prior to receiving a massage. If the client is receiving insulin therapy by injection, massaging the area of recent injection sites should be avoided.
• **Fractures**: Healing fracture areas should not be massaged until the fracture is completely healed and medical clearance is obtained.

• **Pregnancy**: Bodywork is not recommended during the early stages (the first trimester) of pregnancy. During the last trimester, however, gentle stroking can help ease backache and promote relaxation, although more vigorous movements should be avoided. Preeclampsia, a complex condition of pregnancy, is a contraindication for massage therapy unless approved by the client’s attending physician.

• **Hepatitis**: Bodywork is usually contraindicated in the client with hepatitis because it increases circulation and may stress an already debilitated liver.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

1. Massage and bodywork therapies are based on the physical manipulation of body structures; some are based on the manipulation of the body’s energy fields.

2. Massage and bodywork therapies use awareness and learning as the basis for improving body movement and functioning and integrating the mind and body for healing.

3. It is important for the healthcare professional to understand massage and bodywork, not only to use with clients but also to educate them about massage and bodywork therapeutic modalities.

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

1. What are the benefits of therapeutic massage?

2. How many of the massage and bodywork healing therapies have you experienced?

3. What are the cautions and contraindications for massage and bodywork?
REFERENCES


