

Contra-indications

Definition

Contra-indications are a reason, symptom or situation that prevents massage being carried out safely.

The term is derived from 'contra', meaning 'against' and 'indication' meaning 'sign'.

Implications

Contra-indications give rise to treatment not being carried out for a number of reasons:

- i. Safety - to prevent infection spreading, cross-contamination (client to client, client to therapist), aggravating conditions, over stimulation causing damage
- ii. Comfort - pain is an indication that something is wrong. Further damage can occur causing more pain. Counter-productive to massage as muscles may tense up if pain is present
- iii. Responsibility - client may suffer harm as a result of your massage, threatening your professionalism and may lead to legal action
- iv. Client withholds information - clients often forget to tell you all relevant conditions during consultation and may mention them during treatment. If in doubt, stop treatment or avoid area

Classification

Total contra-indications.

These are indications or conditions that dictate there should be no treatment whatsoever and include:

Cancer; drunk client; client has a fever; acute inflammatory conditions; contagious skin diseases, serious illness or conditions being treated medically, unless a GP has given approval.

Local contra-indications.

These are indications or conditions that dictate there should be no treatment in areas specific to the condition and include:

Skin disease in one area; area of sepsis; recent fractures, operations or scar tissue; varicose veins; extensive bruising; limb with a history of thrombosis or phlebitis (inflamed veins); areas of unexplained pain, swelling, inflammation or lumps.

Pregnancy; After a heavy meal (avoid the abdomen); women with periods should not be massaged 2 days prior to or after their period.

Requiring Medical Consent

You should seek medical consent from the GP or consultant for the following:

Clients on long term medication; those suffering from heart disease, clients with very high or low blood pressure; epileptic clients (don't over stimulate and don't leave them alone); diabetic (don't use too much pressure); clients with MS or paralysis; chronic asthmatics; clients with nut allergies.