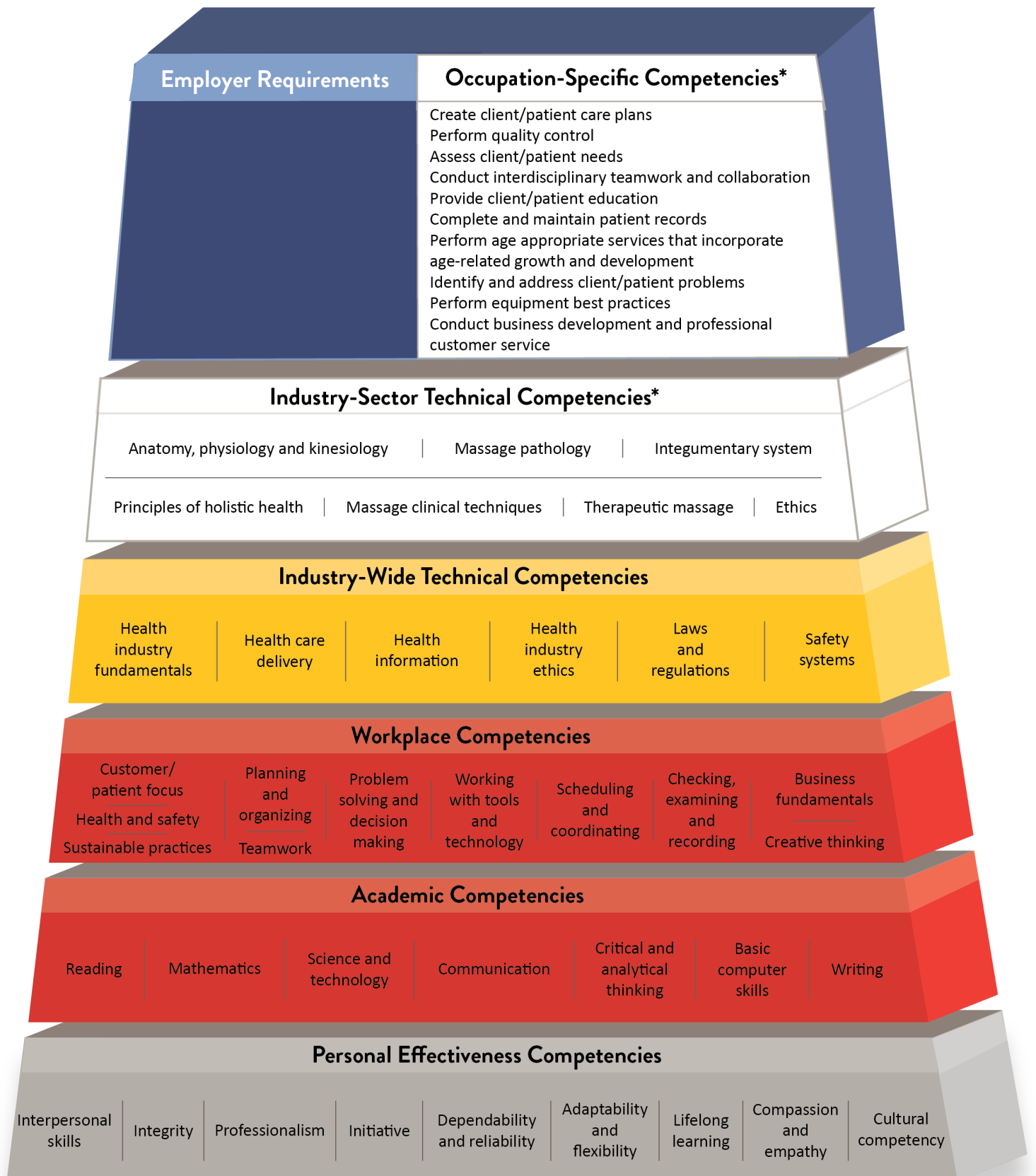


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline Competency Model for Health Care Services Occupation: Massage Therapist



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.

Competency Model for Massage Therapist

Massage Therapist – An individual who is licensed or certified to therapeutically manipulate the soft tissues of the body, including muscle, connective tissue, tendons, ligaments, and skin. The massage therapist varies the amount of pressure and movement as a part of integrative medicine. It can be used for a wide range of medical conditions. An individual in this role must follow the requirements for this occupation as outlined in law and overseen by the Minnesota Department of Health under Unlicensed Complementary and Alternative Health Care Practitioners (CAP).

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Anatomy, Physiology, and Kinesiology** – Understand the foundation of knowledge in normal physiology, pathophysiology, skeletal, muscular, nervous, and sensory systems as well as structure of joints, and other connective tissues that cause movement and control posture in the human body as they apply to massage therapy.
- **Massage pathology** – Able to know the conditions that relate to the safe practice of massage therapy. Able to recognize dysfunctions and diseases of major body systems and determine if massage therapy is indicated or contraindicated.
- **Integumentary system** – Understand how this system is the body's outer layer consisting of skin, hair, nails, and glands. These organs and structures are what massage therapists influence the most, as techniques are focused on treating deeper structures within the system and through the skin.
- **Principles of holistic health** – Understand the basics of holistic medicine, nutrition and complementary health and healing massage techniques.
- **Massage clinical techniques** – Understand how to apply massage to the back, neck and head, posterior legs, anterior torso, face, and anterior legs. Pathology of each area including function, positioning, appropriate strokes, ethical situations, and the appropriate draping.

- **Therapeutic massage** – Understand the theory, techniques and applications of deep tissue therapy including deep work on the muscles and fascia, methods of tension release, and the injury repair process. Understand causes of stress and their relationship to chronic pain as related to neuromuscular therapy and stress-tension-pain cycle.
- **Ethics** – Understand principles of massage therapy ethics and how they apply in professional standards.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Create client/patient care plans** – Understand how to listen carefully to clients/patients' needs and develop and document care plans to promote optimal massage principles and progress.
- **Perform quality control** – Understand how to monitor the quality of massage therapy activities and services.
- **Assess client/patient needs** – Know how to interview the client/patient to better understand problem areas of the body that need to be addressed through the care plan for massage therapy.
- **Conduct interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration** – Able to practice referral to other integrative health and wellbeing disciplines within the team.
- **Provide client/patient education** – Understand how to provide guidance and information about the benefits of massage as an integral part of overall whole-person wellbeing.
- **Complete and maintain patient records** – Able to create and maintain detailed client/patient records and charting.
- **Perform age-appropriate services that incorporate age-related growth and development** – Understand the principles necessary to provide appropriate service and assure safety of clients/patients in accordance with a person's age and physical well-being.
- **Identify and address client/patient problems** – Able to identify a therapeutic problem, weigh alternatives and decide how to manage and implement the solution, then evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

- **Perform equipment best practices** – Understand how to maintain massage equipment in good working condition and keep massage area clean.
- **Conduct business development and customer service** – Understand how to practice massage therapy in a manner that incorporates patient/client scheduling, marketing, and budgeting while ensuring responsiveness and friendliness to the client/ patient.

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