

Steps Toward Massage Therapy Guidelines: A First Report to the Profession

Best Practices Committee of the Massage Therapy Foundation

Bringing Together Research, Clinical Experience, Wide Participation & Review, and Knowledge Technology for the Public Good

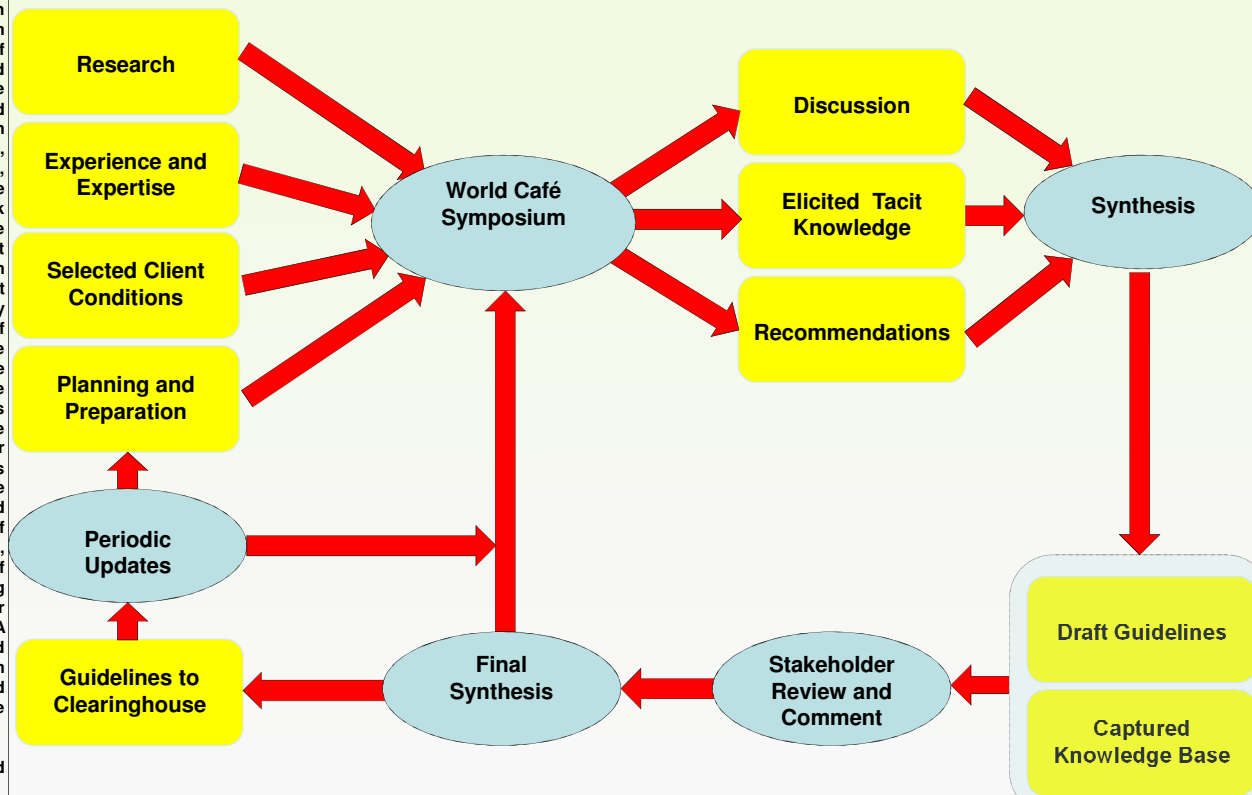


Keith Eric Grant PhD, John Balletto BS LMT, Donelda Gowan-Moody BA(Hons) RMT, Dale Healey BS DC, Diana Kincaid LMP, Whitney Lowe LMT, and Ravensara S. Travillian PhD LMP

Abstract

The massage profession has grown rapidly since the late 1980s. As with business startups that begin informally and successfully mature into larger enterprises, growth brings new organizational challenges, together with greater visibility and opportunity. The maturation of massage as a health care profession increases the need for a process to formalize the synthesis of massage therapy knowledge from clinical experience and research—to collect what we know and to make such baseline knowledge widely available to practitioners, consumers, and other health care stakeholders. In short, we need to create a process for setting guidelines. The present paper lays out the motivations and framework for creating massage therapy guidelines that are informed both by research and by clinical experience. It also acts as a report to the massage therapy profession and to other stakeholders about the work of the Best Practices Committee of the Massage Therapy Foundation since 2006. And it has the additional goal of providing a health care literature basis for future academic discussions of massage. The discussion here is based on a definition from the Institute of Medicine and on research into the nature of expertise. Guidelines are targeted for submission to the National Guideline Clearinghouse. Challenges in creating guidelines for massage therapy are discussed. Various stakeholders are considered. Current literature from the wider scope of health care is extensively reviewed. Topics addressed include guideline creation, credentialing of complementary and alternative medicine practitioners, definition of competence, and the increasing role of technology (that is, informatics) in managing training and task-necessary competencies. Finally, a process for creation of massage therapy guidelines is proposed. A central feature of the proposal is the use of a “World Café” symposium to elicit knowledge and solutions from diverse experts. The role of transparency and broad and open peer review is emphasized as essential to the usability and credibility of guidelines. Full Text at <http://journals.sfu.ca/jitmb/index.php/jitmb> International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork: Research, Education and Practice

Guidelines Process Cycle



Discussion

Clinical practice guidelines are systematically developed statements to assist practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances. – *Institute of Medicine*

The World Café

The World Café process is based on a set of seven design principles as a means of intentionally fostering conversation:

- Set the context
- Create hospitable space
- Explore questions that matter
- Encourage everyone’s contribution
- Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives
- Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions
- Harvest and share collective discoveries

These simple principles, when used in combination, provide useful guidance for anyone seeking creative ways to foster authentic dialog in which the goal is thinking together and creating actionable knowledge.

The World Café process uses a series of discussions at small tables. One person acts as host at each table, and the others progress through a series of discussions at various tables. The tables are small to draw out discussion. Progression between tables cross-pollinates ideas between tables. Each table has a white paper cover and crayons to help illustrate ideas. After a series of progressions, each table host summarizes the ideas and discussions from their table.

As a conversational process, the World Café has an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions that matter. See <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>