



A Path to Research Literacy: The Massage Therapy Foundation

John Balletto, LMT, NCTMB, Massage Therapy Foundation President

To address the need for a research infrastructure within the profession, the Massage Therapy Foundation began by convening a Massage Therapy Research Agenda Workgroup (MRAW). The research agenda created by the MRAW has framed the work of the Foundation, which includes educating practitioners, facilitating research endeavors and disseminating information. The activities of the Foundation are directed by this research agenda and allow for the Foundation to lead down a path towards and promote research literacy within the therapeutic massage and bodywork profession.



Setting a Research Agenda: Massage Research Agenda Workgroup (MRAW)

- The Massage Therapy Foundation reviewed the existing literature and surveyed schools and faculty to determine what support was cited in the teaching of therapeutic massage and bodywork techniques.
- The Foundation commissioned the writing of a paper to explore the methodological challenges involved in doing therapeutic massage and bodywork research. This paper was authored by Claire Cassidy, Ph.D.
- Convened Massage Research Agenda Workgroup March 25-28, 1999.
- Participants included physicians, clinical and experimental scientists, and massage therapists and bodyworkers, chosen to represent a broad spectrum of expertise.
- The purpose was to make recommendations on how to advance the massage therapy profession by prioritizing research in the field and chart a purposeful course for future projects. www.massagetherapyfoundation.org/massageagenda.html

Recommendations made by the MRAW:

- Build a Massage Research Infrastructure
- Fund Research into Safety & Efficacy of Massage Therapy
- Fund Studies of Physiological (or other) Mechanisms by which Massage Achieves its Effects
- Fund Studies Stemming from a Wellness Paradigm
- Fund Studies of the Profession of Therapeutic Massage

With a Research Agenda in place, our activities are directed and purposeful. Our main goals are to **Educate Practitioners, Facilitate Research and Disseminate Information.**

Educating Practitioners about why research is important and how to apply research to their practices

- **Massage Therapy Foundation Website** www.massagetherapyfoundation.org
- **Massage Therapy Research Curriculum Kit**
- **Massage Therapy Research Database**
- **Student Case Report Contest**
- **Continuing Education Workshops**

Each year at the AMTA National Convention, the Foundation holds four courses with CEU credits for massage professionals. These include

- 1.) The Foundation Grant Writing Workshop,
- 2.) The Massage Therapy Research Database Workshop,
- 3.) Current Massage Therapy Research Findings and their Effect on the Profession, and
- 4.) Foundation Post-Convention Workshop

The Dissemination of Research Information

- **Poster Sessions at the AMTA National Convention**
 - **Highlighting Massage Therapy in CAM Research Conference: September 25-27, 2005**
- This Conference seeks to reach the following objectives:
1. Educate massage practitioners about the research process,
 2. Provide an opportunity for dissemination of current massage research,
 3. Promote communication between CAM researchers and therapeutic massage/bodywork practitioners, and
 4. Facilitate collaboration between CAM researchers and therapeutic massage/bodywork practitioners.

**Facilitating Research Endeavors
The Dissemination of Research Information**

- **Publication of articles on Foundation funded research in various massage and bodywork publications**
 - **Massage Therapy Research Grants**
- The Massage Therapy Foundation has been awarding grants since 1993. Since its inception, the Foundation has granted over \$300,000 to fund scientific research in the field of massage therapy and bodywork. Foundation research grants are awarded to individuals or teams conducting studies that promise to advance our understanding of specific therapeutic applications of massage, public perceptions of and attitudes toward massage therapy, and the role of massage therapy in health care delivery.

BRIGHTER
*building a future
for massage therapy*

Contact: John Balletto, LMT, NCTMB
Massage Therapy Foundation, 500 Davis Street, Suite 900, Evanston, IL 60201
president@massagetherapyfoundation.org
View Foundation information at www.massagetherapyfoundation.org