



Servicing clients from the front-line Transitioning during COVID-19



By Wanda Guenther

As a registered massage therapist and manual lymph drainage therapist, I have been working out of my home clinic since 1993. Treatment I provide includes basic deep tissue massage, geriatric massage, neuro-proprioceptive taping, palliative care and lymphatic drainage. I started lymphatic drainage at the Breast Health Centre, treating people post breast cancer treatment for arm/trunkal lymphedema and post-surgical complications.

“Transitioning from working out of my home to doing home visits only.”

I’ve always enjoyed working out of my home and have had a busy practice. I am grateful for the clients that have come to see me over the years, for the flexibility it has afforded me and especially my ability to do the work that I love to do.

In March 2020, I closed my home clinic to comply with the mandated shut down due to COVID-19. On May 4, 2020, supported by the Massage Therapy of Manitoba (MTAM),

we were able to reopen with return to work protocol to stop the spread of COVID-19. After serious consideration and discussion with my family, this seemed to be an appropriate time to make a change so I transitioned from working out of my home clinic to conducting client home visits only. Over the years home visits had been a part of my practice. Some clients had difficulty with stairs, some were in hospital or long-term care and others simply did not have easily accessible transportation to my office. These clients made up approximately 15-20% of my total business. I wanted to create more balance in my life and ultimately chose to assist those who are housebound 100% of my time. It seemed like a good decision.

Working to support clients and at the same time manage the personal protection equipment (PPE) was my next challenge. Where does one begin? Gloves, gowns, masks, face shields or goggles and disposable shoe covers (my latest addition to the list of requirements) seemed like a lot at first. On the other hand, if this is effective in protecting me, my clients, and the related community from the risk of spreading COVID-19, then I can continue to provide much needed



services of care of post-surgical swelling, primary and secondary lymphedema, plus lipedema, with ease and less stress. Therefore, changing shoes at the door or donning disposable shoe covers, using hand cleanser, wearing a mask and face shield, gowning and gloving and washing hands after treatment became the new routine. My shield and cell phone were wiped before and after each visit.



Wanda Guenther, RMT, CDT was a registered massage therapist since 1993 and certified manual lymph drainage therapist since 1999 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Wanda retired from her practice as of March 31, 2021. She continues to be an active member of the Lymphedema Association of Manitoba.

Although the costs related to the PPE increased my expenses, I did not increase my charges to the client. Had I continued working, I feel it would have been a consideration.

I sent a questionnaire along with the appointment reminder one or two days before each visit. Questions asked at each visit were: How were they feeling? Did they have COVID-19 symptoms such as feeling unwell, unable to taste or smell, have a temperature? Had they travelled or been with someone that had in the last 14 days? Were there other people living in the same house? Staying safe for ourselves and those around us, and not to be the carrier of this virus was number one on the agenda.

I never felt ill or fit in a category to be tested for COVID. However, I received my first and second vaccine shot as soon as it was available (January 2021) in Manitoba's initial rollout to health care workers, nursing and community care providers. Being proactive



and responsible to do my part, I was very excited and pleased to "get the shot".

How am I feeling now compared to when we first learned about COVID-19? The biggest fear for me personally is the possibility of spreading the virus to others. Next, I want to recognize symptoms and provide the appropriate support to my clients, resuming treatment once the appropriate time has passed and/or support has been received.

My clients and I shared the same feeling; we all wanted to be safe for ourselves and for each other.

Although rare, some declined treatment altogether and wanted to first wait for their vaccine.

Even with the changes and added protocol, home visits were my passion.

It was always different, and you never knew what lay ahead. I was always so grateful for the ability to be of service to my clients. They were always happy to see me. They appreciated not having to leave home and still

Even with the changes and added protocol, home visits were my passion. It was always different, and you never knew what lay ahead.

receive the much needed comfort and help.

On the other hand, I now have an extra room in my house. It has morphed into an office/sitting room where I watch the activity on the street as I catch up on my office work or read the paper in the early morning hours.

I continued to work during COVID, but just a bit differently!

I have since retired as of March 31, 2021. I felt it was the right time to make the change in my life so I could enjoy new hobbies, sports, activities and time with my family. I look forward to the next step in my journey, which will hopefully include some travel as well. 



Founded by Steve Norton, renowned authority in the field of lymphedema therapy, the Norton School of Lymphatic Therapy is the premier educational institution for training rehabilitation professionals in the treatment of pathologies related to the lymphatic system.



LIVE TRAINING

LIVE TRAINING
Save \$400 When
You Register For Any
Future Course
With Promo Code:
RELIEF20

Upcoming Lymphedema Therapy Certification Course

- | | |
|---|--|
| Houston, TX • July 17-25 | Cleveland, OH • October 2-10 |
| San Jose, CA • August 21-29 | Long Island, NY • October 23-31 |
| Columbus, OH • August 7-15 | Atlanta, GA • November 6-14 |
| Raleigh, NC • August 14-22 | St. Louis, MO • November 6-14 |
| Boise, ID • September 2021 | Las Vegas, NV • November 13-21 |
| Philadelphia, PA • September 11-19 | Tampa, FL • December 2021 |
| Orlando, FL • September 18-26 | Los Angeles, CA • December 4-12 |
| Phoenix, AZ • October 2021 | Philadelphia, PA • December 11-19 |

DID YOU KNOW?

Germany has one certified lymphedema therapist per 3,000 members of the general population. North America has one certified lymphedema therapist per 100,000 members of the general population!

(866) 808-2249 Toll-Free • www.NortonSchool.com • info@NortonSchool.com