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The Massage & Bodywork Profession, once considered a maverick career for hippies and new agers, has evolved into a cornerstone of the entire alternative healing movement. As a licensed massage therapist since 1976 (first in NY and now in NC), I have personally witnessed the dynamic growth of this rewarding profession.

Here in North Carolina, licensure for Massage and Bodywork Therapists was first required in 1998. At that time, there were many practicing massage therapists and bodyworkers with varying credentials and experience. The licensing of the profession established standards for education, experience, and moral character. Licensed Massage & Bodywork Therapists (LMBT) are overseen by the *North Carolina Board of Massage & Bodywork Therapy*

(www.bmbt.org). LMBTs are required to display their licenses where they practice. The Board adjudicates complaints brought against licensed therapists and works with NC police departments to ensure that only LMBTs are presenting themselves to the public as massage therapists or bodyworkers. The Board's role is to protect the public, so if you ever are mistreated or discover that someone offering you massage is not licensed, you can contact the board for help.

Public Education about Massage Therapy and Bodywork is important. As the public learns more about the profession, they can choose a therapist more wisely, communicate better about their needs, and get better results from the work they receive. There are many, many modalities that constitute massage. Each is based on a traditional approach to solving, managing or preventing health problems, dealing with stress, or enhancing beauty, well-being, longevity, athletic abilities, and overall quality of life.

In addition to massage therapy modalities, there is bodywork. Bodywork is a term used to refer to various self-contained approaches. Bodyworkers tend to use one consistent approach that reflects a well-defined philosophy in their work with clients. There is a certification process that is usually quite lengthy- it's like going back to school all over again to become a bodyworker!

Massage therapists tend to mix modalities together in a session based on the client's needs; this is often advertised as therapeutic massage. Not all massage modalities lend themselves well to the mix and match approach however. Sometimes the system behind



the modality cannot be diluted with other modalities in a session without diluting expected client results.

Yes, there is quite a lot to it all. Which is one reason why you will hear massage therapists talk about continuing education classes- there is so much to learn! Here is just a small sample of the many modalities and systems of bodywork that you may encounter. Note that some modalities that can be mixed with other modalities can also stand alone as a system of massage, for example, Swedish Massage.

Modality	Massage System	Bodywork
• Swedish Massage	• Swedish Massage	• Trager®
• Trigger Point Technique	• Bindegewebsmassage (Connective Tissue Massage)	• Freedom Bodywork®
• Deep Tissue		• Rolfing®
• Hot Stone Massage	• Acupressure	• Structural Integration®
• Chair Massage	• Myofascial Release	
• Myofascial Release	• Reflexology	
• Reflexology	• Cranial Sacral	
• Cranial Sacral		

LMBTs may also be energy workers, though energy work does not require a license in massage. Some examples of energy work approaches are: Dynamic Energy Balancing®, Reiki, Therapeutic Touch®, Quantum-Touch®, Touch for Health, BodyTalk, et. Al. Aromatherapy is also commonly used by massage therapists to enhance their work with clients.

You can find LMBTs in diverse settings, such as

- Private practice, which may be in an individual office or an office shared with a group of practitioners.
- Spas, day spas, and beauty salons.
- Within the offices of physicians, chiropractors, and physical therapists.

An historical problem that LMBTs have faced is the profession's use as a cover for illegal prostitution. This is one reason massage therapists pushed for state licensure- so they could get rid of the "bad apples." Massage Therapists and Bodyworkers never mix anything sexual into their work. As a client, if you are ever offered sex under the guise of massage, you should immediately report that person to the police or the Massage Board. Licensed Massage Therapists and Bodyworkers are sensitive to remarks, stories, and jokes that allude in any way to the association of their work with sex. You could inadvertently offend a therapist by calling a massage table a bed, or calling their office a massage parlor. Even the terms masseuse and masseur have fallen into disfavor; "massage therapist" is the correct term in today's world.

I hope this short article has helped you to understand a bit more about massage and bodywork, to feel safe and comfortable enough to give it a try. The benefits of massage and bodywork are diverse and plentiful. Gain the benefits for yourself and live a better life!

Written by Nancy Toner Weinberger, LMBT#2986, 9/25/2013