



Communicating with a Client's Healthcare Team

TEMPLATES TO HELP YOU CONNECT

MESSAGE BUSINESS
BLUEPRINT

How do I get a doctor to talk to me?

Communicating with a client's healthcare team can be a challenging task. Sometimes we really want and need more information so we can adjust our massage to be as safe and effective as possible. But getting access to the right practitioner to ask questions directly is not always possible.

That's why Ruth Werner and I teamed up to tackle the tricky task and provide you with some templates to help you help your clients more effectively.

These templates are a companion to Ruth Werner's article and video "Why "Get a Doctor's Note" Isn't Good Enough, and What Is Better" in the January/February 2023 issue of ABMP's Massage & Bodywork magazine, available online to all at no charge, at massageandbodyworkdigital.com.

To reach a practitioner directly, you may need to call as well as fax a consent form along with your note requesting more information. Most medical offices won't use regular email because it isn't compliant with privacy requirements.

Or you may choose to and deliver a hard copy into the doctor's office in a sealed envelope, with the doctor's name on it, in reference to the patient

There are ways to enlist a client's help in getting information, we'll cover those as well. We've got templates for almost all the options!

"Establishing communication with a client's healthcare provider can feel intimidating... It's a skill that takes practice, but I hope that the samples we've shared here will give you a model for how you can develop your communications about your clients who have complex health situations."

-Ruth Werner

Template to contact provider

Dear Doctor X:

Your patient [NAME] has given me permission to contact you.

I am aware that [NAME] has a history of [PATHOLOGY/SURGERY] and is currently using [MEDICATION(S)]. [HE/SHE/THEY] tells me they have [COMPLICATIONS/SIDE EFFECTS].

[NAME] would like to receive massage therapy to help [GOALS].

In my experience, massage therapy can be helpful to [NAME] to achieve [GOALS]. (Links to appropriate research.)

I believe that [LIGHT/MEDIUM/FIRM] pressure massage, with [DESCRIPTION OF RANGE OF PRESSURE], will be appropriate for [CLIENT]. This would be no more challenging than [HIS/HER/THEIR] [EXAMPLES OF CLIENT ACTIVITIES]. We plan to work together for [FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF SESSIONS], and then we will evaluate our progress.

Because of [HIS/HER/THEIR] medications and possible side effects, I will [SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS].

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I want to be sure that I am supporting your treatment goals for [CLIENT], and not missing any important information about [HIS/HER/THEIR] health or risks before we work together.

Specifically, I am concerned about [CLIENT'S] risk for [POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OR ADVERSE EVENTS].

From your perspective, is this a risk? Do you have any other concerns? And are there other ways my work can support your treatment goals for [CLIENT]?

And finally, would you like me to provide you with updates or progress reports?

Please feel free to contact me directly if needed
[MT Name, phone, email, website, etc.]



Here's an example

Dear Doctor Pepper:

Your patient Sara Lee has given me permission to contact you.

I am aware that Ms. Lee has a history of type 2 diabetes and is currently using diet, exercise, and metformin to manage her condition. She tells me she often feels tired, and she has occasional mild neuropathy that causes pain or numbness in both feet.

Ms. Lee would like to receive massage therapy to help with her pain and fatigue. Along with her other treatments, she hopes this might help her to delay or avoid needing to use insulin and frequent pain relievers for her neuropathy.

I have worked with clients with peripheral neuropathy and had some success in reducing symptoms. Research on massage therapy and various types of fatigue is positive, and some studies also suggest that massage therapy can help to stabilize blood sugar. I will include some links to relevant research, if you're interested.

I believe that light-to-medium pressure massage will be appropriate as Ms. Lee and I start our work together. (Levels 1-3 on the Massage Therapy Pressure Scale, available here: <https://www.tracywalton.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Walton-Massage-Therapy-Pressure-Scale-for-WEBSITE.pdf>).

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This would be no more physically challenging than her typical work in the garden each day. We plan to work together for 60-minute sessions for six weeks, and then we will evaluate our progress.

Because of her diabetes, I plan to schedule her appointments between meals, when her blood glucose is likely to be most stable. And because she has some occasional numbness in her feet, my work in that area will be especially conservative.

I want to be sure that I am supporting your treatment goals for Ms. Lee, and not missing any important information about her health or risks before we work together.

Specifically, I am concerned about Ms. Lee's report of occasional numbness in her feet. My practice is to not do intrusive bodywork where sensation is impaired. I am concerned that her peripheral neuropathy may affect other nerves as well.

From your perspective, is this a risk? Do you have any other concerns? And are there other ways my work can support your treatment goals for Ms. Lee?

And finally, would you like me to provide you with updates or progress reports?

Please feel free to contact me.

Best wishes,

F. Lurraj

[phone, email, website]

The Client Can Help

It can be really hard to get in touch with a client's health care provider. There are privacy considerations and forms, gatekeeping receptionists, and providers who just can't make the time for a conversation.

For these reasons, I'm a big advocate of empowering *the client* to get the information I need to craft a safe and effective massage.

Most medical practices have moved to electronic health records and patients are able to email providers within a secure portal. I give the client the exact text to send to their provider who will (hopefully) respond with the info we need.

You could also go old-school and provide a hard copy for the client to bring to the practitioner at their next appointment.



Templates for clients to gather info

Example for a client with a history of pulmonary embolism and blood thinning medications.

Dear Provider,

I would like to schedule a massage appointment and my massage therapist would like to confirm the adjustments needed to keep massage therapy safe with regard to my current health issues.

She asked that I pass this along to you, to gather any necessary information needed to keep the massage safe. Please let me know if there is any more information I should provide to her or feel free to contact her directly.

Dr. XYZ

I think massage therapy will be beneficial to CLIENT in helping her relax and improve her sleep and overall stress levels. I am aware that CLIENT has a history of high blood pressure, DVT and pulmonary embolism and is currently on blood thinners.

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I believe that light to medium pressure massage, about the same amount of pressure as a strong shower head or XYX would be appropriate for CLIENT. This would be no more challenging to her body than her brisk daily walk with her dogs or her weekly 9 holes of golf. Because of the medication and her tendency to bruise, deep tissue work or assertive range of motion techniques will not be included in her treatment.

From your perspective, are there any other potential contraindications or concerns that I should be aware of or accommodations that need to be made to keep CLIENT safe?

*Please feel free to contact me directly if needed,
MT Name, phone, email, website, etc.*



Example for a client with a history of lymphedema.

Dear Provider,

I would like to schedule a massage appointment and my massage therapist would like to confirm the adjustments needed to keep massage safe with regard to my current health issues.

She asked that I pass this along to you, to gather any necessary information needed to keep the massage safe. Please let me know if there is any more information I should provide to her or feel free to contact her directly.

Dr. XYZ

I think massage therapy will be beneficial to CLIENT in helping her relax and to reduce the swelling/ lymphedema in her right arm. I am aware that CLIENT had surgery including axillary node removal and just finished a course of radiation to the right breast.

I am certified in Manual Lymphatic Drainage techniques (perhaps link to your training program here) and we will work with CLIENT's physical therapist to coordinate her massage and compression wrap appointments.

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CLIENT is moderately active in daily housekeeping chores and short walks with her friends. I believe that in addition to the MLD work to the right upper quadrant, gentle massage (about the same amount of pressure as a strong showerhead) to the remainder of the body would be appropriate for CLIENT.

From your perspective, are there any other potential contraindications or concerns that I should be aware of or accommodations that need to be made to keep CLIENT safe?

*Please feel free to contact me directly if needed,
MT Name, phone, email, website, etc.*



Example for a client who has postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS)

Dear Provider,

I would like to schedule a massage appointment and my massage therapist would like to confirm the adjustments needed to keep massage therapy safe with regard to my current health issues.

She asked that I pass this along to you, to gather any necessary information needed to keep the massage safe. Please let me know if there is any more information I should provide to her or feel free to contact her directly.

Dr. XYZ

I think massage will be beneficial to CLIENT in helping her relax and improve her sleep and overall stress levels. I am aware that CLIENT has POTS.

I believe that light to medium pressure massage, about the same amount of pressure as a strong shower head or XYX would be appropriate for CLIENT. This would be no more challenging to her body than her regular bike rides or more vigorous household tasks like laundry.

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To alleviate risks of lightheadedness immediately after the massage, I will have the head of the massage table slightly inclined for the supine portion and end the massage with some invigorating (rather than sedating) techniques. I also plan to assist the client into a seated position before leaving the massage room after the treatment.

From your perspective, are there any other potential contraindications or concerns that I should be aware of or accommodations that need to be made to keep CLIENT safe?

*Please feel free to contact me directly if needed
MT Name, phone, email, website, etc.*



Communication is a process

There may be times when a provider simply does not respond to your request or your client's request for more information. When this happens you'll have to decide if and how you can safely proceed.

When you communicate well with your client and make informed decisions together, the client will likely be very happy with the massage therapy you provide and feel safe in your care.



About the Author

Allissa Haines

Allissa is a co-founder at Massage Business Blueprint and spends most of her time creating resources for and learning from members in the Blueprint Mastermind community.

She has run a full-time massage practice since 2005 and sings the praises of online marketing to anyone who will listen.

Allissa has served as a volunteer in two massage organizations, taught all over the country, and has been published in several massage publications. She is currently a regular columnist for ABMP's *Massage & Bodywork Magazine*.



In Collaboration with

Ruth Werner

Ruth Werner is a former massage therapist, a writer, and an NCBTMB-approved continuing education provider.

She wrote [A Massage Therapist's Guide to Pathology](#), now in its seventh edition, which is used in massage schools worldwide.

Ruth is a long-time *Massage & Bodywork Magazine* columnist, most notably of the Pathology Perspectives column. Learn more about Ruth at ruthwerner.com.



What is Massage Business Blueprint

You're a hardworking massage therapist that:

- Is doing your best to serve your clients
- Trying to make a good living
- Feel like you need more support than what your associations offer
- Maybe you've attended some classes, read some books, or gotten some coaching but you still feel like you struggle to market your practice
- You struggle to attract new clients
- Can't seem to effectively run your massage business.

That's why we're here for you.

We know that you're looking for strong support to help you market your business and attract the *right* clients.

Massage Business Blueprint offers a TON of free resources that you can subscribe to and enjoy to your heart's content.

However, the real magic is in our [Blueprint Mastermind community](#). Community members get access to additional content (including articles and graphics to use in your marketing), on-demand webcasts, a private forum, and live Office Hours where you can learn from your peers.

These resources are all designed for YOU to help you get the support you need to manage, grow and enjoy your massage therapy practice.