

The Importance of Your Student Clinic

By Michael S. O'Brien, CMT, BA (Adapted from Future LMT.com) (blue italics added)

The student clinic is an invaluable tool for a student's development into a professional massage therapist. The clinics challenge you to interact with the public, taking that extra step away from the comfort of practicing on your fellow students. The instructor is always there, like a football coach on the sideline, providing insight and guidance, but it is up to you, the student, to provide the actual service in a professional, skilled manner.

I would advise you to take the clinic seriously and act as a therapist at all times. My students perform all aspects of the therapeutic massage service in each clinic -- from greeting the client, doing the pre-massage interview, the massage itself, and the post-massage interview, right down to showing the client to the reception area where payment is accepted. This ensures that by the time a student graduates, he or she is confident in all aspects of the massage process.

Another valuable tool for the student during the clinic is the client's evaluation of the student's performance, including pre- and post-massage procedures. This allows the student to be aware of areas needing improvement, as well as to boost their confidence in the areas in which he or she were highly rated.

And then there is the real experience of working with a client to learn about pathology, indications, contraindications, business practices, and putting those massage techniques and skills to work. Indeed, the clinic provides you with practical application of everything you have learned. By the time you graduate, you have this valuable experience to take to your next level, working where you choose as a massage professional. *At Healing Mountain Massage School® we provide as close to a real live massage clinic & day spa experience as possible. Not only massage is performed, but hydrotherapy spa techniques as well – like; Oriental Hot Rock Therapy, Hot Stone Swedish massage, Sea Salt Scrubs, Aromatherapy Steam Baths, and Herbal Body Wraps, etc. Students get to practice side by side with licensed professionals, can ask questions of them, watch them perform and learn from them outside of the classroom within the clinical environment. Additionally, students new to clinic have the opportunity to receive peer mentoring from advanced students who have not graduated yet.*

Michael S. O'Brien, C.M.T., B.A., is the massage therapy program manager at Career Training Solutions in Fredericksburg, Virginia.