

The Essences of SOAP Notes and Accurate Intake

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Documentation and/or SOAP notes are very sketchy in the field of reflexology. In fact, many schools and online classes do not seem to teach this vital component.

Why are SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment Plan) notes so important? If the field of reflexology is to become more professional, reflexologists need to be very accurate on how they complete intake, the mapping of each treatment and the written SOAP notes for each client and each session. Reflexologists who just state a date of the client's session with no notes that just state the health concerns of a client are inadequate intakes. Remember, you are possibly speaking to an audience and/or client who for the most part, that does not understand what reflexology is, let alone what it can do for a client's health and restoration. If a client moves to a different area of the country, another reflexologist can take over from where the former reflexologist left off as the new reflexologist will know the history, in detail, of the client in forwarded files and notes.

What else does the reflexologist need to know? Be sure to ask your client if the reason for the visit was from an accident, personal injury or worker's compensation injury and accurately document that throughout your notes. You need to note the injury date on each receipt for that client so if this case goes to court you will be covered by your continuity. This is another reason that you want to have accurate detailed mapping as well and taking good SOAP notes

during each session.

Warning – if a client is seeing you as a result of an injury, insist on them paying you for each session, **not** when the insurance or court case settles. You may be out many dollars due to you as a result. Always give them a written receipt that they can turn into their insurance company for reimbursement.



Intake is vital to each client's base history. The reflexologist should be questioning the client about their entire body starting from the head to the toes and all points in-between. Always include questioning from when an injury or illness started and what were they doing when it happened. Question the areas of pain and use a numbering system during your intake. You will be able to use this information in future reflexology sessions to assess the effectiveness of their reflexology treatments, i.e. is your assessment and reflexology helping or do you need to change your techniques in hope of a better outcome for the client.

On subsequent treatments, be sure to map the feet and refer back to the original intake as well as previous treatments. For example, if a client has terrible migraines rated a number five during their first treatment, ask the client how many migraines they have had since the last treatment and their discomfort level at this treatment. Subsequent sessions must correlate to the first treatment session no matter how far apart the treatments are. If a client had a pain level of five on the first treatment in a particular area and

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at the fourth treatment that area still remains five, you need to refer them to a medical doctor or another health care modality for evaluation.

In addition to anatomy & physiology questions at intake, ask questions relating to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). These additional questions are the missing puzzle pieces to understanding the health and lack of relaxation issues of a client. What the best time of your day? What is the worst time of your day? Listening to the client's conversation with you, the reflexologist will indicate other areas of energy that need correction. For example, when it's rainy outside the client hates the weather, comes to the session dressed predominately in black and indicates a broken bone in the past. A reflexologist who is trained in TCM will automatically have another line of questioning for the Water Element.

In my over twenty years of practice, I

have taken extremely detailed intake and SOAP notes at the client's first session with accurate charting and SOAP notes for subsequent sessions. Over the course of these 20 years, my charting, SOAP notes and all records, along with receipts for the session, have been subpoenaed many times. I include a copy of a reflexology chart as they need this to interpret my charting. These are the reasons that I am so stringent on accuracy of charting, receipting of funds and record keeping.

In closing, observe your client prior to your session. Be accurate in your SOAP notes. Question your client before, during and after a session and record those observations. Closely listen to your client and the responses provided. You will be able to help your clients beyond their expectations and be a viable asset as a professional in the field of reflexology.