

Holistic

Therapist Magazine

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Learn how you can be a part of the integrated health revolution

Following the success of last year's conference, we're delighted to announce that the 2019 FHT Conference will take place on **Friday 29 November** at **The King's Fund, London**.

The conference will once again bring together **leading experts in research, education and healthcare** to explore the future of integrated health and social care. We will also be holding our annual **FHT Excellence Awards** on the day - shining a spotlight on the ways therapies can make a difference to the health and wellbeing of others.

Tickets are just £75 for FHT members and £95 for non-members when you book before 31 August, including lunch and refreshments. Booking opens 18 July.



Visit fht.org.uk/conference

to learn more and book your ticket



SAFETY MATTERS

*The Federation of Holistic Therapist's **Julie McFadden** looks at some simple ways that therapists can protect their personal safety...*

AS therapists, when we think about 'health and safety', there can be a natural tendency to focus on our clients' health and safety rather than our own. It's just as important to consider potential safety risks that you might face while working.

A recent FHT survey showed that 86% of our members are self-employed, with just over half (51%) working from home and 40% providing treatments in their clients' homes. Many therapists also work at onsite locations, rather than in clinics and spas.

The vast majority of clients are genuine, decent people, but we give treatments to strangers in a one-to-one situation, out of earshot from a colleague, relative or friend. Implementing a few simple measures can help you prevent or manage any potentially difficult situations, should they arise.

Prevention

Our industry can attract individuals looking a sexual release rather than a professional treatment. Make sure that you reinforce your professionalism at every opportunity to discourage inappropriate requests occurring in the first instance. When promoting your business, think carefully about any images and the language you use. Opt for professional-looking portraits rather than personal ones, consider calling yourself a 'professional massage therapist' rather than a 'masseur', and avoid using phrases like 'sensual massage' and email addresses or public user names that sound suggestive. State on your website that inappropriate behaviour will result in the cancellation of future appointments and notification of the relevant authorities.

Nip it in the bud

Most of us get the occasional call or message that is overtly sexual. Simply ignore these where you can, or stress that you are a professional

therapist that abides by a strict code of conduct and professional practice and that you don't offer services of that nature. If someone is persistent, try blocking their number or messages, and if at any stage you feel your personal safety is at risk, contact the police.

Two's company

If a new client is visiting your home, particularly for the first time, make a comment that suggests someone else is in the building, even if that's not the case. Alternatively, calling a friend in front of the client, saying, 'I've just arrived at X's house [or X has just arrived] for their treatment – I'll call you back in an hour'. Make sure that someone knows where you are and how long you will be. Lone worker apps are now available that use GPS tracking and allow you to log visits and discreetly raise an alarm in an emergency.

Thinking on your feet

If you arrive for a treatment and immediately feel uneasy, make an excuse to cancel the session

before it starts. Note the exit routes and how the front door opens. If the treatment has started and you feel unsafe, calmly give a reason to leave the room, such as you've left something in the car and go. You can always return for your things another time with a friend or, if necessary, the police. If you initially felt a little uneasy about seeing a client and your first visit went OK, don't forget that initial gut instinct. Continue to be vigilant at future appointments. ■



The Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT) offers students

and qualified practitioners a range of membership benefits and holds the largest Accredited Register of complementary therapists to be independently approved by the Professional Standards Authority. For further information, visit www.fht.org.uk or call **023 8062 4350**.

