

I appreciate that our state licensure board includes both terms “massage” and “bodywork” in its title. When I look at my license, I know that the state and I agree that these terms are distinct.

I am concerned that although the North Carolina licensure board presents massage and bodywork as separate in name, the line between the two is often blurred in people’s minds, and perhaps in application. I believe the recent Federation of State Massage Therapy Board’s Model Practice Act defines massage therapy so broadly that it completely obfuscates the variety of manual therapies. This is going in the wrong direction.

Rather than continuing to blur the lines, the Board, therapists and CE providers need to spend our energies teaching the public about the wide range of massage and bodywork therapies (with their unique scopes of practice, intentions, and training). Some, like my field of structural integration, have created our own international member associations, psychometric testing, and board certification. How is it that a well-defined field of bodywork should be classified as a type of massage?

While some argue that defining all manual therapies as massage will help us better protect the public, blurring the professions will actually make it harder to provide and monitor appropriate continuing education, and make it more difficult for the public to find therapies that are appropriate for their needs.

Adjusting the wording of our licensure rules to better communicate that massage and bodywork *therapies* are distinct, would be a move in the right direction. In addition, the NCBMBT should make it clear to the Federation what it says on my license — that massage and bodywork are different.

Sincerely,

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