

Improve Client Outcomes with Integrative Manual Therapy

by Amanda Cuda



compilation of assessment and treatment methodologies that address pain, dysfunction and disability.

About 30 years ago, Connell-Giammatteo's mother, Sharon (Weiselfish) Giammatteo, Ph.D., P.T., I.M.T.,C., developed IMT as a way of identifying and addressing the underlying causes of a variety of illnesses and health conditions.

Take that frozen shoulder, for example. It could be just a frozen shoulder, Connell-Giammatteo said, "or it could be from any number of problems."

Sometimes, she said, such conditions as frozen shoulder or muscle spasms are the body's way of protecting itself, limiting mobility in an area that's been compromised by an underlying condition. IMT is a way massage therapists can use hands-on techniques to identify the root of the problem. Connell-Giammatteo said those with intensive experience in IMT can figure out the source of a problem quickly. "You can put your hand on the area and see what other systems are involved."

Using gentle manipulation techniques, those trained in IMT can then promote tissue repair, normalize structure and restore function in the affected area. In addition to the manual piece of the therapy, IMT also integrates other forms of treatment, including nutritional programs, to help provide a customized solution to each client's individual needs.

Connell-Giammatteo said there are roughly 60,000 IMT techniques—some for nearly every system in the body. "The way we see it, [IMT] is sort of an umbrella," she said.

Today, there are more than 10,000 practitioners of IMT. The technique is used across a variety of disciplines, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic and massage therapy. Massage therapists in particular are

turning to IMT as a way to improve client outcomes.

Conventional massage therapy might be able to relieve a client's symptoms temporarily, Connell-Giammatteo said, but with IMT, a massage therapist might be able to make pain relief permanent. That idea is partially what inspired Renee Sheldon, a massage therapist in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, to come to the U.S. to receive training in IMT. "I treated a lot of chronic and rehabilitative patients and felt like they kept coming back with the same complaints," Sheldon explained.

Sheldon was first introduced to IMT about a year ago, when she began suffering complications from knee surgery. She sought treatment from a massage therapist—one who, it turned out, was trained in IMT. The therapist determined Sheldon had fascia wrapped around her tibia, which was causing her problems. After five sessions, Sheldon's problems were gone.

She quickly realized IMT was something that would benefit her clients. "I've been practicing [for] so long and my [clients' problems] are a lot more chronic [than they used to be]," she said.

Shortly after her own positive experience with IMT, Sheldon began taking classes in the therapy. She's nearing the end of her

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training, and is impressed by how much knowledge she's gained. "It's an amazing technique to distinguish aberrant motility from healthy tissue motility," she said.

Lissa Wheeler is another massage therapist who uses IMT. She has been a massage therapist for more than 20 years and has used IMT for 10 years. Wheeler said IMT has been a great addition to her skill set, allowing her to better understand and address clients' problems.

Wheeler said she likes that IMT addresses various systems of the body, providing "a really wide window for understanding the clients' problems." She also said her clients value IMT. "It's a very gentle technique," she said. "And people really appreciate it when their symptoms go away and don't come back."

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CSIMT offers seminars worldwide, as well as a diploma and certification program. Students enrolled in the diploma/certification program receive extensive training and extracurricular lectures from world-renowned speakers in the fields of nutrition, manual therapy and other medical modalities. IMT therapists and students help to restore the body to optimal health and wellness.

IMT practitioners experience positive results worldwide with clients suffering from a range of dysfunction and disability. With more than 30 years of clinical experience and more than 10,000 practitioners worldwide, IMT helps individuals recover from such common symptoms as back pain and headaches to more complex problems, such as autism, multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injuries.

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