

M.T. Wellness

Our mission: to reduce pain and restore physical function

In this issue

2

Success stories

Thomas K. tells his story of chronic pain and how M.T. Wellness has helped

3

Our Masters Center congratulates its newest graduate

Meet therapist Sue Ross

4

Looking for a new career or know someone who is?

Read about our new training program for certification in Medical Restorative Massage Therapy



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Thuy's corner

My journey to develop the next generation of massage therapists



As we start the new year, I am both pleased and excited to share with you our big news for 2010: in mid-January, we began training the inaugural class of the M. T. Wellness Medical Model Massage Institute.

The Medical Model Massage Institute is the next step in my journey to develop a new generation of Medical Restorative Massage Therapy (MRMT)[®] therapists. This is a very exciting development because our new board certified massage therapy training program will help us develop licensed massage therapists that are well prepared to enter our advanced Masters Center program, and then ultimately achieve certification in MRMT.

Where it all began

As we launch this first-of-its-kind training program, I can't help but reflect on how far we have come, and how many people have contributed to our success and bright future.

My journey into massage therapy began in 1997 as a part-time activity—as a way to care for my mother and ease her back pain. When I began to see the positive impact I was having on my mother's quality of life, I began to realize how much I enjoyed helping people who are in pain, and I saw how I could turn my new passion into a successful career.

In 1998, I left my desk job and became a full-time licensed massage therapist. My goal from the start was to be part of every client's health care team. To this end, I took numerous continuing education classes, learned multiple new techniques, and developed a growing confidence that I was a medical massage therapist. Looking back—how naïve that was! I now know that being part of a patient's health care team requires so much more than passion and a handful of continuing education certificates.

As my experience grew, I realized the more I learned, the more I didn't know. This was a humbling, but important, revelation. As my experience grew, I also became very aware that my traditional massage therapy training background did not prepare me to be part of a patient's health care team. I learned the hard way how to set up a clinic, handle people in chronic pain and with challenging disabilities, interpret medical prescriptions, prepare and submit treatment records and summaries to physicians and even attorneys, work with workers compensation and insurance companies—all things that are not taught in most massage therapy schools.

My most valuable learning came with indirect training from Dr. Everhart-McDonald while massaging her patients and while working with a progressive Central Ohio company where massage therapy was used for injured employees.

This experience brought the revelation that many patients felt great while lying on the table, but as soon as they got up, gravity interfered, dysfunctional muscle patterns returned, and the pain came back. My traditional massage therapy techniques also contributed very little to addressing patients' loss of physical function. I recognized that I could not push harder, dig

Continued on page 2

Success stories: Thomas K.

Thomas K. has systemic osteoarthritis, and he has lived with chronic joint pain for decades. He first came to the clinic in 2003. Over the last seven years, he has been treated an average of 16 times a year by three different M.T. Wellness therapists. We are pleased and gratified that Thomas is willing to share his story.

“Chronic joint pain caused by systemic osteoarthritis has been a problem for me for many years. In addition to osteoarthritis, I have had double knee replacements, a hip replacement, and I’ve had to take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for more than 30 years.

Prior to starting treatment at M.T. Wellness, my chronic pain was so stressful that it contributed to both depression and high blood pressure. And my many pain medications never eliminated the pain, they just reduced it. But Medical Restor-

ative Massage Therapy (MRMT) at the M.T. Wellness Clinic has transformed much of my daily life.

Through regular MRMT treatments, my pain is under much better control. Not only does the massage help, but I have also been taught exercises to do when I have flare-ups. This allows me to treat myself quite effectively between massage appointments.

There have been many positive effects:

- I have been off antidepressants for about four years now. Obviously, chronic pain had been a major factor in my depression. The pain relief and the knowledge that I could do something to reduce my pain helped my psychological state.
- I now take half of the NSAIDs I used to take, and I feel much better than I did when I was taking full doses.
- My blood pressure is notably improved. I take significantly less medication, and

what I do take is much more effective. Previously, even with medication, I still had borderline hypertension.

- Because I have much less pain, I can exercise more frequently. This has helped control my weight, and I have been able to raise my HDL and my cholesterol medication is now extremely effective.

In my life, chronic pain apparently had been a clear contributing factor to my medical problems. Of all of the treatments I tried (PT, medication, surgery, cortisone injections, etc.) MRMT at M.T. Wellness has done more for my overall well-being than any other treatment. Surgery and physical therapy worked great for acute or localized problems, but for chronic pain, MRMT has been most effective.”

We’d love to hear your story. Email us at info@mtwellnessclinic.com.

Continued from page 1

deeper, or rub more using techniques such as deep tissue, neuromuscular, trigger point, soft tissue mobilization, myofascial release, positional release, Ortho Bionomy, etc. I needed to change my approach and create new techniques that would contribute to “beyond the table” results for these patients.

Putting the pieces together

At this point, I went on a mission to seek expertise from outside the traditional massage therapy world. This included physicians, physical therapists, and chiropractors—all professions that specialized in rehabilitation. Through these experts, I learned to assess a patient’s underlying dysfunction, to uniquely blend and apply all of my massage therapy techniques, and to incorporate new passive/active motion techniques in order to achieve lasting results and restore patients’ physical function.

With these developments, what we now know as Medical Restorative Massage Therapy was born.

MRMT worked. How did I know this? My patients told me, as did their friends and families. Word of mouth soon had me seeing more patients than I could handle, so in

2001 I expanded and brought in more therapists to help.

Growing pains

But my “roommates” weren’t having the same success. Their schedules were inconsistent—“feast or famine” was the norm for them. Patients that I referred to them often came back to me, refusing to see anyone else. I learned that I had to teach my approach or these therapists would not be able to make a good living.

In 2004, I made the leap and became an employer, hiring licensed massage therapists and attempting on-the-job training for MRMT. I learned quickly that on-the-job training was not conducive for us or our therapists, who had an incorrect idea of what the medical massage model really was. After months of training, they left to pursue other careers. The cost was extensive, and we still didn’t have the trained help we needed.

In January 2006, we opened the M.T. Wellness Masters Center: advanced training programs developed to train and certify LMTs in MRMT. Our first six-month program ensured that myself and my two therapists were all on the same page with the same training.

The second Masters Center class certified three more therapists who joined us in spring of 2007. All three moved on from the M.T. Wellness Clinic. My take-away from this experience was that converting “old school” LMTs to MRMT was not a viable strategy.

The Medical Model Massage Institute is born

In 2008, we made a business decision to suspend our Masters Center training. We submitted the paperwork to the State Medical Board of Ohio and the State Board of Career Colleges and Schools to charter the Medical Model Massage Institute. After approval in fall 2008, our first class began January 2010.

The Medical Model Massage Institute (MMMI) has a health care focus and our objective is to develop licensed massage therapists who want and are prepared to work within the structure of a medical model. Once licensed, MMMI graduates transition to the advanced Masters Center program where they can achieve their full certification in MRMT.

I thank our many patients for their patience as we work to expand our staff of skilled therapists. And I thank my mentors, associates, and family for their continuing help and support!

The M.T. Wellness Masters Center congratulates its newest graduate, Sue Ross!

On December 19, 2009, the M. T. Wellness family celebrated the graduation of Sue Ross from our Masters Center training program where she earned her certification in medical restorative massage therapy (MRMT).

The ceremony was both a celebration of Sue's accomplishment and recognition of a major milestone in the growth of medical restorative massage therapy.

Sue's accomplishment is noteworthy because she is the first therapist to successfully earn certification by completing the latest expanded curriculum and hands-on internship offered by the Masters Center.



Top photo: Sue Ross is all smiles at her Masters Center graduation ceremony. Here she is with her diploma and her commemorative bookmark inscribed: CMRMT – Making It Happen!

Bottom photo: Sue with the Masters Center faculty. From left to right: Susan Pirkel, Thuy Bowyer, and Brian Bowyer.

Brian Bowyer, M.D., and other faculty of the Masters Center presented Sue her diploma and certification. During the ceremony, Thuy addressed the group with remarks that highlighted Sue's accomplishments and shared with the group what it takes to be a successful medical restorative massage therapist. Thuy also shared her vision for the future of MRMT.

During Sue's training, and her subsequent transition to the M. T. Wellness Clinic as a full time therapist, Thuy commented that Sue has demonstrated "desire, decisiveness, dedication, and determination"—the 4-Ds that distinguish successful medical restorative massage therapists.

"From my initial meeting with Sue, I was impressed by her desire for excellence, her decisiveness and dedication to both her career and her family, and her determination to make her dream happen. It has been my pleasure to work with Sue in the first stages of her career in MRMT, and I look forward to working with her for many years to come," commented Thuy.

Thuy added, "With these 4-Ds, and with the skills developed in the 325 hours of in-depth training she completed in the Masters Center, Sue will be a leader in the next generation of certified medical restor-

ative massage therapists. With the help of Sue and the next generation of therapists, we will continue to reach for our vision of developing and growing our profession into a widely recognized and valued health care discipline."

Visit mtwellnessclinic.com for photos of the festivities!

Meet Sue Ross

Sue Ross, a Certified Medical Restorative Massage Therapist, joined our Clinic as a full time therapist last November. She is off to a great start, and we are very, very pleased to have her on the M.T. Wellness team.

Sue attended the American Institute of Alternative Medicine, where she studied massage therapy, and she became a Licensed Massage Therapist in January, 2008. Prior to attending the M.T. Wellness Masters Center where she earned her certification in Medical Restorative Massage Therapy (MRMT), Sue worked as a self-employed massage therapist.

She learned about the Masters Center and MRMT through a posting circulated by her massage therapy school. She decided to pursue advanced training and a career in this new discipline because of her interest in using massage therapy skills to help people in pain.

Sue successfully completed the six-month Masters Center program, and graduated in November, 2009. Upon graduation, she immediately joined the M.T. Wellness Clinic.

Sue has a true passion for helping her patients, and she enjoys practicing MRMT because of its ability to help patients reduce pain and restore physical function.

Sue and her daughter Cecilia are residents of Westerville.

We're pleased to announce the launch of a new training program leading to certification in Medical Restorative Massage Therapy

The M.T. Wellness Training Center is pleased to announce the launch of a new, integrated, two-stage, 18-month health care training program leading to state licensure as a massage therapist and certification as a Medical Restorative Massage Therapy® (MRMT) therapist.

In this new integrated training program, students begin their training in the Medical Model Massage Institute (MMMI), and upon completion of the program and receipt of their state license, proceed into the Masters Center where they earn their certifications in MRMT.

Medical Model Massage Institute

MMMI, which began classes in January 2010, is the first primary massage therapy training program in the country to focus on pain reduction through massage therapy applied within the structure of a medical model. It is also the first primary massage therapy training program designed to prepare students for advanced training and certification as medical restorative massage therapists.

Unlike massage therapy training programs that offer wide ranging curriculums for students with wide range of career interests, the MMMI offers a structured curriculum focused on pain reduction which is designed for students interested in rewarding health care careers in MRMT.

What is a medical model?

A medical model is a set of procedures or a structure within which a medical discipline is performed.

The medical model in which our discipline functions has five basic components:

1. **Assess** each patient's condition with an emphasis on identifying specific dysfunctions.
2. **Develop** a personalized Plan of Care.
3. **Execute** the Plan of Care, including ongoing patient education.
4. **Maintain** records and charts to monitor progress versus Plan of Care.

5. **Collaborate and communicate** with physicians and other medical professionals on each patient's health care team.

Functioning within the structure of this model is one of the key things that set our program and our discipline apart. It also directly contributes to our ability to help reduce pain and restore physical function for our patients.

Institute curriculum

The MMMI curriculum emphasizes:

- Knowledge of human anatomy and function, physiology, muscle pathologies, and selected leading massage therapy techniques to reduce pain.
- The practice of massage therapy within the medical model of musculoskeletal assessment, medical terminology, treatment, and documentation of an individualized Plan of Care based on each patient's muscle pathology.
- A team approach.

The Institute is a one-year program. Upon completion, students are very well prepared for state licensure. Further, they are uniquely prepared to converse fluently with all members of the medical community, including insurance companies.

The next level: The Masters Center

Licensed graduates of the Institute may enter an intensive six month Masters Center program. This training is for certification in Medical Restorative Massage Therapy. The curriculum emphasizes:

- Distinguishing medical conditions from orthopedic conditions to better align ourselves with other medical experts.
- Knowledge of multiple disciplines through working with physicians; experts in orthopedic, chiropractic, physical and massage therapies; and other therapists.
- Knowledge of how to help patients effectively reduce pain, restore physical function, and regain quality of life using assessment skills learned.
- Knowledge of body movement with gravity involved, and muscle action and

reverse muscle action associated with movement.

- Treating each patient with an individualized Plan of Care.

Why MRMT?

Medical Restorative Massage Therapy is a new, emerging discipline that fills the void between traditional massage therapy and physical therapy.

MRMT is influenced by many disciplines: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R), Osteopathic Medicine (DO), Chiropractic (DC), Physical Therapy (PT), Occupational Therapy (OT), traditional Massage Therapy (LMT), yoga, Pilates, and the Alexander Technique.

MRMT is a collective effort of multiple rehabilitation clinicians, therapists, and others who contribute to the training.

MRMT is results driven! It is about using passive techniques to reduce a patient's pain and active techniques to restore movement and function using the medical model. We educate patients on posture, symmetry, balance, and self-care techniques.

Why are we telling you about all this?

The more you know about our training programs and the rewarding health care careers that await certified medical restorative massage therapists, the more likely you will be to tell a friend, neighbor, or family member.

We live in difficult times—high unemployment, jobs shipped overseas, layoffs that never seem to end—and it just seems harder and harder for people to get and hold onto good jobs. Despite all this bad news, there are still great careers out there if you know where to look. MRMT is an emerging growth industry, and careers in this industry are recession-resistant as well as personally and financially rewarding—and they won't be shipped overseas.

If you or someone you know might be interested in more information about our training programs and career paths, contact us via phone (273-0810) or email (info@mtwellnessclinic.com). We'd be happy to talk to you!