



Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia Inc.

# **SHIATSU THERAPY CODE OF PRACTICE**

## **ABOUT STAA**

The Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia Inc. (STAA) is the peak body representing professionally trained shiatsu therapists across Australia.

Established in 1987, STAA is a not-for-profit association dedicated to:

- ensuring members meet the highest standards of training and practice
- increasing public awareness of shiatsu
- supporting and representing members through a national network.

### **Vision**

Shiatsu is a recognised element of an integrated healthcare system.

### **Mission**

To sustain a professional network that promotes shiatsu within the Australian community.

### **Values**

To nurture, respect, collaborate and act with integrity.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Shiatsu Therapy Code of Practice is a guide for shiatsu therapists, educators, allied health professionals, government and regulatory bodies to enable them to communicate within the same framework. This framework is to guide the safe and ethical practice of shiatsu therapy in Australia and to support our practitioners in the application of correct risk management policies and procedures in their clinic and workplace.

This document is a directive for the members of the Shiatsu Therapy Association of Australia to follow as defined by:

- the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers (currently in effect in NSW, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria)
- STAA Code of Standards and Ethics
- STAA Policy and Guidelines, which includes a complaints resolution procedure
- the educational standards of the current health training package
- specific workplace and practice requirements applicable under national, state and territory jurisdictions.

## **SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

### **Definition of shiatsu**

Shiatsu is a dynamic body therapy based on the traditional oriental medical model. It incorporates the principles of anatomy, physiology and pathology. Although the word shiatsu translates literally from Japanese as 'finger pressure'; in practice the thumbs, palms, elbows, knees and feet are used to apply this pressure.

The theory of traditional Chinese medicine proposes that qi moves through the body in well-defined channels or pathways known as meridians. Each meridian is connected to an internal organ and carries the energy of that organ's function. Good health is reliant upon the harmonious flow of qi through the meridians and internal organs.

Treatment can include:

- stretches
- articulation of joints
- structural alignment
- muscle release techniques
- breathing exercises
- circulation of qi, blood and fluid.

Shiatsu therapists frequently address a wide variety of symptoms associated with the following conditions:

- allergies
- arthritis
- asthma
- back, neck and shoulder pain
- tension headaches
- muscle, connective tissue and joint pain
- constipation
- repetitive strain injury and occupational overuse syndromes
- postural problems and biomechanical patterns of strain
- sports and activity-related issues
- stress and anxiety
- rehabilitation and injury management
- sleep problems
- mental health issues.

STAA recognises the need to give practitioners reasonable latitude in employing a diverse range of techniques and methodologies in their clinical practice. A shiatsu therapist must understand their professional duty of care and undertake to adhere to the STAA Code of Standards and Ethics and the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers.

Each registered therapist must have the training, knowledge and skill to perform techniques competently.

A treatment plan may include the following:

- pressure point stimulation
- anma therapy
- massage techniques such as kneading, rubbing, palpation, percussion
- Oriental massage techniques
- assessment of the pulses
- assessment of the tongue
- stretching
- breathing exercises
- postural alignment
- articulation of joints
- corrective exercises
- assessment of the condition of muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue
- discussion of diet
- external application of heat or cold
- topical preparations.

The application of these techniques is based on validated traditions and current scientific understanding and are used to:

- maintain, rehabilitate or augment physical function
- relieve pain
- prevent dysfunction and enhance health and promote wellness.

## **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS**

National competency standards were introduced for shiatsu therapy in 2002 as part of the health training package (HTP).

STAA endorses the health training package for all full members. The current qualification or equivalent is the Diploma of Shiatsu and Oriental Therapies (HLT52215). This qualification sits within the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and must be delivered by registered training organisations in Australia.

Shiatsu therapists demonstrate:

- a detailed knowledge of anatomy, physiology and biomechanics
- well-developed assessment, observational and palpatory skills
- expertise in pressure points and meridian theory
- an understanding of normal function in relation to the soft tissues of the body and the ability to recognise dysfunction, including knowledge of cautions and contraindications to shiatsu therapy.

## **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

Full members must comply with STAA's continuing professional education requirements.