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Seated Massage

General Tips

- Why do seated massage
 - Requires no special equipment or props - seated in any chair that allows access to shoulders
 - Appropriate to vanilla settings
 - An effective way to help your partner feel better and more relaxed
- Prepare yourself
 - Be relaxed
 - Take a deep breath
 - Calm yourself
 - Be focused on the person you will be touching
 - Be aware of the sanctity of the human body
- Make contact gently
 - Rest your hands on your partner's shoulders
 - Give your partner time to feel your touch
 - Take time to feel your partner's level of tension
- Body mechanics
 - Stay relaxed
 - Relax shoulders
 - Relax knees
 - Relax hands
 - Knees soft

- Full hand contact
 - Use heart of palm to give a solid comfortable touch - this is the very center of the palm of the hand with the fingers resting comfortably around it
 - Use soft fist, i.e., back of fingers, when needed to protect wrist
 - Avoid focusing too much pressure using finger tips, knuckles, or heel of hand
- Smooth, flowing movements
- Movement from legs
 - Use a lunge position to protect your back
 - Lean and sink into body using your legs to provide movement of your hands
- Alternate position to work on low back
 - Have partner sit straddling chair and facing chair back
 - Place pillow between partner and back of chair
 - Have partner lean into pillow
 - Using motion of body, work down back
 - Avoid pressure directly on spine
- Focus on shoulders
 - Primary area where most people carry tension
 - Usually least threatening area for most people to be touched
 - Most acceptable in public setting
 - Perfect home base to begin and end
 - Central transition to all other areas being massaged
- Honor your partner's body
 - Ask for permission to touch
 - Transition gently when moving to a new area of the body
 - Never work beyond the comfort level of your partner
 - Allow partner to direct your work

Precautions

- Treat the neck as totally off-limits - touch only with very light brushing movement
- Avoid pressure directly on the spine
- Avoid deep pressure over the kidneys
- Avoid hard pinching or pulling on tight muscles because it can cause the muscle to spasm, making the tightness worse
- If something hurts, don't do it
- Headaches - require great sensitivity
 - May respond well to massage
 - Massage can easily make a headache worse rather than better

Seated Massage

- Opening - saying hello to the body
 - Rest your hands on your partner's shoulders
 - Give your partner time to feel your touch
 - Take time to feel your partner's level of tension
- Shoulders - Home base
 - Solid steady pressure using full hands or forearms
 - Rest hands or forearms on either side of spine between shoulder blades
 - Lean your weight into your arms for pressure while you rest
 - Rock back and forth from you legs to create kneading motion
 - Kneading - leaning into full hands with movement coming from your legs
 - Stroking - long light strokes
 - From center outward
 - From top of shoulders down back

- From in front massage tops of shoulders
 - Full hand relaxed on top of shoulder leaning in
 - Thumbs along ridge of traps sliding outward
- From in side
 - Cup the shoulder between your hands
 - Movement still comes from the legs
- Neck - off limits except for very light brushing strokes
- Head - optional
 - Ask permission
 - Provide support for the neck
 - Shampoo massage
 - Hair stroking
 - Tends to be very calming and relaxing, especially for women
 - Can feel wonderful even on extremely short hair
 - Light face stroking if the partner likes that
 - Get specific permission to touch face - can be a trigger for some people
 - Strokes are outward and/or upward
 - Keep strokes light and smooth
 - Avoid positions that over-extend the neck
 - Light finger circles on temples
 - Can be very soothing for headaches
 - Be especially sensitive to feedback in this area
- Revisit home base and give shoulders more attention
- Arms
 - Start with cupping the shoulder from the side
 - Work down the arm compressing gently all the way down the arm
 - Hand massage - see Foot & Hand Massage handout for full details of hand massage
 - Gentle arm wave

- Hold the hand as if to give a handshake
- Hold the hand at a level where the arm hangs loose and relaxed
- Gently move the hand back and forth so the movement moves up through the arm creating a wave motion
- A hand gently resting on the shoulder may help your partner relax into the movement
- Long strokes
 - Gentle smooth strokes from the shoulder to the finger tips
 - Done with full hands and a soft touch
- Revisit home base and give shoulders more attention
- Back
 - Massage down each side of spine but never directly on spine
 - Kneading moving slowly down the spine from shoulders to hips
 - Sliding hands from the midline towards the sides
 - Long deep strokes down the back
 - Hip-hiker muscles
 - Between the lowest rib and arch or the pelvis
 - Cup hands gently across the back with fingers pointing to the side
 - Rock gently back and forth
 - No deep pressure on the kidneys
 - Low back rock, i.e., SI joint
 - Find the SI joints on either side of the sacrum
 - If you know anatomy you know how to find this
 - In many cases your partner will be able to show you where this is on them
 - If you can see the diamond shape in the low back, the SI joints are the points on either side of the diamond
 - On men this is frequently right under their belt
 - Follow any guidance from your partner about where pressure feels right to them

- If you are not sure of the location, skip this technique
- Place either the heel of the hand with fingers pointing to the sides or the flat of your soft fist, i.e., backs of fingers, on the joints of each side
- Lean into the joint using a deep lunge to adjust your shoulders to an optimal height
- Use your legs to rock side to side on the joint
- Why the SI joint area is important
 - Frequently the source of low back pain
 - Many women hold stress in this area, especially during pregnancy
- Walk your way up the back to return to the shoulders
 - Use full hand or flat of soft fist
 - Walk the hands up by leaning in then moving hands up each time you release the lean
 - Hands can either stay even with each other or walk up alternating hands
- Return to home base at the shoulders for final massage strokes
- Finishing
 - Finish at shoulders
 - Brush down shoulders and back
 - Gently rest your hands on your partner's shoulders
 - Be slow and gentle in withdrawing your touch

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