2023 Massage Therapy Practice Survey Report

In early 2023 the Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association conducted a voluntary survey of the profession of massage therapy in Canada in an effort to help understand the current climate of massage therapy practice in Canada. This survey had a total of 585 participants over the course of the 4 weeks that the survey was available for voluntary participation. The survey was conducted in English.

What follows below is a report of the findings of that survey. Where statistical data has been broken down by category, where results had less than 50 participants within the category, the data has been highlighted with an * in order to indicate reliability of the data.

About the Participants

Association/College Membership – Those who participated were asked to identify which professional body(ies) they belonged to – here are the results showing representation from largest to smallest. 576 Responded.

- Canadian Massage and Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association 493
- College of Massage Therapists of Newfoundland and Labrador 22
- College of Massage Therapists of Ontario 16
- Natural Health Practitioners of Canada Association 13
- Newfoundland and Labrador Massage Therapists' Association 11
- Certified Registered Massage Therapists Association 8
- Massage Therapist Association of Alberta 7
- College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia 7
- Remedial Massage Therapists Society of Manitoba 5
- Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario 4
- College of Massage Therapists of New Brunswick 2
- Registered Massage Therapists Association of British Columbia 1
- Association of New Brunswick Massage Therapists 1
- Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan Inc. 1
- Massage Therapists Association of Nova Scotia 1
- Massage Therapists' and Wholistic Practitioners' Association of the Maritimes 1
- Massage Therapy Association of Manitoba, Inc. 1
- Raynor Massage 1
- Regroupement des Massotherapeutes de Quebec (RMQ) 1

Age – Those who participated were asked to identify their age within a grouping of years – 584 Responded. Here are the results:

- 18-24 yrs 22
- 25-34 yrs 210
- 35-44 yrs 184
- 45-54 yrs 117
- 55-64 yrs 39
- 65+ yrs 12

Gender – Those who participated were asked to identify their gender. 584 Responded. Here are the results:

Female: 503Male: 75Non-binary: 6

Location by Province/Territory – Those who participated were asked to identify each province or territory they practice in. 585 Responded. Here are the results in descending order:

- Alberta 447
- Saskatchewan 78
- Newfoundland & Labrador 28
- British Columbia 23
- Ontario 20
- Manitoba 15
- Northwest Territories 8
- New Brunswick 7
- Nova Scotia 3
- Nunavut Territory 2
- Quebec 1
- Yukon Territory 1
- Prince Edward Island 0

Location by Setting (Large/Small City, Town, Village, Rural) – Those who participated were asked to identify the location they practice in according to population. 585 Responded. Here are the results in descending order:

- Large City (100,000 +) 250
- Small City (10,000 100,000) 207
- Town (2,500 10,000) 87
- Village (1,000 2,500) 26
- Rural (population of nearest settlement has less than 1000) 15

Time in Industry – Those who participated were asked to identify how long they have been part of the profession. 585 Responded. Here are the results in descending order:

- 1-5 yrs 181
- 5-9 yrs 160
- 10-14 yrs 113
- Less than 1 year 49
- 15-19 yrs 28
- 25+ years 24
- 20-24 years 21
- Student 9

When are you Retiring? – Those who participated where given the option to forecast their exit from the profession by way of retirement. Here are the answers provided from the 517 who responded in ascending order.

- 3.09% (16) In the next 12 months
- 22.24% (115) in 1-5 years
- 22.82% (118) in 5-10 years
- 51.83% (268) 10+ years

Work Situation

Respondents were asked to identify how they viewed their work type. These answers included a number of combined responses which allowed for grouping of the responders. A total of 583 responded.

When it came to employment vs. subcontractor vs. owner here are the results:

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- 44.9% (262) respondents identified as sole proprietors.
- 30.5% (178) respondents identified as subcontractors.
- 19.6% (114) respondents identified as employees.
- 6.0% (35) respondents identified as clinic owners either employing or subcontracting additional therapists.

Regarding those who were clinic owners:

- 20 owned clinics with multiple massage therapists at their clinic.
- 15 owned clinics with an multiple disciplinary setting at their clinic.
- 16 used an employer/employee model.
- 19 used a contractor/subcontractor model.

Regarding location:

- 35.5% (207) worked in a multi-disciplinary location.
- 26.6% (155) worked in a multi-therapist location.
- 18.5% (108) worked alone in clinic space set up in their home.
- 12.3% (72) worked alone in rented clinic space.
- 8.1 % (47) worked in mobile massage.
- 0.3% (2) worked in student clinics.
- Of those who were working as subcontractors:
- 71.7% (124) contracted to a single location.
- 28.3% (49) contracted to multiple locations.

Nationally, when asked how many hours of massage therapy the respondents practiced in an average week, they responded as follows in descending order:

- 20-22 Hours 16.41% (95)
- 14-16 Hours 12.26% (71)
- 8-10 Hours 11.23% (65)
- 17-19 Hours 9.50% (55)
- 5-7 Hours 9.15% (53)
- Less than 5 Hours 8.29% (48)
- 23-25 Hours 8.12% (47)
- 11-13 Hours 6.22% (36)
- 25-27 Hours 5.01% (29)
- 28-30 Hours 5.01% (29)
- 31-33 Hours 3.28% (19)
- 34-36 Hours 2.42% (14)
- 40-42 Hours 1.90 % (11)
- 37-39 Hours 0.86% (5)
- 42-50+ Hours 0.35% (2)

Nationally, when asked how many patients/clients the respondents provided treatment to in an average week, they responded as follows in descending order:

- 16-20 24.19% (141)
- 11-15 20.41 % (119)
- 6-10 16.64% (97)
- 1-5 16.12% (94)
- 21-25 14.41% (84)
- 26-30 7.3% (41)
- 36-40 0.51% (3)
- 41-45 0.34% (2)
- 31-35 0.17% (1)
- 46-50 0.17% (1)

Conclusions from this Section

The vast majority of respondents are considered to be self employed (81.48%). As an industry this is a very high percentage and reflects the trend of larger clinics to be in the contracting business rather than serving as an employer. We were also surprised to learn that just slightly more than 1/3 of therapists work in a solo environment. This speaks to the entrepreneurial spirit that many in the industry have.

Also, it is important to note is that of the respondents less than 8.5% provided treatment to more than 25 clients per week. This number is significant, as it is an indication that full time employment as a massage therapist is not likely to look like other professions which consider a regular work week of 36-40 hours as the standard for full time employment. In fact, of those who responded less than 1/5 exceed 25 hours of treatment time per week, with the majority (approximately 2/3) providing less than 20 hours of treatment time per week.

Financial Information

Respondents were asked a number of questions surrounding rates charged, earnings, reliance on massage as primary/secondary source of income. From these questions we concluded the following:

- Nationwide 83.4% of respondents said that massage therapy was their primary source of income. When compared with province specific numbers where there were more than 10 provincial respondents, we observed the following significant (>5%+/-) variations:
 - Newfoundland and Labrador this number jumped to 92.7%*
 - Saskatchewan this number decreased to 76.9%
- Nationwide 45.4% of respondents said that they needed a second source of income in order to make ends meet. When compared with province specific numbers where there were more than 10 provincial respondents, we observed the following significant (>5%+/-) variations:
 - Manitoba this number jumped to 60%*
 - Newfoundland and Labrador this number decreased to 32.1%*
- Nationwide the mean for the charge of a one-hour treatment was \$95.62. Charges for a one-hour treatment ranged from a low of \$35 to a high of \$260. When broken down provincially where there were more than 10 provincial respondents, we observed the following:
 - o Alberta mean \$96.83/hr
 - o British Columbia mean \$100/hr *
 - Manitoba mean \$86.67/hr *
 - Newfoundland and Labrador mean \$96.60/hr *
 - Ontario mean \$108.73/hr *
 - o Saskatchewan mean \$83.63/hr
- Nationwide we observed the following mean rates when comparing reported population densities:
 - o Large Cities (100,000+): \$99.03/hr
 - o Small Cities (10,000 100,000): \$94.44/hr
 - o Towns (2500-10,000): \$89.88/hr
 - Villages (1000 2500): \$101.31/hr *
 - o Rural (less than 1000 at the nearest settlement): \$81.79/hr *

A note of commentary here – we believe that the villages number is higher due to spa/resort settings.

- When broken down provincially where there were more than 50 total provincial respondents, we observed the following mean rates when comparing reported population densities:
 - o Alberta Large Cities (100,000+): \$100.91/hr
 - Alberta Small Cities (10,000 100,000): \$95.76/hr
 - o Alberta Towns (2500-10,000): \$89.03/hr
 - Alberta Villages (1000 2500): \$132.64/hr *
 - o Alberta Rural (less than 1000 at the nearest settlement): \$75.00/hr *
 - Saskatchewan Large Cities (100,000+): \$87.27/hr *
 - Saskatchewan Small Cities (10,000 100,000): \$86.83/hr *

- Saskatchewan Towns (2500-10,000): \$83.00/hr *
- Saskatchewan Villages (1000 2500): \$71.50/hr *
- o Saskatchewan Rural (less than 1000 at the nearest settlement): \$74.00/hr*

A note of commentary here – we believe that the villages number in Alberta is higher due to spa/resort settings.

- When looking at Nationwide rates broken down by treatment location type we observed the following:
 - o In Home Based locations the mean rate was: \$87.50/hr
 - o In Single Therapist Clinic location, the mean rate was: \$91.18/hr
 - o In Mobile Massage the mean rate was: \$99.32/hr *
 - o In Multiple Therapist Clinic location, the mean rate was: \$94.43/hr
 - o In Multidisciplinary Clinic locations the mean rate was: \$97.41/hr
- Nationwide the mean for the rate of compensation for employees or subcontractors for a one-hour treatment was \$59.84/hr. Employee or Subcontractor compensation for a one-hour treatment ranged from a low of \$20 to a high of \$110. When broken down provincially where there were more than 10 provincial respondents, we observed the following:
 - o Alberta mean \$58.73/hr
 - British Columbia mean \$58.21/hr *
 - Newfoundland and Labrador mean \$60.00/hr *
 - o Ontario mean \$71.54/hr *
 - Saskatchewan mean \$59.63/hr*
- Nationwide 81.3% (474) of respondents indicated that either they, or the clinic they work for collects and remits GST/HST.
- When asked about their 2021 net earnings (after taxes and expenses) from the practice of massage therapy respondents reported the following in descending order based on percentage:
 - o \$25,001-\$50,000 39.12% (205)
 - o \$1 \$25,000 29.01% (152)
 - o \$50,001 \$75,000 15.46% (81)
 - No income from Massage Therapy 13.55% (71)
 - o \$75,001 \$100,000 2.48% (13)
 - o \$100,001+ 0.38% (2)
- When asked to compare their 2021 net earnings (after taxes and expenses) from the practice of massage therapy when compared to net earnings from 2020 respondents reported the following in descending order based on percentage:
 - Stayed the same (less than \$1000 increase or decrease) 32.64% (173)
 - Increased by \$1000-\$4999 25.85% (137)
 - Decreased by \$10,000+ 11.13% (59)
 - Increased by \$5000-\$9999 9.43% (50)
 - Increased by \$10,000+ 9.43% (50)
 - Decreased by \$4999-\$1000 7.36% (39)
 - Decreased by \$9999-5000 4.15% (22)
- When asked as to compare their expected 2022 net earnings (after taxes and expenses) from the practice of massage therapy when compared to their 2021 net earnings respondents reported the following:
 - Stayed the same (less than \$1000 increase or decrease) 33.82% (185)
 - Increased by \$1000-\$4999 26.51% (145)
 - Decreased by \$4999-\$1000 10.24% (56)
 - Increased by \$5000-\$9999 9.87% (54)
 - Increased by \$10,000+ 8.41% (46)
 - Decreased by \$10,000+ 6.40% (35)

Conclusions from this Section

There is a very large difference (\$35.78) between the mean rate of charge for treatment (\$95.62) and mean rate of compensation for the therapist (\$59.84). This is just slightly higher than the typical 60/40 split which we understand to be very common in the industry for those considered to be subcontractors.

As a whole it appears that COVID 19 had a very significant impact on earnings, and that the industry is still struggling to recover, although indications are that nearly 45% of respondents were expecting to see an increase in their earnings in 2022 when compared to 2021. This is will be a piece of data that will be important to compare following the 2024 RMT Practice Survey to see if inflation and economic impacts have narrowed or reversed the upward trend.

Also of importance to note, that while over 4/5 of respondents indicated that they or their clinic collected and remitted GST, however in accordance with their net earnings more than 40% were below the \$30,000 threshold for mandatory collection and remittance.

About the Clinics

Respondents were asked a number of questions surrounding the clinics which they work in. These included things like other services which the clinics offer, booking systems, record keeping, and payment methods. From these questions we concluded the following:

- Respondents were asked to disclose which <u>additional services</u> the clinic(s) which they work in provide
 to the public. Respondents were offered a list of what were considered to be the most popular options
 but were also given the opportunity to write their own input by way of a text box. Here is a list of the
 additional services being offered within the therapists' place of practice listed in descending and
 alphabetical order:
 - Cupping Therapy 424
 - Hot Stone Therapy 278
 - Acupuncture 147
 - Reflexology 146
 - Manual Osteopathic Therapy 122
 - Spa Services 108
 - Chiropractic Therapy 107
 - Physiotherapy 96
 - Shockwave Therapy 74
 - Laser Therapy 68
 - o Reiki 16
 - Naturopathic Doctor 11
 - Graston Therapy 9
 - Manual Lymphatic Drainage 9
 - Craniosacral Therapy 8
 - Rattan Massage 8
 - Rapid Neurofascial Reset 7
 - Psychology 7
 - Yoga 5
 - Thai Massage 4
 - Athletic Training 3
 - Dry Needling 3
 - Energy Healing 3
 - Raindrop Therapy 3
 - Aromatherapy 2
 - Biofield Tuning 2
 - Concussion Therapy 2
 - Deep Tissue 2
 - Dietician 2

- Esthetics 2
- Hair Salon 2
- Infrared Sauna 2
- Indian Head Massage 2
- Myofascial Release Therapy 2
- Podiatry 2
- Pre-natal Massage 2
- Sports Massage 2
- Tarot Reading 2
- Access Bars 1
- Akashic Records 1
- Active Release Technique 1
- Aruyeyda 1
- Athletic Therapy 1
- Biofeedback Therapy 1
- o Body Code 1
- Body Talk 1
- Brain Therapy 1
- Chakra Healing 1
- o Counselling 1
- Decompression Table 1
- Dog Daycare 1
- Dog Sports 1
- o Facial 1
- Facilitated Stretching 1
- Fascial Decompression 1
- Fascial Stretch Therapy 1
- Fertility Massage 1
- o GuaSha 1

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Guided Meditation - 1
                                                       Occupational Therapy - 1
  Homeopathy - 1
                                                       Orthotics - 1
0
○ Infant Massage – 1
                                                    o Pilates – 1
  Ion Foot Baths - 1

    Reiki Education – 1

                                                    ○ Speech Therapy - 1
  Kinesio Taping – 1
  Laser Hair Removal - 1

    Somatic Movement Therapy - 1

                                                    Taiyouga – 1
  Lactation Consulting - 1
  Matrix Repatterning – 1
                                                       Tattoos - 1
  Medical Esthetics – 1
                                                    TMJ Therapy – 1
  Medi Facials – 1
                                                    Ultrasound – 1
  Midwifery - 1
                                                    Virtual Coaching – 1
Nurse Practitioner – 1
                                                       Waxing - 1
                                                    0

    Nutritional Counseling – 1
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• Respondents were asked to identify which online booking system is used in their place of practice. 20.70%(117) of the 565 respondents indicated that they do not use any online booking system. Of the remaining respondents, the boking systems which they indicated using are listed in descending order:

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Acuity - 1

    JaneApp - 175

o Noterro - 60
                                                o Book4Time - 1
o ClinicSense - 46
                                                Bookly - 1
Mindbody - 25
                                                Calendly - 1
  Booker - 15
                                                Clinicmaster – 1
Square Booking App – 12
                                                o Cliniko – 1
  Juvonno – 8
                                                Facebook - 1
  Vagaro - 8
                                                GoDaddy - 1
o Zenoti – 8
                                                o Goldie – 1
o Fresha - 6
                                                IntakeQ - 1
Click4Time – 5
                                                InTouch - 1
  Chirosuite - 4
                                                Lifemark – 1
  MassageBook - 4
                                                o LPS - 1
  Setmore - 4
                                                   Massago - 1
  Shortcuts - 4
                                                Massagedger - 1
  DaySmart - 3
                                                o Milano – 1
  Klickbook - 3
                                                o MRX - 1
  10-8.com - 2
                                                o Phorest - 1
  Appointy - 2
                                                Outsmart - 1
o GoRendezvous – 2

    Resort Suite - 1

  MDware - 2
                                                Schedulicity - 1
Midzplay - 2
                                                Schedulista – 1
Perfect Practice – 2
                                                   Simply Book Me - 1
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- Respondents were asked about the method which they use to keep client records. The results are listed below in descending order:
 - $_{\circ}$ I used an online client record system 296
 - o I use a paper based client record system 199
 - o I use a computer based client record system 80
 - o I don't keep client records 5
- Respondents were then asked which online record system they are using to keep client records. The
 results are listed below in descending order:

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    JaneApp - 142
    Noterro - 47
    ClinicSense - 35
    MindBody - 13
    Zenoti - 8
    Juvonno - 5
    MassageBook - 5
    Booker - 4
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Shortcuts - 4
Chiro Suite - 3
Daysmart - 3
Click4Time - 2
Lifemark LPS - 2
Practice Perfect - 2
Vagaro - 2
Chartmaster - 1
Clinico - 1
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- GoodNotes 1
 GoRendezvous 1
 Health Quest 1
 In Touch 1
 Massagedger 1
 Mindzplay 1
 Pike13 1
 Square 1
- Respondents were asked which methods of payment were accepted in their practice locations. Below is a list of responses in descending order of popularity:

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o Cash - 86.62% (505)
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- Debit through a POS System 73.76% (430)
- Direct Third-Party Billing (Health Insurance) 72.56% (423)
- o Credit through a POS System 72.21% (421)
- eTransfer 62.95% (367)
- Gift Certificates 50.77% (296)
- o Cheque 32.42% (189)
- o Gift Cards 27.10% (158)
- Credit Cards through Client Records App 1.37% (8)
- Apple/Google Pay through POS System 0.34% (2)
- Massage-o-gram 0.34% (2)
- Direct Billing to MVA Claims 0.17% (1)
- Trade/Barter 0.17% (1)
- Respondents were then asked, if they used a POS system for credit card transactions, if they had instituted a credit card surcharge fee. Of the 465 who responded 17.85% (83) indicated that they have instituted a credit card surcharge fee for credit card payments.

Conclusions from this Section

When looking at options that clinics have to expand service offerings at their locations it was very interesting to see the very wide variety of options which clients have when visiting a treatment location.

It is interesting to note that while just under 1/5 do not use any form of online booking system, 1/3 of respondents still use a paper system for client records. Also of interest is the wide variety of both online booking systems and online client record systems that are available for therapists to use.

It also interesting to note that while the rules surrounding the ability to pass on the surcharge for credit card use directly to the consumer that less than 1/5 have implemented this practice.

Open Ended Questions

As part of this survey, we asked two open ended questions which we invited respondents to provide an open comment box to respond. Response lengths were limited to about 500 words. Because of the number of responses, and the length of many, we took the time to apply labels to the types of response, and if more than one label applied it was added to the response. We want to thank all those who shared some incredible stories of your successes – they have warmed the hearts of the staff that spent time reading through and labelling. We also want to thank those who were vulnerable enough to share the challenges that you face in your practices, and we want you to know that we are listening!

The first question in this section was "What has been your biggest success as a massage therapist?" We received 495 responses. We then applied labels to these responses in order to group them into categories for this report. In descending order here are the types of responses that we received:

- Helping Clients/Patients 292
- Client Retention 77
- Owning a Business 59
- Career Skill Development 45
- Financial Success 24
- Work Life Balance 24
- Word of Mouth Referrals 15
- Career Longevity 12
- Teaching or Training other Therapists 9
- Excited About Career 8
- Excel at Clinical Practice 7
- Personal Growth 7
- Meeting New People 6
- Client Trust 5
- Surviving Covid 5
- Working with Other Professions (Multi Disciplinary) 4
- Diversity Sensitivity 1
- Volunteering 1

The second question in this section was "What is the biggest challenge you face as a massage therapist?" We received 514 responses. We then applied labels to these responses to group them into categories for this report. These categories in alphabetical order were - Accounting, Autonomy over Booking Schedule, Being a Contractor, Being Profitable, Billing, Business Taxes, City Licensing/Permitting, Client Attraction, Client Education, Client Expectations, Client Outcomes, Client Retention, Client Screening, Clients Faking Injuries, Clients with no Benefits Coverage, Clinic Location, Competition, Completing Con Ed Requirements, Cost of Benefits/Lack of Benefits, Coverage for Therapist, Cost of Continuing Education, Costs Associated with Being Regulated, COVID 19, Dealing with GST, Direct Billing, Economic Downturn, Emotional Strain, Finding Clinics that Support Evidence Based Practice, Finding Desired Continuing Education, Finding Employment, Frustrating Clients, Gender Stereotype, Harassment by Staff, Health Insurance Benefit Limits, High Rental Costs, Home Care, How to Provide Effective Treatment, Imposter Syndrome, Inability to Connect with Clientele, Incompetent Therapists, Inconsistent Pay, Inflation, Knowing How Much Pressure to Apply, Knowing When to Retire, Lack of Association Support, Lack of Business Support, Lack of Control Over Rates, Lack of Knowledge/Skill, Lack of Professionalism in the Industry, Lack of Massage Therapy Awareness Marketing, Lack of Recognition as Health Professionals, Lack of Regulation, Lack of Respect by Fellow Therapists, Lack of Respect by other health professions, Lack of Trust in Professional Skills, Language Barrier, Late Cancellations, Laundry, Low Compensation, Maintaining Professional Boundaries, Male Clients with Thick Hair, Massage Therapy Stereotyping, Maternity Leave, Mental Strain, Moving from Unregulated to Regulated Province, Networking, No Increase in Benefits Companies to Match Increased Cost of Treatments, No Shows, Office Staff, Overbooked, Physical Strain, Political Instability, Poor Treatment by Businesses, Racism, Saving for Retirement, Scheduling, Self Care, Self Employed - Lack of Security in Case of Accident/Illness/Injury, Self Promotion/Marketing, Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment by Clientele, Social Media Management, Time Management, Transitioning to Owning, Wages vs. Cost of Living, Working Alone, Working at Multiple Locations, Work/Life Balance, and Workplace Transition.

As you can see, there were many different challenges that the respondents identified. In descending order, where the category received at least 5% of support from the respondents, here are the top challenges that the industry is currently facing:

- Physical Strain 24.32% (125)
- Client Retention 16.15% (83)
- Client Attraction 14.79% (76)

- Inconsistent Pay 9.14% (47)
- Being Profitable 7.97% (41)
- Wages vs. Cost of Living 6.23% (32)
- Mental Strain 5.25% (27)
- Work/Life Balance 5.25% (27)

Other categories that landed between the 2-5% included in alphabetical order were Client Education, Client Expectations, Clients with No Benefits Coverage, Competition, Cost of Continuing Education, COVID 19, Dealing with GST/HST, Finding Desired Continuing Education, Frustrating Clientele, Gender Stereotypes, Late Cancellations, Low Compensation, Massage Therapy Stereotyping, No Shows, and Time Management.

Conclusions for this Section

For those who responded the greatest driver is their clientele. Their largest standard for success was not earnings or wages, but rather seeing client outcomes and having those same clients return regularly for treatment. This speaks to the incredible drive that massage therapists have to help people. Their financial success was largely secondary.

Also, important to note are the large range of challenges which therapists face within the profession, the largest being their own physical well being due to the physical nature of the work which they do while providing treatment. The need to have a greater focus and emphasis on self care options is abundantly clear.

Final Word

We again want to thank those therapists who took the time to participate in this survey and we are looking forward to repeating the survey in early 2024. If you wish to be added to our emailing list to get an invitation to participate in the 2024 survey, please send an email to info@cmmota.com and let us know, and we will be happy to include you in the invitation.