

Evidence Informed Practice for Massage Therapy

<https://strive.cmta.com/#el-cfe412a3>

What is Evidence-Informed Practice?

Designed to fit the individual needs of all RMTs, STRiVE is made up of two parts: ensuring compliance with minimum standards, including the Standards of Practice, and supporting each RMT to be the best they can be!

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STRiVE - the Quality Assurance Program

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An Introduction to Evidence-Informed Practice in Massage Therapy

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STRiVE – the Quality Assurance Program

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Welcome and Learning Objectives

Welcome to 'An Introduction to Evidence-Informed Practice in Massage Therapy'.

This e-learning module focuses on the **Career-Span Competency - Use an evidence-informed approach in your work** which indicates that:

RMTs make practice decisions by integrating the best available evidence source(s) for the situation at hand, including research-based information, your own professional knowledge, the client perspective, and the practice context.



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Career-Span Competencies

- Understanding that each RMT's career path is unique, STRiVE's personalized approach is built on 15 Career-Span Competencies which provide a framework for RMTs to manage their practice throughout their entire career-span.
- Intentionally broad in nature, the Career-Span Competencies apply to RMTs working in all practice settings including clinics, hospitals, home-based practices, spas, educational institutions, research facilities and administration.
- As a regulated healthcare professional, it is the responsibility of all RMTs to implement each Career-Span Competency in a manner that is consistent with their personal practice situation.

Career-Span Competencies

1. Act with professional integrity
2. Communicate effectively
3. Comply with legal requirements
4. Function in a client-centred manner
5. Apply the principles of sensitive practice
6. Work within areas of personal knowledge and skills
7. Maintain a safe work environment
8. Maintain comprehensive records
9. Maintain personal wellness consistent with the needs of practice
10. Manage time and resources effectively
11. Treat others respectfully
12. Practice in a manner consistent with current developments in the profession
13. Use an evidence-informed approach in your work
14. Interact effectively with other professionals
15. Practice in a self-reflective manner

1. Act with professional integrity

- By this we mean that RMTs are honest and trustworthy in all professional dealings, and share information openly (within the bounds of others' rights to privacy and confidentiality); RMTs respond to situations consistently and in accordance with ethical principles; RMTs maintain appropriate professional boundaries with clients and colleagues; RMTs avoid behaviours which may damage the reputation of the profession.

2. Communicate effectively

- By this we mean that RMTs provide others with information in a way they can understand, adapting language and communication approaches as appropriate. RMTs communicate clearly and as concisely as possible, and take steps to ensure that they are understood. RMTs listen carefully to what others have to say; RMTs are alert to non-verbal signals that suggest discomfort, lack of understanding or unspoken concerns, and attempt to address this.

3. Comply with legal requirements

- By this we mean that RMTs comply with laws, rules, regulations and other requirements established by those with authority to govern practice of the profession and the professional workplace. This includes federal, provincial / territorial, municipal and local governments, regulatory bodies, and professional authorities.

4. Function in a client-centred manner

- By this we mean that RMTs ensure that clients and client wellbeing are at the centre of decisions they make; RMTs give each client their complete attention and allow sufficient time to fully address their needs; RMTs respect client uniqueness and take into account their views, preferences and concerns; RMTs actively involve clients in decision making, and ensure that they are fully informed about and consent to the services they provide.

5. Apply the principles of sensitive practice

- By this we mean that RMTs ensure appropriate therapeutic boundaries (both physical and emotional) are always maintained with clients. This includes that they appropriately manage power differentials; RMTs recognize and address transference and counter-transference; RMTs apply all modalities with a therapeutic intent; RMTs effectively address accidental or incidental physical contact; and, RMTs appropriately respond to a client's emotional reaction before, during and after a treatment. RMTs obtain written consent prior to assessment or treatment of sensitive body areas. RMTs are aware of what constitutes sexual abuse, and how to prevent it.

6. Work within areas of personal knowledge and skills

- By this we mean that RMTs clearly identify the parameters of their work, based upon a realistic understanding of the extent of their knowledge, skills and experience; RMTs work independently only within these parameters; RMTs address client needs that transcend their personal limits by referral or collaboration.

7. Maintain a safe work environment

- By this we mean that RMTs take action to ensure the physical safety of all who enter their practice environment; RMTs optimize the physical and emotional safety of clients throughout service provision; RMTs are aware of and comply with their legal and moral obligations to safeguard young persons and vulnerable adults.

8. Maintain comprehensive records

- By this we mean that RMTs ensure that complete, accurate, clear, legible and contemporaneous records are kept of all your professional activities, using appropriate terminology; that records are secure, and maintained for any period of time that may be required by statute; that client records are available to clients themselves and to others with a legitimate right to access.

9. Maintain personal wellness consistent with the needs of practice

- By this we mean that RMTs maintain their own health, wellbeing and personal care such that they are able to provide optimal client services; this includes maintaining their physical, mental and emotional health; addressing work-life balance; and ensuring that their personal department is consistent with the needs of their workplace.

10. Manage time and resources effectively

- By this we mean that RMTs treat their own time and that of their clients as valuable resources that must be managed to optimize client services; that RMTs take steps to efficiently utilize all the resources of their practice to best serve client needs; that RMTs recognize and where appropriate contribute to the efficient use of public resources in the broader public interest.

11. Treat others respectfully

- By this we mean that RMTs recognize and value the uniqueness of others as individuals, treat them with respect and fairness, and avoid acting in a discriminatory fashion; it includes ensuring that their own beliefs and values do not prejudice the services they provide to clients.

12. Practice in a manner consistent with current developments in the profession

- By this we mean that RMTs take regular, active steps to keep their knowledge and skills up to date; this includes reading professional literature, attending conferences, participating in courses and workshops, and consulting with colleagues.

13. Use an evidence-informed approach in your work

- By this we mean that RMTs make practice decisions by integrating the best available evidence source(s) for the situation at hand, including research based information, their own professional knowledge, the client perspective, and the practice context.

14. Interact effectively with other professionals

- By this we mean that RMTs maintain good working relationships with other professionals; RMTs regularly interact with colleagues inside the profession; RMTs work in active collaboration with such colleagues and with other health / social service professionals when doing so is in the best interest of clients; in team-based work RMTs clearly articulate their role, effectively resolve conflicts and participate fully.

15. Practice in a self-reflective manner

- By this we mean that RMTs regularly take time to consciously think about their practice, analyse their decisions and their effectiveness, and draw on external information, to achieve continuous learning and quality improvement.

Evidence informed practice, otherwise referred to as 'EIP', evolved from Evidence-Based Medicine, a model developed by a group of physician-scientists over 20 years ago, notably Drs Gordon Guyatt and David Sackett, from McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario, Canada.



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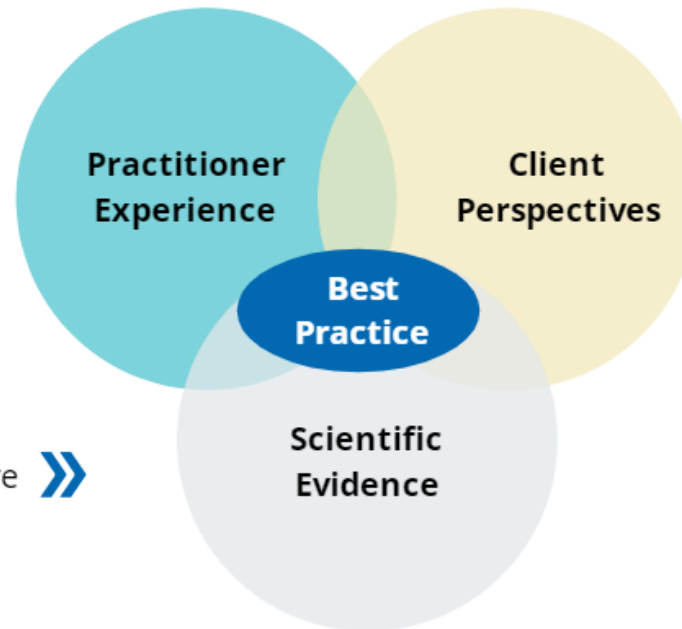


Working collaboratively, the doctors recognized that the provision of good medicine requires the application of current knowledge generated through research and scientific inquiry which highlighted the importance of critical assessment of research literature in clinical practice.



▶ Three Domains

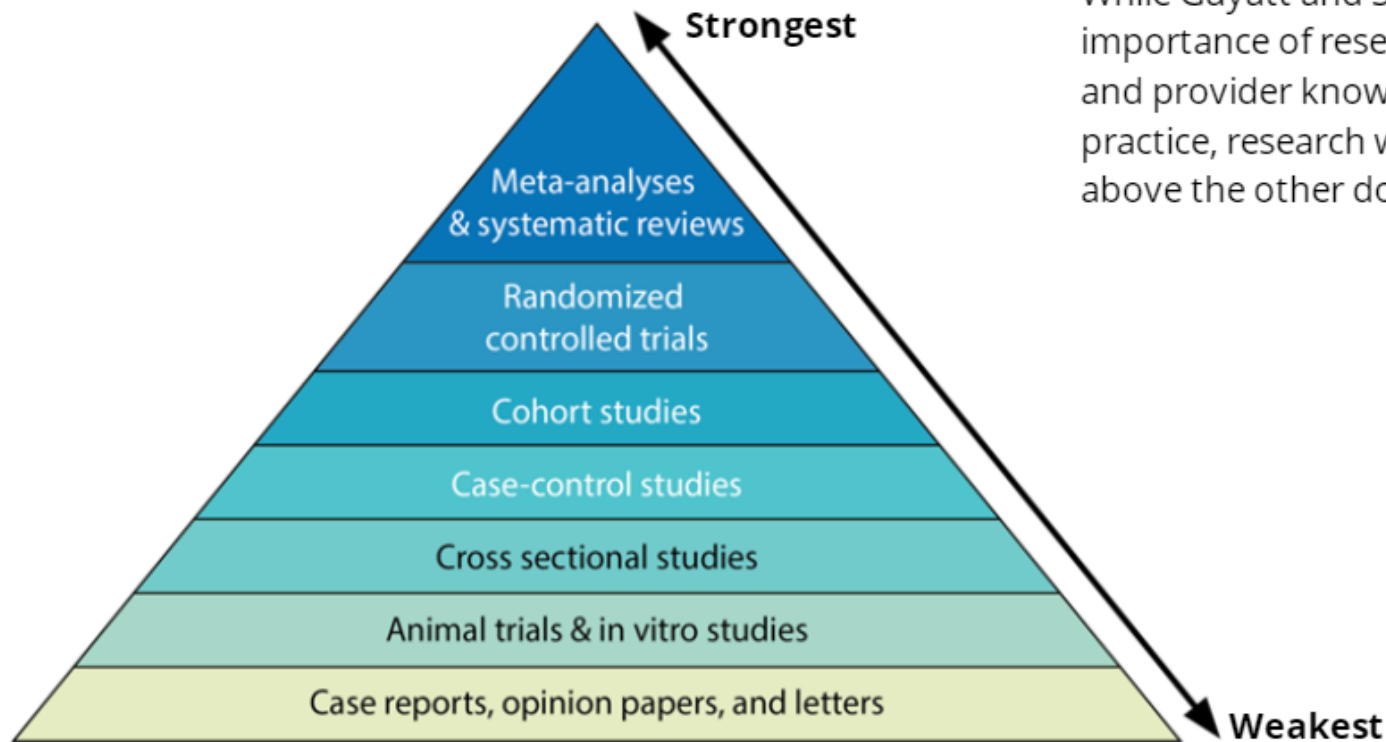
Described as “the integration of the best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values” the Evidence-Based Medicine model was initially identified as having three domains of knowledge:



Click each circle to learn more >>

Based on Sackett DL, et al. BMJ 1996; 312(7023):71-72

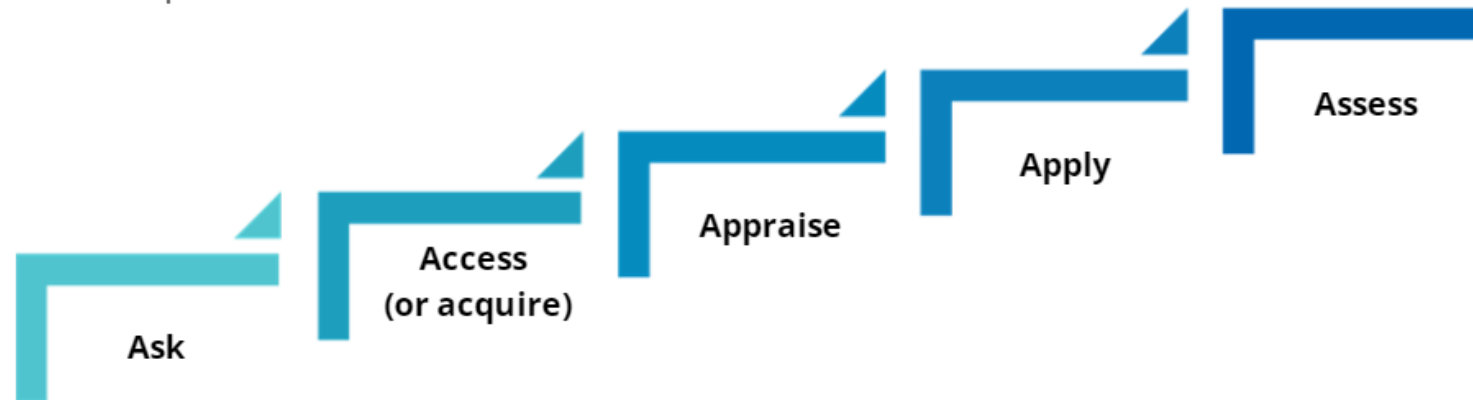
Hierarchy of Scientific Evidence



While Guyatt and Sackett acknowledged the importance of research, client perspective, and provider knowledge/expertise, in practice, research was often emphasized above the other domains.

The emphasis on research is reflected in a five step process that addresses practice-based problems, or clinical questions, which serve to identify helpful solutions.

The Five Step Process involves:



Click each step above to learn more

Although initially applied to medicine, the core ideas of Evidence-Based Medicine have been adopted by many professions in and outside of health care, including:

- Social work
- Nursing
- Physical therapy
- Chiropractic
- Education
- Management

After being incorporated into a variety of professions, the model evolved and changed in response to differing needs and work contexts.



Consistent with any new approach, the emphasis or exclusive focus on the research domain in Evidence-Based Medicine is sometimes criticized.

For example, critics have suggested that a research centric approach is challenging and restrictive because:

- The uptake of research into practice is slow
- Conducting research is expensive
- Sufficient time or money will never be available to address all the important clinical questions through research

From a practical perspective, it is important to remain open to other evidence sources beyond scientific inquiry or science alone.





▶ EIP as Domain Integration

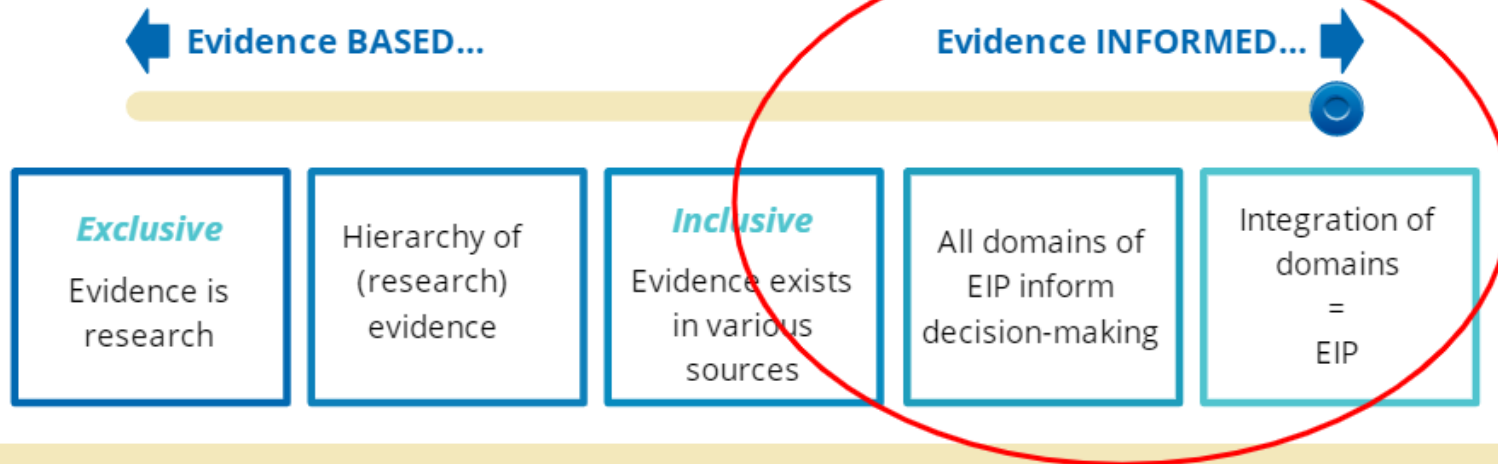
Instead of emphasizing one domain, an evidence-informed approach integrates evidence from all domains. This can be visualized on a continuum from exclusively emphasizing research evidence to equally integrating all evidence domains.



The continuum helps to illustrate the importance of being open to evidence existing in other sources, remaining focused on each of the three domains and integrating all of the information into an evidence-informed approach within the practice setting.

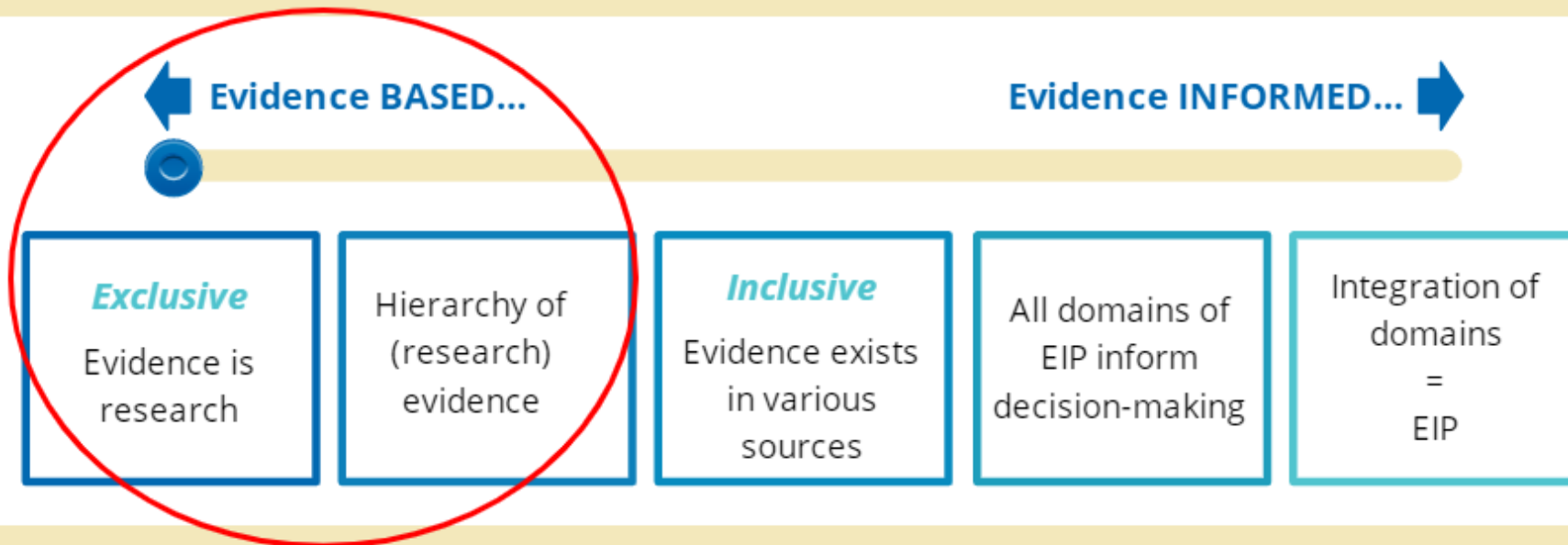
▶ EIP as Domain Integration

Instead of emphasizing one domain, an evidence-informed approach integrates evidence from all domains. This can be visualized on a continuum from exclusively emphasizing research evidence to equally integrating all evidence domains.



Moving along to the other end of the continuum, the emphasis shifts towards practice being informed by research.

Instead of emphasizing one domain, an evidence-informed approach integrates evidence from all domains. This can be visualized on a continuum from exclusively emphasizing research evidence to equally integrating all evidence domains.



At one end of the continuum, the emphasis remains on research and practice that is based on research evidence.

The evolution of thought towards a more integrative approach has increasingly included the addition of a fourth domain: Work Context.

Work context refers to the combination of factors or features that create a unique situation within which an activity takes place.

For example, an RMT may provide a massage therapy treatment within a variety of practice settings including a clinic, hospital, spa or home-based practice.

Alternatively, an RMT working as an educator may teach students enrolled in a Massage Therapy Program offered at either a publicly funded or private career college.

Recognition of work context is important because it often requires adjustment, or adaptation, in how one practices and works. Individual differences across contexts can be unique in terms of what information is considered relevant, the availability of resources, the experiences one is being exposed to, and the result in each situation.



Across all healthcare professions, it is established and recognized that the provision of high-quality health services is dependent on evidence-informed practice.

Formally defined,

'quality healthcare' is the degree to which health services increase positive health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge. Quality healthcare is often defined by effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, access to appropriate care, and safety.



A lack of quality healthcare services leads to clients receiving sub-optimal care, incorrect or inappropriate treatments, and potentially harmful care.



▶ EIP's Importance to Massage Therapy

Click each number to learn more



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It's a fact, RMTs throughout the province demonstrate an ongoing commitment to learn as they practice and take active steps to reflect on clinical findings that result from working with valued clients on a regular basis.

While not formally referenced in the past, the approach that RMTs have regularly incorporated into daily practice, suggests that Evidence-Informed Practice has on some level, been commonly integrated in the Massage Therapy profession for many years.



▶ EIP's Importance to Massage Therapy

Click each number to learn more



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That said, the concept of EIP is an important distinction for Massage Therapy as a profession because:

- Relying on what one learns in school is simply not adequate education for an entire career.
- Knowledge changes over time. Ideas and theories are challenged; some methods continue to be accepted whereas other approaches may be dismissed due to not being reflective of scientific fact.
- Continually adapting and changing means working in new ways to provide better quality of care.

Click each number to learn more



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Effective use of an evidence-informed approach, requires a collective commitment from all RMTs to:

- **Frequently explore opportunities for improvement and enhancement.**
- **Evaluate treatment outcomes and gather all forms of evidence encountered in practice.**
- **Critically assess the information received.**
- **Use reliable data to inform actions and decisions.**
- **Remain committed to lifelong learning through regularly engaging in continuing education and professional development activities.**

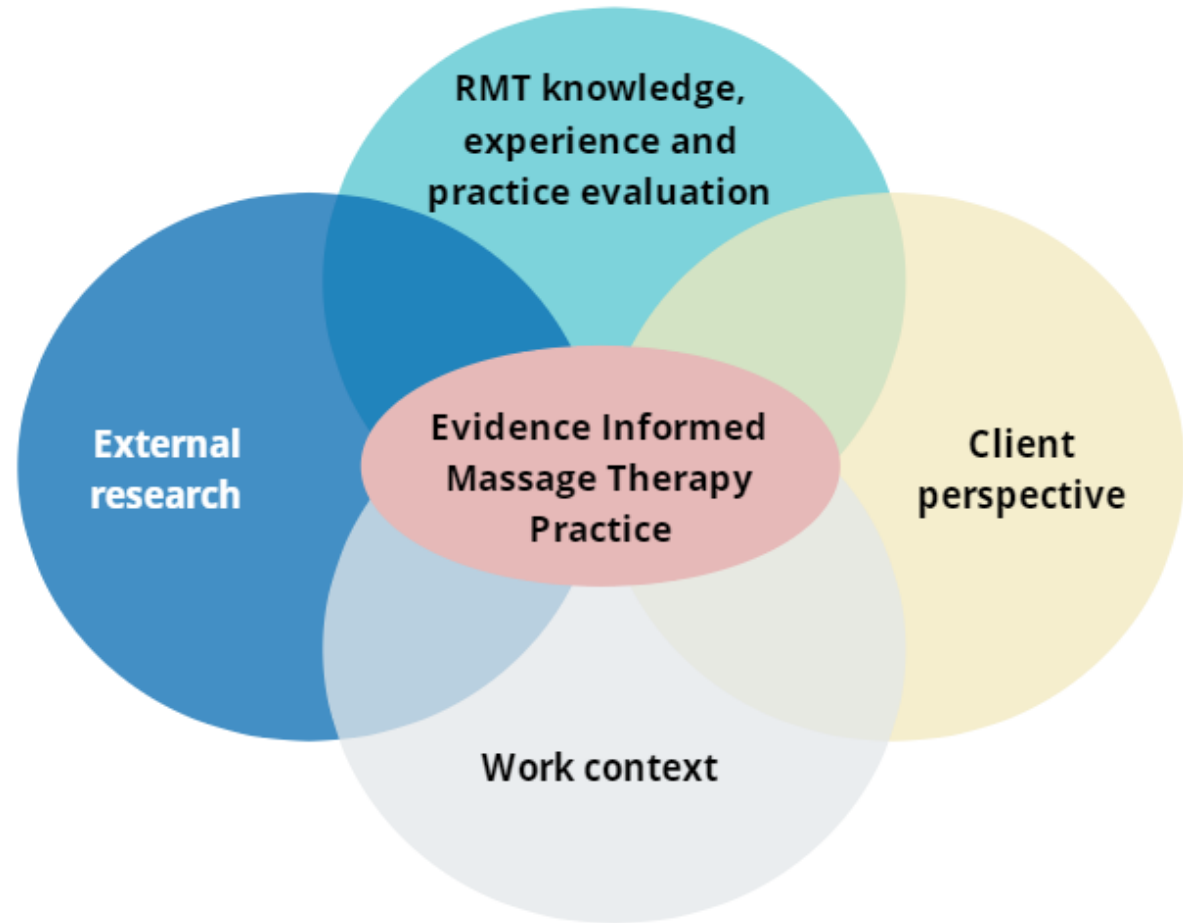
Employing an evidence informed approach serves to enhance the perception of RMTs as modern, knowledgeable and informed healthcare professionals.

The provision of safe and effective practices has a direct impact on clients, students, fellow RMTs, other regulated healthcare professionals, stakeholders and members of the public seeking high quality healthcare.



Based on research and consultation, an approach to EIP has been adopted by CMTO Council that places an emphasis on the integration of the four domains discussed previously.

As a result, Evidence-Informed Massage Therapy Practice in Ontario, recognizes the integration of all four domains in practice.



▶ Adopting an EIP Approach

The consistent and thorough adoption of an Evidence-Informed Practice approach within the Massage Therapy profession will require effort, commitment and dedication over an extended period of time.

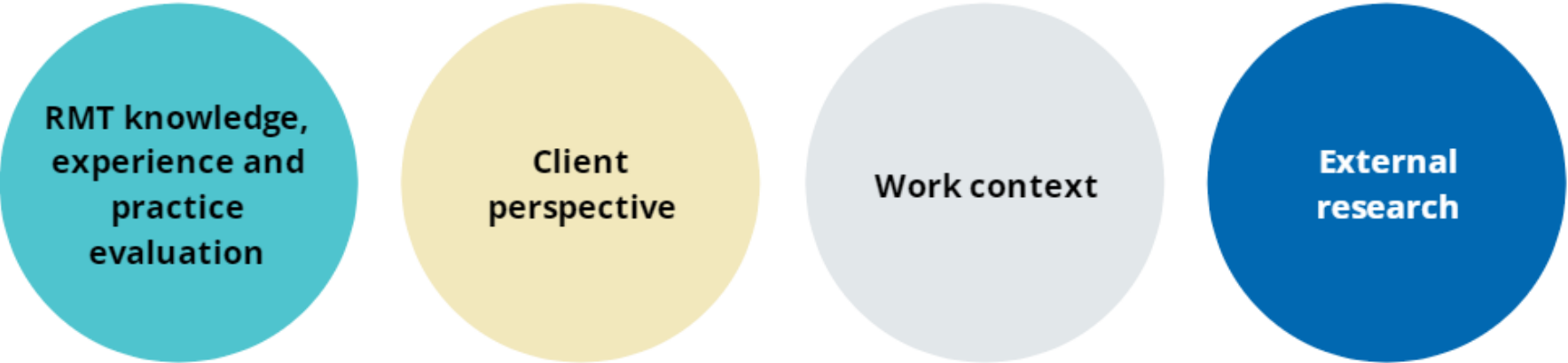
Familiarity with the application of EIP or aspects of the concept in daily practice is an excellent starting point that can be further enhanced with additional learning and experience.



Alternatively, the introduction of EIP as a new concept provides opportunity for learning and the development of skills that will provide significant benefit to practice.

The good news is that the integrating an evidence-informed approach to practice is possible, regardless of the number of years an RMT has been working in the Massage Therapy profession.

For RMTs that are new to the concept of Evidence-Informed Practice, it will be helpful to learn about each domain individually, with relative separation or distinction. While engaging in daily practice, apply the concepts during relevant times or select moments.



**RMT knowledge,
experience and
practice
evaluation**

**Client
perspective**

Work context

**External
research**

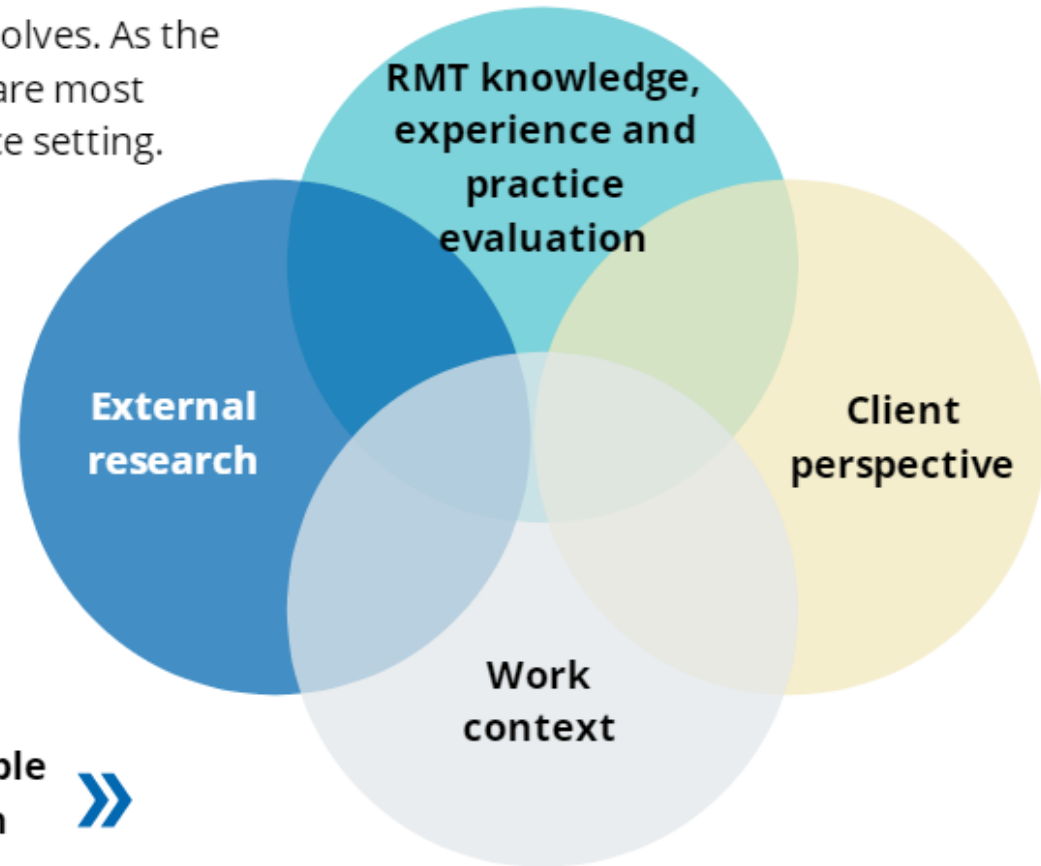
▶ Partially Integrative Approach

Once a level of comfort with Evidence-Informed Practice has been established, recognize what each domain involves. As the process unfolds, begin to apply the domains that are most relevant or interesting in the context of the practice setting.

Remember, an RMT's knowledge and skill across the domains may vary which will prevent each domain from being applied equally. Eventually over time, after working within multiple domains at the same time, the integration will begin to occur with consistent practice.

Consider the following, as an example of integrating EIP into the treatment of a client:

Click on the individual circle to view an example of integrating an evidence informed approach into each domain.



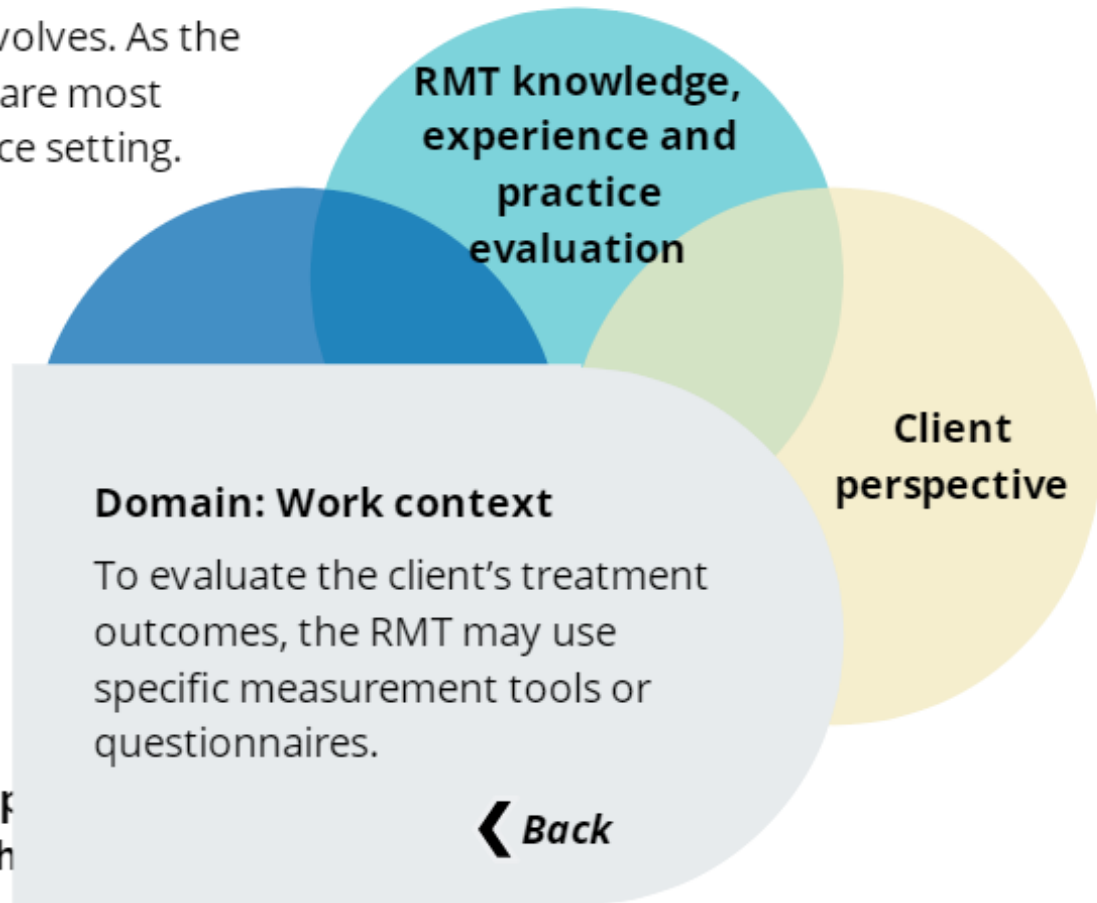
▶ Partially Integrative Approach

As comfort with Evidence-Informed Practice has increased, recognize what each domain involves. As the domains begin to apply the domains that are most interesting in the context of the practice setting.

When RMTs knowledge and skill across domains may vary which will prevent each domain from being applied equally. Eventually, as RMTs work within multiple domains at the same time, the integration will occur with consistent practice.

Following, as an example of how to integrate EIP into the treatment of a client:

Click on individual circle to view an example of integrating an evidence informed approach into a domain.



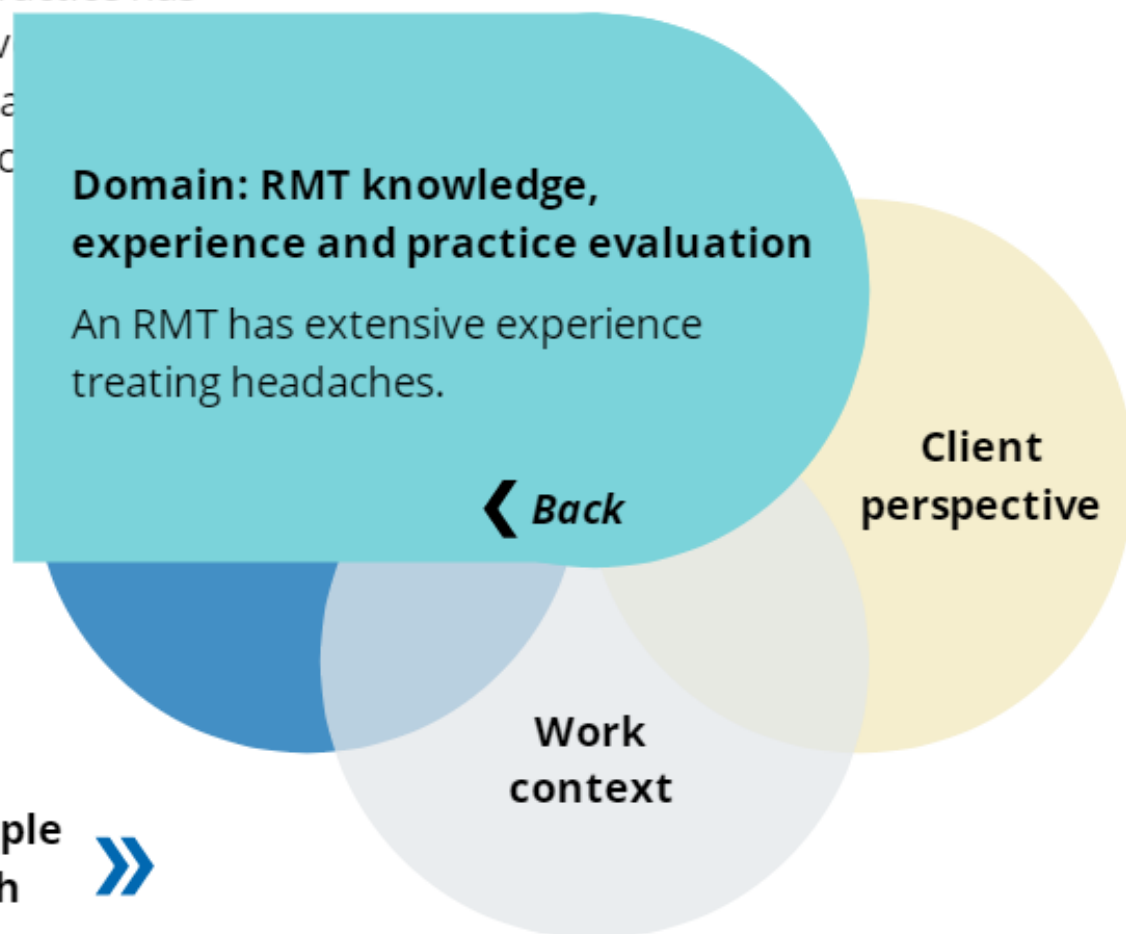
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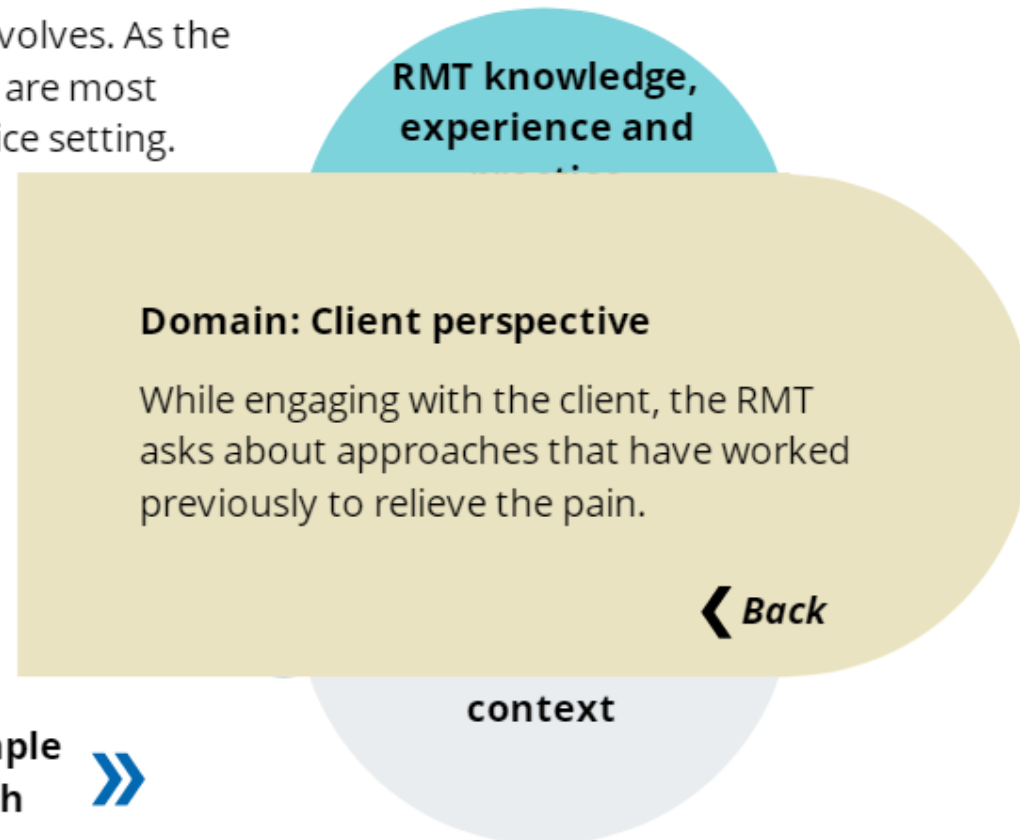
▶ Partially Integrative Approach

As your level of comfort with Evidence-Informed Practice has increased, recognize what each domain involves. As the domains unfold, begin to apply the domains that are most interesting in the context of the practice setting.

As an RMT's knowledge and skill across domains may vary which will prevent each domain from being applied equally. Eventually, after working within multiple domains over the same time, the integration will occur with consistent practice.

Following, as an example of applying IP into the treatment of a client:

Click on an individual circle to view an example of applying an evidence informed approach to a domain.



**RMT knowledge,
experience and
skill**

Domain: Client perspective

While engaging with the client, the RMT asks about approaches that have worked previously to relieve the pain.

◀ *Back*

context

▶ Partially Integrative Approach

As comfort with Evidence-Informed Practice has increased, recognize what each domain involves. As the models evolve, begin to apply the domains that are most interesting in the context of the practice setting.

As an RMT's knowledge and skill across domains may vary which will prevent each domain from being applied equally. Eventually, after working within multiple domains at the same time, the integration will occur with consistent practice.

The following, as an example of Evidence-Informed Practice into the treatment of a client:

Click on an individual circle to view an example of applying an evidence informed approach to a domain.





► Fully Integrative Approach

Becoming more knowledgeable and experienced with EIP allows for the consistent application of domains and integration becomes more intuitive. Eventually, the ability to function in an evidence-informed manner becomes seamlessly incorporated into an RMTs practice.



The four-domain approach to Evidence Informed Practice is well suited to the Massage Therapy profession in Ontario for several reasons:

Click each number to learn more >>

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- **The concepts recognize the wealth of knowledge and information that exists collectively within the profession and individually as RMTs which has been gained over years of practice as regulated healthcare professionals.**

The four-domain approach to Evidence Informed Practice is well suited to the Massage Therapy profession in Ontario for several reasons:

Click each number to learn more >>

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- **The approach provides flexibility so that learning and integration of EIP can come from a space of strength and familiarity, ultimately enhancing the RMTs assessment of practice and outcomes of additional effort.**

The four-domain approach to Evidence Informed Practice is well suited to the Massage Therapy profession in Ontario for several reasons:

Click each number to learn more



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- **External research is included in the process, however, the proposed approach for evidence-informed Massage Therapy practice does not begin or end with research. The ability to access or interpret research findings remains important but it does not define EIP, nor is it the only aspect that is emphasized.**

The four-domain approach to Evidence Informed Practice is well suited to the Massage Therapy profession in Ontario for several reasons:

Click each number to learn more



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- **The ability to function within the four domains and integrate each domain into daily practice is what defines the EIP approach that has been adopted for the Massage Therapy profession in Ontario.**

Recognizing the focus of an evidence informed approach may require a shift in thinking for the profession. CMTO remains committed to supporting the continued growth of all RMTs with the provision of additional resources to assist with the successful integration of the four EIP domains into massage therapy practices.

Be sure to watch your inbox for further details in the coming months.





► Demonstrate Knowledge of EIP



Now that you have an understanding of evidence informed practice, it is time to demonstrate your knowledge by completing the questions that follow.

Remember, while the number of attempts is unlimited, and answers to the questions are accessible only to you, a score of 100% is required to confirm completion.

Questions and Answers

1. What is Evidence-Informed Practice?
2. Please list Career-Span Competencies for RMT in Ontario.
3. Please explain the integration of four domains in EIP practice.
4. What is the hierarchy of scientific evidence in EIP practice?