



# CANCER AWARE

Personalized Session Framework



“An individual is not a diagnosis or a situation, they are something much greater. As human beings, we must remember to cultivate compassion and focus on developing a connection with our client, however terrible their circumstance—no matter how visible, hidden, or obscure it is.”

*~Julie Bach, Creator of Wellness for Cancer*

Working with clients recovering from cancer is an exciting time for the spa industry to learn to bring contemplative practices into our professional field. Our *customized client session framework* provides the tools needed for you to deliver a safe and nurturing service. On the simplest level our framework centers on Connection, Touch, and Healing. But ... our client session framework is so much greater than that. Embedded into the framework are those contemplative elements that encourage you to cultivate perspective, presence, communication, and compassion.

By integrating these higher skilled practices, we move from being a technical spa specialist to one that helps a client enter into the true realm of the mind-body connection. Taking steps to evoke the relaxation response in our clients, we aide them in their healing process.

## COMPONENTS OF THE CANCER AWARE FRAMEWORK

### Touch

The touch component of the Cancer Aware framework is the core that provides you with guidelines and professional knowledge to deliver the technical aspects of a Cancer Aware Personalized Session. Understanding the variables of site, pressure, and position enables you to leverage the necessary critical thinking skills to modify a person's session according to presenting needs and conditions.

### Connection

The connection component centers on developing a healthy exchange between you and your client.

Communication requires that you listen with a quieter mind when a client is speaking. Rather than a noisy mind, this component fosters a mind that *is* fully focused on what the client is saying verbally and non-verbally. From the moment a client meets you, your communication skill and style is what enables the client to feel relaxed and connected to you during the hour you spend together.

### Healing

Just as it is easy to get lost in a forest of trees, it's just as easy to get lost delivering a technical service, wondering which healing ingredients to use and/or what other modalities to invoke as opposed to providing service that yields an exceptional client healing experience. The difference between the two is based on a critical element that you must cultivate and bring into the room—presence.



Client presence means being 100% in the moment with a client. Your capacity to be fully present enables the client to feel respected, heard, and nurtured. Being fully present allows you to fine tune your responsiveness to a client's experience.

Presence also means learning to see and let go of obstacles to being present, which may include stress, fatigue, burnout, excessive busyness, overwork, lack of self-care, or lack of presence in your own life. You know when you are not present; your mind wanders and creates chaos. And a client can feel when you are not present—it comes through your touch.

## CONTEMPLATIVE ELEMENTS

In working with clients who are stressed, ill, or healing, the role of the spa therapist must evolve. It is with this intention that we have planted the seeds to leverage contemplative practices within this framework, which provide you with a roadmap for future skills to be cultivated.

### Grounding

Grounding is an important ritual for you to do before and after a client session. It helps bring your focus into the room, with your client, rather than your attention being scattered or unsettled.

When you are grounded and relaxed, you come from a place of ease, which is then imparted to the client. When you enter the room in this state, even the most stressed client will feel the effects. When you provide a relaxed, mindful touch, you have the power to create a relaxation response in your client. Everything can shift for the client as a result.

### Mindfulness

Being mindfully present is the capacity to observe the experience without getting overwhelmed by it. Mindfulness can also mean coming close to a client's pain and discomfort without absorbing it. Developing a personal mindfulness practice will actually deepen your ability to be fully present and accessible to your clients, enabling you to be open and aware of your own responsive emotions, professional knowledge, and intuition.

Your ability to develop mindfulness with yourself helps to cultivate qualities of acceptance, empathy, compassion, and presence not only within but also ultimately with your client.

### The power of perspective

Stepping back for a moment to gain perspective enables you to see the larger picture for your client and how today fits in. Developing this quality gives you the ability to do the very best that you can without any attachment to the outcome of your service or the general well-being of your client.



Perspective provides you with an understanding of how things are, focusing on what you are able to affect and what you cannot. It is crucial for you to realize what you have control over and what you do not. Perspective helps you let go of your service needing to be a certain way.

Imagine the pressure and the stress that we create for ourselves when we cannot step back and open to the perspective of understanding that the causes and conditions of our clients' health issues are not within our control.

### Letting go of expectations

Learning to let go of expectations does not mean that you are not providing a beautiful service. Rather, it changes how you act or go about your service. Letting go of expectations decreases the chances of functioning on autopilot, creates space for your client to be themselves, and allows you to open up to the experience with your client.

### Dropping the belief that you are not doing enough

Additionally, it is essential to drop the belief that you are not doing enough, or that no matter what you do, it won't be enough. In the face of seeing people that you cannot physically help, you open yourself to the optimism that comes with understanding what it is you can and need to do. What you do is done with kindness, joy, and compassion.

There is a freshness and simplicity of encounter when you take interest in the other person—you pay attention to the small gestures, how you speak, and the space between you that creates a certain lightness.

### Feeling invigorated rather than defeated by this work

When we are present and attuned to what is happening with our client, when we honor personal boundaries while offering heartfelt focus toward our clients who may be suffering, we are more invigorated rather than defeated by our work. People need us to be present with them as opposed to acting from denial, aversion, or deprivation. Our clients need our full attention.



***“You cannot give what you do not have.”***  
***~Felix Lopez, Mindfulness Teacher***

The degree to which a therapist can use the *Cancer Aware Personal Session framework* is only limited by your capacity for growth and expansion.

### Additional Information

For additional information on our Cancer Aware or Mindfulness and Meditation Training, please contact: Julie Bach at 970-376-6220 or [Info@wellnessforcancer.com](mailto:Info@wellnessforcancer.com).

