

Massage Therapy: A Life-Changing Career

Margaret Cohen describes the 16 years she spent working as a legal secretary as “the longest years of my life.” They were also the most stressful years. “I was at the point where I had to change what I was doing or I was going to lose it,” she says. Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy offered the opportunity for change she was looking for, a fact that was evident, she says, from the first day of orientation.

As a Licensed Massage Therapist who works at a popular day spa five days a week and sees clients at a senior center on her day off, Margaret says she has “100 percent less stress” and more control over her time than she ever did in her previous career. But best of all, she adds, “I know that people leaving my office are happy and they’re likely to come back. My quality of life, my attitude and outlook are dramatically different. I wouldn’t trade this career for anything. I’m never going to sit behind a desk again,” she exclaims.

Raul Blanco loved playing professional jai alai, but when the Milford fronton closed down in 2001, his 20-year athletic career abruptly ended. With a family to support, he took a job with a furniture refinisher and quickly became a manager. But he always harbored a desire to go back to school to become a massage therapist, thanks to the regular massages he received as a player. Now, four years after graduating from CCMT, Raul’s deep tissue massages are much in demand at the chiropractic office where he works in Fairfield.

After 25 years as a journalist, Lorraine Gengo was burned out and looking for a career change that would spark a passion in her that she’d once felt about journalism as a rookie reporter. Discovering yoga, she decided to become certified to teach it, and during that process she discovered something about herself that she’d forgotten: the joy she felt communicating with others through touch. Her sister, who was studying to be a naturopathic physician, highly recommended the teaching staff at CCMT, some of whom taught courses at her naturopathic school as well. Following her sister’s suggestion and her own intuition, Lorraine visited CCMT’s Westport branch.

“As soon as I entered the school, I knew instantly that it was where I needed to be,” she said. After graduating from the clinical program and getting licensed in both Connecticut and New York, Lorraine took her education a step further; she was the first LMT to receive certification in Ayurvedic Massage through CCMT’s Continuing Education Program, an experience that took her to India for a month of hands-on training. Now she has a new passion: educating her clients about India’s ancient life science wisdom, which she incorporates into her personal massage therapy practice in Norwalk.

Getting paid to do something you love which also profoundly benefits the lives of others isn’t as rare an occurrence as it might sound to those who feel stuck in their career choices. Massage therapists like the three mentioned above have found that helping people relax or manage their pain or recover from an injury or illness is empowering and meaningful work. And as massage therapy is increasingly valued by other health

practitioners as a complementary treatment, the avenues are expanding for where massage therapists can find work. *Money Magazine* recently rated a career in massage therapy in the top 20 best jobs in America, citing 24 percent job growth over the next 10 years and high job satisfaction as significant factors.

Finding the right school is the first step to becoming a successful massage therapist. Since 1980, CCMT has been exclusively dedicated to training massage therapists. Accredited by the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation, CCMT provides a comprehensive, quality education in an atmosphere that honors and promotes self-care, personal transformation and the mind-body-heart connection. CCMT's teachers are some of the most committed and enthusiastic instructors teaching in any institution of learning. They bring the added benefit of their real-life experiences in private practice as massage therapists or health-care professionals. CCMT helps its students, some of whom haven't been in a classroom in more than 20 years, achieve their educational goals by helping them understand their personal learning style, offering tutors, mentors, course assistants and study skills workshops.

CCMT ensures that its students will be thoroughly prepared for professional practice and licensure. In 2006, 98 percent of CCMT graduates passed the National Certification Exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork compared to the national average of 68 percent. But the training and opportunities for learning don't end on graduation day. CCMT graduates have access to lifetime career resources and support, including placement assistance, online massage therapist listings, job postings, business consultations and continuing education seminars. Many graduates return to CCMT to volunteer as course assistants, helping others learn while refreshing their own knowledge.

"It's comforting to know that you always have a place to touch base when you have questions or concerns about stuff that comes up in your career," Lorraine said. "It's a very reassuring feeling."

CCMT offers a risk-free way of testing the waters to see if a career in massage therapy is right for you. Every month, the school hosts a complimentary, half-day Discovery Workshop at each of its campuses in Newington, Groton and Westport. At these events, participants will give and receive massage, experience CCMT's unique learning environment, and feel firsthand the sense of community that is an integral part of a CCMT education.

Who knows, you might decide a career in massage therapy could be more rewarding than the job you have now.

All Discovery Workshops are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To register for an upcoming workshop, visit www.ccmt.edu or call: Newington main campus, 75 Kitts Lane, Newington, (877) 282-2268; Groton branch, 1154 Poquonnock Rd., Groton, (877) 295-2268; or the Westport branch, 25 Sylvan Rd., Westport, (877) 292-2268.

