



Registered Massage Therapists'  
Association of Ontario

# COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORK COORDINATOR VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

*Welcome to the Team!*

Thank you for volunteering to lead the Community-Based Network in your region!

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors and the staff of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario, thank you for your dedication and commitment to the profession of massage therapy. We are happy that you have agreed to volunteer as a Community-Based Network Coordinator for the RMTAO.

Most of our time is spent one-on-one with our patients and it can sometimes feel as though we are working in isolation with limited connection to others in our profession. Staying connected with our peers can provide us with a support system, and somewhere to turn when we have questions, need a second opinion, want to learn from someone else's experience, or just need a good laugh! I hope that we can work together to build a strong network of RMTs in your region.

Coordinating activities and meetings within your community will allow fellow RMTs to network, share knowledge, and seek support. The opportunity to connect with your peers within your community is an integral part of growing the profession at the grassroots level.

Although these CBNs are affiliated with the RMTAO, they are not exclusive to RMTAO members. All RMTs and students of massage therapy in Ontario, both RMTAO members and non-members are welcome to participate in the CBNs.

Building a strong profession begins small, with local RMTs coming together with a common purpose. Strong communities working together will make massage therapy a stronger profession. We are stronger when we are united together.

Thank you for volunteering your time. The work you will do as a CBN coordinator will make a difference for the entire profession of massage therapy in Ontario and across Canada.

## About the RMTAO

The RMTAO is a member-driven, not-for-profit professional association for Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs) in Ontario. The RMTAO exists in order to advance the profession of massage therapy in Ontario. The RMTAO advocates on behalf of the profession and provides resources and opportunities to help RMTs improve their knowledge, navigate the latest research and grow their practices.

## About Community-Based Networks

Community-Based Networks (CBNs) are informal groups of RMTs within local communities or regions of Ontario that connect regularly for social, educational and networking meetings. CBNs are supported and developed by the RMTAO and are coordinated by a volunteer RMTAO member.

## Your Role as CBN Coordinator

CBN Coordinators are volunteer RMTAO members who commit for a period of at least one year to organize and run meetings of RMTs in their community. CBN meetings are open to all RMTs and RMT students, not just RMTAO members. CBN coordinators determine the date, time, topic and location of meetings.

The expectations for CBN Coordinators include:

- Hosting or helping to coordinate a minimum of three meetings per year within your local community.
- Informing the RMTAO of dates, times and locations of upcoming meetings as soon as they are determined.
- Providing a summary of meetings to the RMTAO within 10 business days of when the meeting took place.
- Informing the RMTAO as soon as possible if you are no longer able to fulfill your role as CBN coordinator, and attempt to find potential replacements in your community.
- Respond to communications from the RMTAO in a timely manner.

## RMTAO Support

The RMTAO will support the growth and development of the Community-Based Networks. We will provide tools, information and resources to help your local CBN succeed. The RMTAO will:

- Promote upcoming CBN meetings in the Friday File and on the RMTAO website.
- Provide support to the local coordinator in finding potential speakers or topic suggestions.
- Promote CBNs and encourage RMTAO members to join their local CBNs.
- Provide CBN coordinators with updates on RMTAO advocacy, new programs and resources, and other RMTAO activities.
- Remain a consistent information resource to CBN coordinators, answering all questions and concerns and keeping in consistent contact with CBN coordinators.

## How to Get Started

In order to hold several successful meetings a year and encourage large numbers of RMTs in your region to attend, there are several things you can do.

### Tips for Reaching out to other RMTs in your region

1. **Create a regional Facebook group** and invite RMTs in your region, encouraging others to do the same. Post frequently in your group, sharing meeting times and future meeting ideas, polling group members about what they're interested in, and any issues that affect you in your region.
2. **Reach out to schools** in your region, either speaking to students about attending your meetings, or to educators about promoting your CBN.
3. **Share the work.** Whether it's finding a venue, deciding on a topic or encouraging others to attend, if you need help with a task, other RMTs in your region are a great resource. By involving and engaging your attendees in the work of running the CBN they will become more invested, and more likely to become regular attendees at your CBN meetings.
4. **Send emails to the RMTs in your region**, letting them know that you have started a CBN in the area, and inviting them to attend your meetings. To find a list of all the RMTs in your area, you can put the name of your city or town into the CMTO public registry. There may be dozens, or even hundreds of results. Don't let that overwhelm you. Start simple, emailing a few RMTs in your region at a time and gradually expand your local network.
5. **Be the go-to destination for information and resources.** If you find that your local colleagues are interested in a particular type of course, resource or presentation, try to offer it. If your CBN becomes the place to get the information your community wants and needs, you will encourage local RMTs to attend your CBN meetings.
6. **Use your dedicated attendees.** When people attend your meetings, encourage them to bring a friend or colleague to the next meeting, or to reach out to other RMTs in the region that they know, growing your network by word of mouth

### Types of Meeting Structures

There are several types of meeting structures that can be used at your CBN gatherings. Many CBNs use a variety of meeting structures depending on their preferences, goals and the topics they'd like to discuss. To determine the meeting structure that's right for your group, start by determining what topics interest you, and asking yourself what your goals and objectives are before every CBN meeting.

**Meet & Greet** – Casual, often ideal for a first meeting. No particular agenda/topic, allows everyone to meet each other, talk about their personal issues and concerns and what they would like to get out of the group.

**Resource Review** – Meeting structured around the review, discussion and application of a particular resource (for example, an RMTAO resource or the CMTO Touchpoint articles). Resources can be distributed/read before the meeting to be prepared for discussion.

**Guest Speaker** – An individual presenting about a specific topic relating to their experience/expertise. The presentation could be related to business skills, particular conditions and patient populations, finances, marketing, etc.

**Idea Generation Meeting** – Focuses on one central issue in the profession, and brainstorm ways individual RMTs could contribute. The meeting usually begins with an explanation of the central issue/challenge, and then the group comes up with as many thoughts, ideas and opinions as possible to ensure a thorough understanding, appreciation of and engagement with the issue. This meeting type can be particularly useful when discussing new CMTO and RMTAO initiatives.

**Sharing Experiences** – This is the opportunity to discuss specific challenges that you have in your RMT practice, whether they be business, marketing, or technique related. Using the experiences and insights of your colleagues, you can work through the issues directly affecting you in your practice.

**Workshop** – Informational, educational and practical events can be an essential type of meeting for the continued growth of the CBN. These sessions may involve practicing hands on massage therapy techniques or may involve working through producing other practical business, administrative or marketing related work.

## How to Follow Up After Meetings

- During the meeting, gather the names and contact information of attendees
- After the meeting, contact everyone who attended, thanking them for their participation, provide a summary of the meeting if appropriate, and solicit suggestions for future meetings and events.
- Use your Facebook group (if applicable) to poll your members on future meeting opportunities and set up an event.
- Contact the RMTAO with a summary of what was discussed, key ideas that were shared and decisions made, and any support you may need from the RMTAO. (See below for meeting reporting form)
- Reflect on what aspects of your meeting were successful, where you could use improvement, and what you wish you'd done, and use that insight to plan the next meeting.

Community-Based Networks not only provide somewhere for RMTs to turn for knowledge and support, they also begin to connect the profession at the grassroots level. By connecting together in our local communities, we build a strong base of support for the profession of massage therapy that spans across Ontario.

The RMTAO will help facilitate the growth and development of CBNs across Ontario. We hope you are encouraged to reach out to your local peers and lead many successful meetings. The RMTAO is always available to support you in your role as CBN coordinator, and we encourage you to contact the RMTAO with any questions or concerns.

*Thank you!*

## Additional Resources

**CBN Introductory Template** – Introduce yourself to the RMTs in your area. This template can be easily customized and provides an overview of the CBNs and well as benefits of becoming involved in your local network.

**CBN Survey** – The survey can be used to assist in future meeting planning by helping to determine the types of meetings and topics that are important to your community.

**CEU Reporting Form** – Provide this document to the members of your CBN to assist them in tracking the activities and competencies that are applicable for CEUs.

**CBN Reporting to RMTAO** – Use this form to provide information back to the RMTAO. You can provide the topics that were discussed, action plans that were proposed at the meeting, as well as support needed from the RMTAO.

**Topic Suggestions** – We have provided some ideas for meeting topics to get you started. Engage with the members of your CBN to determine topics of interest to the group.

Fellow RMTs,

On behalf of the Registered Massage Therapists' Association of Ontario (RMTAO), I would like to welcome you to your Community-Based Network (CBN). My name is ***insert your name***, and I am the CBN coordinator for ***insert your region***. Our Community-Based Network will meet regularly for networking, educational and social meetings. This Community-Based Network is a great opportunity to meet other local RMTs and access valuable resources and information.

The RMTAO provides support to our CBN, however all RMTs and students of massage therapy in Ontario are welcome to attend meetings!

Attending your local CBN meetings has a variety of benefits.

- Meet fellow RMTs in person to discuss issues and concerns about specific situations and issues in your practice. Together it's easier to brainstorm solutions!
- Expand your knowledge through relevant presentations, workshops and resources
- Earn free CEUs
- Access and discuss practical resources that will help you grow your business.
- Meet with more established RMTs and RMTs with different practice focuses, and learn from their expertise and experience.
- Connect with your professional association – The RMTAO advocates on behalf of all RMTs in Ontario, and CBNs are a great opportunity to increase engagement and communication with the RMTAO.

Our next meeting is ***insert date, time and location of next meeting***. I hope to see you there! The more RMTs we have in attendance, the more successful and engaging meetings we can hold in our region. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at ***insert your preferred contact information***.

***(include if applicable)*** You can also follow us on Facebook! I have created a Facebook group for our CBN called ***insert name of your regional Facebook group***, and I welcome you to join. This is a great way to connect with your fellow RMTs outside of regular CBN meetings, and keep up to date with upcoming meetings and events.

Join me in building a strong community of connected RMTs in ***insert your region***.

Sincerely,

***Your name***

1. **Meeting Availability:** What days/times would you be available in the average week? Check all that apply.

Day	Morning (9am - Noon)	Afternoon (Noon – 5pm)	Evening (5pm – 8pm)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

2. **Topics (Level of Interest):**

Please indicate level of interest in the following topics:	Strong	Moderate	Some	None
Marketing, promotion				
Record keeping (forms, review of obligations, and discussion of best practices)				
Bookkeeping, taxes				
Client challenges (specific cases, concerns)				
Tips and challenges for running a successful business				
Inter-professional collaboration opportunities				
Communication (with patients, with other health professionals, with other RMTs)				
Review anatomy, physiology, pathology, neurology				
Review specific techniques				
Review assessment				
Review of specific conditions and how massage therapy can help				
Review of remedial exercise				
Topics of career longevity (running a business, preventing burnout, self-care, proper body mechanics)				
Focus on a specific patient population (e.g. cancer care, pregnancy, aging populations)				
<b>Your suggestions:</b>				

3. **Would you be willing to pay for presenters or other incidental meeting costs?**

No  Yes If yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Possible presenters** (your suggestions - name, topic, contact information):

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Are there any topics in which you have expertise and would be willing to share?**

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **Are you aware of any locations that would be suitable for our purposes for future meetings?** Examples: cafes/restaurants, churches, clinic spaces, meeting rooms in condos, libraries etc.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. **Why are you interested in joining your local Community-Based Network?** (select all that apply)

- a) Networking
- b) Learn from more experienced RMTs
- c) Practical treatment advice (specific cases, techniques)
- d) Advice on running a successful business
- e) Meeting more RMTs in my area for friends/socializing
- f) Engage in my profession /give back
- g) Other, Please specify

8. **What do you consider the biggest barrier to connecting with other RMTs in your region?**

- a) Area has sparse/spread out RMT population
- b) Difficult to reach out to non RMTAO members
- c) Lack of awareness of other RMTs in the area
- d) Lack of interest
- e) Lack of time
- f) Other, please specify

9. **Would you be willing to volunteer to assist with the coordination of the CBN?**

Yes  No

**Additional Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# CBN Coordinator Reporting to the RMTAO



<b>CBN Region:</b>		<b>CBN Coordinator:</b>	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>		<b>Number of Attendees:</b>	
<b>Meeting Topic:</b>			

<b>Topics Discussed:</b>	<b>Decisions made/conclusions:</b>	<b>Support needed from RMTAO:</b>

**Next Meeting:**

<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Topic:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	



### Interprofessional Collaboration

- Discuss local opportunities to connect with other health professionals
- Share experiences of connecting with other health care professionals, both successful and not
- Brainstorm different ways to promote massage therapy as beneficial to the patients of different health professionals (e.g. promote massage therapy for TMJ to Dentists)
- Potential speakers: Other health professional in the community, RMT who works in multidisciplinary environment (perhaps more rare environment, e.g. hospital, sports team)

### New Research

- Discuss research for specific areas of interest (e.g. specific conditions, treatment options, patient populations, pain science)
- Discuss a specific piece of research and application and incorporation into practice

### Record Keeping

- Discuss successful and unsuccessful record keeping practices and strategies
- Discuss practice management software and SOAP notes options
- Overview of record keeping requirements and related CMTO policies

### Self-Care

- Discuss self-care tips and tricks based on personal experience
- Review of proper body mechanics and potentially helpful stretches
- Discuss strategies to avoid emotional burnout and dealing with emotionally difficult situations
- Potential speakers: mental health expert, body mechanics expert

### Marketing

- Learn how to set up a website
- Discuss personal marketing experiences, what worked and what didn't
- Discuss RMTs on social media, including promoting your business, interacting with patients, fulfilling your professional obligations, respecting privacy requirements
- Discuss tips on attracting new patients and building up a client base
- Potential speakers: local marketing professional, social media specialist

### Career Longevity

- Tools and modalities that can be incorporated RMTs to reduce hands-on time
- Techniques and experiences to avoid physical burnout
- Developing a business plan and a career plan
- Potential speakers: long-time RMT, RMT who owns one or a series of clinics, representative from a medical device or massage therapy tool company

### Accounting and Taxes

- Review of HST requirements in different practice and contract situations
- Discuss common tax issues encountered by RMTs and sharing systems to manage them as well as common tax deductions

- Review of financial record keeping requirements including receipts and business expenses
- Share information about local accountant familiar with massage therapy or small businesses
- Share advice on determining profitability and estimating expenses
- Potential speaker: local accountant or bookkeeper

### **Professional Issues**

- Discuss new CMTO policies or standards, and any required changes to incorporate into practice
- Discussing professional boundaries (e.g. treating family and friends, giving or receiving gifts, conflicts of interest)
- Discuss important issues related to the insurance industry (e.g. delisted practitioners, client file requests, prescriptions required for reimbursement by some plans)
- Review advocacy efforts and brainstorm ideas for local advocacy initiatives (e.g. contacting local MP or MPP)
- Review the campaign for tax exemption for massage therapists (RMTACT.ca)

### **Patient Populations**

- Pregnancy massage (including specific benefits and things to consider, sharing personal experiences)
- Palliative care (including how RMTs can help, things to consider, opportunities to get involved with this population)
- Aging populations (including special considerations, personal experiences, and opportunities in retirement homes, hospitals or home care)
- Sports massage therapy (including how to get involved with sports teams, different techniques used)
- Pediatric massage (specific benefits, sharing experiences)
- Patients with mental health conditions (i.e. PTSD, depression and anxiety)