



# What Would You Do?

## Chapter 1

an online resource  
created to accompany

### ***Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy:***

*A Comprehensive Guide to Prenatal, Labor  
and Postpartum Practice  
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**this resource links to:**

**Chapter 1, pages 10 & 29**





## What Would You Do?

### Chapter 1

[from page 10]

*A new client spends her entire massage animatedly sharing the details of her pregnancy. She also asks you many questions. You share in her excitement, yet you also know that she is missing out on certain benefits of the session. Why might it be important for her to turn inward and “focus” in her treatments? What can you do to encourage that – with your words, your hands and your environment – while honoring her wish to share?*

Below is one possible response:

Turning inward to her body sensations and her feeling states will increase the relaxation effects of the massage session. She is more likely to experience increased autonomic sedation, which in turn will enhance her body awareness and decrease her sensations of pain. Women who are more “tuned in” and relaxed tend to be better able to cope with the stress of pregnancy, and then can use this ability during the rigors of labor and the challenges of being a new mother.

Encourage her to turn inward by using:

- *Your words:* “What does this movement feel like for you?” “Where else do you feel the effects of this technique other than where I am touching you?” “Would you like more or less pressure (speed, movement, etc.)?” “What are you feeling right now?” Answer her



questions as simply and with as few words as possible. Ask her to hold her questions until after your session when you can focus better on answers; so that right now you can focus on giving an effective, relaxing massage.

- *Your hands:* Slow down your technique. Focus more intensely on the intention of your work and the structures you are touching. Your own increased awareness of your contact will encourage her to become more aware of what's happening within her body.
- *Your environment:* In subsequent sessions, experiment with changing the music and lighting to encourage relaxation. Declutter your room so that it is more serene. Cover or remove books, charts and other elements that may stimulate her mind.



[from page 29]

*You are invited to attend a conference for public health nurses in your community as part of their continuing education program. How would you describe the benefits of massage therapy both during and after pregnancy to this group?*

Below is one possible response:

- I would summarize the major possible benefits of prenatal massage therapy, as discussed in this chapter.
- I would include one or two studies that support my claims for these benefits, listing these and any other relevant studies in a bibliography in their handout material.
- Part of my discussion would include any shortcomings of these studies and what needs further investigation.
- I would include some of my professional experiences with clients as examples, which would make these benefits more real and personal.
- I would also ask the nurses to share any of their own experiences of the benefits of massage, either as a recipient or a giver of nurturing touch.
- Finally, I would lead them in brief, simple, partnered massage of another nurse's shoulders, so that they might have a here-and-now experience of being touched with care and positive purpose.