

HANDS OFF OUR NAME

Massage is Therapy

MEDIA TOOLKIT

Overview

We value the media as allies and advocates of legitimate, tax-paying massage therapy businesses and members of our community. As such, on behalf of the over 350,000 licensed massage therapists in the US and the many business owners, we ask that you assist us in changing the narrative and learn more about the massage therapy profession.

The main problem is the words that are being used in news stories across the US. Human trafficking is all over the news. In 2018, The Polaris Project's report on human trafficking coined the term **illicit massage business/illicit massage parlor** and saddled the massage profession with these damaging words. Now when someone hears the words, they think it is a massage business with the workers doing sex work.

There is no such thing as an illicit massage business/illicit massage parlor. If there was a plumber leading a theft ring would you call it an illicit plumber? No, we call them a theft ring. Calling them what they are will bring the needed attention in our communities. This is a very complex societal issue that needs the attention of people in each community so they can work on the issues together. The city /county councils, local law enforcement agencies, agencies who provide support and services for the victims, local and state prosecutors and then help for the Johns (the men who frequent these places).

The word Massage Parlor has actually been stricken from the North American Industry Classification System. Massage therapists are now classified under Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners NAICS 621399 and NOT NAICS 812999 – Massage Parlors.

Changing the Narrative

Most states have laws that limit the use of the words massage to only LICENSED massage therapists. (There are only a few states that do not require statewide licensing: Minnesota, Kansas, Wyoming and California. CA has a voluntary certification.) In all other states, LMT's must attend approved massage schools and pass a state licensing exam. Most are also subject to background checks and must maintain their licensee with continuing education. We ask that you help with the untangling of the massage profession with the many sexually oriented businesses. Here are some of the things we suggest:

- Learn about the massage profession and what it means to become a massage therapist. Each state has different requirements to become a licensed massage professional. You can find the details of the website www.lookbeforeyoubookamassage.com.
- Refer to the victims that provide illicit services as Sexually Oriented Businesses and not illicit massage businesses and massage parlors. They have nothing to do with massage. They can also be called Brothels Disguised as Massage Businesses (BDAMBs) or Sexually Oriented Businesses (SOBs) or Illicit Sex and Human Trafficking Businesses Disguised as Massage (ISHT).
- When speaking about law-abiding, licensed massage therapists, do not use the word masseuse/masseur. That may be acceptable in France, where the term originated, but in the U.S., those terms are used to refer to people who are providing sexually oriented services. Occasionally, these words are still used in the laws but the massage profession is working on correcting the language.
- Each state has their own list of words that are acceptable for massage therapists to use like Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) and other words. Check your state laws. It is important that the public understand the difference and use the correct terminology as this will help the massage profession be recognized as the legal allied healthcare professionals that we are.
- There are also other terms that are being misused to disguise the many sexually oriented businesses. Asian Massage is a common term for hiding sex businesses. There are true Asian types of massage but they are required by the **American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia®** to use specific terms: Acupressure, Jin Shin Do®, Bodymind Acupressure®, Amma, Amma Therapy®, Chi Nei Tsang, Jin Shou Tuina™, Nuad Bo 'Rarn (Traditional Thai), Tuina, Medical Qigong, Five Element Shiatsu, Integrative Eclectic Shiatsu, Japanese Shiatsu, Macrobiotic Shiatsu, Shiatsu Anma Therapy, Zen Shiatsu, Shiatsu. <https://aobta.org/>
- Foot massage places often hide sex workers and offer really low cost foot massage. There are some states that have laws that exempt something called Reflexology from having to be LMT's. This is a very specific type of foot massage and is not just a foot massage. Loopholes in laws allow sex work to happen in some of these businesses. Legitimate Reflexologists will have other training and credentials from the American Reflexology Certification Board. <https://www.arcb.net/>
- Thai Massage is also another hiding place, yet there are very law abiding, licensed massage therapists giving Thai Massage.
- Most states require licensed massage therapists to have their license number on all advertisements including their websites. They are also required to have their license hanging on the wall of the office along with having appropriate ID. Many try to still hide by having one license with one name on it and the workers will say that they are the person on the license and they don't carry any ID.

Call Them What They Are

So as you can see, the issue is quite complex and has been going on for a very long time. We ask that you help us in this daunting task of untangling massage therapy from sexually oriented businesses. Just the simple change in language in the media can create a big change in awareness and lead to the changes needed in each community.

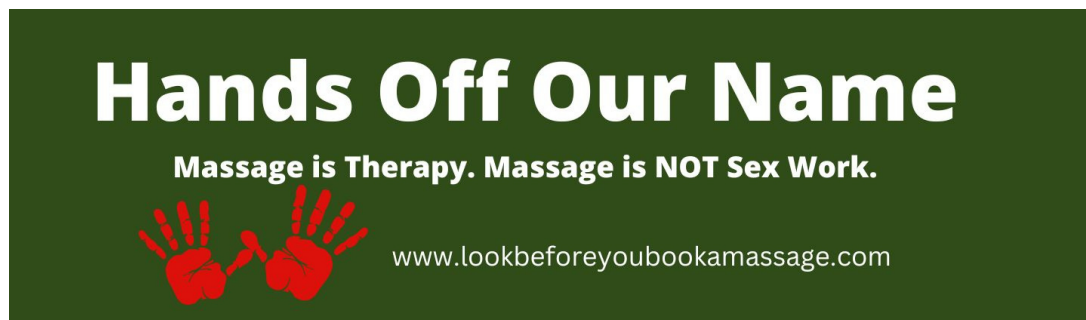
They are Sexually Oriented Businesses Disguised as Massage.

They are Sexually Oriented Business and Human Traffickers Disguised as Massage.

They are Brothels Disguised as Massage Businesses.

Hands Off Our Name

Hands Off Our Name is a campaign to correct the language being used to describe sexually oriented businesses disguised as massage businesses.



Look Before You Book a Massage



www.lookbeforeyoubookamassage.com