



What is sexual abuse?

For health care providers in Ontario, the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) defines sexual abuse not only as sexual intercourse with a patient, but also touching or remarks of a sexual nature directed towards a patient.

What does this mean?

It means a homeopath is not allowed to:

- have sex of any form with a patient
- touch a patient in a sexual way
- make comments of a sexual nature or behave in a sexual way towards a patient

Please note that this does not apply to touching, behaviours or comments that are of a clinical nature and are appropriate to the care provided.

The College of Homeopaths of Ontario exists to protect the interests of the public and sees any form of sexual abuse or sexual boundary crossing as unacceptable. Sexual abuse must never be tolerated

What can a patient do if they are feeling uneasy during an appointment?

- Tell the homeopath to stop.
- Ask the homeopath to explain what he or she is doing and why he or she is doing it.
- Refuse to continue with the appointment if feeling uneasy.

If you think that you or someone you know has been sexually abused by a homeopath, please contact the College of Homeopaths of Ontario at (416) 862-4780 or 1-844-862-4780 or info@collegeofhomeopaths.on.ca.

Should I expect a homeopath to touch me?

For the purposes of assessing your case touching may or may not be required. A homeopathic physical examination may include: visual observation, basic diagnostic testing such as taking blood pressure, using a stethoscope to monitor heart or lung function, muscle testing, reflexes, and gentle appropriate surface touch. Not all homeopaths will choose to do a physical examination of a patient.

What is appropriate touching?

When touching occurs as part of your assessment you can expect that:

- the homeopath will tell you what he or she is going to do before touching you
- the homeopath will ask your permission to touch you
- the homeopath will respect your privacy
- you will be allowed to ask questions or express any concerns
- you will feel respected
- you can ask that an activity be stopped at any time if you are feeling uneasy
- you can withdraw your consent or change your mind about the examination at any time

Understanding the relationship between patient and homeopath—the therapeutic relationship

The relationship between a patient and a homeopath is a professional one that is all about a patient getting the needed care from a professional. This is called a therapeutic relationship.

Patients trust their care to a homeopath because of their unique knowledge and skills. Patients should expect that the homeopath will respect their needs and act in a caring and professional manner.



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Understanding Sexual Abuse

FACT SHEET

A therapeutic relationship is very different than an intimate personal relationship. If a therapeutic relationship exists, homeopaths are not allowed to have an intimate personal relationship with a patient. This does not mean that the homeopaths will not be friendly and interested in you as a person, but it does mean that the homeopaths should not develop an intimate personal relationship with you in or out of the clinic or practice setting, while you are a patient. In fact, to do so could be defined as sexual abuse, even if you consent to the relationship. The homeopath is the one responsible for maintaining an appropriate relationship with patients. The College has rules called standards that describe how homeopaths are expected to behave in order to show that they are acting in the best interests of their patients.

To access these standards, visit the Resources on the College's website or contact us at

(416) 862-4780 or 1-844-862-4780 or

info@collegeofhomeopaths.on.ca.

How to recognize sexual abuse

Because of the way that sexual abuse of a patient is defined in the law, it is difficult to describe exactly the kinds of actions that might be considered to be sexual abuse of a patient by a homeopath. Many times it depends on the situation. What one person finds friendly and kind, may seem too casual or intimate and make another person uncomfortable. Each person's level of comfort with physical contact and informal ways of speaking can be different.

The list below includes some examples of actions or behaviours that are likely inappropriate on the part of the homeopath. These behaviours can be obvious or subtle and words can be as damaging as actions. Contact the College if you experience any of the following with your homeopath:

- Any unwanted sexual attention or behaviour, for example kissing or hugging in a sexual way.
- Sexual touching, for example touching your buttocks, breasts, genitals or any other areas in a way that is not needed for homeopathy.
- Sexually suggestive or seductive remarks, for example, comments about your sexual relationships or sexual orientation or inappropriate sexual remarks or questions about your appearance or clothing.
- Sexually insulting or offensive comments or jokes.
- Asking to meet you outside the clinic or practice setting or to have an intimate, personal relationship with you—for example, dating.
- Not asking for permission before touching you.
- Anything that makes you feel uneasy.

