

Staff Profile: Sheila Savary, WC(Hon), RMT

Hi there! My name is Sheila Savary. I graduated from Wellington College in 1995. Soon after, I was hired to be an instructor in the distance education program. (previously called “part-time” – ha!) I have had my own in-home clinic, worked in clinics and am currently the massage therapist on contract with Middlechurch Home of Winnipeg Inc. I am still instructing at WCRMT – Physiology, Pathology, Medical Terminology, Neurophysiology and Hydrotherapy are my topics.

I have been on quite the journey through my massage therapy career. When I first came to it – it was to have a career I could do out of the house and raise my 2 sons. This was my only goal. Instructing came naturally (who knew?!) and became a love of mine. I have even gone so far as to complete the CACE program with the University of Manitoba – this gives me a certificate in adult education.



I find though, that by far the most queries I get are directed toward my work in palliative care. This was a natural progression through my work at Middlechurch – I have seen many of the residents pass away during my almost 10(!) years there. In 2002, I took a course through Hospice and Palliative Care Manitoba (HPCM) called “Friend in Hand” which most definitely helped me deal with the many deaths of my friends (residents).

I was a guest speaker at the 2004 HPCM Annual Conference – speaking on palliative massage therapy in a personal care home. I was the Chair of the Palliative Care Team at Middlechurch from 2005-2007. As well, in 2004 Middlechurch approved an end-of-life massage therapy program – funded by donations – for all residents of the home. This was such good news, hands-on care provided to residents in their last days.

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Hands-on care.... the power of touch, how to share with you the deep feelings shared during end-of-life care? Often, it is silent work, little responses become big – a more comfortable breath, a sigh, a turn of the head toward you. Sometimes, a gift is given – a hand reaches out and strokes your hand or face in thanks. Just as newborns respond immediately to touch as they enter life, people respond to touch on their journey onward.

So, how do I stay cheerful and keep my soul enriched while working with the dying? Well, it’s actually easy with the right information, attitude and perseverance. All massage therapists are “givers”, most students who come into the program say that they just want to help people. But, in any profession where “giving” is the main criteria, burn-out is common. Just like a bank account, if all you ever do is pay out, you will become bankrupt in no time. The account needs to be replenished.

So, in my years working in palliative – I have taken up running, hockey, belly dance and a pure joy for life. Life is short – Love like you’ve never been hurt, Work like you don’t need the money and **Dance like no one’s watching!** (those of you who have danced with me – you KNOW I follow that one!)

To all of my fellow therapists – I wish you peace and happiness. Enjoy each day you are able to work, help people, love your family and take good care of yourselves.