

Innovating in the Midst of Adversity: Spa Treatment Facilities

April 6, 2022

Spa owners are finding it difficult to return their therapists to work at the same hours as before the pandemic. One reason is needing to be home to take care of children or other vulnerable family members, while others prefer to receive federal support programs like the Canada Recovery Benefit. However, some massage therapists are choosing not to return for safety reasons.

There is already a shortage of qualified therapists, and the pandemic has only exacerbated it. At the end of 2019, there were 14,964 registered therapists, while 994 were inactive. The majority (5,878) worked in clinical group settings. (1)

Spa Magazine even predicts a significant increase in massage therapists changing their status to "inactive" or even leaving the field. (1)

Innovations in Safety

Spa owners have come up with ways to provide safe services to their clients beyond just improving safety protocols.

In an interview with Spa Magazine, the owner of Zenbar Healing Studio in Oakville, Ontario, Carrie Rowan, said the first few days following the pandemic were a "very scary time" due to people's fear of the unknown. The rent bill of \$25,000 per month, as well as many other expenses, had to be paid despite zero revenues. To ensure the safety of clients and staff, Rowan hired two full-time cleaners to keep the spa sanitized and spotless.

Throughout his career, Rowan embraced new technologies and innovative treatments. Among other improvements, she reconfigured her spa space and purchased a \$100,000 facial machine. Her biggest revenue-generating service is medical facials, although due to COVID restrictions she couldn't offer them for months. Rowan attributes her success to hiring "the best people," which she says results in 90 percent repeat customers. (1)

Due to COVID-19 and the fear of infection, no-touch therapies are becoming more popular, and rather than closing, many spa facilities are finding technological solutions to treat their clients. Iwa Spa, located in the Blue Mountain Resort Village just outside Collingwood, Ontario, has developed a new treatment for clients who want no-touch therapy, as well as for clients who want to augment their spa experience. It involves a session lasting between five and 35 minutes called the Healium Relaxation VR Treatment. VR has been shown to increase levels of melatonin and lower levels of cortisol in the brain, which can help people cope with stress and sleep better. VR can be offered as a standalone treatment or as an upgrade to another treatment. (1)

How are Spa Treatment Facilities at Risk?

Spas and other businesses that provide health and beauty services may face bodily injury allegations. A complaint may result from improper handling of equipment, insufficient training, incorrect application of treatment, or physical damage to premises or equipment. The majority of bodily injury claims allege that the insured mishandled equipment or incorrectly performed a procedure or technique, resulting in some degree of injury.

Various dermatological issues are treated with sophisticated equipment, lasers, harsh chemicals, and injections at spas. Botox and laser hair removal, even when performed by experienced professionals, can pose great risks to clients.

Even though laser hair removal clinics are not medical in nature, Health Canada classified the owner's powerful laser equipment as a medical device.

Mistaken prescreening can lead to a variety of medical problems, including skin burns, scarring, paralysis, and hyperpigmentation.

The most reputable spas may still use powerful equipment and perform harsh procedures. Medispa procedures are associated with risks, so it is important to educate clients and build trust between a doctor and patient to ensure they understand these risks.

The MedThree Advantage

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Sources:

1. <https://www.spainc.ca/spa-business/spas-pandemic-survival/>