VERSION 1.0 | November 2026 | Therapist study use

RED FLAGS: STOP / REFER

Quick-reference therapist card | review before every appointment

STOP HANDS-ON TREATMENT

Presentation	Required response
Chest pain, sudden breathlessness, fainting, coughing blood	Emergency medical response immediately
Acute one-sided limb swelling, pain, warmth or colour change	Urgent same-day evaluation for possible DVT
Hot, painful, spreading skin signs, fever or chills	Same-day evaluation for possible infection/cellulitis
Sudden/worsening swelling with shortness of breath, inability to lie flat	Urgent medical assessment; emergency care if severe
Postoperative redness, severe pain, fever, wound complication or unexplained swelling	Do not treat; contact surgical/medical team urgently
Known/suspected acute thrombosis, unstable cardiac illness, acute systemic illness	Do not treat; medical management
Cancer/lymph-node removal and new or worsening swelling	No generic sequence; oncology/lymphoedema specialist referral

SCOPE CHECK

Is this a medically stable wellness client, or a person asking for treatment of disease or unexplained swelling? Clinical oedema care requires the relevant diagnosis, practitioner training, scope and, where applicable, a qualified CDT/CLT referral.

SOUTH AFRICA EMERGENCY

Mobile emergency number: 112. Use local emergency arrangements and send the client for appropriate urgent assessment. A massage therapist must not delay emergency care to attempt drainage.

Document: symptom, time, action taken, referral destination and information shared.

Educational prompt only. Follow current professional protocols and emergency-service instructions.