



What should you do if you receive a complaint?

- Listen to your client
- Do not comment on the complaint
- Show respect and concern for their problem
- Let your client know that you are sorry for their distress

Following these steps may resolve the complaint.

IMPORTANT:

Write notes about the conversation while you are talking or immediately following the conversation. Include the date and time.

If you cannot resolve the complaint directly with your client, or your client wishes to pursue the complaint, or has already complained to the Health and Disability Commissioner, then take the following actions:

Contact the following organisations:

- 1. your insurance company**
 - Insurance companies will give advice and support, and pay for legal assistance if required.
- 2. your professional body (NZIA, NZCMAS, NZCCM etc)**
 - Your professional body will support their members through any complaints process.
 - They will provide you with a support person if requested.
- 3. NZASA**
 - a) NZASA will deal with any complaint received.
 - b) The complaint may come direct from the client, or HDC or ACC.
 - c) Some clients may not tell the practitioner they have complained.
 - d) The process for these complaints is the same.
 - e) NZASA will remind you to contact your insurance company and your professional body.
 - f) if the complaint has come direct to NZASA, NZASA will:
 - a. tell you a complaint has been received, then...
 - b. form a Complaints Assessment Committee (CAC) composed of two competent acupuncturists, a lay member, and a lawyer if required.

The CAC:

- i. The CAC will meet and determine how the complaint will be investigated.
- ii. The CAC may ask you for information about the case e.g. a response from you about the complaint, copies of your clients files etc
- iii. The CAC may ask you to pay for translation of your client notes if they are not written in English
- iv. Once the CAC has received all the information, it may arrange to meet with you, and separately with the person making the complaint.
- v. After investigating the complaint the CAC makes a recommendation to NZASA whose decision is final.
- vi. As a result of the recommendation, NZASA can:
 - require the Registrant to undertake counselling or/and work under supervision;
 - caution the Registrant; reprimand the Registrant;
 - order remedial education;
 - impose fines;
 - impose restrictions on practice;
 - suspend registration;
 - cancel registration.

What can you do to help prevent complaints?

Take comprehensive client histories, including...

- general information e.g. name, address, contact details, next of kin, GP, marital status, ACC number etc
- western medical history e.g. diagnosed conditions, surgeries, allergies, medications, children etc
- lifestyle e.g. smoking, alcohol, recreational drugs, diet, exercise, relaxation etc
- Chinese medicine “10 questions” e.g. temperature/perspiration, pain/sensations, headache, cough, sleep, urine, bowels, appetite/digestion, menses etc
- pulse, tongue, diagnosis, treatment plan and treatment record

Write down everything you do at each treatment

- name all the acupuncture points (WHO numbers, pinyin)
- write down if you use moxa and where you apply it
- write down if you use any massage and where you apply it
- write down if you use a heat lamp and where you apply it to your client
- write down any herbs you prescribe and the instructions you have given the client for taking them

Write down everything you recommend to your client

- diet changes, exercise etc
- referrals to other practitioners
- any advice you give them
- any telephone contact and any advice given over the telephone