

# The Sibley Report

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... the place to find valuable information to help make your job – and your life easier! If you have a topic idea or any other suggestions, please give our Editor - Angie Catenaro - a call.

Sibley & Associates is a national disability management firm with a decade of experience, 140 plus healthcare professionals and state-of-the-art technology. Our customers benefit from all the advantages a large company has to offer... while also benefiting from the “small business” customer service philosophy of our dedicated **Insurance Services Division.**

## What Does It All Mean..

### Clarifying The Different Types of Alternative and Complimentary Therapies

The use of “Alternative and Complimentary Therapies” in preventing and treating disease and illness is emerging as a popular topic. It is becoming common for medical benefit plans to provide coverage for treatments that are often not considered “traditional”, such as massage and acupuncture. There is also a trend towards more people wanting to try “non-traditional” therapies. However, because the term “Alternative and Complimentary Therapies” often implies different things to different people, it can be difficult to determine what it really means and which therapies fall into this category...the following information should help clarify this topic.

#### What is “Alternative and Complimentary Medicine”?

Although numerous definitions exist, it is often defined as treatments and healthcare practices not taught widely in medical schools, not generally used in hospitals and (in the past) not usually reimbursed by medical insurance companies. Many of these therapies are termed “holistic” which generally means that the healthcare practitioner considers the “whole person” (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual).

Many are also termed “preventative” which means that the healthcare practitioner tries to help prevent health problems, rather than treating symptoms after problems have begun.

#### Things to consider when looking into alternative and complimentary therapy options for yourself or a client:

- Consult the Main Healthcare Provider:** The most important thing is to consult the main healthcare provider so that he/she is aware of any type of treatment (both conventional and alternative).
- Assess the Safety and Effectiveness of the Therapy:** Ensure that the information is credible (controlled scientific trials usually provide the best information).
- Examine the Practitioner’s Expertise:** Investigate his/her background, qualifications and competence.
- Consider the Service Delivery:** Investigate whether it has a regulatory board, clear standards of practice, etc.
- Consider Cost:** Investigate which options are reimbursable and the going rate for the same treatment.

*Thank you to Becky Ostrom, CGU London, for this suggested topic.*

To further help clarify who’s who in the world of Alternative and Complimentary Therapies, please see the attached chart.

# Sibley

& ASSOCIATES INC.

Steve Sibley  
President & C.E.O.  
Jim Richings  
Vice-President, Operations  
Cam Lowther  
Vice-President, Sales and Marketing

3027 Harvester Road, Suite 401  
Burlington, Ontario L7N 3G7

Tel: 905-633-7800 or  
1-800-363-8900  
Fax: 905-633-7435

www.sibley.ca

sibley@sibley.ca