Unit 307: Provide Aromatherapy for Complementary Therapies

Handout 10: Blending dilutions

In aromatherapy it is vital that you understand the dilution ratios when blending your chosen essential oils to your blend of carrier oils/media.

The general rule and easiest way of calculating your dilutions is as follows:

1% = 1 drop of essential oil in 5mls of carrier.

2% = 2 drops of essential oil in 5mls of carrier.

3% = 3 drops of essential oil in 5mls of carrier.

½ % would be calculated as 1 drop in 10mls of carrier.

The carrier can be 5mls of any base products, whether it is a fixed oil for massage or a base cream or lotion or even base shampoo etc.

Blending

There are lots of factors to consider when blending, from deciding on what the client needs due to their presenting symptoms, how they are feeling, taking into account any medication they may be on, where a woman is in her cycle, dealing with a pregnant woman, their skin type and potential sensitivities and then looking at the safety data of the oils, their chemistry and toxicity and whether or not the client likes the aroma of the blend.

General rules for blending are to consider chemical properties as plants with similar chemical constituents blend well together as do oils belonging to the same plant families. Bergamot (Citrus bergamia) oil is very chemically complex and tends to blend well with everything, as does Rose (Rosa damascena) oil. The concentration of oil is also important when blending. Rose, Neroli and Jasmine are all very concentrated as it takes a large number of petals to make a small amount of oil. Therefore you need fewer drops of these when blending.

When choosing dilution ratios, consider the following:

- 1% is for treating emotional problems or for elderly (parchment) skin, babies and young children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and for doing facials.
- 2% is used where you have an adult with some physical problem but also emotional problems.
- 3% would be for a more physical problem, such as pain or making up a blend for a sports person.
In massage, when calculating the amount of oil and dilution ratio, the best way to do it is as follows:

1. Decide on the body parts to be massaged (is it a full body, a back etc.).

2. Decide on the carrier oils to be used and the total amount depending on the client.

3. Decide on the dilution ration either 1, 2 or 3%.

4. Choose the appropriate essential oils for the client, stating your reason for choice and ensuring the client likes the aroma of the blend.

5. Work out your number of drops.

6. Do an immediate patch test if there are no reasons to carry out a 24 hour patch test, to check for any potential reaction before applying the blend to the body.

**Based on the information, calculate the following:**
Your client is having a full body aromatherapy massage. He is fit and healthy with greasy skin, no contra-indications or cautions but has recently had a cold and is still a bit mucousy. His shoulders are aching from gardening. He is tall and hairy. He has no emotional stress to speak of and just wants relaxation and to feel uplifted.

1. State 2 carrier oils would you use & why?

2. How much carrier oil would you need in total?

3. What dilution ration would you use?

4. Choose 3 essential oils (Latin names) and state reasons for choice.

5. Work out the number of drops of each essential oil.

6. How would you carry out an immediate patch test?

**Perfumery notes**
It is important to recognise that although consideration of notes is sometimes useful, it is not a rule when it comes to blending. You also have to consider the realistic outcomes of the treatment and the time of day the treatment is being given and what the client will be doing after the treatment.

For example, if you do a morning appointment and the client says they are suffering from insomnia and stress, you would not give them sedating oils to help them sleep at that appointment as they need to get through the rest of the day or maybe have to go back to work after or collect the children from school and will be driving. Instead give them uplifting oils to lift their spirits and make them up a blend with oils to help them sleep to use in an evening bath. Therefore you would not need to use any base note oils at this time of the day. It is better to consider middle to top notes only. Middle to top notes are higher in monoterpenes generally and are uplifting and balancing.