Case Study Outline

When planning a case study report, consider the “Recommended Layout” as shown below. This should not be regarded as a rigid structure, but is intended to help the aromatherapist plan and report, and act as a check list that all essential information has been included.

1. Description of the case

Since case reports are highly individual, and may be re-published in the general media or on the internet, there is a chance that the client’s family and friends may see the report and recognize the client. Confidentiality must be assured and clients must be made aware of your intention to publish their case.

Client information:

- State the age of the client and give relevant health history; including herbal, dietary supplements and homeopathic medicines.
- Previous experiences with CAM and purpose for treatment should be clearly written.

2. Treatment Protocol

The aims and objectives need to be stated with clear thought and understanding.

- The selection of essential oils, vegetable oil and hydrolats requires both botanical and common name when first mentioned; rationale as to their selection and formulation should be provided. Formulations and dosages should ideally be expressed in terms of percentages.
- The method of essential oil application must be documented, as well as any techniques described, as applicable.
- The duration of sessions and frequency of treatment sessions should be noted.

3. Client response to treatment

- Observations during treatment. Note immediate client responses and those followed up at subsequent treatment sessions.

4. Evaluation

- State here the assessment of the treatment from the client’s perspective; what did you learn from your experience and the results (or lack thereof) by the treatment from the protocol of treatment you used.
- Be careful about drawing a ‘conclusion’ that there is a link between the aromatherapy treatment and the effect in a single case: it could just be a coincidence.
• Remember it is only a record of your experience so ideally include an assessment of how far it can be regarded as reliable.

5. References
• Where rationale is given regarding essential oil selection, application method/technique selected, the source that influenced your selection should be referenced. All statements, opinions, conclusions, etc taken from another writer’s work should be acknowledged, whether work is directly quoted, paraphrased or summarized.

• The report should use the Harvard method of referencing. This is a system in which names and dates are given in the body of the text and the references are listed alphabetically at the end of the report.

Notes regarding writing style:
• Keep sentences short. Use short paragraphs.
• Avoid complex sentence structures that bore or confuse readers.
• Design a case study to be read by someone who wants to grasp the main points easily.
• Lay it out clearly. Avoid large sections of text.
• Demonstrate clear thought and reasoning.
• Avoid jargon, abbreviations or colloquialisms.
• Obtain feedback from a friend or colleague.

Recommended Layout for a case study:
• Title:
• Author(s), credentials, addresses and affiliations
• Description of the case
• Treatment protocol
• Treatment methods
• Client response
• Evaluation
• References

TIPS
• Keep sentences short. Use short paragraphs.
• Avoid complex sentence structures that bore or confuse readers.
• Design the case study to be read by a busy reader, who wants to grasp the main points easily.
• Lay it out clearly; avoid large areas of text.
• Demonstrate clear thought and reasoning.
• Avoid jargon, abbreviations and colloquialisms
• Obtain feedback from a colleague or friend.