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| <b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b> | 21/124               |
| <b>ADVERTISER</b>       | Olivia Scott         |
| <b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>    | Olivia Scott website |
| <b>DATE OF MEETING</b>  | 5 April 2021         |
| <b>OUTCOME</b>          | Settled              |

**Advertisement:** Olivia Scott's website advertisement promotes her Reiki and distance Reiki energy healings. They are said to have various health and therapeutic benefits such as relieving anxiety, stress, tension and pain and improving sleep.

**The Chair ruled the complaint to proceed was Settled.**

**Complaint:**

Olivia Scott is an Auckland based Reiki seller. Her distance Reiki costs \$80, and presumably requires no evidence from her that she has done anything except perhaps think about her distant client. She does however say, Olivia will perform Reiki from her studio at the arranged time, and will follow up with an email summary of the session. It is very, very difficult to imagine how it would make the slightest difference if Ms Scott were to instead just drink a cup of coffee, and check out her social media pages through most of the appointed time.

A one-hour Reiki session in her studio costs \$130. That also includes: crystal therapy and channeled messages. Channeled usually means a claim to be communicating with the dead. For that \$130 customers get to take home a prescribed crystal and and messages from the guides. I am guessing that means spirit guides.

Testimonials that appear to have been posted on Facebook are provided presumably to boost confidence in her practices.

The description of Reiki on her website, curiously, is to be found in the events section. Here, the rationale is not clear, but she does say, ailments could be healed by directing the universal source Reiki Energy through the hands and into the body. It works on not only a physical level, but helps to heal mental and emotional ailments too.

This whole idea is surely both preposterous and unlikely.

Scott claims,

The benefits of Reiki can include but not limited to;  
 Clear and release blocks, stagnant energy or imbalances  
 Clear and rebalance chakras  
 Heightens natural vibration and intuition  
 Relieve pain  
 Relieve anxiety, stress, tension  
 Improves sleep

The first four claims are ludicrous, but not testable, or even knowable in the case of chakras. To say therefore that Reiki can achieve these things is a very strong claim indeed for which it seems unlikely there will ever be any evidence.  
 The final three above are testable therapeutic claims.

I consider the first four claims are a breach of principle 1 rule 1(b) because magical and miraculous effects are claimed: unblocking stagnant energy? Where is the stagnation? How does Ms Scott detect and prove it exists? Likewise chakras. Just because ignorant people believed in this nonsense hundreds of years before scientific medicine began is no reason to keep making money from making the same miraculous claims.

Further, Gullible people may have symptoms that need to be seen by a doctor. There could be a delay in seeking a proper diagnosis. Scott does not appear to carry out any diagnoses. Principal 2 is also clearly breached because there is not the slightest reason to believe any of the claims are truthful. Not only is no evidence provided, but a serious search of reliable sources reveals no reliable evidence either.

The Cochrane collaboration is probably the most reliable source in the world for evidence on medicine. They only report that it is unproven for anxiety and depression.

England's National Health Service does not even list Reiki in its NICE site that includes all effective treatments. No evidence is put forward by either the Mayo clinic nor Harvard University Medical School.

Science Based Medicine has an entry on Reiki. It clarifies the primitive superstitious pre-scientific nature of Reiki describing it as vitalism.

The author, Dr Steven Novella goes on to note,

...existing research is of such poor quality we cannot draw any useful conclusion from it. I disagree, however, that this necessarily means that more research is needed. The low plausibility of using magical energy that has never been demonstrated to exist by medical science argues otherwise

**The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 2(a)**

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concerns the advertisement contained therapeutic claims that were misleading. The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website, after receiving the complaint, removing references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's cooperative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the advertisement, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board.

The Chair ruled that the matter was Settled.

**Chair's Ruling:** Complaint **Settled**

**APPEAL INFORMATION**

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website [www.asa.co.nz](http://www.asa.co.nz). Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.