

Assessment, Diagnosis, Treatment

Standard

The physiotherapist demonstrates **proficiency** in patient assessment, diagnosis, and treatments to deliver **quality, safe,** patient-centered physiotherapy services.

Expected outcome

Patients can expect the physiotherapist to select appropriate assessment techniques, make an informed diagnosis, and apply treatment procedures that are carried out proficiently for quality delivery of safe, effective physiotherapy services.

Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Obtains patients' ongoing **informed consent** to proposed physiotherapy services.
- Applies professional judgment to select and apply appropriate assessment procedures to evaluate patients' health status. Appropriate assessment includes taking a history and completing a physical examination relevant to presenting symptoms.
- Uses **standardized measures** as available to assess and reassess the patient's condition and progress.
- Uses critical thinking and professional judgment to interpret the assessment findings and determine a diagnosis and prognosis consistent with the scope of practice of the physiotherapy profession and the physiotherapist's individual competence.
- Addresses patient's physiotherapy needs and goals by employing professional judgment to develop sensible and practical treatment plans that are consistent with the assessment findings.
- Applies treatment procedures safely and effectively.
- Assigns appropriate tasks to **supervisees** with patients' consent.
- Re-evaluates, monitors, and documents patients' responses throughout the course of treatment.
- Makes adjustments and/or discontinues physiotherapy services that are no longer required or effective.
- Makes appropriate referrals when patients' needs are best addressed in **collaboration** with or by another provider.

- Employs professional judgment to plan and implement discharge plans appropriate for the patient's need, goals and progress.
- Provides patient education to enable and optimize patients' transition to self-management.
- Promotes continuity in service by collaborating and facilitating patients' transition from one health sector or provider to another.
- Delivers only those physiotherapy services that are clinically indicated for patients and that they are competently able to provide.

Definitions

Collaborate means to work jointly with others or together, especially in an intellectual endeavor.

Informed Consent refers to the process where a patient or their substitute decision maker, in cases where the patient is incapable with respect to the treatment, is provided with information regarding a proposed course of treatment. This information covers essential topics such as the nature of the treatment, expected benefits, material risks and potential side effects, alternative courses of action, and the likely consequences of not undergoing the treatment. The individual is ensured the opportunity to seek and receive additional information to help make an informed decision about the treatment.

Proficiency means performance consistent with the established standards in the profession.

Quality is the degree to which a product or service satisfies a specified set of attributes or requirements.

Safe means free from harm or reasonably foreseeable risk; secure from threat or danger.

Standardized Measures refers to measurement tools that are designed for a specific purpose in a given population. Information is provided regarding the administration, scoring, interpretation, and psychometric properties for each measure.

Supervisee means an individual who is working under supervision. In physiotherapy practice this may include physiotherapist residents, physiotherapist assistants, or students and volunteers.

Communication

Standard

The physiotherapist communicates professionally, clearly, effectively, and in a **timely** manner to support and promote quality physiotherapy services.

Expected outcome

Patients, potential patients, colleagues, members of the public, and others can expect that communication with and by the physiotherapist will be respectful and professional and will contribute to their understanding and/or participation in their health management.

Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Does not engage in communication that is disrespectful, dishonest, misleading or lacking in transparency.
- Identifies potential barriers to effective communication and makes a reasonable effort to address these barriers.
- Engages in **active listening** to ensure that the patient's perspective, needs, and preferences are heard and understood.
- Communicates with patients, team members, and others to facilitate collaboration and coordinate care.
- When sharing information with the patient, team members and others regarding the patient and physiotherapy services:
 - Obtains patient consent when required by privacy legislation, and
 - Maintains patient **confidentiality** by selecting secure methods of communication.
- Documents all communications accurately, clearly, professionally, and in a timely manner.
- Confirms that any exchanges using electronic communications are appropriate for therapeutic relationships established with patients.
- When using social media platforms, communicates with patients, potential patients, members of the public, and others honestly, **transparently**, and professionally:
 - Obtains explicit informed consent if using patient images or personal information in social media posts.

- Conveys scientifically sound, evidence-informed information.
- Does not share private, disrespectful, dishonest or misleading information.
- Does not provide patient specific treatment recommendations via social media platforms.

Definitions

Active Listening is a process of attending to what the speaker is saying and repeating back to the speaker what has been heard, to confirm that the listener has correctly understood the speaker.

Communication is “the imparting and exchanging information” and includes speaking, listening, written and electronic information exchange. Effective, professional, communication involves active listening, and the sharing of information using **plain language** and assistive methods or devices (e.g., interpreters, technology, diagrams, printed education materials) when needed to facilitate the listener’s understanding.

Confidentiality is the assurance that certain information that may include a subject’s identity, health, behavior, or lifestyle information would not be disclosed without permission from the subject.

Plain language refers to “communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Written material is in plain language if your audience can:

- Find what they need
- Understand what they find
- Use what they find to meet their needs”

Social Media refers to online practices, technologies, and platforms used to network, share content, and communicate opinions, insights, and experiences. Social media can involve a variety of formats, such as text, video, audio, and live dialogue. Examples include, but are not limited to, social networks (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X), podcasts, blogs, and discussion forums. In this standard, social media is not intended to cover e-mail, electronic messaging services, or secure platforms used for the purposes of delivering virtual care.

Timely refers to “happening at the correct or most useful time: not happening too late.”

Transparent (transparently) refers to the quality of being easy to perceive, obvious, clear and unambiguous.

Duty of Care

Standard

The physiotherapist has a duty of care to their patients, and an obligation to provide for continuity of care whenever a therapeutic relationship with a patient has been established.

Expected outcome

Patients can expect that their interests will be the primary consideration when receiving physiotherapy services and that they will be provided with the information needed to manage their physiotherapy needs and to access ongoing care if their physiotherapist is unavailable or unable to continue the therapeutic relationship.

Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Takes responsibility for maintaining an effective therapeutic relationship.
- Facilitates shared decision-making by taking the time to provide education regarding the patient's condition, supporting health literacy and facilitating the transition to self-management.
- Does not provide a physiotherapy service when the patient's condition indicates that commencing or continuing the physiotherapy service is not warranted or is contraindicated.
- Recognizes that patients have the right to make informed decisions about their own care, even when the physiotherapist believes the decisions may put the patient's health at risk.
- Does not allow their personal judgments about a patient, the patient's lifestyle or health choices to compromise the patient's physiotherapy care. The physiotherapist does not withdraw from or refuse to provide care due to the physiotherapist's judgements about a patient, the patient's lifestyle or health choices.
- Employs respectful conflict resolution strategies when conflict arises.
- Makes appropriate arrangements for continuity of care during planned absences.
- When discharging a patient in need of ongoing care, the physiotherapist:
 - Must not abandon patients.
 - Must document their reasons for discontinuing care.
 - Must advise the patient of their decision to discontinue care and rationale.
 - Ensures continuity of care, making appropriate arrangements for transfer of care to another physiotherapist or providing the patient with information regarding other physiotherapy service options, and
 - Provides care until transfer to another physiotherapist can be arranged or provides a reasonable opportunity for the patient to arrange alternate physiotherapy services.
- Discharge of a patient without providing for continuity of care may be considered under various circumstances, including but not limited to:
 - The patient requests the discontinuation.

- The patient is given a reasonable opportunity to arrange alternative services.
- The physiotherapist is unable to provide care that meets the standards of practice because there are not enough resources available.
- The patient has failed to pay for physiotherapy services received within a reasonable time, and all reasonable attempts made by the physiotherapist to facilitate payment have been unsuccessful.
- The patient has not cooperated or complied with the treatment plan and the result is that the care is not effective.
- The patient, or providing care to the patient, poses a safety risk to the physiotherapist or others within the practice setting.
- The patient is abusive (physically, verbally, emotionally or sexually) towards the physiotherapist or others within the practice setting.
- A professional boundary has been breached and all reasonable steps have been taken to manage the behavior.

Risk Management and Safety

Standard

The physiotherapist promotes and maintains a safe environment for patients, health-care providers, themselves, and others.

Expected outcome

Patients can expect to be safe in the care of the physiotherapist and in the practice environment, and that any **patient safety incidents** will be appropriately addressed and disclosed promptly and transparently.

Performance expectations

Related to Risk Identification and Mitigation

The physiotherapist:

- Identifies potential patient safety risks relevant to the practice setting, method of service delivery, and patient population served.
- Verifies that there are policies and procedures in place related to risk and crisis management and is knowledgeable about these procedures.
- Incorporates appropriate measures to mitigate/manage identified risks and adheres to safety best practices.

Related to Physiotherapist Training

The physiotherapist:

- Maintains their competency in safety protocols, procedures and risk mitigation measures relevant to their practice.
- Participates in emergency preparedness and response training appropriate to the practice setting, method of service delivery, patient population served, and identified safety risks.

Related to Patient Interactions

The physiotherapist:

- Provides a clean and safe physiotherapy practice environment.
- Confirms that all equipment and electrophysical modalities are clean, safe, and maintained and calibrated in accordance with manufacturer specifications, and retains documentation of equipment calibration and maintenance for a minimum of one year.
- Verifies patients' identities to confirm that the correct physiotherapy services are provided.
- Applies appropriate safety procedures when using equipment or electrophysical modalities.

Related to Responding to Patient Safety Incidents

The physiotherapist:

- Recognizes the occurrence of patient safety incidents and near misses.
- Responds immediately to patient safety incidents and near misses to minimize the impact on the patient.
- Documents patient safety incidents and near misses in the patient's treatment record and completes reports appropriate to the practice setting in accordance with the practice setting's policies and procedures.
- Contributes to the collection of data to identify, manage, remediate and prevent potential risks and patient safety incidents and near misses relevant to the practice setting and population served.
- Discloses details of patient safety incidents and near misses related to physiotherapy services to the patient and appropriate parties promptly and transparently.
- Confirms that the appropriate party has disclosed patient safety incidents and near misses not related to physiotherapy services.

Definitions:

Patient Safety Incident *refers to any event or circumstance which could have resulted or did result in unnecessary harm to a patient. Patient Safety Incidents consist of near miss events, no-harm incidents, and harmful incidents.*