CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

This code applies to registered physiotherapists 1 in Canada.

PURPOSE
Ethical conduct sets the rules by which the physiotherapy profession governs the conduct of its members. The Code, through all stages of their careers. It must always be consistent with the value systems and moral principles of the physiotherapy profession in Canada. The Code of Ethics sets the standard for the physiotherapy profession in all contexts of practice and represents the conscience of the profession. The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to provide a moral foundation, a public service, and a guide to sound ethical conduct and to help to prevent unethical behaviours and outcomes.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES
Ethical principles are the foundation of ethical conduct and provide guidance along the pathway to ethical decision-making. While there are several approaches to ethical principles, this document follows the classical ethical principles described below as a basic guide to ethical conduct. Emphasis is on the pursuit of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy.

Beneficence

- Good-will to do good to others.
- Act with the intention to benefit others.
- Ethical responsibility to: 1) practice in the best interest of clients, 2) improve the health and well-being of clients.

Non-maleficence

- Good-will not to do harm to others.
- Avoid causing injury, pain, or distress to others.
- Ethical responsibility to: 1) protect the safety and well-being of clients, 2) provide evidence-informed and clinical best practices in all professional and business practices.

Justice

- A fair and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens.
- Ethical responsibility to: 1) provide equitable treatment and access to physiotherapy services, 2) resources fairly between clients.

Autonomy

- The freedom of individuals to make their own decisions and to have control over their lives as much as possible.
- Ethical responsibility to: 1) respect and support the autonomy of the client.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLIENT

Members of the physiotherapy profession have an ethical responsibility to:

1. Demonstrate sensitivity toward individual clients, recognizing and respecting their cultural, linguistic, religious, social, economic, personal, and psychological backgrounds.
2. Never use client information, including electronic information, for personal or commercial gain or to cause harm to the client or others.
3. Be attentive and responsive to the needs of the client, providing treatment in a sensitive, respectful, and ethical manner.
4. Respect and support the autonomy of the client to participate in the management and delivery of their health care.
5. Provide an alternative treatment option through referral to another health care provider if the therapeutic approach is not right for the client.
6. Respect the confidentiality, privacy, and security of client information in all forms of documentation.
7. Use electronic communication and social media responsibly in professional practice.
8. Provide all clients with clear, unbiased, and evidence-informed information, including obtaining informed consent.
9. Act with integrity and respect in all professional and business practices.
10. Include clients, their family, and their support network in the decision-making process.
11. Recognize the responsibility to share information with others only as necessary.
12. Practically and ethically support the development of the client to participate in the management and delivery of their health care.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION

Members of the physiotherapy profession have an ethical responsibility to:

1. Demonstrate sensitivity toward individual clients, recognizing and respecting their cultural, linguistic, religious, social, economic, personal, and psychological backgrounds.
2. Never use client information, including electronic information, for personal or commercial gain or to cause harm to the client or others.
3. Be attentive and responsive to the needs of the client, providing treatment in a sensitive, respectful, and ethical manner.
4. Respect and support the autonomy of the client to participate in the management and delivery of their health care.
5. Provide an alternative treatment option through referral to another health care provider if the therapeutic approach is not right for the client.
6. Respect the confidentiality, privacy, and security of client information in all forms of documentation.
7. Use electronic communication and social media responsibly in professional practice.
8. Provide all clients with clear, unbiased, and evidence-informed information, including obtaining informed consent.
9. Act with integrity and respect in all professional and business practices.
10. Include clients, their family, and their support network in the decision-making process.
11. Recognize the responsibility to share information with others only as necessary.
12. Practically and ethically support the development of the client to participate in the management and delivery of their health care.

1. Conduct and present themselves with integrity and professionalism.
2. Respect diversity and provide care that is both culturally sensitive and responsive.
3. Advocate within their capacity and context to address social inequities and address barriers to access to physiotherapy services.
4. Act transparently and with integrity in all professional and business practices.
5. Respect the confidentiality, privacy, and security of client information in all forms of documentation.
6. Use electronic communication and social media responsibly in professional practice.
7. Provide all clients with clear, unbiased, and evidence-informed information, including obtaining informed consent.
8. Act with integrity and respect in all professional and business practices.
9. Include clients, their family, and their support network in the decision-making process.
10. Recognize the responsibility to share information with others only as necessary.
11. Practically and ethically support the development of the client to participate in the management and delivery of their health care.

HOW TO USE THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Ethics is not intended to provide absolute rules for specific actions that may arise in any situation, rather it provides a framework and approach to ethical decision-making. It is often impossible to create a comprehensive list of ethical principles and rules and can be a guide to ethical conduct. Emphasis is on the pursuit of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy.

1. Understand the Code of Ethics as a guide to ethical conduct.
2. Be aware of the professional value systems and moral principles of the physiotherapy profession in Canada.
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