

**CODE OF ETHICS**

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**RULES  
OF CONDUCT**



Canadian  
Physiotherapy  
Association

Association  
canadienne de  
physiothérapie

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# PREAMBLE

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A code of ethics formulated and accepted by a professional association sets forth the ethical principles governing the conduct of that Association's members. Such a code must reflect societal ethics of the time, as well as the value systems and moral principles of the members as a collective group.

The Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association stress the necessity for each physiotherapist to act with integrity, accountability and judgement in the best interests of the client, society, and the profession. Implied also, is the responsibility to recognize the scope of practice of the profession and personal limitations.

Members of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association recognize their opportunity to practise as a privilege granted by society. This privilege carries with it the need and responsibility to define broadly a limited range of behaviours acceptable to the Canadian Physiotherapy Association in providing a service to clients and to society. The Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct can provide guidance, but cannot offer definitive resolutions to all ethical questions and dilemmas that might arise during professional practice. The enforcement of these behaviours, which are based on ethical obligations, protects clients, serves society and maintains the principles of the profession.

Differences of opinion as to what constitutes ethical behaviour are inevitable. Such differences must be respected as much as possible. In addition, society and the practice of physiotherapy are sufficiently complex and changing that situations posing ethical dilemmas and questions not covered in this code will inevitably arise. In such situations it is the duty of each member to act in an ethically responsible manner. Flexibility allows members the freedom to exercise discretionary judgement while imposing on them a greater measure of accountability. Nevertheless, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association retains the right and responsibility to interpret its Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct, and to discipline any member who is found to have violated its provisions.



# CODE OF ETHICS

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Physiotherapists  
are committed to act  
with integrity, to honour the  
rights and dignity of all individuals,  
to recognize their responsibility  
to society, and to pursue a  
quest for excellence  
in professional  
activities.



# RULES OF CONDUCT

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## PREMISE STATEMENT

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The provision of effective quality care while respecting the rights of the client, shall be the primary consideration of each member of the profession.

## RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE CLIENT

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### 1.1

Physiotherapists shall respect the client's rights, dignity, needs, wishes and values.

### 1.2

Physiotherapists may not refuse care to any client on grounds of race, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, social or health status.

### 1.3

Physiotherapists must respect the client's or surrogate's rights to be informed about the effects of treatment and inherent risks.

## **1.4**

Physiotherapists must give clients or surrogates the opportunity to consent to or decline treatment or alterations in the treatment regime.

## **1.5**

Physiotherapists shall confine themselves to clinical diagnosis and management in those aspects of physiotherapy in which they have been educated and which are recognized by the profession.

## **1.6**

Physiotherapists shall assume full responsibility for all care they provide.

## **1.7**

Physiotherapists shall not treat clients when the medical diagnosis or clinical condition indicates that the commencement or continuation of physiotherapy is not warranted or is contraindicated.

## **1.8**

Physiotherapists shall request consultation with, or refer clients to, colleagues or members of other health profession when, in the opinion of the physiotherapist, such action is in the best interest of the client.

## **1.9**

Physiotherapists shall document the client's history and relevant subjective information, the physiotherapist's objective findings, clinical diagnosis, treatment plan and procedures, explanation to the client, progress notes and discharge summary.

## **1.10**

Physiotherapists shall respect all client information as confidential. Such information shall not be communicated to any person without the consent of the client or surrogate except when required by law.

## **1.11**

Physiotherapists, with the client's or surrogate's consent, may delegate specific aspects of the care of that client to a person deemed by the physiotherapist to be competent to carry out the care safely and effectively.

## **1.12**

Physiotherapists are responsible for all duties they delegate to personnel under their supervision.

## RESPONSIBILITIES TO SOCIETY

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### 2.1

Physiotherapists shall recognize their responsibility to improve standards of health care.

### 2.2

Physiotherapists shall comply with all laws and regulations pertaining to the practice of physiotherapy.

### 2.3

Physiotherapists shall report, to the appropriate authorities, any member of the profession who appears to be incompetent or whose conduct while practising as a physiotherapist appears to be unethical or illegal.

### 2.4

Where a direct fee is charged, physiotherapists shall inform clients, in advance, of the fee which will be commensurate with the service provided.

## RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION

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### 3.1

Members shall abide by the policies of the Association and support its mission.

### **3.2**

Physiotherapists shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to merit the respect of the society for the profession and its members.

### **3.3**

Physiotherapists shall engage in continuing education for growth and development.

### **3.4**

Physiotherapists shall advance the science of physiotherapy by sharing relevant information and by supporting, or engaging in, research activities.

### **3.5**

Physiotherapists shall be responsible for ensuring that research protocols respect the rights of research subjects and are in compliance with standards accepted by the scientific community.

### **3.6**

Physiotherapists shall be willing and diligent preceptors in the education of physiotherapy students.

### **3.7**

Physiotherapists shall ensure that their professional judgement and integrity are not compromised by motives of profit.

### **3.8**

Physiotherapists shall enter into contracts and agreements, only when professional integrity can be maintained.

### **3.9**

Physiotherapists shall ensure that any advertising of their services is accurate, verifiable and acceptable according to the legal, social, and professional norms of the times, and does not bring the profession into disrepute.

## **Appendix to 1.5**

Physiotherapists are responsible for recognizing and practising within their levels of competence. The clinical diagnosis is established by taking a history and conducting a physical and functional examination. The identification of the client's problems and the physiotherapeutic management is based on this diagnosis in conjunction with an understanding of pertinent biopsychosocial factors. This rule does not restrict the expansion of the scope of the physiotherapy practice.

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The terms “physiotherapist” and “physiotherapy” may be replaced by “physical therapist” and “physical therapy.”