



Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility and Anti-Racism

Applies to Physical Therapists

The College of Health and Care Professionals of BC was created on June 28, 2024 through the amalgamation of seven health regulatory colleges:

- College of Dietitians of British Columbia
- College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Optometrists of British Columbia
- College of Opticians of British Columbia
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia
- College of Psychologists of British Columbia
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia

All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the seven colleges remain in place upon amalgamation.

This document was created by the College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.



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INTRODUCTION

[In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care](#) provides evidence of Indigenous-specific racism in the B.C. healthcare system. Indigenous-specific racism and discrimination negatively affects Indigenous clients' access to healthcare and health outcomes. These impacts include lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, and the increased presence of chronic health conditions.

The purpose of this standard is to set clear expectations for how registrants are to provide culturally safe and anti-racist care for Indigenous clients.

This standard is organized into six core concepts. Within these concepts are the principles to which health professionals are held.

CORE CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES

1 SELF-REFLECTIVE PRACTICE (IT STARTS WITH ME)

Cultural humility begins with a self-examination of the physical therapist's values, assumptions, beliefs, and privileges embedded in their own knowledge and practice, and consideration of how this may impact the therapeutic relationship with Indigenous clients. Cultural humility promotes relationships based on respect, open and effective dialogue, and shared decision-making.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 1.1 Reflect on, identify, and do not act on any stereotypes or assumptions they may hold about Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.2 Reflect on how their privileges, biases, values, belief structures, behaviours, and positions of power may impact the therapeutic relationship with Indigenous clients.
- 1.3 Evaluate and seek feedback on their own behaviour towards Indigenous Peoples.



2 BUILDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EDUCATION

Physical therapists continually seek to improve their ability to provide culturally safe care for Indigenous clients.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 2.1 Undertake ongoing education on Indigenous healthcare, determinants of health, cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism.
- 2.2 Learn about the negative impact of Indigenous-specific racism on Indigenous clients accessing the healthcare system, and its disproportionate impact on Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit, queer, and trans Indigenous Peoples.
- 2.3 Learn about the historical and current impacts of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples and how this may impact their healthcare experiences.
- 2.4 Learn about the Indigenous communities located in the areas where they work, recognizing that languages, histories, heritage, cultural practices, and systems of knowledge may differ between Indigenous communities.

3 ANTI-RACIST PRACTICE (TAKING ACTION)

Physical therapists take active steps to identify, address, prevent, and eliminate Indigenous-specific racism.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 3.1 Take appropriate action when they observe others acting in a racist or discriminatory manner towards Indigenous Peoples by:
 - 3.1.1 Helping colleagues to identify and eliminate racist attitudes, language, or behaviour.
 - 3.1.2 Supporting clients, colleagues and others who experience and/or report acts of racism.
 - 3.1.3 Reporting acts of racism to leadership and/or the relevant health regulatory college.



4 CREATING SAFE HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCES

Physical therapists facilitate safe healthcare experiences where Indigenous clients' physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs can be met.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 4.1 Treat clients with respect and empathy by:
 - 4.1.1 Acknowledging the client's cultural identity.
 - 4.1.2 Listening to and seeking to understand the client's lived experiences.
 - 4.1.3 Treating clients and their families with compassion.
 - 4.1.4 Being open to learning from the client and others.
- 4.2 Care for a client holistically, considering their physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs.
- 4.3 Acknowledge and incorporate into the plan of care Indigenous cultural rights, values, and practices, including ceremonies and protocols related to illness, birth, and death, where able.
- 4.4 Facilitate the involvement of the client's family and others (e.g., community and Elders, Indigenous cultural navigators, and interpreters) as needed and requested.

5 PERSON-LED CARE (RELATIONAL CARE)

Physical therapists work collaboratively with Indigenous clients to meet the client's health and wellness goals.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 5.1 Respectfully learn about the client and the reasons the client has sought healthcare services.
- 5.2 Engage with clients and their identified supports to identify, understand, and address the client's health and wellness goals.
- 5.3 Actively support the client's right to decide on their course of care.
- 5.4 Communicate effectively with clients by:
 - 5.4.1 Providing the client with the necessary time and space to share their needs and goals.
 - 5.4.2 Providing clear information about the healthcare options available, including information about what the client may experience during the healthcare encounter.
 - 5.4.3 Ensuring information is communicated in a way that the client can understand.



6 STRENGTHS-BASED AND TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE (LOOKING BELOW THE SURFACE)

Physical therapists have knowledge about different types of trauma and their impact on Indigenous clients, including how intergenerational and historical trauma affects many Indigenous Peoples during healthcare experiences. Physical therapists focus on the resilience and strength the client brings to the healthcare encounter.

PRINCIPLES

Physical therapists:

- 6.1 Work with the client to incorporate their personal strengths that will support the achievement of their health and wellness goals.
- 6.2 Recognize the potential for trauma (personal or intergenerational) in a client's life and adapt their approach to be thoughtful and respectful of this, including seeking permission before engaging in assessments or treatments.
- 6.3 Recognize that colonialism and trauma may affect how clients view, access, and interact with the healthcare system.
- 6.4 Recognize that Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, queer, and trans Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately impacted by Indigenous-specific racism in the healthcare system and consider the impact gender-specific trauma may have on the client.

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This Standard is adapted with permission from the [British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives \(BCCNM\)](#) and the [College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC \(CPSBC\)](#) who collaboratively developed the Indigenous Cultural Safety, Cultural Humility and Anti-Racism Practice Standard (January 2022). We gratefully and humbly acknowledge the contributions from Indigenous people and guidance from Indigenous leaders during the consultation process, which informed the development of the BCCNM and CPSBC Standard.