



Boundary Violations

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.

Boundary Violations



STANDARD

The physical therapist acts with integrity and maintains professional boundaries with clients.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Clients can expect to be treated with dignity and respect, and for the physical therapist to maintain the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship in all interactions.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The physical therapist:

1. Demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to the impact of power, trust, respect, and physical proximity on the relationship with the client.
2. Treats the client with respect and avoids unprofessional and discriminatory comments and actions.
3. Does not enter or continue therapeutic relationships with an individual with whom professional boundaries, judgment and objectivity cannot be established and maintained.
4. Does not make abusive, sexually suggestive, or harassing comments or engage in physical contact with a client that violates the therapeutic relationship.
5. Establishes and maintains a physical environment that supports the therapeutic relationship during client assessment, treatment, and education in practice environments, including but not limited to:
 - 5.1. proactively providing options for draping;
 - 5.2. providing privacy while the client is undressing or dressing.
6. Explains to the client beforehand any procedures that could be misinterpreted and obtains ongoing informed consent.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- Conflict of Interest
- Informed Consent
- Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct

7. Does not attempt to persuade a client to a personal view related to politics or religion in the context of the therapeutic relationship.
8. Does not enter a personal relationship with a client or a person who is a caregiver for a client (e.g., parent of a minor receiving physical therapy services, client's spouse) where their ability to be objective and impartial and to fulfill their professional obligations may be impaired.
9. Does not use their professional role as a means of pursuing a personal relationship beyond the therapeutic relationship with a client or a person who is a caregiver for a client.
10. Establishes, maintains, and attempts to re-establish professional boundaries that support the therapeutic relationship.
11. Identifies, documents, and addresses boundary violations, whether initiated by the physical therapist or client.
12. Ends the therapeutic relationship by discontinuing treatment or transferring care as required when:
 - 12.1 the physical therapist is unable to maintain their objectivity;
 - 12.2 professional boundaries cannot be maintained or re-established;
 - 12.3 a positive, respectful therapeutic relationship cannot be maintained or re-established.