



Duty of Care

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.

Duty of Care



CPTBC

College of Physical Therapists
of British Columbia

STANDARD

The physical therapist has a duty of care to their clients, and an obligation to provide for continuity of care whenever a therapeutic relationship with a client has been established.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

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

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The physical therapist:

1. Takes responsibility for maintaining an effective therapeutic relationship.
2. Facilitates shared decision-making by taking the time to provide education regarding the client's condition, to support health literacy and to facilitate the transition to self-management.
3. Does not provide a physical therapy service when the client's condition indicates that commencing or continuing the physical therapy service is not warranted or is contraindicated.
4. Recognizes that the client has the right to make informed decisions about their own care, even when the physical therapist believes the decisions may put the client's health at risk.
5. Does not allow their personal judgments about the client or the client's health choices or lifestyle to compromise the client's physical therapy care.
6. Does not withdraw or refuse to provide care due to their personal judgments about the client, or the client's health choices or lifestyle.
7. Respectfully employs conflict resolution strategies when conflict arises.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- Assessment, Diagnosis, Treatment
- Boundary Violations
- Communication
- Informed Consent

8. Makes appropriate arrangements for continuity of care during planned absences.
9. When discharging a client in need of ongoing care, the physical therapist:
 - 9.1 must not abandon the client;
 - 9.2 must document their reasons for discontinuing care;
 - 9.3 must advise the client of their decision to discontinue care and rationale;
 - 9.4 ensures continuity of care, making appropriate arrangements for transfer of care to another physical therapist or providing the client with information regarding other physical therapy service options;
 - 9.5 provides care until transfer to another physical therapist can be arranged or provides a reasonable opportunity for the client to arrange alternate physical therapy services.
10. May discharge a client without providing for continuity of care if:
 - 10.1 the client poses a safety risk to the physical therapist or others within the practice setting;
 - 10.2 the client is abusive (physically, verbally, emotionally, or sexually) towards the physical therapist or others within the practice setting.