



Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct

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.

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct



CPTBC
College of Physical Therapists
of British Columbia

STANDARD

Physical therapists do not engage in behaviour that constitutes sexual abuse or sexual misconduct.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Clients can expect that any interaction with a physical therapist will be free from conduct, behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

The physical therapist:

1. Does not commence an intimate or sexual relationship with a client for the duration of the therapeutic relationship, even if the client agrees to or seeks to initiate an intimate or sexual relationship.
2. Knows that due to the inherent power imbalance between client and physical therapist, clients cannot offer valid consent to commencing a sexual relationship.
3. Knows that the duration of the therapeutic relationship extends beyond the duration of active treatment and may be enduring, depending on:
 - 3.1 the nature of the client-physical therapist relationship;
 - 3.2 the risk of enduring power imbalance between client and physical therapist; and
 - 3.3 dependence of the client on the physical therapist.
4. Does not enter into a sexual relationship with a former client unless sufficient time has passed that the imbalance of power inherent in the therapeutic relationship and/or client dependence on the physical therapist no longer exists.
5. Abstains from all forms of conduct, behaviour or remarks directed towards a client that constitute sexual abuse.
6. Abstains from conduct, behaviour or remarks directed towards a client that constitute sexual misconduct.
7. Must not end a therapeutic relationship for the purpose of pursuing a sexual relationship.
8. Clearly and thoroughly explains any physical therapy service which could be perceived to be sexual in nature, taking all reasonable steps to confirm the client's understanding of the service and its rationale, and obtaining informed consent prior to engaging in the service.
9. Reports all instances where the physical therapist has reasonable grounds to believe that the conduct of a registrant of any health profession regulatory organization constitutes sexual abuse or sexual misconduct to the Registrar of their regulatory organization, with consent of the client.

RELATED STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

- Boundary Violations
- Communication