

# Standards of Practice Communication

## Standard

The physiotherapist **communicates** professionally, clearly, effectively, and in a **timely** manner to support and promote quality physiotherapy services.

## Expected outcome

**Clients**, potential clients, colleagues, members of the public, and others can expect that communication with and by the physiotherapist will be respectful and professional and will contribute to their understanding and participation in their health management.

## Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Does not engage in communication that is disrespectful, dishonest, misleading, or lacking in **transparency**.
- Identifies potential barriers to effective communication and makes a reasonable effort to address these barriers.
- Engages in **active listening** to ensure that the client's perspective, needs, and preferences are heard and understood.
- Communicates with clients, team members, and others to facilitate collaboration and coordinate care.
- When sharing information with the client, team members, and others regarding the client and physiotherapy services:
  - Obtains client consent when required by privacy legislation, and
  - Maintains client **confidentiality** by selecting secure methods of communication.
- Documents all communications accurately, clearly, professionally, and in a timely manner.
- Confirms that any exchanges using electronic communications are appropriate for therapeutic relationships established with clients.
- When using social media platforms, communicates with clients, potential clients, members of the public, and others honestly, transparently, and professionally:
  - Obtains explicit informed consent if using client images or personal information in social media posts.
  - Conveys scientifically sound, evidence-based information.
  - Does not share private, disrespectful, dishonest, or misleading information.
  - Does not provide client-specific treatment recommendations via social media platforms.

**Active listening** is a process of attending to what the speaker is saying and repeating back to the speaker what has been heard, to confirm that the listener has correctly understood the speaker.

**Communication** is "the imparting and exchanging of information" and includes speaking, listening, written, and electronic information exchange. Effective, professional, communication involves active listening, and the sharing of information using plain language and assistive methods or devices (e.g., interpreters, technology, diagrams, printed education materials) when needed to facilitate the listener's understanding.

**Confidentiality** "is the assurance that certain information that may include a subject's identity, health, behavior, or lifestyle information, or a sponsor's proprietary information would not be disclosed without permission from the subject (or sponsor)."

**Plain language** refers to "communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Written material is in plain language if your audience can:

- Find what they need.
- Understand what they find.
- Use what they find to meet their needs."

**Timely** refers to "happening at the correct or most useful time: not happening too late."

**Transparent** refers to the quality of being easy to perceive, obvious, clear and unambiguous.

## Related Standards

- Collaboration
- Informed Consent
- Privacy