

Standards of Practice

Conflict of Interest

Standard

The physiotherapist must identify, disclose, and avoid or otherwise mitigate any real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Expected outcome

Clients can expect that the physiotherapist delivers physiotherapy services that are in clients' best interests and that real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest are avoided or disclosed and managed.

Performance expectations

The physiotherapist:

- Identifies situations of real, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest involving themselves or someone with whom they have a close personal relationship.
- Does not enter into any agreement or arrangement that prevents or could prevent the physiotherapist from putting the needs and interests of the client first.
- Does not use professional status and the credibility afforded by professional status for purposes unrelated to physiotherapy.
- Does not participate in any activity which could compromise professional judgment, or which is for personal gain. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Paying for or providing **other benefits** to other parties in return for referrals.
 - Providing referrals to other parties in return for payment or other benefits.
 - Agreements which incentivize the sale of physiotherapy products or non-physiotherapy services by the physiotherapist by providing financial or other benefits to the physiotherapist for doing so.
 - Agreements which incentivize the physiotherapist to discharge clients following a specified number of visits in return for financial or other benefits.
 - Agreements which include financial or other benefits if the physiotherapist provides more than a specified number of treatment sessions to a client.
 - Self-referring clients for personal or financial gain.
- Avoids participating in other activities that a reasonable person would conclude pose a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. In situations where a conflict of interest cannot be avoided, the physiotherapist must:

- Provide full disclosure of the conflict of interest to clients and others as appropriate, and
- Document in a complete, transparent, and timely manner how the conflict was managed.
- Avoids providing services to individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship. In situations where this conflict of interest cannot be avoided (e.g., where no other professional with the specific skills is available) the physiotherapist must:
 - Identify the risks related to providing the physiotherapy services and the measures they can adopt to limit these risks.
 - Document and disclose the conflict of interest to the client indicating how the relationship is to the client's benefit and complies with regulatory requirements.
 - Follow formal processes and document all physiotherapy services provided.

Conflict of interest exists when a reasonable person could conclude that the physiotherapist's duty to act in the client's best interests while exercising their professional expertise or judgment may be affected or influenced by competing interests or relationships. Competing interests may be financial, non-financial, or social in nature.

A conflict of interest may be actual, potential, or perceived and can exist even if the physiotherapist is confident that their professional judgment is not being influenced by the conflicting interest or relationship.

Other benefit includes but is not limited to gifts of materials or equipment, preferential access to facilities, or provision of promotional activities that would typically be paid for by the physiotherapist.

Related Standards

- Title, Credentials, and Specialty Designations