

Standards of Practice

Indigenous Cultural Safety and Humility

Standard

The physiotherapist demonstrates cultural humility and strives to provide culturally safe physiotherapy services when working with Indigenous clients.

Expected outcomes

Indigenous clients can expect that the physiotherapist will demonstrate respect and seek to understand the client's values, beliefs, and identity, incorporating this understanding into all aspects of physiotherapy service delivery.

Performance expectations

Reflective practice

The physiotherapist:

- Reflects on the biases they hold towards Indigenous People and how these may impact the therapeutic relationship with Indigenous clients.
- Reflects on how their privileges, values, belief structures, behaviours, and positions of power may impact the therapeutic relationship with Indigenous clients.
- Reflects on, identifies, and does not act on any stereotypes or assumptions they may hold about Indigenous Peoples.
- Evaluates and seeks feedback on their own behaviour towards Indigenous Peoples.

Building knowledge through education

The physiotherapist:

- Participates in ongoing education on Indigenous health care, determinants of health, cultural safety, cultural humility, and anti-racism.
- Learns about the negative impact of Indigenous-specific racism on Indigenous clients accessing the health-care system, and its disproportionate impact on Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit, queer, and transgender Indigenous people.
- Learns about the historical and current impacts of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples and how this may impact their health-care experiences.
- Learns about the Indigenous communities located in the areas where they work, recognizing that languages, histories, heritage, cultural practices, and systems of knowledge may differ between Indigenous communities.

- Learns about different types of trauma and their impact on Indigenous clients, including how intergenerational and historical trauma affects Indigenous Peoples' health and health-care experiences.

Anti-racist practice

The physiotherapist:

- Takes appropriate action when they observe others acting in a racist or discriminatory manner towards Indigenous Peoples by:
 - Helping colleagues to identify and eliminate racist attitudes, language, or behaviour.
 - Supporting clients, colleagues and others who experience and/or report acts of racism.
 - Reporting acts of discrimination to leadership and other appropriate authorities.

Creating safe health-care experiences

The physiotherapist:

- Treats clients with respect and empathy by:
 - Acknowledging the client's cultural identity.
 - Listening to and seeking to understand the client's lived experiences.
 - Acknowledging and seeking to address the barriers the client encounters when seeking health services.
 - Treating clients and their families with compassion.
 - Being open to learning from the client and others.
- Cares for a client holistically, considering their physical, mental/emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs.
- Acknowledges and incorporates into the plan of care Indigenous cultural rights, values, and practices, including ceremonies and protocols related to illness, birth, and death, that are meaningful to the client, where able.
- Facilitates the involvement of the client's family and others (e.g., community and Elders, Indigenous cultural navigators, and interpreters) when desired by the client.

Relational care

The physiotherapist:

- Develops respectful, supportive, and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous clients and community members.

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- Respectfully learns about the client and the reasons the client has sought physiotherapy services.
- Engages with clients and their identified support persons to identify, understand, and address the client's health and wellness goals.
- Actively supports the client's right to decide on their course of care.
- Provides the client with the necessary time and space to share their needs and goals.
- Communicates effectively with clients by:
 - Providing clear information about the health-care options available, including information about what the client may experience during the health-care encounter.
 - Ensuring information is communicated in a way that the client can understand.

Acknowledgement: This Standard is based on the Indigenous Cultural Safety, Humility, and Anti-racism Standard (2022) first developed by the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia.

Related Standards

- Communication
- Continuing Competence
- Health Equity and Anti-Racism

Strengths-based and trauma-informed practice

The physiotherapist:

- Works with the client to incorporate their personal strengths to support the achievement of their health and wellness goals.
- Recognizes the potential for trauma (personal or intergenerational) in a client's life and adapts their approach to be thoughtful and respectful of this, including seeking permission before engaging in assessments or treatments.
- Recognizes that colonialism and trauma may affect how clients view, access, and interact with the health-care system.
- Recognizes that Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit, queer, and trans Indigenous Peoples are disproportionately impacted by Indigenous-specific racism in the health-care system and considers the impact gender-specific trauma may have on the client.