



CODE OF CONDUCT

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The South African Society of Physiotherapy believes that physiotherapists should at all times act in the best interests of their patients and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct and integrity:

In terms of their commitment to the profession – they should

1. Ensure that they are familiar with the latest requirements set in terms of ethical behaviour by relevant professional bodies and effect changes through participatory and democratic means;
2. Ensure that they maintain their professional independence and integrity when entering into any contract regarding professional services; recognise that they remain personally responsible to their patients for health care; and ensure that the terms and conditions of contracts entered into are fair;
3. Ensure that information about themselves given in the course of presenting physiotherapy topics to the media or to audiences does not imply that they are the only, the best, or most experienced practitioners in a particular field;
4. Avoid activities, which could be regarded as canvassing or touting for patients;
5. Issue sick certificates that are in line with the requirements set by the Health Professions Council of South Africa and that constitutes a fair reflection of their professional evaluation of a patient;
6. Be aware of instances of perverse incentives so as to benefit from such consideration;
7. Recognise and disclose instances of conflict of interest;

In terms of their commitment to appropriate patient/client relations – they should

1. Foster good relationships with their patients based on mutual respect, communication and trust;
2. Ensure that patient management is not being influenced by undue pressure from third parties;
3. When determining professional fees, consider the financial position of their patients and discuss the financial implications of treatment options;
4. Maintain their clinical independence and be vigilant in situations of dual loyalty, and inform relevant professional bodies and patients/clients accordingly.

In terms of their commitment to Patients' Rights – they should

1. Provide adequate information about the patient's diagnosis, treatment options and alternatives, costs associated with each such alternative and any other pertinent information to enable the patient to exercise a choice in terms of treatment and informed decision-making pertaining to his or her health and that of others;
2. To provide to a patient, upon request and in terms of relevant legislation, access to medical information in the possession of the physiotherapist;
3. Respect the confidentiality of information entrusted to them, unless legislation or an unequivocal ethical duty compels disclosure;
4. Respect patient confidentiality, privacy, choices and dignity;
5. In case of an emergency or in the event that the patient is unable to provide consent for treatment him or herself, to obtain consent from his or her next of kin.

In terms of transformation of the profession and healthcare services in South Africa – they should

1. Endeavour to understand the meaning of transformation and accept individual and collective responsibility for its advancement within the Society, taking pride in participating in an organisation that embraces courtesy, accountability and mutual respect at its core.
2. Agree that the Society is available for all physiotherapists regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background or sector within which they practice. All members of the SASP have freedom of discussion and enquiry within the structures of the SASP.
3. Contribute towards the SASP representing the profile of all the professionals working in the physiotherapy profession. The SASP strive to apply the ethos of equity in all levels of involvement within the various Special Interest Groups, Provincial and National structures of the SASP.
4. Value a thriving culture of social cohesion and promote through a spirit of understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity in all its forms. Every member, committee and structure within the SASP are encouraged to interact with diverse social groupings within its membership.
5. Adopt and embrace a culture that eliminates discrimination in all its forms, including disability, ethnicity, race, gender, nationality, class, religion and sexual orientation.

In terms of their commitment to maintain professional relations with colleagues – they should

1. Recognise their own limitations and recommend to a patient/client that other opinions and services be obtained when this is considered in the best interest of the patient/client, or when requested by a patient/client;
2. Make all relevant information available to colleagues concerned, unless being expressly prohibited to do so by the patient/client after providing the patient/client with information regarding the desirability of continuity of care;
3. Report their findings and recommendations back to the referring colleague when requested;
4. Take reasonable steps to consult with the Health Care Professional (HCP) involved with a case to avoid superseding;
5. Conduct themselves in a professional manner that is beyond reproach, and take any necessary steps to correct unethical behavior by colleagues;
6. Report impairment of colleagues as required by the Health Professionals Council of South Africa.

In terms of their commitment towards science and continuing professional education – they should

1. Participate in continuing professional development in order to improve the standard of care;
2. Practice evidence-base physiotherapy in line with the best available evidence, the choice of the patient and the skills of the physiotherapist;
3. Uphold scientific standards, promote research and create new knowledge within the frameworks of acceptable international and national standards of ethics.

In terms of their commitment to social responsibility – they should

1. Use their knowledge and skills to promote and benefit humankind;
2. Promote health for all by sharing responsibility and fostering good relationships with stakeholders for the health and health education of the nation. Advocating that everyone has equal access to affordable quality health care, by:
 - 2.1. promoting medical care to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups;
 - 2.2. promoting improved standards and quality of health services in the community;
3. Adhere to the principle of non-discrimination in all healthcare services;
4. Not condone or participate in torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedure towards any person;
5. Treat persons held in custody in the best interests of their health and with the same concern as other patients, and report maltreatment or refusal of healthcare services to the relevant authorities.