PROFESSIONALISM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY: CORE VALUES

SELF-ASSESSMENT



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Introduction

In 2000, the House of Delegates adopted Vision 2020 and the Strategic Plan for Transitioning to A Doctoring Profession (RC 37-01). The Plan includes six elements: Doctor of Physical Therapy, Evidenced-based Practice, Autonomous Practice, Direct Access, Practitioner of Choice, and Professionalism, and describes how these elements relate to and interface with the vision of a doctoring profession. In assisting the profession in its transition to a doctoring profession, it seemed that one of the initiatives that would be beneficial was to define and describe the concept of professionalism by explicitly articulating what the graduate of a physical therapist program ought to demonstrate with respect to professionalism. In addition, as a byproduct of this work, it was believed that practitioner behaviors could be articulated that would describe what the individual practitioner would be doing in their daily practice that would reflect professionalism.

As a part of the preparation for this consensus conference, relevant literature was reviewed to facilitate the development of the conference structure and consensus decision-making process. Literature in medicine3, 18, 19, 25, 27 reveals that this profession continues to be challenged to define professionalism, describe how it is taught, and determine how it can be measured in medical education. The groundwork and advances that medicine laid was most informative to the process and product from this conference. Physical therapy acknowledges and is thankful for medicine’s research efforts in professionalism and for their work that guided this conference’s structure and process.

Eighteen physical therapists, based on their expertise in physical therapist practice, education, and research, were invited to participate in a consensus-based conference convened by APTA’s Education Division on July 19-21, 2002. The conference was convened for the purpose of:

1. Developing a comprehensive consensus-based document on Professionalism that would be integrated into *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education, Version* 2004 to include a) core values of the profession, b) indicators (judgments, decisions, attitudes, and behaviors) that are fully consistent with the core values, and c) a professional education matrix that includes educational outcomes, examples of Terminal Behavioral Objectives, and examples of Instructional Objectives for the classroom and for clinical practice.
2. Developing outcome strategies for the promotion and implementation of the supplement content in education and, where feasible, with practice in ways that are consistent with physical therapy as a doctoring profession.

The documentation developed as a result of this conference is currently being integrated into the next version of *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2004.*  The table that follows is a synopsis of a portion of the conference documentation that describes what the physical therapist would be doing in his or her practice that would give evidence of professionalism.

In August 2003, Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values was reviewed by the APTA Board of Directors and adopted as a core document on professionalism in physical therapy practice, education, and research. (V-10; 8/03)

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the efforts of those participants who gave their time and energies to this challenging initiative; a first step in clearly articulating for the physical therapist what are the core values that define professionalism and how that concept would translate into professional education.

USING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Self-Assessment that follows is intended for the user to develop an *awareness* about the core values and to *self-assess* the frequency with which he or she demonstrates the seven core values based on sample indicators (behaviors not intended to be an exhaustive list) that describe what the practitioner would be doing in daily practice. These seven core values were identified during the consensus-based conference that further defined the critical elements that comprise professionalism. Core values are listed in alphabetical order with no preference or ranking given to these values. During the conference many important values were identified as part of professionalism in physical therapy, however not all were determined to be core (at the very essence; essential) of professionalism and unique to physical therapy. The seven values identified were of sufficient breadth and depth to incorporate the many values and attributes that are part of professionalism.

For each identified core value, (ie, accountability, altruism, compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and

social responsibility) a definition and sample indicators (not intended to be exhaustive) are provided that describe what the physical therapist would be doing in practice, education, and/or research if these core values were present.

Complete the Self-Assessment

Review each core value indicator and check the frequency with which you display that sample indicator in your daily practice based on the rating scale provided (1-5). It is not expected that one will rate himself or herself as 5 (always) or 1 (never) on every item. Be candid in your response as this is a self-assessment process with an opportunity for personal learning and insight, identification of areas of strength and growth, and assessment of your development in the professionalism maturation process.

Analyze the Completed Self-Assessment

Once you have completed the Self-Assessment, you may want to reflect as an individual or group on the following questions:

* On what sample indicators did you or the group consistently score yourself/themselves on the scale at the 4 or 5 levels?
* Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves higher in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
* On what sample indicators did you or the group score yourself/themselves on the scale at level 3 or below?
* Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves lower in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
* Identify, develop, and implement approaches to strengthening the integration of the core values within your practice environment.
* Establish personal goals for increasing the frequency with which you demonstrate specific sample behaviors with specific core value(s)
* Conduct periodic re-assessment of your core value behaviors to determine the degree to which your performance has changed in your professionalism maturation.

### Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values

Positioned next to each core value in the table are a definition and a group of sample indicators that describe what is viewed in a physical therapist who demonstrates this core value in his or her daily practice. Alongside each sample indicator on the list, mark only one number that best represents the frequency with which you display the behavior described. The scale of frequency is as follows: 1=never; 2=seldom; 3=sometimes; 4= often; 5=always. The questionnaire is written in male gender for convenience only; it is meant for women and men equally.

| **Core value** | **Definition** | **Sample indicators** | **Self-assessment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| (Never) | (Seldom) | (Sometimes) | (Often) | (Always) |
| **Accountability** | Active acceptance of responsibility for the range of roles, commitments, and actions of the physical therapist. Includes self-control and other behaviors that favorably affect the patient’s outcomes, the profession, and society’s healthcare needs. | 1. I respond to the patient’s goals and needs. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I seek feedback from multiple sources and respond to it. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I acknowledge and accept the results of my actions. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I accept responsibility for learning and changing. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I adhere to the code of ethics, working procedures, and policies/procedures that regulate the management of my professional activities. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I share with others, accurately, information about professional actions (including patients, other healthcare-service providers, and payment entities). | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I participate in attaining healthcare goals of patients and of society. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 8. I aspire continually to improve the quality of care. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 9. I am a permanent member of an association for the advancement of physical therapy and other organizations. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 10. I advise students in a manner that whets their desire to learn. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Altruism** | Focusing on or being devoted to patients’ interests, through which the physical therapist assumes the responsibility, originating in the trust placed in him or her, to put the patient’s needs before his or her own affairs. | 1. I place the patient’s needs above my own. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I provide service on a volunteer basis. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I provide physical-therapy services to population groups that are adequately served and represented. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I serve the patient/customer in a way that exceeds the expectations set forth in professional standards. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I complete my professional care of the patient and discharge my professional responsibility before I attend to personal needs. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Compassion/ caring** | Compassion is the wish to empathize with, or to sense, a certain aspect of the other’s experience; it is a preliminary stage of caring.Caring is concern for, empathy with, and consideration of others’ needs and values. | 1. I understand the socio-cultural, economic, and psychological effects on the individual’s life in his or her surroundings. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I understand the individual’s point of view. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I advocate for the patient’s needs. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I maintain effective verbal and nonverbal communication with others and take account of personal differences in learning style, language, cognitive abilities, and the like. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I design programs/interventions for patients that are consistent with their needs. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I empower patients to attain the highest possible level of functioning and to make independent decisions about their care. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I focus on attaining the highest level of well-being and potential of the patient. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 8. I identify my social, cultural, genderic, and sexual biases and refrain from acting in accordance with them. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 9. I accommodate the affective and psychological aspects of the patient’s care. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 10. I am attentive to the patient’s personal needs and comfort. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 11. I demonstrate respect for others and treat others as unique and valuable. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Excellence** | Practice of physical therapy in a manner that makes consistent use of the latest knowledge and theory, coupled with understanding personal limitations, integrating the patient’s point of view into judgment, challenging mediocrity, and acting to develop new knowledge. | 1. I exemplify investment in the physical therapy profession. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I internalize the importance of using evidence from multiple sources to support professional practice and make professional decisions. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I participate in integrated and cooperative professional endeavors in order to promote high-quality healthcare and educational outcomes. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I project intellectual humility in professional and personal situations. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skills in all aspects of the profession. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I consistently use evidence to back professional decisions. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I demonstrate tolerance of lack of clarity. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 8. I strive to find new evidence in order to broaden my knowledge. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 9. I have been involved in acquiring new knowledge all along my professional life. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 10. I share my knowledge with others. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 11. I contribute to the development and design of excellence in all my professional roles. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Integrity**  | Staunch adherence to ethical principles or professional standards; credibility, fairness, doing what you said you would do, and transparency in explaining the reasons for your actions. | 1. I obey the rules, regulations, and statutes that apply to the profession.  | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I adhere to professional standards at the highest level (professional practice, ethics, remuneration, institutional ethics committee, code of conduct, etc.). | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I clearly express and internalize declared ideals and professional values. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I apply discretion in using force (including avoidance of use of excessive privileges that I do not deserve). | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I resolve dilemmas in consideration of consistent core values. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I am trustworthy.  | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I assume responsibility for being an inseparable part of the management of patients’ ongoing care. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 8. I acknowledge my limitations and act accordingly. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 9. I take action against harassment and bias on the part of professionals and others. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 10. I identify the limits of my expertise and make referrals accordingly. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 11. I choose professional employment that is consistent with ethical and professional values and standards. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 12. I act on the basis of professional values even when the results of this behavior may endanger me. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Professional duty** | The physical therapist’s commitment to honor his or her undertakings, provide individual patients with effective physical-therapy service, serve the profession, and influence society’s health for the better. | 1. I display utility by providing “optimal care.” | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I enable every individual to attain functional, health, and wellness goals. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I safeguard people’s safety, security, and confidentiality in all professional contexts. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I am involved in professional activity beyond the confines of the “physical-therapy room.” | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I promote the physical-therapy profession. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I serve others as a mentor in order to fulfill their potential. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I am proud of my profession. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| **Social responsibility** | Promotion of mutual trust between the profession and the public at large, entailing a response to social needs for the cause of health and wellness. | 1. I advocate for society’s health and wellness needs, including access to medical care and physical-therapy services. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 2. I promote cultural fitness as part of my profession and as a member of the public at large. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 3. I promote social policies that affect patients’ functioning, health, and wellness. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 4. I make sure that existing social policies act to the personal benefit of the patient/customer. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 5. I advocate for amendments to statutes, regulations, and standards that affect the delivery of physical-therapy services. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 6. I promote volunteering in the community. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 7. I am a political activist.  | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 8. I understand the latest issues at the community, national, and global levels, and the way they affect society’s health and wellness and the delivery of physical-therapy services. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 9. I provide leadership in the community. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 10. I collaborate with other healthcare and medical professionals and with the public at large. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |
| 11. I make sure that the services combine social justice and economic efficiency. | ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ 3 | ☐ 4 | ☐ 5 |

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