

SCPT Practice Guideline # 22

Clinical Supervision of Student Learners

Background:

The Saskatchewan College of Physical Therapists (SCPT) acknowledges the important role of clinical education and clinical supervision in the preparation of competent student learners in a physical therapy setting. The SCPT recognizes the role of clinical supervisor as an activity which contributes to continuing professional development, maintenance of competency and maintenance of Physical Therapy practice hours required for licensure. A quality clinical education program is vital to the future provision of relevant, safe and effective delivery of Physical Therapy services which fundamentally also serves to protect the public.

The SCPT Code of Ethics provides:

6. Physical therapists shall assume full responsibility for all care they provide.
11. Physical therapists, with the client's consent, may delegate specific aspects of the care of the client to a person deemed by the physical therapist to be competent to carry out the care safely and effectively.
12. Physical therapists are responsible for all duties they delegate to persons under their supervision.
13. Physical therapists shall recognize their responsibility to improve standards of health care.
17. Physical therapists shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to merit the respect of society for the profession and its members.
19. Physical therapists shall maintain an optimum standard of practice by exercising competent professional judgment and by continually striving to improve their knowledge and professional skills.

Practice Guidelines:

1. Physical therapists shall, when possible, participate in, support and encourage the role of clinical educator/supervisor for student learners.
2. As supervisors of student learners, physical therapists shall ensure they have the knowledge, skills and abilities to provide supervision for the clinical content area as well as for the process of providing supervision.
3. Physical therapist supervisors shall assess their competence related to providing supervision and enhancing that competence through appropriate professional development (this may include accessing and review of further references provided at the end of this document and/or participation in clinical

supervisor/instructor training sessions offered through educational institutions from which student placements are arranged.)

4. Physical therapists shall ensure that the duties assigned to a student learner are appropriate for the complexity of the environment/practice setting and the student's level of education and experience.
5. Physical therapists shall only supervise activities they themselves are competent to perform.
6. Physical therapists shall ensure that he or she supervises student learners at a level appropriate to the activities that the student will perform, minimizing any potential risk of harm to the patient and providing safe, quality care.
7. Physical therapists shall ensure informed consent from a patient or his/her substitute decision maker is obtained prior to involving a student in patient care.
8. Physical therapists shall ensure ongoing evaluation of a student to ensure that the student's performance of assigned clinical interventions, services and activities meets generally accepted professional standard of practice.
9. Physical therapists shall ensure health records and related documentation written or completed by a student learner include the student's name and status and also include the co-signature of the supervisor.
10. Physical therapists shall conduct regular evaluations to ensure student learners under their supervision are delivering ethical, quality, and competent treatment.
11. Physical therapists shall immediately discontinue student involvement in patient care in circumstances where the student's actions or deficient knowledge, skills and clinical reasoning places the public at risk, or where the patient withdraws consent for their involvement.
12. Physical therapists shall ensure that the student's physical, mental, and emotional safety are valued, promoted, and supported at all times during the student's placement.

References

Physical Therapy Act, Code of Ethics, and Regulatory Bylaws (accessible at www.scpt.org)

Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada - 2009

College of Physiotherapists of Ontario - Standard for Professional Practice Supervision of Student Learners

College of Physiotherapists of Alberta - Supervision Resource Guide for Alberta Physiotherapists