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# Things to Remember When using Social Media

Be sure to review the relevant Standards and resources under each point. If you have any questions, contact the Practice Advisor at 1-800-583-5885 ext. 241 or advice@collegept.org.

## ☐ 1. All the Rules Apply

PTs are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and meeting the expectations of the College Standards, relevant legislation and the College's Code of Ethics. Physiotherapists sharing health related information on social media must be within the scope and expertise of a PT. The information must be supported by evidence and not be false, or misleading.

* [College Standards](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources)
* [Advertising Standard](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/advertising)
* [Code of Ethics](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/ethics)
* [Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada](https://www.collegept.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/essentialcompetencyprofile2009.pdf?sfvrsn=614fc9a1_2)

## ☐ 2. Maintain Professional Boundaries

PTs are expected to maintain professional boundaries and respectful communication. The physiotherapist’s responsibility is always to act in the patient’s best interest and to manage the boundaries within the therapeutic relationship and interactions with others in the professional environment. PTs must not exploit the power imbalance inherent in the physiotherapist-patient relationship when posting or communicating online.

* [Boundaries and Sexual Abuse Standard](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/new-boundaries-and-sexual-abuse)
* [Professional Misconduct Regulation](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_080388_e.htm)

## ☐ 3. PT Responsibility

Physiotherapists are responsible for everything that is posted or sent under their name or through an account representing them. A PT’s unprofessional behavior in person or online can result in regulatory consequences, when it has a negative impact on the PT’s ability to carry out their professional obligations or where the conduct has a negative impact on the physiotherapy profession or the public interest.

* [Professional Misconduct Regulation](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_080388_e.htm)

## ☐ 4. Protecting Patients

Physiotherapists have a responsibility to patients and to the public. They must always ensure that anything they post or publish online never undermines public health guidance, or a patient or person's health, treatment, or safety.

* [Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada](https://www.collegept.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/essentialcompetencyprofile2009.pdf?sfvrsn=614fc9a1_2)
* [Code of Ethics](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/ethics)
* [Professional Misconduct Regulation](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_080388_e.htm)

## ☐ 5. Safeguard Privacy

Featuring a patient in a social media post carries significant risk to the patient's privacy and boundaries. Physiotherapists must comply with [Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)](http://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/04p03) and safeguard patients' personal health information.

If a PT plans to post patient's health information, including pictures or videos, informed consent must be obtained from the patient for the publication of the content on social media, including a discussion about the permanence of information online.

A physiotherapist should consider how the power imbalance inherent in a therapeutic relationship may cause a patient to be pressured to consent. There may also be long term consequences to the patient who is the subject of the post. A PT should take reasonable steps to reassure the patient their care will not be affected if they do not agree to be featured in the post. Any digital communication relevant to patient care made directly with a patient (including messaging, texts, and email) should be included in the clinical record.

* [Boundaries and Sexual Abuse Standard](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/new-boundaries-and-sexual-abuse)
* [Record Keeping Standard](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/record-keeping)
* [Privacy](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/privacy)
* [Consent](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/consent)

## ☐ 6. Position of Trust

Physiotherapists should understand that any material posted by those who represent themselves as a PT is likely to be seen as trustworthy and may be taken to represent the views of the profession more widely.

* [Restricted Titles, Credentials and Specialty Designations Standard](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/restricted-titles-credentials-and-specialty-designations-standard)
* [Code of Ethics](https://www.collegept.org/rules-and-resources/ethics)