**Communication Standard**

Effective Date: August 1, 2024  
Date Approved: June 24, 2024

**Standard**

The physiotherapist communicates professionally, clearly, effectively, and in a **timely** manner to support and promote quality physiotherapy services.

**Expected outcome**

Patients, potential patients, colleagues, members of the public, and others can expect that communication with and by the physiotherapist will be respectful and professional and will contribute to their understanding and/or participation in their health management.

**Performance expectations**

The physiotherapist:

* Does not engage in communication that is disrespectful, dishonest, misleading or lacking in transparency.
* Identifies potential barriers to effective communication and makes a reasonable effort to address these barriers.
* Engages in **active listening** to ensure that the patient’s perspective, needs, and preferences are heard and understood.
* Communicates with patients, team members, and others to facilitate collaboration and coordinate care.
* When sharing information with the patient, team members and others regarding the patient and physiotherapy services:
  + Obtains patient consent when required by privacy legislation, and
  + Maintains patient **confidentiality** by selecting secure methods of communication.
* Documents all communications accurately, clearly, professionally, and in a timely manner.
* Confirms that any exchanges using electronic communications are appropriate for therapeutic relationships established with patients.
* When using social media platforms, communicates with patients, potential patients, members of the public, and others honestly, **transparently**, and professionally:
  + Obtains explicit informed consent if using patient images or personal information in social media posts.
  + Conveys scientifically sound, evidence-informed information.
  + Does not share private, disrespectful, dishonest or misleading information.
  + Does not provide patient specific treatment recommendations via social media platforms.

**Definitions**

***Active Listening*** isa process of attending to what the speaker is saying and repeating back to the speaker what has been heard, to confirm that the listener has correctly understood the speaker.

***Communication*** is the imparting and exchanging of information and includes speaking, listening, written and electronic information exchange. Effective, professional, communication involves active listening, and the sharing of information using **plain language** and assistive methods or devices (e.g., interpreters, technology, diagrams, printed education materials) when needed to facilitate the listener’s understanding.

***Confidentiality*** is the assurance that certain information that may include a subject’s identity, health, behaviour, or lifestyle information would not be disclosed without permission from the subject.

***Plain language*** refers to communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. Language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. Written material is in plain language if your audience can:

• Find what they need

• Understand what they find

• Use what they find to meet their needs

***Social Media*** refers to online practices, technologies, and platforms used to network, share content, and communicate opinions, insights, and experiences. Social media can involve a variety of formats, such as text, video, audio, and live dialogue. Examples include, but are not limited to, social networks (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X), podcasts, blogs, and discussion forums. In this standard, social media is not intended to cover e-mail, electronic messaging services, or secure platforms used for the purposes of delivering virtual care.

***Timely*** refers to happening at the correct or most useful time, not happening too late.

***Transparent (transparently)*** refers to the quality of being easy to perceive, obvious, clear and unambiguous.