

ETHICS IN DAILY PRACTICE

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The Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist and The Standards of Ethical Conduct for the Physical Therapist Assistant are core documents that are the framework of our practice. More than 'right' or 'wrong', these documents, as delineated by the APTA House of Delegates, highlight the ethical obligations for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants. No Code of Ethics or Standards of Conduct can address every situation. Rather, these are important frameworks that can guide thoughtful reflection and subsequent action in everyday practice.

https://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About_Us/Policies/HOD/Ethics/CodeofEthics.pdf

http://www.apta.org/uploadedFiles/APTAorg/About_Us/Policies/Ethics/StandardsEthicalConductPTA.pdf

The physical therapist and physical therapist assistant have the special obligation to empower, educate, and enable those with impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and disabilities to facilitate greater independence, health and wellness and enhanced quality of life.

Ethical dilemmas are encountered by physical therapists and physical therapist assistants daily. Questions of conduct may include:

- How do you respond to a patient/client expressing unsolicited political views far contrary to your own?
- How do you respond to a supervisor that encourages placing a patient in a higher RUG level than you assign based on your clinical decision making?
- How do you respond to a practice manager that reviews your documentation and charges and encourages 'tweaking the charges' posted to an account?
- How do you respond to a care manager that states "The patient's insurance won't cover inpatient acute rehab; they'll go to a SNF" when based on your clinical judgment, greater than three hours of rehabilitation is in the best interest of the patient?
- How do you respond when a patient gives you a "Thank You" card and enclosed in the card is a \$100.00 Gift Card?
- How do you respond when you have observed fellow professional behaviors and you believe they may be suffering from a physical or a psychological or a substance –related impairment?
- How do you respond when your professional organization sends out a 'CALL TO ACTION' to communicate with lawmakers regarding a piece of legislation that may effect the health care that our patients /clients receive?

Each of these scenarios is covered in our Code of Ethics and Standards of Ethical Conduct. The PPTA Ethics Committee encourages yearly review of these core documents in your practice. Use them as a guide for your daily practice and a tool for teaching the next generation of practitioners as well as other health care stakeholders and the public on who we are as a Profession. Moral courage to reflect on who we are AND what we believe are imperative to continue to weather the winds of change in our ever changing health care environment.