

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) Guide for Professional Conduct and Code of Ethics

Preamble

The Code of Ethics for the Physical Therapist (Code of Ethics) delineates the ethical obligations of all physical therapists as determined by the House of Delegates of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

This Code of Ethics describes the desired behavior of physical therapists in their multiple roles (e.g., management of patients and clients, consultation, education, research, and administration), addresses multiple aspects of ethical action (individual, organizational, and societal), and reflects the core values of the physical therapist (accountability, altruism, collaboration, compassion and caring, duty, excellence, integrity, and social responsibility). Throughout the document the primary core values that support specific principles are indicated in parentheses. Unless a specific role is indicated in the principle, the duties and obligations being delineated pertain to the five roles of the physical therapist. Fundamental to the Code of Ethics is the special obligation of physical therapists to empower, educate, and enable those with impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions, and disabilities to facilitate greater independence, health, wellness, and enhanced quality of life.

- **Principle 1:** Physical therapists shall respect the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals.
- **Principle 2:** Physical therapists shall be trustworthy and compassionate in addressing the rights and needs of patients and clients.
- **Principle 3:** Physical therapists shall be accountable for making sound professional judgments.
- **Principle 4:** Physical therapists shall demonstrate integrity in their relationships with patients and clients, families, colleagues, students, research participants, other health care providers, employers, payers, and the public.
- **Principle 5:** Physical therapists shall fulfill their legal and professional obligations.
- **Principle 6:** Physical therapists shall enhance their expertise through the lifelong acquisition and refinement of knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional behaviors.
- **Principle 7:** Physical therapists shall promote organizational behaviors and business practices that benefit patients and clients and society.
- **Principle 8:** Physical therapists shall participate in efforts to meet the health needs of people locally, nationally, and globally.