



Physiotherapy Alberta
College + Association

Understanding Ethics Workbook



Introduction

This workbook supplements the material presented in Physiotherapy Alberta's Understanding Ethics Modules. It includes activities to make you think more about the materials presented in the modules. It will challenge you so that you will get the most from this course. You are strongly encouraged to complete each workbook activity.

Module One

Reflection on Morals

What are the key influences that have shaped your own personal moral code?

What kind of moral values do you think society expects from physiotherapists?

Moral Conflict Scenario

You are paid a lump sum to provide services to residents of a long term care centre. Your supervisor tells you if you are short on time, not to worry about treating Mr. Smith as he is seldom lucid and won't remember if you came to see him or not.

What is your gut reaction to this situation?

Do you think Mr. Smith is entitled to any and all services that he needs regardless of his cognitive status? (explain)

How will you resolve this situation?

Self-Reflection Activity - complete at end of module

Think of a situation where your personal moral code has been in conflict with the moral code of a group you belong to (i.e. profession, employer).

Describe your feelings/emotional reaction to the situation?

What moral values were challenged?

What actions did you take to resolve the issue?

Module 2

Personal ethical-decision making preferences

Which of the following statements best fits with your personal style of ethical decision-making and why?

- I am very concerned about the outcome of a decision but less inclined to follow the rules if I am not happy with the outcome.*
- The rules establish a fair and equitable resolution of any problem. I am comfortable following the rules and I am comfortable with the outcome.*

Ethical Scenario Involving Justice - Slide 23 and 24

You work in an understaffed out-patient physiotherapy facility. The facility is overbooked and has a long waiting list. Only one appointment is available within the next two weeks. You must choose between:

- Ms. Jones, a 29 year-old spinal cord injured female who recently injured her shoulder and is having difficulty moving her wheelchair or
- Mr. Smith, a 70 year-old male who recently had a knee replacement and needs rehabilitation to get him mobile and off a walker.

Who would you choose and why?

Module 3

Pause and Reflect Activity – complete at end of module

The Code of Ethics for Alberta physiotherapists embodies professional ethical values intended to guide our interactions with clients, other health care providers and the public. Each of the seven values Respect, Empathy, Safety, Professionalism, Equity, Collaboration and Trustworthiness are intended to be concrete values that will guide your own conduct and behaviour.

Describe an ethical situation where you did a good job in upholding one or more of the RESPECT values.

Now describe an ethical situation where you did not do a good job in upholding one or more of the RESPECT values? What did you learn from this situation?

Module 4

Reflection on the scenario embedded within module 4

Embedded within the presentation was a clinical scenario that presented an ethical dilemma:

Your client, who is a good friend of your spouse, has a serious injury that requires semi-urgent knee surgery. You work closely with a group of orthopaedic surgeons and have often accommodated their requests to see client's urgently. You know getting an appointment to see an orthopaedic surgeon is not easy. Both your client and spouse ask if you can "pull some strings" to get an earlier appointment. To resolve this situation four options were presented?

1. The first option is to explain to your client that they are required to go through the same referral channels as everyone else.
2. The second option is to call the surgeon and get an immediate appointment.
3. A third option is to call the surgeon's office to clarify the procedure and information required to get a more urgent appointment. You know the orthopaedic surgeons have screening criteria to determine the urgency of a referral so perhaps a good referral letter would expedite the appointment.
4. A fourth option is to call the client's family physician to determine if they can expedite the referral based upon your client's condition and needs.

Can you think of alternative options?

What would you do and why?

Module 5

Ethical Scenario 1	
<p>Marie is a young mother admitted to the burn unit with extensive burns to her face, hands and chest that required grafting and surgical amputation of three digits on her right hand.</p> <p>She has become increasingly depressed dealing with the severe pain and extensive disfigurement. For the past two-days, she has refused to get of bed and does not want to participate in any physiotherapy treatment</p> <p>Despite attempts to communicate with Marie, the physiotherapist until now has respected Marie's refusal of treatment.</p> <p>Other attending health-care staff have now provided strict orders that the physiotherapist carry out treatment regardless of Marie's wishes.</p> <p>Now let's step through the ethical decision making framework to arrive at a course of action.</p>	
Decision-Making Steps	Notes:
Step 1: Identify the dilemma	
Step 2: Map out the issue	
Step 3: Document relevant factors	
Step 4: Generate a list of options	
Step 5: Choose an option - Then implement	
Step 6: Follow-up	

Additional Ethical Scenarios	
<p>Apply the ethical decision making steps to the following ethical scenarios. You are strongly encouraged to work through these scenarios with other physiotherapists as it allows for a richer discussion of each scenario.</p>	
<p>Scenario 2</p> <p>It is 5:00 p.m. on a Friday afternoon and the physiotherapist is deciding who should get weekend physiotherapy coverage. Coverage is only available for 4 hours. The acute post-ops get priority. There are two additional patients on the physiotherapist’s daily list, but with all the acute-post ops, only one patient can go on the weekend list.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A 30-year-old male with end stage cystic fibrosis. He is on palliative treatment and has a DO NOT RESUSCITATE order. He finds daily chest physiotherapy helps for comfort and breathing but providing chest treatment is time consuming. 2. A frail 76-year old woman recovering from an acute episode of pneumonia. She has been progressing well with daily mobility and gym exercises. She lives out of town but there is a possibility she can soon go home if she keep progressing with daily rehabilitation sessions. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What would you do if faced with this scenario?</i></p>	
Decision-Making Steps	Notes:
Step 1: Identify the dilemma	
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Scenario 3

The past two months at the clinic have been slow. The owner tells staff that revenue is low and challenges staff to ensure the clinic remains busy or hours will likely be cut back.

Henry has been attending the clinic for an ankle injury. He has funding for eight visits. He is doing well and on the sixth visit reports no pain, swelling, or functional problems. On assessment, the ankle is comparable to the normal side. The treating physiotherapist thinks that Henry is ready for discharge and provides a discharge plan that includes additional exercises and advice on return to sport.

While Henry is getting dressed the treating physiotherapist gets called away to take an urgent phone call. Meantime the clinic owner, who overheard the treating physiotherapist's discussion with Henry, talks to Henry and suggests he come back for a final check-up in one week. The owner then books Henry an additional appointment. The treating physiotherapist returns to find Henry has left the clinic and another appointment is booked in one week.

What would you do if faced with this scenario?

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Step 5: Choose an option - Then implement	
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Scenario 4

Andrea is a single parent whom the physiotherapist has treated for a variety of conditions over the past 10-years. While in the clinic, Andrea has a seizure. Andrea has always disclosed a history of epilepsy but has maintained her seizures are very well controlled by medications.

The seizure is short. As Andrea recovers, she confides to the physiotherapist that over the past 2-3 months she has suffered several short seizures. Andrea is beside herself because she fears her driver's license will be revoked if anyone finds out. Andrea needs to drive for her livelihood and to get her kids to their numerous activities. Andrea requests that the physiotherapist not tell anyone and let her figure out what to do for herself.

What would you do if faced with this scenario?

Decision-Making Steps	Notes:
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Scenario 5

A local physiotherapist opens a private clinic after 10-years of hospital work. Before opening, the physiotherapist met with various referral sources and sent flyers to many of the local physician practices. The physiotherapist also asked the doctors at the hospital to keep her in mind when recommending physiotherapy to their clients.

After opening, referrals are lower than expected. The physiotherapist arranges a lunch meeting at a local practice of specialist physicians who refer a lot to physiotherapy. The physiotherapist provides a good clinical presentation but during discussions, one of the doctors infers that he will continue to refer elsewhere because other clinics are paying for client referrals.

What would you do if faced with this scenario?

Decision-Making Steps	Notes:
Step 1: Identify the dilemma	
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