

# **Iran Professional Physiotherapy Ethics Document**

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## **Acknowledgments**

Iran Professional Physiotherapy Ethics Document (IPPED) was discussed in the telegram group “physiotherapy professional ethics” with the participation of physiotherapist colleagues. Professional Physiotherapy Ethics Committee (PPEC) deems it necessary to thank the members of this group and all those who have contributed in some way in the preparation of this document.

## **Iran Physiotherapy Professional Ethics Document (First edition, 2016)**

IPPED has been discussed in a telegram group called "Professional Physiotherapy Ethics Group" with the presence of more than two hundred physiotherapists. This document contains nine principles that express physiotherapy ethics. Each principle includes codes of conduct that physiotherapists must follow and professional performance of every physiotherapist is evaluated according to these codes. It is obvious that by creating newer concepts of ethics over time and the development of professional ethics in physiotherapy profession, updates on professional ethics document is also necessary, so that it could lead its members in a better and more precise path.

PPEC is an impartial group to express professional physiotherapy ethics in Iran and has no executive responsibility in this regard, but it announces its readiness to establish "a comprehensive document of professional physiotherapy ethics," which is also stated in the suggestion with the help of respected Iranian Physiotherapy Association and the Board.

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## **Introduction**

At the present time, physiotherapy is an important part of the health system for dynamism and efficacy, therefore member's awareness of the principles standards and professional codes of ethics is an important factor, so that through a commitment to common values and using them create shared professional conduct and thus lead to benefit and satisfaction of patients and community. These principles and ethical guidelines and tips are like maps that help each member of physiotherapy with the title professional physiotherapist to behave more accurate, clearer and more complete.

Physiotherapists, who are considered experts in movement and motor problems in the health system and society, are completely aware of the need for acting

based on professional ethics for success, access to their ideals and visions. In addition to being a guidance for favourable decisions including doing or not doing certain behaviours and by learning the rules and guidelines, physiotherapists see themselves as obliged to follow them. Every physiotherapist's professional performance is evaluated based on codes of ethics, even if they are not employed in their profession.

### **The definition of professional ethics**

The exact introduction of the physiotherapy community of Iran with professional ethics and its place in the health system and society helps conceptualizing and use of values and ethical guidelines in professional environments, important organizations, and organizational positions.

Different definitions of professional ethics are offered. To conceptualize and understand it better, two definitions are referred to:

- Professional ethics is a branch of ethics that includes a set of principles and guidelines on ethical duties and issues of a profession or organization based on human values and ethical of the society to guide, monitor, and determine professional behaviour of its members or the organization.

- Professional ethics is behaviour management and the practice of people of a profession or organization while performing professional work and practice through adherence to ethical principles and guidelines of that profession.

The definition of professional ethics simply as a career or professional responsibility is a very simple idea and an incomplete mentality that leads to incomplete or reductionism of ethics professionals. Moreover, other cases of reductionism habits and norms of professional ethics delivery job, statements with general slogans, rules, regulations, relying solely on professional people without imprinting of affiliated associations or trade, other related groups as well as ethical values without taking into account the behavioral aspects may occur.

Reductionism is of the barriers of professional ethics growth and in the absence of systemic thinking skills, its risk increases. It should be noted that the definition of professional ethics is beyond the scope of work or career.

### **Physiotherapy nature**

Physiotherapy is a service to patients / clients or care-seeker, organizations, and community that is done only by or under the supervision of physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists are known as experts of motion and movement disorders. Movement is essential to maintain and improve the health, life, and to comply with environment.

Physiotherapists provide services to maintain, develop, and restoration of maximum movement and functional ability for individuals. Physiotherapists can help people move and function in cases where due to lesions, diseases, disorders, aging, conditions, or environmental they are threatened.

Physiotherapy is a part of the health system whose members with different disciplines in health sector, especially orthopedic specialists, neurology, rheumatology, cardiology, respiratory diseases, obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics and children cooperate to improve the quality of health of people. Physiotherapists can help

autonomy, increased motivation, improved healthy lifestyle, and help prevent diseases and disorders.

Physiotherapy nature in practical concerns includes the following processes:

- Assessment
- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- Treatment
- Evaluation
- Prevention

### **Physiotherapy work environment**

Physiotherapists based on therapy, rehabilitation and prevention goals work in different places:

- Private clinics
- Educational Centres
- Research centres
- Sports centres
- Schools
- Industrial centres
- Public and private hospitals
- Clinics
- Homes or houses
- Rehabilitation centres
- Organizations
- Nursing homes and care centres for the elderly
- Primary health care centres
- Assisted impotent patients
- Military barracks

The operation scope of physiotherapy includes diseases and disorders of the musculoskeletal physiotherapy, neurology, cardiovascular, pulmonary (respiratory), rheumatology and metabolic.

### **Ethical values**

Ethics is the study of the principles and standards according to which correct behaviour principles are developed in a society. These rules are based on ethical values and are welcomed by society. Ethical values are characterized as general ethical principles. For the preparation of professional ethics document, first core ethical values must be identified.

The Core ethical values in physiotherapy are:

- Responsibility, conscientiousness and accountability
- Respect for others
- Honesty and Integrity
- Justice, fairness, and equality
- Sympathy and empathy
- Individual autonomy

- Beneficence
- Lack of harmfulness
- Job promotion

Iranian physiotherapy community is committed to ethical values.

### **Ethical codes or code of conduct**

Ethical codes or guidelines (code of conduct) is the set of regular principles and rules that are ethically right or wrong and these codes of practice and behaviour would be binding. Any profession or occupation based on its own specific features has a particular ethical code. Moreover, part of the definition of any professional or ethical codes is specified its ethical codes. Ethical codes are a set of requirements and ethical commitments to all stakeholders. The most important role and importance of ethical codes and guidelines of conduct is a clear program for individuals or organizations to create professional ethical values. In addition to explaining individual ethical codes, they have a role in creating professional or organizational shared values for professional decisions and behaviours.

Another role of these codes is to avoid actions that are not according to the dignity of a profession, even if not unethical or illegal. Thus, ethical guidelines are a list of dos and don'ts for professional behaviour. On the other hand, with the development of theoretical knowledge, technologies, the importance of clinical governance and evidence-based physiotherapy cannot be merely a series of dos and don'ts or orders and find more practical aspects (applied ethics).

To increase the quality and desirable effectiveness of physiotherapy and to promote thereof in the field of health and society and professional ethics, physiotherapy should include research, education, professional communication, decision-making, clinical counselling, problem-based learning, developing reasoning and ethical judgment. Physiotherapy ethical codes reflect the responsibilities, roles and social mission of physiotherapists in the health system and society, and each physiotherapist specifically sees himself committed to learning and using them.

### **Professional physiotherapy ethics charter**

Physiotherapists in addition to theoretical knowledge and clinical experience in their profession require development of ethical skills. From the perspective of ethics researchers, different levels of ethical development such as avoiding punishment, individual interests, gaining the approval of others, obeying the law, ethical conscience for ethical judgments on the basis of the social contract have been raised, among which conscience is as the highest stage of ethical development for numerous ethical decision-making.

Enhancing and development of physiotherapy skill ethics is a need for professional improvement and the quality of services. Since even a high level of ethical reasoning (judgment to determine the rightness or wrongness of an issue or topic) alone is not sufficient, commitment through codes of ethics are essential to ethical behavior and professional development. Iranian physiotherapy society is committed to **nine principles and ethical guidelines** with the aim of professional development, improving the quality of service, notifying the public about the role and importance of human movement system, prevention of mobility problems, pain and diseases,

planning for scientific and professional development, and providing the best and most effective services related to therapy in the health system.

## **First principle**

### **Responsibility, conscientiousness and accountability**

#### **First principle: responsibility, conscientiousness and accountability**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

1.1. Physiotherapists must be present and on time for their work and do their tasks on time.

1.2. Physiotherapists must perform their duties to the patient / client carefully and fully.

1.2.1 Physiotherapists should be responsible for any performance and their behaviour towards the patient / client should be accountable in this regard.

1.2.2. Physiotherapists should perform physiotherapy processes (assessment, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, re-evaluation and prevention) accurately.

1.2.3. In the case of bad performance and behaviour, physiotherapists must take responsibility and be held accountable. In these cases, reviewing the cause of the error should be understood and not to be repeated in the future. This experience should be a lesson and improve the quality of physiotherapy services in the future.

1.3. A physiotherapist should not relegate actions and practices that need experience and physiotherapy knowledge, accurate decision-making and skills to people who are not physiotherapists or others.

1.4. Performance and behaviour of the physiotherapists must maintain their social status and professional identity.

1.4.1. Each physiotherapist should protect professional titles of physiotherapists and physiotherapy.

1.4.2. The therapist must be aware that only those the whose qualification is approved through Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Medical Council of Iran or Iranian Physiotherapy Association can use the title professional physiotherapist and they are responsible to keep their career title as a physiotherapist.

1.4.3. Physiotherapists should notify the Board of Physical Therapy, Physiotherapy Association of Iran and other responsible organizations if any changes occur in their career, in public or private institutions or other organizations to be followed-up.

1.5. Physiotherapists should give enough information to the patient / client and be accountable for the information provided.

1.6. Physiotherapists must accept social responsibility for the development and growth of physiotherapy practice and should not be indifferent towards their community.

1.6.1. Physiotherapists should be active socially to make the community aware of the importance of physiotherapy in the health system.

1.6.2. Physiotherapists should make efforts aimed at the prevention of diseases, disorders, and problems related to the field of physiotherapy in order to improve

general health and work performance.

1.7. Technical officers of physiotherapy should be present in their workplace while giving physiotherapy services to patients.

1.8. Physiotherapists must act within the framework of his duties and responsibilities.

1.9. In cases where the patient is a child, therapists should do all the processes of physiotherapy in the presence of a companion or one of his parents and comply with ethical and humane issues about children.

1.10. In a case where illness, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, addiction to drugs, psychotropic substances and psychiatric disorders of colleagues that cause trouble and impairment in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, the physiotherapist should report it to the authorities.

1.11. Physiotherapists should inform the patient and discharge them, when the desired therapeutic goals are of not needed.

## **Second principle**

### **Respecting others**

#### **Second principle: respecting others**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

2.1. Physiotherapists should treat their patient/ client or patient family and caregivers with respect, regardless of sex, age, nationality, religion, race and economic or political conditions. This includes patients who do not have the power to make decisions.

2.1.1. The speech and language of the physiotherapists should be gentle.

2.1.2 The physical therapists must listen carefully to the words and desires of the patient.

2.1.3. Physiotherapists should call the patient by their family name and should not use titles for calling.

2.2. Physiotherapists should respect the patient's beliefs and convictions of every ethnicity, religion, nationality, culture, and race.

2.3. While talking about their patients to their colleagues (even in the patient's absence), the physiotherapists should speak with great respect and preserve human dignity.

2.4. Physiotherapists must respect the patient's privacy and refrain from visiting him in the presence of other people except with the permission and consent.

2.4.1. Physiotherapists should respect the request of the patient about the presence of a trusted person or a relative within the physiotherapy services (physical processes).

2.5. In the case of the patient's request, for physiotherapy by colleagues, physiotherapists should respect the right for them to facilitate the process.

2.6. Physiotherapists must treat staff personnel, associates and other members of the health care provider with respect and human dignity.

2.6.1. Physiotherapists should respect the roles and skills of fellow physiotherapists and other professionals involved in patient care and have respectful communication with them.

## **Third Principle**

### **Honesty and Integrity**

#### **The third principle: Honesty and Integrity**

##### **Obligations and commitments**

- 3.1. Physiotherapists must comply with honesty and integrity in papers such as certificates and reports.
- 3.2. Physiotherapists should not disclose the information of the patient's to others except in cases where the law stipulates and refrain from the divulging of information breaching his identity and privacy.
- 3.3. Physiotherapists should provide patients / clients and the society with the correct information.
  - 3.3.1. Physiotherapists should provide the right and real information for awareness of their role in the field of health to patients / clients and people.
  - 3.3.2. Physiotherapists should provide the right, true and meaningful information in relation to the illness to the patient / client relatives and caregivers.
  - 3.3.3. Physiotherapists should provide the right information in appropriate circumstances to patients / clients or community in the best and understandable way.
  - 3.3.4. Physiotherapists should not mislead their patients in cases where they do not have information and if they are asked for this type of information, they should give reference of reliable sources or experts.
  - 3.3.5. Physiotherapists should provide the right information to patients / clients in relation to their questions.
- 3.4. In cases where the diagnosis is uncertain or the physiotherapists do not have the necessary background and treatment plan, they should inform patients and refer them to competent people.
  - 3.4.1. Physiotherapists should charge the patient only for the provided services based on pre-set rules and regulations and refrain from imposing unnecessary costs to patients.
- 3.5. Physiotherapists must avoid false advertising and false claims, which lead to the abuse of patients / clients.
- 3.6. Physiotherapists must provide complaints, conditions and feedback to the patient and any criticism to them.
- 3.7. Physiotherapists should not abuse of the patients / clients, children, employees (staff), students and others.
  - 3.7.1. Physiotherapists should refuse any sexual relationship with the patient / client.
  - 3.7.2. Physiotherapists must avoid any exploitation and abuse of the patient's economic or administrative status.
- 3.8. Physiotherapists must avoid verbal dispute with the patient or their entourage.
- 3.9. In situations of conflict of interest, the physiotherapists should supply the interests of patients.
  - 3.9.1. Physiotherapists must just consider the benefits of the patient in referring him to



other parts of the health system, and in this connection, he should not receive payment or advantage.

3.10. Physiotherapists should not abuse their powers, authority, and facilities.

3.11. Physiotherapists should the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances that lead to impairment of the physical processes.

3.12. Physiotherapists must avoid abusing any illegal transactions such as monthly percentage and the giving or receiving unusual gifts in exchange for referring patients.

3.13. Physiotherapists must avoid receiving unusual gifts such as coins or the money from patients and reject receiving a bribe.

## **Fourth Principle**

### **Justice, fairness and equality**

#### **Fourth: justice, fairness and equality**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

4.1. Physiotherapists must be free from any discrimination based on age, sex, education level, status, nationality, ethnicity, race, language, economic status, political - social and religious beliefs of their patients and / or clients.

4.2. The physiotherapists should preserve quality and integrity of quality of services relative to people with fairness and equality.

2.4.1. Physiotherapists should consider quality and comprehensiveness of the services and have a good performance in providing physiotherapy services to vulnerable groups, people with physical or mental disability, children, people with consciousness disorders and mental illnesses like any other illness.

4.2.2. Physiotherapists should provide services for people with certain diseases that may be recognized as a social stigma or there is a risk of disease transmission in compliance with regulations and safety rules like any other patient.

4.3. Physiotherapists should consider justice and fairness in dealing with their colleagues, other staff and health systems society.

4.4. Physiotherapists should provide quality physiotherapy services with fair and predetermined wages and commissions.

## **Fifth Principle**

### **Sympathy and empathy**

#### **Fifth principle: sympathy and empathy**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

5.1. Physiotherapists should feel and understand the pain and suffering of patients /clients.

5.2. Physiotherapists should have sympathy with patients with honesty and openness.

5.3. Physiotherapists should listen patiently for understanding and feelings patients' pain.

5.4. For empathy, physiotherapists should talk with patients calmly, carefully, and patiently.

5.5. Physiotherapists should not treat physical and mental difficulties of the patients as small and worthless.

5.6. When sympathizing with patients, physiotherapist should not deal with pity or

compassion and be immersed in the problems of the patient.

5.7. Physiotherapists should have empathy to cooperate with the other members of the health system and society.

## **Sixth Principle**

### **Individual autonomy**

#### **Sixth principle: individual autonomy**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

6.1. Physiotherapists must give accurate and understandable information to the patient /client, so that they can participate in decisions related to the problems or issues.

6.2. The patient`s consent towards physiotherapy services is needed. This refers to the physiotherapist`s knowledge and understanding of the benefits and risks of medical procedures or research for decision-making and depends on the autonomy of the patient and the therapist telling the truth.

6.2.1. Physiotherapists should give appropriate information in relation to specified methods of treatment and its cost to the patient / client.

6.2.2. Physiotherapists should announce the advantages, risks and disadvantages associated with the methods of therapy for the patient / client.

6.2.3. Physiotherapists should make the patient / client aware of services and alternative methods, along with the benefits and risks.

6.2.4. Physiotherapists should get the informed consent from the patient / client and record it in the patient's record.

6.2.5. Before obtaining informed consent from the patient / client, physiotherapists should ensure their understanding of the benefits or risks of physiotherapy (or research).

6.2.6 For informed consent, the individuals must have the necessary qualifications and in a case where a person is ineligible (ego, children, mental health problems and loss of consciousness), informed consent of the legal guardian is required.

6.7.2. Physiotherapists should inform the patient of any complications resulting from dissatisfaction with the received physiotherapy.

6.2.8. The patient / legal guardian can withdraw their consent whenever they wish to.

6.3. Physiotherapists have the right of choosing, continuing, and ending the services and nobody has the right to force them to receive services.

6.3.1. The patient has the right to start or deny physiotherapy.

6.3.2. The patient has the right to continue or deny physiotherapy.

6.3.3. The patient has the right to declare the end of their physiotherapy treatment.

6.3.4. The patient has the right to continue treatment with another therapist.

## **Principle seven**

### **Beneficence**

#### **The seventh principle: beneficence**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

7.1. Physiotherapist should act appropriately to the benefit of the patient / client.

7.1.1. Actions, behaviour and speech therapists should improve the performance and enhance the health of the patient / client.

7.1.2. Physiotherapists should aim to provide the best quality medical services to the patient / client.

7.1.3. Physiotherapists need to increase the motivation, determination and confidence in the treatment of patients to increase their participation and facilitate their recovery process.

7.2. For the benefit to the patient, before any medical treatment, physiotherapists should reach their patient's diagnosis.

7.3. Physiotherapists should use the methods and equipment to treat patients and overcome their problems and issues associated with the disease, disorder or disability.

7.4. Physiotherapists should have the selection of procedure or treatment effects that patients trust.

## **Eighth Principle**

### **Lack of harmfulness**

#### **Eighth Principle: lack of harmfulness**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

8.1. Physiotherapists should not do an action or practical work resulting in recklessness and carelessness or lack of knowledge and skills relative to the patient / client.

8.2. Physiotherapist should have discretion in relation to the patient's problem to avoid harm of cause false detection.

8.3. Physiotherapists should not do practical actions, where the harm is greater than the benefit and the physiotherapists' action should maximize effectiveness, and no damage or minimal damage.

8.4. Physiotherapists should refrain any speech and behaviour that cause any physical mental harm to the patient.

8.5. Physiotherapists should avoid using the methods or equipment that don't have any positive impact or benefits for their patients, staying conscious of the time, and extra costs towards their patients.

8.6. In the event of harm made to the patient, physiotherapists should record it in the patient's report and try to compensate and treat it.

## **Ninth Principle**

### **Job promotion**

#### **Ninth Principle: Job promotion**

##### **Obligations and commitment**

9.1. Physiotherapists need to update and re-educate in lifelong learning within the scope of their work and actively seeking professional capability and make sure that there is always proof that their work is being done at the correct standard.

9.1.1. Physiotherapists should participate in seminars, educational activities, and scientific congresses as often as possible, in order to improve their professional knowledge, and professional skills.

9.1.2. Physiotherapists should be aware of their professional standards and make their activities can relate to them.

9.2. For promotion and development of physiotherapy, physiotherapists should have

mutual relations with their colleagues, other members of the health system and community organizations.

9.2.1. Physiotherapists should transfer their knowledge, research findings, and experience in their field of work to other physiotherapists.

9.2.2. Physiotherapists should value their careers and transfer the role and importance of physiotherapy to other members of the health system and community organizations.

9.2.3. Physiotherapists should not downplay their professional colleagues, physicians, and other members' jobs in the health system.

9.2.4. Physiotherapists should support the conditions that facilitate the transfer of the specialized information and clinical skills to their colleagues and development of their physiotherapy community.

9.3. Physiotherapists in communication with patients / clients must study carefully.

9.3.1. In cases that they do not have the necessary knowledge and skills in their field, physiotherapists should not accept their limitations. Through investigation or through the help of other colleagues, they should act appropriately to fix it.

9.4. Physiotherapists' lifestyle should be to promote physical, subjective and social health.

9.5. Physiotherapists should recap their performance on the science, skills and professional competencies and behavioral monitoring, in order to strengthen strong points and correct their weaknesses and take steps in this regard for the patient / client.

9.6. Physiotherapists should have a social career and avoid actions that results in a loss of public confidence and avoid professional stigma.

9.6.1. In discussions with colleagues, physiotherapists should speak appropriately, regarding logical reasoning and avoid unfounded and malicious criticisms.

9.6.2. When disagreeing with their colleagues, physiotherapists should have patience, listen to their colleagues and in the event of complexity, maintain their patience and seek appropriate solutions.

9.7. Physiotherapists must be aware of the ethical values and codes of their profession.

9.8. Physiotherapists should support the levels of training or research to improve the quality of medical services to patients / clients and the community.

9.9. Physiotherapists should not identify and assess factors where physiotherapy helps growth and professional development efforts and take appropriate measures in this connection.

9.10. Physiotherapists should be interested in their job and prefer professional interests and collaboration to personal interests.

9.11. Physiotherapists should be precise in their work and in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, sober, and complicated work.

### **Suggestions**

For integration and explanation of the role and importance of individual action and physiotherapy and determining what kind of personal and group behaviour, physiotherapy community suggests "IPPED" as listed below:

- Code of professional ethics of physiotherapists
- Physiotherapy Board of Professional Ethics Charter
- Physiotherapy Association's professional code of ethics

- Code of professional ethics groups of physiotherapy education in Iran CC:
- Iran Physiotherapy Association's Board of Directors
- Iran Board of Physical Therapy
- Iran physiotherapy education groups
- Provinces physiotherapy association
- Physiotherapy telegram groups
- Physiotherapy sites and blogs

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**Autumn 1395/2016**