## Standards of Practice

# Supervision

**Approved by NSRPT Board:**

**Effective Date:**

**Replaces: Supervision and Task Assignment Standard, 2019**

### Standard

The physiotherapist is responsible and accountable for the physiotherapy services provided by personnel working under their **supervision** (**supervisees**), and for providing appropriate supervision, in accordance with the client's needs, supervisee's skills and competencies, identified risks, and the context of practice.

### Expected outcome

Clients can expect that they are informed of the role of supervisees, have consented to services being provided by supervisees, and that the physiotherapy services provided by supervisees are supervised by the physiotherapist.

### Performance expectations - Supervision of Physiotherapist Support Workers

When supervising **unregulated health providers working as physiotherapist support workers**, the physiotherapist:

- Is aware that a supervisor-supervisee relationship and related supervision responsibilities exist any time an unregulated health provider delivers physiotherapy services that the physiotherapist assigned.
- Assigns only those activities that the supervisor is competent to perform and that are within the supervisor's personal scope of practice.
- Assesses the knowledge, skills, and judgment of support workers.
- Assigns only those activities that fall within the support worker's knowledge, skills, judgment, and competence.
- Assesses clients to determine those appropriate to receive physiotherapy services from support workers.
- Communicates to clients the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of support workers participating in the delivery of physiotherapy services.

- Obtains clients' informed consent for the delivery of physiotherapy services by support workers.
- Uses mechanisms (e.g., name tags, introduction) so that support workers are readily identifiable.
- Employs **direct** or **indirect** supervision strategies appropriate to the competence of the support worker, the client's care needs, identified risks, and other factors related to the practice environment.
- Establishes ongoing and timely communication with support workers.
- Monitors and evaluates the delivery of physiotherapy services by support workers.
- Monitors documentation of physiotherapy services by support workers to confirm that the documentation is consistent with regulatory standards.
- Reassesses clients, monitors and evaluates the delivery of physiotherapy services by physiotherapist support workers and client outcomes, modifying or reassigning service delivery as determined by clients' needs.
- Must not assign the following activities to support workers:
    - Any reserved practice, or portion thereof, that is authorized to the physiotherapist, unless the assignment is explicitly permitted by applicable legislation or the NSRPT's Standards of Practice or Practice Guidelines.
    - Interpretation of referrals, diagnosis or prognosis.
    - Interpretation of assessment findings and determination of treatment procedures and treatment goals and the planning, development or modification of treatment plans beyond pre-set parameters.
    - Initial discussion of treatment rationale, clinical findings and prognosis with clients.
    - Documentation that should be completed by the physiotherapist.
    - Discharge planning.
    - Any treatment that would require the physiotherapist support worker to employ clinical reasoning, analysis and decision making to change the established plan of care without the input of the supervising physiotherapist.
- Reassigns the supervision of support workers when the physiotherapist is not available to supervise.
- Advises support workers, clients, and employers that delivery of physiotherapy services by support workers must be discontinued when the level of physiotherapist supervision required for the circumstances is not available.

## Performance expectations – Supervision of Physiotherapy Students

When supervising **physiotherapy students**, the physiotherapist:

- Is aware that a supervisor-supervisee relationship and related supervision responsibilities exist any time they agree to be a preceptor to a student and the physiotherapy student is delivering physiotherapy services.
- Assigns only those activities that the supervisor is competent to perform and that are within the supervisor's personal scope of practice.
- Assesses the knowledge, skills and judgment of physiotherapy students.
- Assigns only those activities that fall within the physiotherapy student's competence.
- Identifies clients appropriate to receive physiotherapy services from physiotherapy students.
- Communicates to clients the roles, responsibilities, and accountability of physiotherapy students participating in the delivery of physiotherapy services.
- Ensures that clients have provided informed consent for the delivery of physiotherapy services by physiotherapy students.
- Uses mechanisms (e.g., name tags, introduction) so that physiotherapy students are readily identifiable.
- Employs direct or indirect supervision strategies appropriate to the physiotherapy student's demonstrated competence, the client's care needs, identified risks, and the practice environment, including consideration of whether an initial period of direct supervision is required.
- Establishes ongoing communication processes with physiotherapy students.
- Monitors documentation by physiotherapy students to confirm that this documentation is in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- Monitors and evaluates the delivery of physiotherapy services by physiotherapy students and client outcomes, modifying or reassigning service delivery as determined by the client's needs.
- Ensures that physiotherapy students perform only those activities, including reserved practice, that are appropriate to the student's knowledge, skills, and competence, within the supervisor's personal scope of practice and permitted by applicable legislation or the NSRPT's Standards of Practice or Practice Guidelines.
- Reassigns the supervision of physiotherapy students when the physiotherapist is not available to supervise.

- Advises physiotherapy students, clients, and employers that delivery of physiotherapy services by physiotherapy students must be discontinued when the level of physiotherapist supervision required for the circumstances is not available.

### Performance expectations – Supervision of Physiotherapist Residents

When supervising **Physiotherapist Residents**, the physiotherapist:

- Is aware that a supervisor-supervisee relationship and related supervision responsibilities exist any time they agree to supervise a Physiotherapist Resident and the Physiotherapist Resident delivers physiotherapy services.
- Ensures that the PT Resident performs only those activities that the supervisor is competent to perform and supervise.
- Assesses the knowledge, skills and judgment of Physiotherapist Resident.
- Ensures that the PT Resident performs only those activities that the PT Resident is competent to perform.
- Confirms that the respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the Physiotherapist Resident and their supervisor have been communicated to clients and that clients have provided informed consent for the delivery of physiotherapy services by the Physiotherapist Resident.
- Uses mechanisms (e.g., name tags, introduction) so that Physiotherapist Resident are readily identifiable.
- Employs direct or indirect supervision strategies appropriate to the competence of the Physiotherapist Resident, the client's care needs, identified risks, and other factors related to the practice environment.
- Establishes ongoing communication processes with Physiotherapist Resident.
- Ensures that the Physiotherapist Resident performs only those activities, including reserved practice, that are within the Resident's education, training, knowledge, skills, and competence, within the supervisor's personal scope of practice and that are permitted under the terms and conditions of their registration, applicable legislation, or the NSRPT's Standards of Practice or Practice Guidelines.
- Monitors and evaluates the delivery of physiotherapy services by Physiotherapist Resident.
- Reassigns the supervision of Physiotherapist Resident when the physiotherapist is not available to supervise.
- Advises Physiotherapist Residents, clients, and employers that delivery of physiotherapy services by Physiotherapist Residents must be discontinued when

the level of physiotherapist supervision required for the circumstances is not available.

**Related Standards**

- Assessment, Diagnosis, Treatment
- Consent
- Conflict of Interest
- Boundary Violations

## Definitions

***Physiotherapist support worker*** – unregulated health provider working under the supervision and direction of a physiotherapist. PTSWs have a range of educational backgrounds and experience. May be referred to as physiotherapist assistant, rehabilitation assistant, therapy assistant, rehabilitation aide, or kinesiologist when working as a supervisee.

***Reserved Practice*** – A physiotherapy activity identified by the Board that requires additional education, training, or other requirements beyond entry-to-practice competencies before a registrant may perform it. A registrant must obtain approval from the Registrar before engaging in Reserved Practice.

***Direct Supervision*** – The supervising physiotherapist is present or immediately available while the assigned activity is being performed and is able to observe, direct, intervene, and support the supervisee as needed.

***Indirect Supervision*** – The supervising physiotherapist is not present when the assigned activity is carried out but remains readily available through appropriate means (e.g., telephone, video conference, or other communication technology) to provide direction, consultation, and support. The supervising physiotherapist's availability and response time must be appropriate to the client's needs, the supervisee's competence, the identified risks, and the clinical circumstances.