

TERMINATION OF TREATMENT

The Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists has developed the following Advisory Statement to provide guidance to our members on the termination of physiotherapy services to clients.

WHEN TO TERMINATE CARE?

A physiotherapist¹ should provide timely, effective and quality care while respecting the rights of their clients. They should not treat clients when the medical diagnosis or the clinical condition indicates that commencement or continuation of physiotherapy is not warranted, or is contraindicated.² A physiotherapist shall terminate the therapeutic relationship if they are unable to maintain objectivity in their interaction with the client.

When a physiotherapist discharges a client from active treatment, they must do so in accordance with their professional and regulatory obligations, the Code of Ethics and any other applicable rules or regulations.

WHAT TO DO IN CHALLENGING SITUATIONS?

In some situations a physiotherapist may decide to discharge a client from active treatment when, despite repeated reasonable attempts to manage the therapeutic relationship over a reasonable period of time, either:

- the situation has not changed sufficiently and the physiotherapist has deemed that the client will not be able to achieve the desired physiotherapy outcomes, or
- there is an immediate risk of harm to the physiotherapist or other individuals.

In a challenging situation, the physiotherapist must first identify, discuss and attempt to resolve the issue. When discontinuing the services, the physiotherapist should always suggest other options or, if appropriate, offer transfer of care to another physiotherapist.

A physiotherapist cannot refuse care to any client on the grounds of race, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, and social or health status. [Ref: Code of Ethics, Sec.1 (Responsibilities to Client) #3]

¹ Physical therapist, physiotherapist, physical therapy, physiotherapy, physiothérapie, physiothérapeute, PT and pht are official marks used with permission.

² Ref: Code of Ethics, Sec.4 (Professional Misconduct) #3 ,