

# Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values Self-Assessment

**Notice: This resource was created in 2013 and is inconsistent with APTA's Core Values for the Physical Therapist and Physical Therapist Assistant, updated in 2019, which can be found at the link below. APTA is providing this resource until a new assessment can be developed.**

<https://www.apta.org/apta-and-you/leadership-and-governance/policies/core-values-for-the-physical-therapist-and-physical-therapist-assistant>

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## PROFESSIONALISM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY: CORE VALUES

### Introduction

In 2000, the House of Delegates adopted Vision 2020 and the Strategic Plan for Transitioning to A Doctoring Profession (RC 37-01). The Plan includes six elements: Doctor of Physical Therapy, Evidenced-based Practice, Autonomous Practice, Direct Access, Practitioner of Choice, and Professionalism, and describes how these elements relate to and interface with the vision of a doctoring profession. In assisting the profession in its transition to a doctoring profession, it seemed that one of the initiatives that would be beneficial was to define and describe the concept of professionalism by explicitly articulating what the graduate of a physical therapist program ought to demonstrate with respect to professionalism. In addition, as a byproduct of this work, it was believed that practitioner behaviors could be articulated that would describe what the individual practitioner would be doing in their daily practice that would reflect professionalism.

As a part of the preparation for this consensus conference, relevant literature was reviewed to facilitate the development of the conference structure and consensus decision-making process. Literature in medicine<sup>3, 18, 19, 25, 27</sup> reveals that this profession continues to be challenged to define professionalism, describe how it is taught, and determine how it can be measured in medical education. The groundwork and advances that medicine laid was most informative to the process and product from this conference. Physical therapy acknowledges and is thankful for medicine's research efforts in professionalism and for their work that guided this conference's structure and process.

Eighteen physical therapists, based on their expertise in physical therapist practice, education, and research, were invited to participate in a consensus-based conference convened by APTA's Education Division on July 19-21, 2002. The conference was convened for the purpose of:

- 1) Developing a comprehensive consensus-based document on Professionalism that would be integrated into *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education, Version 2004* to include a) core values of the profession, b) indicators (judgments, decisions, attitudes, and behaviors) that are fully consistent with the core values, and c) a professional education matrix that includes educational outcomes, examples of Terminal Behavioral Objectives, and examples of Instructional Objectives for the classroom and for clinical practice.
- 2) Developing outcome strategies for the promotion and implementation of the supplement content in education and, where feasible, with practice in ways that are consistent with physical therapy as a doctoring profession.

The documentation developed as a result of this conference is currently being integrated into the next version of *A Normative Model of Physical Therapist Professional Education: Version 2004*. The table that follows is a synopsis of a portion of the conference documentation that describes what the physical therapist would be doing in his or her practice that would give evidence of professionalism.

In August 2003, **Professionalism in Physical Therapy: Core Values** was reviewed by the APTA Board of Directors and adopted as a core document on professionalism in physical therapy practice, education, and research. (V-10; 8/03)

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the efforts of those participants who gave their time and energies to this challenging initiative; a first step in clearly articulating for the physical therapist what are the core values that define professionalism and how that concept would translate into professional education.

## **USING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The Self-Assessment that follows is intended for the user to develop an *awareness* about the core values and to *self-assess* the frequency with which he or she demonstrates the seven core values based on sample indicators (behaviors not intended to be an exhaustive list) that describe what the practitioner would be doing in daily practice. These seven core values were identified during the consensus-based conference that further defined the critical elements that comprise professionalism. Core values are listed in alphabetical order with no preference or ranking given to these values. During the conference many important values were identified as part of professionalism in physical therapy, however not all were determined to be core (at the very essence; essential) of professionalism and unique to physical therapy. The seven values identified were of sufficient breadth and depth to incorporate the many values and attributes that are part of professionalism.

For each identified core value, (ie, accountability, altruism, compassion/caring, excellence, integrity, professional duty, and social responsibility) a definition and sample indicators (not intended to be exhaustive) are provided that describe what the physical therapist would be doing in practice, education, and/or research if these core values were present.

### **Complete the Self-Assessment**

Review each core value indicator and check the frequency with which you display that sample indicator in your daily practice based on the rating scale provided (1-5). It is not expected that one will rate himself or herself as 5 (always) or 1 (never) on every item. Be candid in your response as this is a self-assessment process with an opportunity for personal learning and insight, identification of areas of strength and growth, and assessment of your development in the professionalism maturation process.

### **Analyze the Completed Self-Assessment**

Once you have completed the Self-Assessment, you may want to reflect as an individual or group on the following questions:

- On what sample indicators did you or the group consistently score yourself/themselves on the scale at the 4 or 5 levels?
- Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves higher in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
- On what sample indicators did you or the group score yourself/themselves on the scale at level 3 or below?
- Why did you or the group rate yourself/themselves lower in frequency for demonstrating these sample behaviors?
- Identify, develop, and implement approaches to strengthening the integration of the core values within your practice environment.
- Establish personal goals for increasing the frequency with which you demonstrate specific sample behaviors with specific core value(s)
- Conduct periodic re-assessment of your core value behaviors to determine the degree to which your performance has changed in your professionalism maturation.

## PROFESSIONALISM IN PHYSICAL THERAPY: CORE VALUES

For each core value listed, a definition is provided and a set of sample indicators that describe what one would see if the physical therapist were demonstrating that core value in his/her daily practice. For each of the sample indicators listed, check only one item that best represents the frequency with which you demonstrate the behavior where 1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Occasionally, 4= Frequently, 5= Always.

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
<b>Accountability</b>	Accountability is active acceptance of the responsibility for the diverse roles, obligations, and actions of the physical therapist including self-regulation and other behaviors that positively influence patient/client outcomes, the profession and the health needs of society.	1. Responding to patient's/client's goals and needs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Seeking and responding to feedback from multiple sources.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		3. Acknowledging and accepting consequences of his/her actions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		4. Assuming responsibility for learning and change.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		5. Adhering to code of ethics, standards of practice, and policies/procedures that govern the conduct of professional activities.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		6. Communicating accurately to others (payers, patients/clients, other health care providers) about professional actions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		7. Participating in the achievement of health goals of patients/clients and society.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		8. Seeking continuous improvement in quality of care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		9. Maintaining membership in APTA and other organizations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		10. Educating students in a manner that facilitates the pursuit of learning.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
<b>Altruism</b>	Altruism is the primary regard for or devotion to the interest of patients/clients, thus assuming the fiduciary responsibility of placing the needs of the patient/client ahead of the physical therapist's self interest.	1. Placing patient's/client's needs above the physical therapists.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		2. Providing pro-bono services.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		3. Providing physical therapy services to underserved and underrepresented populations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		4. Providing patient/client services that go beyond expected standards of practice.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		5. Completing patient/client care and professional responsibility prior to personal needs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Compassion/ Caring</b>	Compassion is the desire to identify with or sense something of another's experience; a precursor of caring.  Caring is the concern, empathy, and consideration for the needs and values of others.	1. Understanding the socio-cultural, economic, and psychological influences on the individual's life in their environment.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		2. Understanding an individual's perspective.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		3. Being an advocate for patient's/client's needs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		4. Communicating effectively, both verbally and non-verbally, with others taking into consideration individual differences in learning styles, language, and cognitive abilities, etc.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		5. Designing patient/client programs/interventions that are congruent with patient/client needs.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		6. Empowering patients/clients to achieve the highest level of function possible and to exercise self-determination in their care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		7. Focusing on achieving the greatest well-being and the highest potential for a patient/client.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		8. Recognizing and refraining from acting on one's social, cultural, gender, and sexual biases.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
<b>Compassion/ Caring (continued)</b>		9. Embracing the patient's/client's emotional and psychological aspects of care.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		10. Attending to the patient's/client's personal needs and comforts.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		11. Demonstrating respect for others and considers others as unique and of value.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Excellence</b>	Excellence is physical therapy practice that consistently uses current knowledge and theory while understanding personal limits, integrates judgment and the patient/client perspective, challenges mediocrity, and works toward development of new knowledge.	1. Demonstrating investment in the profession of physical therapy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Internalizing the importance of using multiple sources of evidence to support professional practice and decisions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		3. Participating in integrative and collaborative practice to promote high quality health and educational outcomes.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		4. Conveying intellectual humility in professional and personal situations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		5. Demonstrating high levels of knowledge and skill in all aspects of the profession.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		6. Using evidence consistently to support professional decisions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		7. Demonstrating a tolerance for ambiguity.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		8. Pursuing new evidence to expand knowledge.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		9. Engaging in acquisition of new knowledge throughout one's professional career.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		10. Sharing one's knowledge with others.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		11. Contributing to the development and shaping of excellence in all professional roles.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
<b>Integrity</b>	Integrity is steadfast adherence to high ethical principles or professional standards; truthfulness, fairness, doing what you say you will do, and “speaking forth” about why you do what you do.	1. Abiding by the rules, regulations, and laws applicable to the profession.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		2. Adhering to the highest standards of the profession (practice, ethics, reimbursement, Institutional Review Board [IRB], honor code, etc).	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		3. Articulating and internalizing stated ideals and professional values.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		4. Using power (including avoidance of use of unearned privilege) judiciously.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		5. Resolving dilemmas with respect to a consistent set of core values.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		6. Being trustworthy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		7. Taking responsibility to be an integral part in the continuing management of patients/clients.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		8. Knowing one’s limitations and acting accordingly.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		9. Confronting harassment and bias among ourselves and others.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		10. Recognizing the limits of one’s expertise and making referrals appropriately.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		11. Choosing employment situations that are congruent with practice values and professional ethical standards.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		12. Acting on the basis of professional values even when the results of the behavior may place oneself at risk.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
<b>Professional Duty</b>	Professional duty is the commitment to meeting one's obligations to provide effective physical therapy services to individual patients/clients, to serve the profession, and to positively influence the health of society.	1. Demonstrating beneficence by providing "optimal care".	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Facilitating each individual's achievement of goals for function, health, and wellness.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		3. Preserving the safety, security and confidentiality of individuals in all professional contexts.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		4. Involved in professional activities beyond the practice setting.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		5. Promoting the profession of physical therapy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		6. Mentoring others to realize their potential.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		7. Taking pride in one's profession.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	Social responsibility is the promotion of a mutual trust between the profession and the larger public that necessitates responding to societal needs for health and wellness.	1. Advocating for the health and wellness needs of society including access to health care and physical therapy services.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		2. Promoting cultural competence within the profession and the larger public.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		3. Promoting social policy that effect function, health, and wellness needs of patients/clients.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		4. Ensuring that existing social policy is in the best interest of the patient/client.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		5. Advocating for changes in laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines that affect physical therapist service provision.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		6. Promoting community volunteerism.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		7. Participating in political activism.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Core Values	Definition	Sample Indicators	Self-Assessment				
			1 (N)	2 (R)	3 (O)	4 (F)	5 (A)
Social Responsibility (continued)		8. Participating in achievement of societal health goals.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		9. Understanding of current community wide, nationwide and worldwide issues and how they impact society's health and well-being and the delivery of physical therapy.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		10. Providing leadership in the community.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		11. Participating in collaborative relationships with other health practitioners and the public at large.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		12. Ensuring the blending of social justice and economic efficiency of services.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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