Supervision—It’s a Serious Matter

Whether you’re supervising a PT with a provisional practice certificate working in a clinic, a physiotherapist assistant at the hospital or a student learner getting their volunteer hours—you, the registered PT, are responsible for that person and the work that they do.

Supervision is serious stuff and shouldn’t be treated lightly. By agreeing to supervise, you are taking on a professional responsibility and accountability for the care provided to your patients by another person. You should be confident of ability and skill when assigning, supervising and monitoring people that you have agreed to be responsible for in practice. If they make a mistake—it’s like you made a mistake.

What Do You Need to Make this Work?

Use common sense, good professional judgement and refer to the Standards and College resources.

Before supervising a student, agreeing to work with PTAs or acting as a PT monitor, go back to the basics—the Standards—and understand what you can and cannot do.

The College is seeing a growing number of questions and complaints related to supervision and we believe many could be avoided.

Did You Know?

You can’t leave students and go on vacation—that is not considered supervising.

It is a conflict of interest to supervise your spouse, a family member or your best friend while they hold a provisional practice certificate.

If you are going on an extended leave (maternity for example) you cannot continue to supervise or monitor others—it’s not possible if you’re not there.

You shouldn’t accept responsibility for students or physiotherapist assistants you’ve never met from a colleague.
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Did You Know?

You cannot ask a student or a PTA to perform activities that you are not rostered for—these activities are on the roster because they’re considered high risk. Nor can you assign activities that you are not competent to perform.

It is not okay to have a physiotherapist assistant act as a Monitor on your behalf—that is not allowed.

You should only be supervising the number of physiotherapist assistants that you can safely oversee.

A patient’s informed consent is needed if you plan to have a student or PTA treat or assist in treating patient and not getting it right can end badly. Read our October 2014 Case of the Month. www.collegept.org/Resources/CaseoftheMonth

Related Resources

www.collegept.org/Resources

- Standard: Conflict of Interest
- Standard: Supervision of Student Learners
- Standard: Physiotherapists Working with Physiotherapist Assistants
- Video: Supervising Support Personnel
- Provisional Practice Application Package/Monitoring Agreement