MU DPT Professional Behaviors - Policy

Professional behaviors – Philosophy

The faculty of the Methodist University Department of Physical Therapy expects students accepted into the Doctor of Physical Therapy Program to behave in accordance with standards of the profession including the APTA Core Values in Professionalism, the Code of Ethics, and APTA Guide for Professional Conduct. In addition to ethical and moral edicts, the DPT faculty believes that students and graduates of the program should demonstrate the cognitive, psychomotor and behavioral skills necessary to provide competent patient care. While cognitive and psychomotor skills are more concrete and can be readily defined, behaviors are more abstract and open to interpretation. Therefore, the intent of the professional behaviors policy is to describe the repertoire of behaviors deemed necessary for success in the practice of physical therapy.

Description of Professional Behaviors

The Department of Physical Therapy has adopted the ten professional behaviors initially developed by May et al, partially validated by Jette and Portney, and revised in 2009 by May et al. The ten professional behaviors include; critical thinking, communication, problem solving, interpersonal skills, responsibility, professionalism, use of constructive feedback, effective use of time and resources, stress management, and commitment to learning

1. **Critical Thinking**: The ability to question logically; identify, generate and evaluate elements of logical argument; recognize and differentiate facts, appropriate or faulty inferences, and assumptions; and distinguish relevant from irrelevant information. The ability to appropriately utilize, analyze, and critically evaluate scientific evidence to develop a logical argument, and to identify and determine the impact of bias on the decision making process

2. **Communication**: The ability to communicate effectively (i.e. verbal, non-verbal, reading, writing, and listening) for varied audiences and purposes

3. **Problem Solving**: The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes

4. **Interpersonal Skills**: The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other health care professionals, and the community in a culturally aware manner

5. **Responsibility**: The ability to be accountable for the outcomes of personal and professional actions and to follow through on commitments that encompass the profession within the scope of work, community and social responsibilities.

6. **Professionalism**: The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively while promoting the growth/development of the Physical Therapy profession

7. **Use of Constructive Feedback**: The ability to seek out and identify quality sources of feedback, reflect on and integrate the feedback, and provide meaningful feedback to others
8. **Effective Use of Time and Resources**: The ability to manage time and resources effectively to obtain the maximum possible benefit.

9. **Stress Management**: The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop and implement effective coping behaviors; this applies for interactions for: self, patient/clients and their families, members of the health care team and in work/life scenarios.

10. **Commitment to Learning**: The ability to self-direct learning to include the identification of needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek and apply new knowledge, behaviors, and skills

Behavioral Expectations during Learning Activities

Students enrolled in the Methodist University Doctor of Physical Therapy program are expected to demonstrate professional behavior as determined by the American Physical Therapy Association and the Department of Physical Therapy of Methodist University. Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate professional behavior during all learning activities, including classroom, laboratory, experiential, group, community and clinical experiences.

Using the professional behaviors as previously described, the DPT faculty outlined the following behavioral expectations as guide to students in the academic setting. Students are expected to:

1. Attend and participate in all scheduled learning activities at the scheduled times. Students who are unable to attend class due to personal illness or emergency are required to notify the course faculty prior to the scheduled class time. Respect your faculty and your classmates; be on time.

2. Make optimal use of time during learning experiences.

3. Complete assigned readings, watch podcasts/videocasts, homework assignments, and projects according to assigned dates/times in order to be prepared for learning experiences.

4. Be active participants by engaging in fair and collegial group activities.

5. Recognize learning problems and seek faculty guidance. Students are expected to recognize learning difficulties and ask the course faculty for guidance. Students should develop a plan of learning that may include additional learning strategies, tutorial assistance, and use of University and external resources.

6. Abide by the Methodist University Honor Code. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form and under any circumstance. Issues of academic improprieties will be addressed according to the guidelines outlined in the MU DPT Student Handbook.

7. Wear appropriate classroom attire and portray the appearance of a responsible health care professional.
   a. Classroom guidelines include that clothing must be worn that does not expose the abdomen, chest, or buttocks.
   b. Hats and clothing with unprofessional wording or pictures are prohibited.
   c. In the laboratory portion of some courses, students will be required to wear clothing that permits the exposure of portions of the body as appropriate for the practice of clinical skills.

8. Wear professional dress for activities that include guest speakers or patients and learning activities external to the University. Professional dress includes:
   a. Men: dress pants and shirt, dress shoes;
b. Women: dress pants or skirts, tailored tops, dress shoes.

c. All Students:
   i. Tattoos and body piercings must be concealed. Facial and tongue piercings must be removed.
   ii. Long hair must be tied back for learning experiences that involve patients.
   iii. Methodist University Student Physical Therapist name tags are required for all external learning experiences.

Professional Behaviors Evaluation Process

We expect that all students will be successful in all parts of their education, including academic, behavioral, and clinical. Just as there are standards and protocols established for students who require remediation for academic issues, we have established a similar process for professional behavior, as represented in this document. Students are expected to behave according to these standards during academic and clinical learning experiences. The following describes the evaluation process for professional behaviors in the academic setting.

If an academic or clinical faculty member identifies and documents a serious problem with a student’s professional behavior or inability to maintain a standard within the realm of acceptable professional behavior, the following procedure outlines the identification of a professional behavior problem, a plan for remediation, and the process leading to further action.

1. The faculty member will meet with the student to identify the behavior and counsel the student to demonstrate behavior consistent with the professional standard.

2. If the faculty determines that the student has a recurrence of an unprofessional behavior prior to the completion of their professional program, both the student and faculty member will meet with the Student Affairs Committee to determine a remediation plan and contract for the student.

3. The remediation plan and contract will include the following items:
   a. A description of the specific behaviors that the student is expected to demonstrate.
   b. The specific tasks that the student is expected to accomplish.
   c. Time frames related to accomplishing the tasks and behaviors.
   d. Repercussions for unsuccessful remediation or inability to meet the terms of the contract.
   e. Which of the faculty (typically the student faculty advisor) will monitor the terms of the contract.
   f. How the terms of the contract will be monitored.

4. The committee will meet again, at a time stated in the contract, to determine if the student has successfully completed the remediation plan and has met the terms of the contract.

5. The following are the repercussions resulting from unprofessional behavior.
   a. Immediate dismissal: In addition to felony conviction or pleading no contest for behaviors that would prohibit the granting of a physical therapy license other behaviors may be determined to be irremediable.
b. Probation: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable. The terms of the probation and remediation will be outlined in the contract.

c. Dismissal: Behaviors that the committee has determined are remediable; however, the student has been unable or unwilling to remediate, as defined in the remediation plan and contract.

References: