

Clinic Policy and Procedure

How to guide

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Policy and Procedure Manual- The Basics

It is difficult to generate excitement in a room when discussing Policy and Procedure Manuals. While no one looks to these manuals for a riveting read, they should be on everyone's must-read list. And while clinic owners and managers do not always keep policy manual creation, review, and revision at the top of their 'To Do' list- they should. A complete and comprehensive Policy and Procedure manual can save hours of management time, and ensure that all employees are knowledgeable about the clinic's mission, vision, rules and guidelines.

That being said, it is important to know that when it comes to policy and procedures, one size does not fit all. There is no cook-book template that will serve to cover everything your employees need to know. This guide will help you to determine the need for an individualized manual for your workplace, and some of the basics that should be included. In the appendices we have included a sample table of contents and a sample policy template that you can adapt for your own use.

Policy and Procedure- what is the difference?

Dictionary.com defines policy as "a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency." More simply, policies are the guidelines that set expectations for employee behaviour. They are the formal statement or rules that guide decision making. Policies are the link between the vision of the organization and the day-to-day operations. They answer the question "What?"

Procedures are defined as "a particular course or mode of action." They answer the question "How?" They are the instruction manual for your particular workplace, and spell out the steps the employee is to take to achieve the desired outcome as described in the policy. They identify who is responsible for each step, and help to eliminate mistakes and misunderstandings.

To demonstrate the difference between policy and procedure, consider the following example. A clinic may have a policy stating that they follow current infection control practices. The procedures associated with this will spell out the specifics related to the particular workplace. It could identify the steps required for proper hand hygiene, cleaning of equipment, disposal of acupuncture needles, etc. As evidence changes, the steps in the procedure should also change.

But why do we need a Policy and Procedure Manual?

Let's first look at this from the point of view of an employee. How would a Policy and Procedure Manual help your staff to be successful and happy in their jobs? Here are some of the ways employees benefit from a comprehensive manual:

- Creates clear expectations, employees know roles and responsibilities
- Empowers employees to make certain decisions without constant oversight
- Articulates the vision of your organization, allowing employees to see the value of their work
- Encourages fair treatment of all employees
- Allows and encourages consistent management decisions

- Assists in the orientation of new employees
- Outlines specifics concerning pay and benefits

It may seem like a huge investment of management time to create this manual, but the benefits far outweigh the up-front costs. What can an employer or manager expect after creating their Policy and Procedure Manual? The easy answer is time and money. Here's how:

- Eliminates need for micromanagement- employees know what they are supposed to do
- Sets clear expectations- making performance management easier
- Creates sense of fairness between employees
- Creates a clear link between organization's values and expectations
- Maintains compliance with legislation and regulation
- Creates consistent management decisions
- Identifies where discipline, coaching and training are necessary
- Minimizes mistakes, while improving safety and best practice
- Increases professional atmosphere in clinic and office
- Improves staff morale
- Provides evidence that employer wants team members to be happy and successful
- Assists with orientation of new staff

How to tell if your current Policy and Procedure Manual is adequate?

You might say that you wrote a Policy and Procedure Manual when you opened your clinic 20 years ago, and no one ever looks at it. Don't take this as evidence that you don't need one. Instead, understand this as evidence that your current manual is outdated and needs to be reviewed.

How do you know that your Policy and Procedure Manual is no longer meeting your needs? You may see some of these telltale signs and symptoms in your workplace.

- General confusion- either on the clinical side or the office/management side, or worse- both!
- Questions arise regarding normal operations
- Inconsistent performance amongst your staff members
- Increased workplace stress
- Increased absenteeism
- Accidents and mistakes
- Customer complaints

Can a Policy and Procedure Manual really help with these issues? In short, yes. We know that having employees who are empowered and knowledgeable can have increased job satisfaction and increased productivity. Engaged employees are also less likely to make mistakes, and less likely to leave your organization. A comprehensive Policy and Procedure Manual will help employees understand their role and get satisfaction from their work, which in turn will help to solve many of the problems listed above.

Steps in creating each Policy and Procedure

In order to create effective policies and procedures, there are certain steps that should be followed to ensure that the end product meets the needs of your clinic.

- Establish need- if starting from scratch, begin by developing policies that impact high-volume, high-risk, or high-cost activities
- Develop content- everything does not have to be completely original, look to other clinics or the internet for guidance
- Draft policy- use a template to guide your thinking
- Write procedure- think of step by step instructions
- Review by staff and stakeholders- is it saying what you think it says?
- Approve
- Implement- communicate
- Review and update- set a time frame for review, and add it to your schedule

Points to consider when writing Policies and Procedures

The table below highlights some of the differences between policies and procedures, and may be helpful as you write them for your clinic or workplace.

Policies	Procedures
General in nature	Specific steps and actions
Corporate 'rules'	Explains when to act
Explains why rule exists	Describes alternatives
Tells why rule applies	Shows emergency procedures
Details who is covered by rule	Includes warnings and cautions
Explains how it is enforced	Gives examples
Describes consequences	Shows how to complete forms
Simple sentences and paragraphs	Point Form

What should be included in our Policy and Procedure Manual?

The quick answer is everything that impacts your clinic or workplace. However, we have included a sample table of contents in the appendices. Remember that this list is not exhaustive, but it does include some of the more common policies and procedures from some of the Policy and Procedure Manuals that we have looked at. It is not necessary for your clinic to have policies on all of these topics, only the ones that affect your business, your clients and your employees.

Rather than speak about every potential Policy and Procedure that your clinic may need, we will discuss each of the recommended sections broadly, explaining what might be included and why. The suggested

sections are Administration, Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Environment/Safety, Patient Care, Public Relations, Quality and Students.

Administration

The Administration section is about the basics of your business and why you exist. This should provide employees with a link between their work and your vision. This section should be about removing ambiguity, and empowering your staff to know their roles and responsibilities- as well as understanding what decisions are theirs to make. By spending time developing these policies, you will be freeing your clinic manager from micro-managing your employees.

This section should contain policies and procedures outlining your organization's mission, vision and values and how they impact the work you do. You should have job descriptions for each role in your organization, including all professionals, support personnel and administrative staff. You should include an outline of your organizational chart and policies concerning clinic authority and communication.

Human Resources

Human Resources will likely be the lengthiest section of your manual, as it includes policies and procedures on everything related to your employees. This is a broad section and can include information on employee contracts, benefits, and expectations. It should also include information on performance review and discipline. It is beneficial to have a policy describing the clinic's process for ensuring that all staff have the necessary licensure and insurance each year.

It is beneficial to your organization to have some specifics in this section about what behaviour is expected and acceptable, and what is simply not tolerated. This section is your chance to explicitly spell out what qualifies as professional behaviour in your clinic. A dress code policy, for example, should clearly define how you expect your clinic staff to present themselves, and provide examples of what is and what is not appropriate in your particular workplace.

Benefits information can also be explained in this section, along with the process for applying for each benefit. For example, the policy may state that an employee is entitled to 2 weeks of paid vacation. The procedure can then explain the steps to apply for this vacation, and who is responsible for approving the request.

Financial Management

The Financial Management section in your manual is pretty self-explanatory- it is all about fees, invoices and financial reporting and accounting. It lays out who is responsible for doing bank deposits, insurance billing, reconciliation and auditing. It should have specific procedures as to what to do if errors are made and the necessary steps to correct them.

Legal

There are legal responsibilities that every business owner and manager must be aware of. Ignorance is not a valid excuse for breaking a law or failing to meet your regulatory requirements. Some of the

policies that should be included in this section will be impacted by federal or provincial legislation. It is imperative that the policies in this section be accurate and up-to-date. It might be a good idea to seek advice from a lawyer or your provincial physiotherapy regulator.

Include any policies on privacy, human rights, regulatory issues and liability insurance in this section. It would also be wise to have a policy and procedure regarding reporting suspected or actual abuse of a client, and any mandatory reporting issues set out by the provincial college.

Safety

This section is concerning the physical environment of your clinic, and client and staff safety. It can include seemingly routine items like building management and maintenance, to more priority items like sexual abuse or harassment in the workplace.

Everyone has the right to work in a safe workplace, free from excessive risks or hazards. Having these policies in place will ensure that you have thought about what employees should do, and have empowered them to act appropriately in these situations. These policies help to demonstrate that, as a clinic owner or manager, you have done your due diligence in preventing safety issues and have taught your staff what to do.

Client Care

As a provider of health care services, the care provided to patients or clients should always be at the centre of everything you do. As such, it is important that you have policies that will guide all of your staff in all interactions with patients/clients. Copies of each form that you use (intake, assessment, etc.) should be included in your manual.

You should ensure that your client care policies and procedures meet all of the regulatory requirements as set out by your provincial college. A policy and procedure outlining documentation standards is important, and will be helpful in coaching a staff member if they struggle with documentation.

Public Relations

In our wired world, public relations can include any way you reach out to current or potential patients/clients. This can include social media, as well as traditional print marketing. You want to have policies in place that set the tone for your social media presence, and ensure that all of your staff and contractors are complying with this policy. Additionally, your provincial regulator may have regulations concerning advertising, to which you need to comply. A policy will ensure that you will meet all of your regulatory obligations.

In the words of famed businessman Warren Buffett, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it.” Ensure that you have the necessary policies and procedures in place to protect your good name.

Quality

The Quality section will document your clinic's Quality Improvement plan to collect client outcomes data, analyse it and continuously improve patient care services. The policy and procedures will help ensure that staff understands their role in quality improvement. One easy method of implementing quality improvement ideas is: Plan-Do-Study-Act.

By promoting the integration of client preference data, customer feedback and evidence-informed best practice to improve client interventions, you will ensure that your staff are providing the best quality care. One framework that is used to measure quality is from the Institute of Medicine. They postulate that quality care is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and equitable.

Students

As professionals, we have a professional obligation to mentor students in the profession. If your clinic takes students, you should have a section in your manual dedicated to students- whether they be physiotherapy students, physiotherapist assistant students or shadowing/high school co-op placements. Your policies and procedures should outline all of the steps, from making the initial offer to on-boarding and orienting them.

Appendix A

Sample Table of Contents for a Clinic Policy and Procedure Manual

i. Administration

- ADM 010 Mission, Vision and Values
- ADM 020 Organizational Chart
- ADM 030 Job Description - Clinic Manager
- ADM 040 Job Description – Physiotherapist- Employee
- ADM 050 Job Description - Physiotherapist- Independent Contractor
- ADM 060 Job Description - Physiotherapist Assistant
- ADM 070 Job Description - Administrative Assistant
- ADM 080 Authority in Absence of Clinic Manager
- ADM 090 Roles and Responsibilities within Clinic
- ADM 100 Clinic Security
- ADM 110 Keys
- ADM 120 Opening and Closing Procedures
- ADM 130 Working Alone
- ADM 140 Review and Update of Manual
- ADM 150 Clinic Forms

ii. Human Resources

- HR 010 Employee vs. Independent Contractor
- HR 020 Employee/Employer Responsibilities for Reporting Accidents
- HR 030 Employee Absenteeism
- HR 040 Performance Evaluations
- HR 050 Dress Code/Footwear
- HR 060 Staff Immunization
- HR 070 Hours of Work/Overtime
- HR 080 Pay Periods, Pay Stubs
- HR 090 Resignation/Retirement
- HR 100 Sick Leave
- HR 110 Rescheduling of Patients due to Physiotherapist Sick Leave
- HR 120 Bereavement Leave
- HR 130 Vacation
- HR 140 Professional Development Leave/Allowance
- HR 150 Employee Benefits
- HR 160 Progressive Discipline
- HR 170 Professional Licencing for Physiotherapists
- HR 180 Professional Liability Insurance
- HR 190 CPA Membership
- HR 200 Recognition of CPA Clinical Specialist Program

HR 210 Staff Identification
HR 220 Confidentiality Agreement

iii. Financial Management

FIN 010 Bank Deposits
FIN 020 Internal Controls
FIN 030 Credit/Debit Machine
FIN 040 Reconciliation
FIN 050 Preparation of Invoices for Physiotherapy Services
FIN 060 e-claims
FIN 070 Physiotherapist Audit/ Sign off Procedure
FIN 080 Establishment of Fee Schedule
FIN 090 Retention of Records for Bookkeepers/Accountants
FIN 100 Capital Expenditures
FIN 110 Petty Cash
FIN 120 Company Credit Card

iv. Legal

LEG 010 Consent to Payment of Treatment Fees/ Fee Schedule
LEG 020 Sharing Personal Health Information
LEG 030 Privacy Legislation
LEG 040 Incident Reports
LEG 050 Retention and Destruction of Client Records
LEG 060 Medical-Legal Reports
LEG 070 Mandatory Reporting
LEG 080 Clinic Insurance

v. Safety

SAF 010 Cleaning Procedures for Staff
SAF 020 CPR Training
SAF 030 Emergency Preparedness
SAF 040 Emergency Procedures
SAF 050 Evacuation
SAF 060 Infection Control
SAF 070 Repair and Maintenance to Building
SAF 080 Repair and Maintenance to Equipment
SAF 090 Responsibility for Client Safety
SAF 100 Workplace Harassment
SAF 110 Workplace Safety
SAF 120 Security of Clinic
SAF 130 Smoking
SAF 140 Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

SAF 150 Clinic Accessibility
SAF 160 Sexual Harassment at Work
SAF 170 Violence in the Workplace
SAF 180 Procedure to Manage Aggressive/Harassing Client
SAF 190 Right to Refuse Unsafe Work
SAF 200 Scented Products
SAF 210 Latex Containing Products
SAF 220 Common Allergens in the Workplace

vi. Client Care

CC 010 Admission of a Client
CC 020 Intake Forms
CC 030 Referrals - Walk-In
CC 040 Booking a Client
CC 050 No Show/Cancellation Policy
CC 060 Electronic Outcome Measures
CC 070 Patient Scheduling
CC 080 Standards for Documentation of Client Care
CC 090 Policy on Use of Abbreviations
CC 100 Therapeutic Procedures- should have individual one for each modality/machine
CC 110 Treatment Area Assignment & Management
CC 120 Assessment
CC 130 Progress Notes
CC 140 Discharge Summary
CC 150 Referral to Another Health Care Provider
CC 160 Triaging of Referrals
CC 170 Treatment For Multiple Diagnoses

vii. Public Relations

PR 010 Public Relations - General Policy
PR 020 Correspondence (e-mail, Telephone, answering machines)
PR 030 Declaration of Good Billing Practices
PR 040 Effective Communication
PR 050 Problem Solving
PR 060 National Physiotherapy Month
PR 070 Telephone Courtesies
PR 080 Telephone Messages
PR 090 Telephone scripts
PR 100 Website and Social Media
PR 110 Printed Information
PR 110 Advertising and Promotion

viii. Quality

QUA 010 Chart Audits

QUA 020 Electronic Outcome Measures

QUA 030 Quality Improvement

QUA 040 Data Collection

ix. Students

STU 010 Students as Professional Responsibility

STU 020 Physiotherapy Students

STU 030 Physiotherapist Assistant Students

STU 040 High School Coop students

STU 050 Retention/Disposal of Student Evaluations

Appendix B

Policy and Procedure Template

Clinic Name and Logo

Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy Number	Policy Name	Signatures
Date of Issue		Written by:
Date of next Review		Approved by:

Purpose

A general statement as to the purpose of this policy/procedure- typically a single sentence.

Background

Information may include specific legislation or regulations that the policy or procedure is intended to address.

Definitions

Define any terms and acronyms that may not be widely understood.

Policy

Specific rules and guidelines that apply to this policy/procedure- remember, this section tells “why” there is a guideline.

Procedure

Step-by-step description of the process to complete the task- remember, this section tells “how” to implement the policy.

Verification/Authorization/ Approval

The title and name of the person responsible for this document having been approved for circulation.

Revision History

Provide dates and brief description of any changes or updates to policy/procedure, and the date of next revision.

Appendix C

Samples

Mission Statement

Every organization should have a mission statement, a clear compelling statement that explains the organization’s reason for being; why it exists, what it stands for and what it doesn’t stand for. This statement should provide direction to the organization’s employees, and provide useful information for customers and potential customers. The mission statement of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, for example, is “*CPA’s purpose is to advance the profession of physiotherapy in order to improve the health of Canadians.*” Staff are aware of their purpose, and members know why their membership is important.

Why should your clinic have a mission statement?

In addition to the reasons mentioned above, research has shown that organizations with a compelling purpose are more profitable, have fewer workplace accidents, and have a lower rate of turnover. A compelling mission can also help to shape your organizations workplace culture and help to create an engaged workforce.

Points to consider when writing your mission statement

- Your mission statement should be as concise as possible
- It should speak to the services you provide to your clients
- It should be memorable
- It should be unique to your organization
- It should reflect the values of your organization
- It should always be current

ADM-010	Mission Statement	Signatures
Date of Issue		Written by:
Date of next Review		Approved by:

Policy

It has been determined that the mission of this organization is _____.

Procedure

- Management prepares mission statement with or without consultation from staff and other stakeholders
- All staff are familiarized with Mission Statement after it is revised or during orientation for new hires
- Mission statement will be prominently posted in clinic waiting area and on clinic’s website
- Mission statement will be reviewed every two years to ensure it is still current and relevant to the operation

Organizational Chart

An organizational chart is a graphic representation of the chain of command and communication. It can serve as a visual reminder of the important linkages between employees and management. Organizational charts do not show the informal linkages and communication channels that occur in every workplace. An organizational chart can be helpful when orienting new employees

There are as many different kinds of organizational charts as there are organizations. Some are very flat, while others are hierarchical, with multiple levels of management and accountability. Some have turned the organizational chart completely upside down with the front-line staff at the top, and each successive layer below, supporting the work of the front-line staff.

Points to Consider

- Reporting relationships are different for employees and independent contractors
- Consider who is responsible for administrative and support staff
- Must be kept current
- Many online tools available to create your perfect organizational chart

Suggested resources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_chart
- <http://www.organimi.com/>
- <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2015/07/06/the-5-types-of-organizational-structures-part-1-the-hierarchy/&refURL=https://www.google.ca/&referrer=https://www.google.ca/>

ADM-020	Organizational Chart	Signatures
Date of Issue		Written by:
Date of next Review		Approved by:

Policy

Management shall design and maintain an organizational chart, to visually represent the reporting and communication channels within the clinic.

Procedure

- Management will design an organizational chart, keeping in mind the formal channels of communication and reporting relationships
- All members of the team should be included on the organizational chart
- Independent contractors may be represented, but should not have a direct reporting relationship with clinic owner or management
- Chart should be updated annually, or with staff turnover
- New staff members should be familiarized with organizational chart as part of orientation