

Professional Engagement: A Consensus Definition and Key Indicator Behaviors for Physical Therapists

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ABSTRACT

Design. Modified Delphi technique

Objectives. This study aimed to develop a consensus definition and identify key indicator behaviors of professional engagement in the physical therapy profession.

Background. Engagement is associated with positive outcomes in the healthcare industry. Recommendations to better contextualize engagement led to interest in various loci of engagement such as one's profession. A definition of professional engagement and associated behaviors has been identified for pharmacists, but it is unclear if physical therapists hold a similar perspective.

Methods and Measures. Thirty physical therapists recognized for contributions to the profession served as an expert panel. Panelists participated in a 3-round Delphi process. In round 1, constructs to be included in a definition and potential indicator behaviors were identified. In round 2, panelists indicated agreement or revision recommendations for a draft definition and rated perceived relative value of potential indicator behaviors. In round 3, agreement with the revised definition and resulting key indicator behaviors was determined. An opportunity to recover a behavior that did not make the list was also provided.

Results. A 75% to 85% response rate was achieved for each round. Ninety-two and 96% agreement was achieved for the proposed definition and list of 6 key indicator behaviors respectively, exceeding the a priori consensus threshold of 70% in both cases. Six panelists recommended adding the same behavior to the list of key indicator behaviors bringing the final number to 7 behaviors.

Conclusion. A consensus definition and key indicator behaviors of professional engagement may be useful in furthering the understanding of physical therapists' professional identity formation. Results from this study may be used to develop a measure of professional engagement and further investigate associated antecedents and outcomes.

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