

Community based rehabilitation

Policy statement

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Community based rehabilitation

Community based rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within community development for the rehabilitation, equalisation of opportunities, and social integration of all people with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of persons with disabilities themselves, their families and communities, and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services. (1)

World Physiotherapy encourages the development of CBR addressing individual needs and supports internationally relevant statements, such as the World Health Organization's global disability action plan and the rehabilitation 2030 – a call for action (2) which highlight the importance of a strong multidisciplinary approach and recognise rehabilitation as an essential component of integrated health services.

Community engagement is often necessary to promote and fulfil the human rights of people with disabilities and allow them to become active members of society (3). World Physiotherapy recognises that CBR extends beyond health and rehabilitation and encompasses educational, social, vocational and economic strategies. Collaboration between agencies, sectors and professionals is vital at all levels to support this comprehensive approach to rehabilitation. Health professionals practise with individuals and local communities as partners in service planning, operation and monitoring.

Physiotherapists are equipped through their education to practise in both urban and rural settings and have important contributions to make in CBR. These include:

- providing physiotherapy examination/assessment, evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis/plan and intervention/treatment aimed at promoting health, preventing disease, enhancing movement and function and improving participation
- achieving jointly identified physiotherapy and patient/client goals by educating and transferring selected skills to other staff, carers and community members
- providing consultation advice, support and supervision to other health, education and social care/service personnel
- collaborating intra- and inter-professionally in the best interest of the patient/client/population
- initiating and managing programmes
- providing policy advice to governments, non-governmental organisations and disabled people's organisations

World Physiotherapy believes that physiotherapists have a right to equal status and should be treated the same whether practising in rural or urban communities and calls on its member organisations to support this.

World Physiotherapy supports the use of the World Health Organization CBR Guidelines and encourages its member organisations to work with national governments and non-governmental organisations to develop policies that support CBR.(4)

Glossary (<https://world.physio/resources/glossary>)

Community based rehabilitation (CBR)

Disability

Equity

Multidisciplinary

Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Rehabilitation

Approval, review and related policy information	
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Date for review:	2027
Related World Physiotherapy policies:	World Physiotherapy policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Primary health care• Diversity and inclusion

References

1. International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization. CBR: a strategy for rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities, poverty reduction and social inclusion of people with disabilities: joint position paper. Geneva, Switzerland 2004 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43060>.
2. World Health Organization. Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action 2019 [24 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/rehabilitation-2030>.
3. United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals New York, USA 2018 [2 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.
4. World Health Organization. Community-based rehabilitation: CBR guidelines Geneva: World Health Organization; 2010 [28 Nov 2023]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548052>.

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