

Torture

Policy statement

© World Physiotherapy 2019
www.world.physio



Torture

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) calls on its member organisations and physical therapists globally to adhere to the following principles.

- Physical therapists shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures. This applies in all situations including armed conflict and civil strife – whatever the offence, whatever a person’s beliefs or motives, and whether a person is accused or guilty.
- Physical therapists shall not provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge that facilitate torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or that diminishes the ability of a person to resist such treatment.
- Physical therapists shall not be present during any procedure where cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments are being used or threatened.
- Physical therapists’ fundamental role is to alleviate distress. No motive – whether personal, collective or political – shall prevail against this higher purpose.
- Practising physical therapists should understand the general and specific physical and psychological functional limitations, participation restrictions and impairments that can result from torture, and the appropriate functional examinations/assessments and interventions/treatments for survivors.
- The curriculum for professional physical therapist entry level and continuing professional development programmes should include principles for the treatment of vulnerable populations including those with physical and psychological effects of torture.

WCPT supports the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and encourages its member organisations to call on their national governments to sign and comply with the convention. ¹

WCPT will support and encourage the international community, its member organisations and physical therapists to support fellow physical therapists and physical therapists’ families in the face of threats or reprisals resulting from a refusal to condone the use of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Approval, review and related policy information	
Date adopted:	First adopted at the 13th General Meeting of WCPT June 1995. Revised and re-approved at the 16th General Meeting of WCPT June 2007. Revised and re-approved at the 17th General Meeting of WCPT June 2011. Revised and re-approved at the 18th General Meeting of WCPT May 2015. Revised and re-approved at the 19th General Meeting of WCPT May 2019.
Date for review:	2023
Related WCPT policies:	WCPT ethical principles WCPT policy statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethical responsibilities of physical therapists and WCPT members• Patients'/clients' rights in physical therapy• The consequences of armed violence, landmines and other weapons of war

References

1. United Nations. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. New York, USA; 1984. www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cat.aspx (Access date 29 August 2019)

© World Confederation for Physical Therapy 2019