

DIAGNOSTIC PRACTICES

Standard

A **registrant**^G performs diagnostic activities within their level of competence and in accordance with relevant regulatory requirements. They actively participate in ongoing learning to acquire, maintain and enhance competence in diagnostic practice.

Expected Outcome

A **client**^G can expect that the diagnostic services they receive are provided by an occupational therapist who is competent and authorized to establish and communicate diagnoses safely and effectively.

Performance Expectations

A registrant

1. Acquires authorization from ACOT prior to establishing and communicating diagnoses.
2. Ensures, prior to engaging in the diagnostic process, that their professional liability insurance provides coverage for the registrant to engage in diagnostic-related activities.
3. Applies all *Standards of Practice* and the *Code of Ethics* to the diagnostic process, with particular attention to the identified *Related Standards*.
4. Uses reasonable skill and care when establishing and communicating a diagnosis with clients.
5. Establishes and communicates diagnoses that directly relate only to their specific occupational therapy practice area of expertise.
6. Recognizes, accounts for and communicates transparently with the client, prior to and throughout the diagnostic process, the limitations, uncertainties and potential risks and harms associated with pursuing, establishing and communicating a diagnosis.
7. Reveals a diagnosis to a client only when the registrant has established that diagnosis.

8. Identifies and manages any conflicts of interest related to establishing and communicating a diagnosis for a client. This includes but is not limited to:
 - (a) Conflicts arising from dual roles, when the registrant is both the diagnosing and treating health professional; this must be managed in the best interests of the client (e.g., by providing a list of service provider options).
 - (b) Not diagnosing a client solely for the purpose of financial gain or to build the registrant's or colleagues' personal business or client base.
9. Uses a systematic, comprehensive and evidence-informed diagnostic reasoning process to establish and justify a diagnosis for a client.
10. Engages other service providers as needed throughout the diagnostic process to come to a more precise diagnosis. For example, submitting requests for information or referrals to service providers who
 - (a) Are authorized to order diagnostic testing (e.g., laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging) or have expertise to rule out any other explanations for the signs and symptoms or co-occurring conditions, and/or
 - (b) Can provide treatment(s)/intervention(s) outside of the description of occupational therapy practice (e.g., prescribing and evaluating effectiveness of medications, etc.) that may assist in ruling out other health conditions.
11. Collaborates with the client throughout the diagnostic process and communicates transparently with them about the registrant's level of certainty regarding their diagnosis.
12. Facilitates appropriate next steps following completion of the diagnostic process by:
 - (a) ensuring identified client needs are addressed through a service plan or service transition/discharge plan developed in collaboration with the client;
 - (b) providing treatment or intervention, as appropriate, within the registrant's area of practice and competence; and/or,
 - (c) consulting with or referring to other health professionals as appropriate.

Related Standards

Accountability and Professional Responsibility
Communication
Competence
Documentation and Record Retention
Informed Consent
Restricted Activities
Risk Management and Safety
Service Provision
Supervision

Supplemental Resources

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