The Physical Therapy Aide: Collection of Guidelines and Policy Statement
American Physical Therapy Association, New York, N.Y.
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Descriptors: Clinical Experience, Curriculum, Health Occupations Education, Occupational Information, Policy, Professional Associations, Program Administration, Standards
Identifiers: American Physical Therapy Association, Physical Therapy Aides

Materials in this collection include a policy statement for the training and utilization of the physical therapy aide, guidelines for training, and a sample form for reporting information about a training program to the American Physical Therapy Association. The policy statement defines the aide as an unlicensed worker who has completed on-the-job training and who functions under the supervision of a professional physical therapist to perform designated routine tasks and assist with other activities which are predetermined and assigned by the professional physical therapist. Qualifications, training standards, and duties are outlined. The guidelines for training stipulate the kinds of institutions in which didactic instruction may be given and include a 109-hour sample program outline as well as a sample schedule providing for 109 hours of didactic instruction and 211 hours of on-the-job training. The training report form requests such information as number of trainees, age range, education, work experience, wage during training, employment after training, use of guidelines, and problems encountered. (JK)
Training and Utilization of the Physical Therapy Aide

OFFICE OF EDUCATION

TIME: Physical Therapy Aide
DEFINITION:

The physical therapy aide is a nonlicensed worker who has completed an on-the-job training program. The physical therapy aide's primary function is to perform designated routine tasks related to the operation of a physical therapy service but may assist with patient related activities which are predetermined for each patient and assigned by the professional physical therapist.

PREQUALIFICATIONS:

1. Age: 16 years minimum
2. Health Status: Good physical and emotional health as determined by a pre-employment medical examination.
3. Personal Qualifications: History of school and/or work performance which gives evidence of the ability to meet requirements of the job.

TRAINING:

A training program for the physical therapy aide may be established when there is a demonstrated need and reasonable assurance of employment.

1. There shall be active participation of professional physical therapists in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the physical therapy aide training program.
2. The training program shall be located within or affiliated with a physical therapy service which meets the criteria established by the American Physical Therapy Association.
3. The training program shall follow the guidelines recommended by the American Physical Therapy Association. An outline to be used for the training of aides is available from the American Physical Therapy Association.
4. Upon satisfactory completion of the recommended training program, the trainee is eligible to:
   a. use the title, Physical Therapy Aide.
   b. perform the functions which are outlined in this document under the supervision of a legally qualified physical therapist.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

The physical therapy aide may function only with the continuing supervision of the professional physical therapist.
The physical therapy aide may work only in a supervised situation where there is direction, guidance and frequent observation by the professional physical therapist.

DUTIES:
The extent to which the physical therapy aide will participate in the following activities will be dependent upon the organization, structure, and size of the physical therapy service.

1. Operational Activities
   a. Maintenance:  1. follow established procedures pertaining to the care of equipment and supplies.
   2. prepare, maintain, clean up treatment areas; maintain supportive areas.
   b. Transportation:  transport patients, records, equipment, and supplies in accordance with established policies and procedures.
   c. Clerical:  perform predetermined general office procedures.
   d. Other:  perform special duties as assigned.

2. Patient Related Activities:
The physical therapy aide shall not interpret physicians' referrals, perform evaluative procedures, initiate or adjust treatment, assume responsibility for planning patient care, nor make entries in the patients' records, but may:
   a. assist patients in preparation for and, as necessary, during, and at the conclusion of treatment.
   b. assemble and disassemble equipment and accessories.
   c. assist patients in the safe practice of activities related to the development of strength and endurance.
   d. perform treatment procedures predetermined for each patient by the legally qualified physical therapist and in accordance with the training of the worker.

RECOGNITION:
Recognition of the training of the aide shall be left to the discretion of the training institution. If a certificate is awarded, it is recommended that the document include a statement to the effect that the aide has been trained to work under the supervision of a legally qualified physical therapist.

Policy statement prepared by the A.P.T.A. Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Utilization and Training of the Nonprofessional Assistants, March 1966 and approved by the House of Delegates, July 1966.
Introduction

The attached guidelines for physical therapy aide training have been prepared for use by health care facilities with established physical therapy services which are concerned with the development or modification of physical therapy aide training programs.

This is essentially an on-the-job training program. The practice sessions, at least, must be held in an established physical therapy service. The didactic aspects may be provided in an institution which provides training in health careers and may be in one of the following categories:

- Hospital accredited by the Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation
- Approved home health agency
- Public vocational school
- Rehabilitation center which is a member of the Association of Rehabilitation Centers

It is desirable that more than 1 physical therapist be employed in the physical therapy service which is selected for the practice sessions.

The professional physical therapist shall participate actively in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the physical therapy aide training program. The participating physical therapist should have a minimum of 2 years of professional experience after completing professional education. Supervisory, administrative and/or teaching experience is desirable.

It is to be noted that the hours allotted in the guidelines for each topic indicate the relative importance of the subject and of the possible division of classroom instruction and supervised-on-the-job training. The classroom hours total approximately 1/3 of the total training time and may need to be adjusted in line with the learning abilities of the trainee. However, care should be taken to avoid a disproportionate number of classroom hours in relation to the practice sessions. The method of presentation—lecture, laboratory, demonstration, or a combination is not specified but is left to the discretion of the instructor.

It may be necessary to adjust the hours and some topics depending upon the type of facility and the characteristics of the patients generally treated in the institution where the aide will be employed. It is imperative that the physical therapy aide trainee have adequate opportunity to observe and practice in the setting where he will be employed.

Upon completion of the training program, the physical therapy aide may work only in a supervised situation where there is direction, guidance, and frequent observation by the professional physical therapist. The physical therapy aide's primary function is to perform designated routine tasks related to the operation of a physical therapy service but he may assist with patient-related activities which are predetermined for each patient and assigned by the professional physical therapist.

The attached materials identify the functions of a physical therapy aide and his relationship with other workers in a physical therapy service. Uniformity in the use of the title physical therapy aide and in the training of this worker will denote certain qualifications.
UNIT I. INTRODUCTION

A. Orientation I

- Health field
- Health facility
- Physical therapy service personnel
- Employment information
- Rules and regulations
- Job of the aide: duties, responsibilities, evaluation of performance

B. Orientation II

- Attitudes and standards of conduct
- Relationships with patients, personnel, visitors
- Personal health and hygiene
- Posture and grooming
- Body mechanics

C. Orientation III

- Prevention of spread of disease and infection
- Handwashing
- Principles of sterile technique
- Principles of disinfection and sterilization
- Common hospital and medical terms
- Identification of common hospital equipment

D. Orientation IV

- Safety practices
- Housekeeping
- Fire
- Accident reports
UNIT II. MAINTENANCE AND CLERICAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Care of Treatment Areas

Common physical therapy terms
Identification of Equipment

Care of
wet areas
dry areas

Care of beds and plinths

B. Care and Maintenance of Supplies

Care
Distribution
Storage
Inventory

OF: Linen
Expendable supplies
Sterile supplies and medications
Office supplies

C. Care, Maintenance and Preparation of Equipment for Use

Cleaning and disinfection
Maintenance care
Safety checks
Storage
Preparation for use

OF: Hydrotherapy equipment
Electrotherapy equipment
Exercise, assistive and supportive equipment
Miscellaneous and special equipment

D. Office Procedures

Communications
telephone
messages
Reception
Schedules
Records
office
patient
Filing

UNIT III. TRANSPORT AND PREPARATION OF PATIENT FOR TREATMENT

A. Patient Transport
Transportation equipment
  Care
  safety in use
Assisting patient in transfer
  assisting to sitting
  assisting to standing

B. Body Positioning and Alignment  9 hours
  Changing bed position
  Positioning and draping for treatment

C. Assistance in Dressing and Undressing
  Care of patient's clothes
  personal belongings
  Removal and application of supportive and assistive devices

D. Special Considerations  3 hours
  Observation of patient's comfort and response
  Surveillance

  Equipment
    traction
    plaster casts
    special frames and beds

UNIT IV. STRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE OF FUNCTION OF HUMAN BODY

A. Bones and joints  3 hours
  bony prominences
  joint motions

B. Skin
  care
  pressure areas
  decubiti

C. Muscles and nerves  4 hours
  nervous systems
  major muscle groups
  gross function
  maintenance of function
  lower extremities
  upper extremities

D. Digestion  4 hours
  Gastro-Intestinal and Genito-Urinary systems
  gross structures

  Food
    serving food
    feeding the helpless patient
    passing drinking water
Elimination
  presentation and removal
  bedpan
  urinal

Special Orders
  input and output
  diet restrictions

Special equipment
  tubes
  recognition, function, care

E. Circulation and Respiration

Cardiovascular and respiratory systems
  gross structure
  normal function

Temperature, pulse and respiration

Special equipment
  tubes
  Circoelectric bed
  other

Tilt Table

UNIT V. ASSIST THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST IN SELECTED TREATMENT PROCEDURES

A. Effects of heat and cold

  Normal reactions
  Danger signs to be observed and reported
  Importance of observation and reporting

B. Applications of heat and cold

  Purpose
  Temperature control
  application and removal
  OF: Hot packs
    Cold applications
    Hubbard tank
    Whirlpool
    Pool without exercise
    Contrast baths
    Paraffin applications
    Moist air
    Infrared

C. Special Considerations

  Geriatric patients
  Pediatric patients
  Special conditions
    orthopedic
    neurological
    medical
    surgical
    psychiatric

9 hours

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  Geriatric patients
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    orthopedic
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    psychiatric

9 hours
UNIT VI. ASSIST THE PATIENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE

A. Assisting in practice of ambulation
   body mechanics
   safety precautions
   observations and reporting
   types of ambulation aids
   uses
   measurement and adjustment
   care

B. Assisting in practice of transfer activities
   body mechanics
   safety precautions
   observations and reporting

C. Assisting in practice of self-care activities
   body mechanics
   adaptive devices
   precautions
   observations and reporting

D. Assisting in practice of general conditioning exercises
   purpose and types
   normal reactions
   precautions and danger signs
   observations and reporting
   care of equipment

Total hours - 109 - not including reviews and tests
211 - on-the-job training.
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**Notes:**
- Orientation I, II, III, IV, V refer to different orientation sessions.
- On The Job Training sessions are marked with "On The Job Training.
- Various care and maintenance activities are listed, including care and maintenance of supplies, patient transport, and office procedures.
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**Monday**

- 2 hours

**Tuesday**

- 2 hours

**Wednesday**

- 2 hours

**Thursday**

- 2 hours

**Friday**

- 2 hours
AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION
1740 Broadway, New York, N. Y. 10019

Physical Therapy Aide Training Program
Report to the APTA

Name and address of health Care Facility:

Dates of Training program:
Name of supervising physical therapist:

Data regarding trainees:

1. Number in program:
   Male____
   Female____

2. Number completing program:
   Male____
   Female____

3. Range of age of those completing program:
   Number under 18 years____
   Number 18-20____
   Number 21-30____
   Number 31-40____
   Number 41-50____
   Number 51-60____
   Number over 61____

4. Trainees' previous education and/or work experience:
   Number who did not complete high school____
   Number who are high school graduates____
   *Number who had other special education or training____
   *Number who held previous employment____
   Approximate length of time since previous employment:
     less than 6 months____
     6 months to 1 year____
     1 - 2 years____
     more than 2 years____
   (*If information is available about the nature of special education or training or previous employment please record on separate sheet.)

5. Were trainees paid an hourly wage during training program:
   Yes____ amount____
   No____
   If yes, what was the source of funds:
   Training facility____
   Government sponsored project____

6. Are all trainees who completed the program presently employed as physical therapy aides:
   Yes____ Number employed in the training facility____
   No____

7. If not, describe the nature of their present activities:
   (use separate sheet if necessary)

(over)
8. Describe your anticipated plans for follow up of trainees:

Data regarding Training program:

9. Were the APTA Guidelines used? Yes  No

10. Describe any modifications, additions or deletions which were made in the Guidelines:

11. Describe any problems which were encountered:

12. If available, please attach any course materials such as schedule of classes, bibliography, "handouts", tests.

Other

13. Describe any other problems which the trainees or the training facility encountered:

14. Any suggestions or recommendations:

Signed

Title

Date of report

P.T.A. 1
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