

ASK THE PRACTICE ADVISOR

Advertising and Social Media

Question:

I notice many of the other private Physiotherapy Clinics in my area are utilizing social media to advertise their business and engage clientele. I too would like to set up a social media page and would like to know if there are regulatory considerations I need to be aware of?

Practice Advisor Response

Social media refers to all web-based and mobile applications that allow individuals and organizations to digitally create and share information. It is used to stay in touch with friends, network with other professionals locally, nationally, and internationally; communicate with organization members, promote service to potential clients and communicate with and educate existing clients.

Social media use does have inherent risks including loss of privacy and reputational risks, risks related to patient-therapists' boundaries and confidentiality and it also can be very time consuming to maintain an active social media presence.

When using social media as a means of advertising, members must follow the SCPT Regulatory Advertising Bylaws as well as any other standards and guidelines related to professional practice. The following are considerations relevant to social media:

1. Testimonials are not allowed in any advertising including posting to social media pages.
2. Google reviews are public domain and as such are not controllable by the profession. However, google reviews may not be copied and posted to business or personal social media pages.
3. Keep all personal social media pages separate from your professional/business pages.
4. Friending patients on social media is discouraged.
5. The ability for the public to comment or post on your social media page must be turned off.
6. Marketing PT and non-PT services in the same post must comply with all bylaws and make clear distinction to what is PT and what is not.



It is also recommended that: PT businesses must have clear policies regarding employee social media use including any rules related to personal profiles or using personal profiles to promote the business. Policies should clearly state who is responsible to post to the business social media page, rules around giving health advice online and there should be guidelines in place for appropriate content and a means to validate the credibility of information posted.

Business owners may wish to consult with their insurance provider to ensure liability insurance coverage applies to online activity. Remember – the information you post online is there forever – pause before you post – consider getting a second opinion from a colleague.