



# **CORE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR PHYSIOTHERAPISTS TO DELIVER QUALITY CARE VIA VIDEOCONFERENCING**

**Centre for Health Exercise & Sports Medicine  
Department of Physiotherapy**



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE



FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS ABOUT HOW THE  
FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED, PLEASE REFER TO  
THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATION:

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THIS FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED BY ACADEMIC RESEARCHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AND SUPPORTED BY AN INTERNATIONAL STEERING GROUP.

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# BACKGROUND AND METHODS

## What is a capability framework?

A "capability" can be defined as an "integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively". A capability framework provides a model that communicates a set of capabilities that are required of individuals to ensure success in a given role.

## Why is a core capability framework important for physiotherapists to deliver care via videoconferencing?

An emerging shift from competency-based training to capability-based training is observed across health professions and tertiary education settings. Capable clinicians are seen as adaptable, flexible and resourceful when responding to changing circumstances. During the COVID-19 pandemic, provision of physiotherapy care rapidly shifted from in-person to the digital environment. Many clinicians had limited telehealth training and experience, highlighting a need to identify the knowledge and skills required for the optimal delivery of telehealth via videoconferencing. This framework can be used as a blueprint to inform curriculum and professional development initiatives, including learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and graduate attributes.





# HOW WAS THE FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED?

We established an International Delphi Panel and conducted an e-Delphi survey to achieve expert consensus on the core capability framework. The International Delphi Panel of 130 experts (including the researchers and Steering Group) comprised:

- i) **Physiotherapy researchers involved in telehealth research**
- ii) **Physiotherapy clinicians who have provided care to patients via videoconferencing**
- iii) **Representatives of physiotherapy professional organisations**
- iv) **A representative from a private health insurer**
- v) **Consumers who have received physiotherapy care delivered via videoconferencing**

The panel comprised experts from 32 countries, with more than half the panel (n=, 61%) comprising of physiotherapy clinicians.



Figure 1. A global map showing locations of the expert Delphi panel (highlighted in blue).

The Delphi Panel considered a draft framework (developed by the research team and steering group from relevant documents identified in the literature) of 73 capabilities mapped across 8 domains. **Over three rounds**, the Panel **rated their agreement** on whether **each specific capability** was core for physiotherapists to deliver quality care via videoconferencing. Those that **achieved consensus** at the end of Round 3 were retained for the final framework.

The final framework comprised **60 capabilities** mapped across **7 domains**.



# THE FRAMEWORK

- DOMAIN 1** Compliance
- DOMAIN 2** Patient privacy and confidentiality
- DOMAIN 3** Patient safety
- DOMAIN 4** Technology skills
- DOMAIN 5** Telehealth delivery
- DOMAIN 6** Assessment and diagnosis
- DOMAIN 7** Care planning and management





# DOMAIN 1

## Compliance

The physiotherapist demonstrates they can...

- a) identify any limitation to their individual scope of telehealth (videoconferencing) practice as dictated by relevant laws, registration requirements, organisational regulation, and/or the funding/reimbursement model relevant to the patient
- b) comply with the regulatory requirements associated with practicing as a physiotherapist in the practitioners' geographical location, the geographical restrictions associated with their professional registration and the geographical location(s) of the patient
- c) have professional indemnity insurance that covers the intended scope of telehealth (videoconferencing) practice
- d) determine a patient's eligibility for receiving care via telehealth (videoconferencing) in accordance with federal and state regulations and/or the funding/reimbursement model relevant to the individual patient
- e) obtain and document informed consent from the patient and/or helper which is appropriate for the intended telehealth interactions
- f) align practice with relevant organisational telehealth procedures and protocols
- g) record and manage clinical documentation about telehealth (videoconferencing) interactions in accordance with professional association standards, state/federal regulations and medico-legal requirements





# DOMAIN 2

## Patient privacy & confidentiality

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- a) set up their and the patients environment in order to maintain privacy
- b) obtain informed consent from the patient if videos or photos are taken during the telehealth (videoconferencing) interaction (such as for assessment purposes), and explain how these will be used and stored
- c) inform the patient/caregiver that physiotherapist consent if required for them to take photos/videos of the consultation
- d) comply with the data security requirements of telehealth practice, platforms, storage and transmission (including sharing information with other health professionals) as dictated by bodies such as federal/state/professional and/or employer organisations (e.g. for United States of America physiotherapists, The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act required technical, physical and administrative safeguards, for Australia the Australian Privacy Principles and for Europe the General Data Protection Regulation)



# DOMAIN 3

## Patient safety

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- a) determine whether a patient is safe to receive care via telehealth, taking into consideration a patient's health and physical environment
- b) inform the patient of potential risks, benefits and limitations associated with the delivery of telehealth
- c) describe a documented procedure in the case of a patient incident during the telehealth consultation including being able to provide patient address to emergency services if required and/or notify the patient's emergency contact
- d) confirm the geographical address of the patient at the beginning of each consultation in case emergency services need to be called
- e) identify safety hazards related to remote care where the therapist is not in the same room as the patient
- f) enlist the assistance of a patient caregiver to assist with physical assessment and management tasks in order to ensure patient safety when required
- g) instruct the patient to set up their physical environment in a manner that is safe for them to perform intended assessment and management tasks





# DOMAIN 4

## Technology skills

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- a) assess the digital literacy of the patient and suitability for a telehealth interaction
- b) determine if the patient has appropriate IT hardware (e.g. laptop, tablet device, smart phone) to enable the delivery of the telehealth consultation
- c) select appropriate fit for purpose telehealth technology that is compliant with data security requirements
- d) select (if possible) a telehealth (videoconferencing) platform that is suitable for the intended assessment and management task
- e) competently use relevant functions of the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform to optimise delivery of care
- f) instruct the patient on how to use the key features of the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform
- g) understand and identify the potential problems and/or technical issues likely to be encountered by the patient when using the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform, and be able to assist the patient to deal with such problems





# DOMAIN 5

## Telehealth delivery

The physiotherapist demonstrates they can...

- a) instruct the patient on how to connect to the telehealth (videoconferencing) consultation, including information about time of appointment, contact details of the physiotherapist, and provision of information for setting up technology prior to first consultation
- b) enact an appropriate procedure for alternative mode of contact with the patient in the event of technical/communication disruption
- c) set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal lighting, so the therapist is clearly visible to the patient
- d) set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal acoustics, including silencing and electronic notifications on the device used
- e) set up the camera angle so that the therapist is in centre frame with their head and shoulders visible, allowing for eye contact with the patient
- f) adjust their own camera angle to include their whole body or equipment and/or props for demonstration purposes
- g) instruct the patient how to set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal lighting and uncluttered neutral background (if possible), so they are clearly visible to the therapist
- h) instruct the patient how to set up their own physical environment to optimise acoustics





# Telehealth delivery

The physiotherapist demonstrates they can...

- i) instruct the patient to set up the camera angle so that they are in centre frame with their head and shoulders visible, allowing for eye contact
- j) instruct the patient to set up the camera angle to visualise other patient assessment and treatment tasks appropriately (e.g. walking, exercise performance) as required
- k) demonstrate telehealth etiquette when speaking, such as turn taking to optimise conversational flow
- l) modulate communication style including clear enunciation, slower pace and lengthened pauses to reduce overlap
- m) utilise other means of instructions outside of verbal, such as use of hands to demonstrate angles of movements, other props to help convey the instructions
- n) provide written or digital information to the patient as required to support delivery of care
- o) encourage patient positive beliefs about telehealth to maximise adherence to treatment
- p) use the findings of evaluation to continuously improve the telehealth service



# DOMAIN 6

## Assessment and diagnosis

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- a) follow a structured process to ensure patient appropriateness for telehealth (videoconferencing) for the individual patient
- b) follow a structured process to identify risk of falls or other safety considerations prior to consultation
- c) recognise the limitations of telehealth (videoconferencing) in assessment and diagnosis
- d) adapt assessment processes (if required) to appropriately assess the patient via telehealth (videoconferencing)
- e) instruct and/or demonstrate the patient and/or helper (using videos and/or images where appropriate) on how to perform modified special tests for assessment and diagnosis if required
- f) determine the elements of care suitable for delivery via telehealth (videoconferencing) for the individual patient
- g) recognise when an in-person consultation and/or other investigations are required to supplement the telehealth assessment and/or diagnosis





# DOMAIN 7

## Care planing and management

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- a) identify and interpret the evidence for physiotherapy via telehealth (videoconferencing)
- b) facilitate patient choice in choosing telehealth (videoconferencing) or face to face consultation
- c) use the existing evidence base to deliver treatments that have been shown to have equivalence to in person treatment
- d) critically apply relevant clinical practice guidelines and other best available evidence on telehealth (videoconferencing) care and service delivery, identifying where local modifications may be required
- e) effectively and safely adapt (if required) and deliver treatment approaches using telehealth (videoconferencing)
- f) develop a patient centred management plan which considers the digital literacy of the individual and whether a blended approach combining telehealth (videoconferencing) and in person delivery care is needed
- g) consider and use as appropriate written and digital resources to enhance information sharing with the patient to increase their knowledge about their condition, management options and prognosis



# Care planing and management

The physiotherapist demonstrates the ability to...

- h) proficiently use the relevant features of their chosen telehealth (videoconferencing) platform and other supporting digital tools as appropriate to provide effective telehealth treatment for the patient
- i) adapt (to the patient's environment) and implement relevant outcome measures to monitor treatment progress to guide ongoing telehealth management
- j) identify opportunities for, and engage in, interprofessional care and collaboration via technology where possible
- k) adhere to privacy, security legislative requirements when using digital mechanisms to communicate with other health care professionals about a patient
- l) provide an alternative treatment if the person is not appropriate for care delivered via telehealth (videoconferencing)





# Clinician Self-appraisal Checklist



The following checklist has been provided for you to use as a self-appraisal tool to identify areas where you may have reduced confidence



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# Self-appraisal checklist

## DOMAIN 1 Compliance

- a) identify any limitation to their individual scope of telehealth practice as dictated by relevant laws, registration requirements, organisational regulation, and/or the funding/reimbursement model relevant to the patient
- b) comply with the regulatory requirements associated with practicing as a physiotherapist in the practitioners' geographical location, the geographical restrictions associated with their professional registration and the geographical location(s) of the patient
- c) have professional indemnity insurance that covers the intended scope of telehealth practice
- d) determine a patient's eligibility for receiving care via telehealth in accordance with federal and state regulations and/or the funding/reimbursement model relevant to the individual patient
- e) obtain and document informed consent from the patient and/or helper which is appropriate for the intended telehealth interactions
- f) align practice with relevant organisational telehealth procedures and protocols
- g) record and manage clinical documentation about telehealth interactions in accordance with professional association standards, state/federal regulations and medico-legal requirements

### Self-reported Level of confidence

Not Confident      Confident

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DOMAIN 2 Patient privacy and confidentiality

- a) set up their and the patients environment in order to maintain privacy
- b) obtain informed consent from the patient if videos or photos are taken during the telehealth (videoconferencing) interaction (such as for assessment purposes), and explain how these will be used
- c) inform the patient/caregiver that physiotherapist consent if required for them to take photos/videos of the consultation
- d) comply with the data security requirements of telehealth practice, platforms, storage and transmission (including sharing information with other health professionals) as dictated by bodies such as federal/state/professional and/or employer organisations (e.g. for United States of America physiotherapists, The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act required technical, physical and administrative safeguards, for Australia the Australian Privacy Principles and for Europe the General Data Protection Regulation

Not Confident      Confident

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





# Self-appraisal checklist

## DOMAIN 3 Patient Safety

- a) determine whether a patient is safe to receive care via telehealth, taking into consideration a patient's health and physical environment
- b) inform the patient of potential risks, benefits and limitations associated with the delivery of telehealth (videoconferencing)
- c) describe a documented procedure in the case of a patient incident during the telehealth (videoconferencing) consultation including being able to provide patient address to emergency services if required and/or notify the patients emergency contact
- d) confirm the geographical address of the patient at the beginning of each consultation in case emergency services need to be called
- e) identify safety hazards related to remote care where the therapist is not in the same room as the patient
- f) enlist the assistance of a patient caregiver to assist with physical assessment and management tasks in order to ensure patient safety when required
- g) instruct the patient to set up their physical environment in a manner that is safe for them to perform intended assessment and management tasks

### Self-reported Level of confidence

Not Confident      Confident

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DOMAIN 4 Technology skills

- a) assess the digital literacy of the patient and suitability for a telehealth (videoconferencing) interaction
- b) determine if the patient has appropriate IT hardware (e.g. laptop, tablet device, smart phone) to enable the delivery of the telehealth (videoconferencing) consultation
- c) select appropriate fit for purpose telehealth (videoconferencing) technology that is compliant with data security requirements
- d) select (if possible) a telehealth (videoconferencing) platform that is suitable for the intended assessment and management task
- e) competently use relevant functions of the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform to optimise delivery of care
- f) instruct the patient on how to use the key features of the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform
- g) understand and identify the potential problems and/or technical issues likely to be encountered by the patient when using the telehealth (videoconferencing) platform, and be able to assist the patient to deal with such problems

Not Confident      Confident

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Self-appraisal checklist

## DOMAIN 5 Telehealth delivery

- a) instruct the patient on how to connect to the telehealth (videoconferencing) consultation, including information about time of appointment, contact details of the physiotherapist, and provision of information for setting up technology prior to first consultation
- b) enact an appropriate procedure for alternative mode of contact with the patient in the event of technical/communication disruption
- c) set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal lighting, so the therapist is clearly visible to the patient
- d) set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal acoustics, including silencing and electronic notifications on the device used
- e) set up the camera angle so that the therapist is in centre frame with their head and shoulders visible, allowing for eye contact with the patient
- f) adjust their own camera angle to include their whole body or equipment and/or props for demonstration purposes
- g) instruct the patient how to set up their own physical environment ensuring optimal lighting and uncluttered neutral background (if possible), so they are clearly visible to the therapist
- h) instruct the patient how to set up their own physical environment to optimise acoustics
- i) instruct the patient to set up the camera angle so that they are in centre frame with their head and shoulders visible, allowing for eye contact
- j) instruct the patient to set up the camera angle to visualise other patient assessment and treatment tasks appropriately (e.g. walking, exercise performance) as required
- k) demonstrate telehealth etiquette when speaking, such as turn taking to optimise conversational flow
- l) modulate communication style including clear enunciation, slower pace and lengthened pauses to reduce overlap
- m) utilise other means of instructions outside of verbal, such as use of hands to demonstrate angles of movements, other props to help convey the instructions
- n) provide written or digital information to the patient as required to support delivery of care
- o) encourage patient positive beliefs about telehealth to maximise adherence to treatment
- p) use the findings of evaluation to continuously improve the telehealth service

### Self-reported Level of confidence

Not Confident      Confident

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐



# Self-appraisal checklist

DOMAIN 6 Assessment and diagnosis	Self-reported Level of confidence	
	Not Confident	Confident
a) follow a structured process to ensure patient appropriateness for telehealth for the individual patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) follow a structured process to identify risk of falls or other safety considerations prior to consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) recognise the limitations of telehealth in assessment and diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) adapt assessment processes (if required) to appropriately assess the patient via telehealth (videoconferencing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) instruct and/or demonstrate the patient and/or helper (using videos and/or images where appropriate) on how to perform modified special tests for assessment and diagnosis if required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) determine the elements of care suitable for delivery via telehealth (videoconferencing) for the individual patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) recognise when an in-person consultation and/or other investigations are required to supplement the telehealth (videoconferencing) assessment and/or diagnosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DOMAIN 7 Care planning and management	Not Confident	Confident
a) identify and interpret the evidence for physiotherapy via telehealth (videoconferencing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) facilitate patient choice in choosing telehealth (videoconferencing) or face to face consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) use the existing evidence base to deliver treatments that have been shown to have equivalence to in person treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) critically apply relevant clinical practice guidelines and other best available evidence on telehealth (videoconferencing) care and service delivery, identifying where local modifications may be required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) effectively and safely adapt (if required) and deliver treatment approaches using telehealth (videoconferencing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) develop a client centred management plan which considers the digital literacy of the individual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) develop a client centred management plan which considers the most appropriate model of service delivery (in person or telehealth or a blended approach)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) consider and use as appropriate written and digital resources to enhance information sharing with the patient to increase their knowledge about their condition, management options and prognosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) proficiently use the relevant features of their chosen telehealth (videoconferencing) platform and other supporting digital tools as appropriate to provide effective telehealth treatment for the patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) implement and adapt relevant outcome measures according to the client's environment to monitor treatment progress and guide ongoing telehealth management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) identify opportunities for, and engage in, interprofessional care and collaboration via technology where possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) adhere to privacy, security legislative requirements when using digital mechanisms to communicate with other health care professionals about a patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) provide an alternative treatment if the person is not appropriate for care delivered via telehealth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





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