



Demystifying the difference Physio or Kin?

- Kathie Sharkey, OKA

Demystifying the difference between Physiotherapists and Kinesiologists is a challenge that should be mastered by Kinesiologists in our profession. I have practiced Kinesiology in Ontario for 20 years (the last 4 of them as a registered Kinesiologist) so my experience allows me to comment on Kinesiology in Ontario. There may be some differences in other provinces but I feel that the information presented should still be relevant to the topic.

One of the most significant differences between Kinesiologists and Physiotherapists is that Physiotherapists are able to communicate to an individual a diagnosis identifying a disease or disorder.

A Kinesiologist can explain how the client's diagnosis may be influencing his or her movement and/or performance. You may be asked to provide your client's with information about the disease or disorder. As long as the disease or disorder has already been communicated by the diagnosing practitioner it's permissible to do this.

During your time with a client you may become aware of signs or symptoms that indicate that there might be a disease or disorder present. You can provide data to a diagnosing practitioner, so that they can arrive at a definitive diagnosis. It will be your responsibility to make your client aware of the significance of the signs or symptoms and to suggest the appropriate action. This includes the referral.

A client may seek your services without having a diagnosis. What you need to do is conduct an assessment and collect relevant health history information. You can provide treatment as long as you have determined that it is safe to do so. At this point, you need to explain to your client that you have made a clinical impression and they should see their physician to get further information. Continue to be aware of any changes in your client's condition and alert your client to certain symptoms or warning signs.

Often times Kinesiologists find themselves working alongside Physiotherapists. You may find yourself working as part of a health care team or your primary role may be a support role. In a multi-disciplinary setting, you should strive to put the welfare of the client first. Create and maintain a positive work environment that focuses on collaboration and discussion. If you work in a support role, you are always accountable for the treatment you provide, even if it is prescribed by another regulated health professional. You should ensure that you have reviewed a patient/client's assessment and you can confirm whether or not the diagnosing practitioner's assessment is still valid. You should always confirm whether or not the client's condition has changed and always maintain clear and concise records.

Kinesiologists and Physiotherapists skills compliment one another's abilities. In my practice, I strive to maintain a positive relationship and open dialogue with Physiotherapists to provide optimal care to my clients.

References

College of Kinesiologists of Ontario – Standards and Guidelines;

[Professional Collaboration](#)

[Article: Record keeping in support roles](#)

[Interpreting the Controlled Act of Communicating a Diagnosis](#)

[Scope of Practice, Controlled Acts and Delegation](#)