

Scope of Practice and Ethics

An Essential Concept for All
Members of the Diabetes Care Team

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What is Scope of Practice?

- Scope: “The area covered by a given activity or subject (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, c. 1992)
- Examples: What is within the scope of practice for these jobs: Lifeguard; certified personal trainer; high school mathematics teacher. External to scope?

Why Does Scope of Practice Matter?

- To protect the patients and clients that we serve. It ensures that the role of each team member is supported by training, certification, and experience specific to each team member's job description.
- To protect you. It ensures that you are not in a position of providing care or services for which you do not have the training and experience. Provides support to say "no" when asked to do something not within your scope of practice.

How to determine your scope of Practice

- You must have a clear job description specific to your practice setting and job. If one is not provided, create your own, and then have your supervisor confirm for accuracy. A job description is simply a detailed list of job duties and assignments.
- For licensed or credentialed professionals, refer to the position statement or definition provided by professional organizations such as AADE.

Scope of Practice Examples from AADE

- Diabetes Educator

“Diabetes educators are healthcare professionals who focus on educating people with and at risk for diabetes and related conditions achieve behavioral change goals which, in turn, lead to better clinical outcomes and improved health status. Diabetes educators apply in-depth knowledge and skills in the biological sciences, communication, counseling, and education to provide self-management education/self-management training”. (www.diabeteseducator.org/DiabetesEducation/Definitions.html)

Scope of Practice Examples from AADE

- Community Health Workers (CHWs, Promotoras)
 - “ CHWs are individuals who serve as bridges between their ethnic, cultural, or geographic communities and health care providers and engage their community to prevent diabetes and its complications through education, lifestyle change, self-management and social support. The community-based system of care and social support provided by CHWs compliments, but does not substitute for, the more specialized services of health care providers”. (Excerpt from AADE Position Statement: Community Health Workers in Diabetes Management and Prevention, TDE 2009-In Press)

Factors that expand or vary Scope of Practice

- Additional licensing, certification or skills from the varied professions represented in Diabetes Education.
- Complimentary credentialing or certifications, such as Certified Personal Trainers and Smoking Cessation Educators.
- Expansion of the roles available in Diabetes Education such as research and case management.

Ethics

- A code of ethics guides the decisions, actions and professional behavior for those working in health care settings.
- This list for diabetes educators would be useful for all members of the diabetes care team:

Ethics

1. Respects and upholds basic human rights
2. Demonstrates professional integrity
3. Maintains patient confidentiality
4. Discloses all potential or perceived conflicts of interest when appropriate
5. Respects the uniqueness, dignity, and autonomy of each individual and
6. Accepts responsibility for professional competence
(“The Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators”;
www.diabeteseducator.org/ProfessionalResources; 7-14-08 update)

Final Thoughts

- If you don't have a clear idea of your scope of practice, commit to defining it.
- Start a list today of your tasks and responsibilities and your qualifications to perform them.
- Make a list of additional training that would help you perform your job.
- For those with a defined profession or certification, look up your scope of practice and ethical guidelines for your profession.