

**WAC 246-918-410 Sexual misconduct.** (1) The following definitions apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Patient" means a person who is receiving health care or treatment, or has received health care or treatment without a termination of the physician assistant-patient relationship. The determination of when a person is a patient is made on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to several factors, including the nature, extent and context of the professional relationship between the physician assistant and the person. The fact that a person is not actively receiving treatment or professional services is not the sole determining factor.

(b) "Physician assistant" means a person licensed to practice as a physician assistant under chapter 18.71A RCW.

(c) "Key third party" means a person in a close personal relationship with the patient and includes, but is not limited to, spouses, partners, parents, siblings, children, guardians and proxies.

(2) A physician assistant shall not engage in sexual misconduct with a current patient or a key third party. A physician assistant engages in sexual misconduct when they engage in the following behaviors with a patient or key third party:

(a) Sexual intercourse or genital to genital contact;

(b) Oral to genital contact;

(c) Genital to anal contact or oral to anal contact;

(d) Kissing in a romantic or sexual manner;

(e) Touching breasts, genitals or any sexualized body part for any purpose other than appropriate examination or treatment;

(f) Examination or touching of genitals without using gloves, except for examinations of an infant or prepubescent child when clinically appropriate;

(g) Not allowing a patient the privacy to dress or undress;

(h) Encouraging the patient to masturbate in the presence of the physician assistant or masturbation by the physician assistant while the patient is present;

(i) Offering to provide practice-related services, such as medications, in exchange for sexual favors;

(j) Soliciting a date;

(k) Engaging in a conversation regarding the sexual history, preferences or fantasies of the physician assistant.

(3) A physician assistant shall not engage in any of the conduct described in subsection (2) of this section with a former patient or key third party if the physician assistant:

(a) Uses or exploits the trust, knowledge, influence, or emotions derived from the professional relationship; or

(b) Uses or exploits privileged information or access to privileged information to meet the physician assistant's personal or sexual needs.

(4) Sexual misconduct also includes sexual contact with any person involving force, intimidation, or lack of consent; or a conviction of a sex offense as defined in RCW 9.94A.030.

(5) To determine whether a patient is a current patient or a former patient, the commission will analyze each case individually, and will consider a number of factors including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) Documentation of formal termination;

(b) Transfer of the patient's care to another health care provider;

- (c) The length of time that has passed;
- (d) The length of time of the professional relationship;
- (e) The extent to which the patient has confided personal or private information to the physician assistant;
- (f) The nature of the patient's health problem;
- (g) The degree of emotional dependence and vulnerability.

(6) This section does not prohibit conduct that is required for medically recognized diagnostic or treatment purposes if the conduct meets the standard of care appropriate to the diagnostic or treatment situation.

(7) It is not a defense that the patient, former patient, or key third party initiated or consented to the conduct, or that the conduct occurred outside the professional setting.

(8) A violation of any provision of this rule shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.71A.020, 18.130.050, 2024 c 62, and chapter 18.71A RCW. WSR 24-23-043, s 246-918-410, filed 11/14/24, effective 12/15/24. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.71A.150, 18.130.050, chapter 18.71A RCW and 2020 c 80. WSR 21-22-043, § 246-918-410, filed 10/27/21, effective 11/27/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.71.017, 18.130.062, and Executive Order 06-03. WSR 16-06-009, § 246-918-410, filed 2/18/16, effective 3/20/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.130.180, 18.71.017, and 18.71A.020. WSR 06-03-028, § 246-918-410, filed 1/9/06, effective 2/9/06.]