



Eclectic Staffs Enhance Problem-Solving

The only answer that matters is the right one. But, there are many ways of getting to that single solution in the profession of physical therapy.

In a field filled with a variety of approaches, longtime physical therapist Diane Shiffer decided to tap into different types of talent when she founded her Lake Oswego, Oregon, practice in 2012.

Most of the five-member staff at Connect Physical Therapy did advanced training through NAIOMPT. Adding an expert in the McKenzie Method® of Mechanical Diagnosis and Therapy® (MDT) expanded services and encouraged professional development as well, Shiffer says.

With 30-plus years of experience the norm, Connect PTs tend to get some difficult cases. The variety of input from different approaches has been effective in finding the right treatment solutions, Shiffer says.

While NAIOMPT and McKenzie philosophies differ, MDT diplomate Susan Bamberger says the eclectic setting offers advantages to both the patients and practitioners.

“We all get stuck from time to time,” Bamberger says. “Here we can problem-solve with a variety of views.

“We get patients the right care,” she says. “We’re not trying to get the square peg in the round hole.”

Bamberger brings the McKenzie Method’s strong emphasis on assessment and clinical reasoning to Connect. The evidence-based MDT system begins with a thorough mechanical analysis to establish a “cause-and-effect” relationship between historical pain behavior as well as the response to repeated test movements, positions and activities.

A systematic progression of applied mechanical forces utilizes pain response to monitor changes in motion and function to classify the disorder. Clinicians then develop a self-treatment program for the patient.

“I think having different schools of thought is very important,” Shiffer says. “I think it’s a better experience for the clinician, a better experience for the practice and a better experience for the patient.

“It’s a very collaborative practice,” she says. “We love treating patients together.”

Each practitioner also comes with her own specialties. Bamberger’s different approach to evaluating musculoskeletal problems complements her colleagues’ expertise in sports injuries and women-specific issues among many other areas.

“Our commonalities are related to our values and how we care about our patients,” Bamberger says.

Shiffer focuses on building partnerships with patients and meeting their needs, be it adding a yoga class, new specialist or niche approach like MDT to the practice.

“Good clinicians are not afraid of good ideas,” she says. “There are multiple ways to get to the right answer.”

To learn more about the McKenzie Method and how it can add to your practice, visit www.mckenzieinstituteusa.org.