APTA Wisconsin | Clinical Education SIG

The Resilient Clinician: Navigating AI, Career Growth, and Education in PT

2027 Clinical Education Special Interest Group Spring Conference

DATE	Friday, March 5, 2027
TIME	9 am – 3 pm – *registration includes lunch*
LOCATION	ThedaCare Neenah, Memorial Conference Room 130 2nd St, Neenah, WI 54956
CEU CREDITS	8 Total Hours - Includes 6 hours of in-person synchronous conference + 2 hours of required asynchronous learning. 4 credits count towards ethics requirement.

Course Listing

Effective and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Physical Therapy Education and Clinical Practice

Instructor: Halee Shepard, PT, DPT, MBA, EdD

Course Description

Practical implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI), ensuring responsible use, will be explored. AI is reshaping how physical therapists document care, monitor patient progress, and make clinical decisions. Interactive lessons will examine how to evaluate AI tools critically, maintain data privacy, and uphold the profession's core values. The content will equip clinicians, assistants, educators, and students with a systematic approach to using AI for improved quality of care.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this session, you will be able to:

1. Recognize common issues surrounding the use of AI in physical therapy education and clinical practice.
2. Understand the elements of responsible AI use in physical therapy.
3. Develop a relevant framework for AI literacy to elevate physical therapy practice.

Instructor Biography

Halee Shepard is a current physical therapy educator and has been working in higher education for over 12 years. She has served as the Director of Clinical Education for student physical therapist assistants,

student physical therapists, and bridge students. Her research interests include curriculum design and assessment especially related to physical therapy clinical education outcomes.

Building Resilient Workplaces for Clinicians and Students

Instructor: Dr. JJ Ferguson, PT, DPT, DScPT, OCS, SCS, FAAOMPT

Course Description

Burnout affects physical therapists at every career stage, and it often starts earlier than we expect. Students on clinical experiences, new graduates finding their footing, and the clinical instructors who mentor them all face different pressures within the same workplace. Many organizations respond with wellness programs, resilience training, mentoring, and scheduling support. These person-focused strategies have value, but research suggests they work best when paired with attention to how the work itself is structured. This session looks at burnout as a shared responsibility. Students, clinicians, clinical instructors, and leaders all have a role in creating workplaces where physical therapists can thrive.

This interactive session is designed for clinical instructors, site coordinators, and early career clinicians. It draws on Christina Maslach and Michael Leiter's Areas of Worklife framework and the presenter's own research with outpatient and academic physical therapists. You will explore the six areas of worklife: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. You will look at how each area shows up differently for students, new clinicians, and the clinical instructors who support them. Through case analysis, guided reflection on your own practice setting, and small-group evaluation of common interventions, participants will compare the evidence for individual and organizational strategies.

You will leave with a practical action plan to protect your own well-being and to support the students and new clinicians around you. You will also leave with language for starting constructive conversations with colleagues and leadership.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Differentiate the three dimensions of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy) from related conditions, including stress, compassion fatigue, and depression.
2. Compare how the six areas of worklife contribute to burnout risk for physical therapist students, early career clinicians, and clinical instructors.
3. Analyze their current practice setting using the six areas of worklife to identify the two areas of greatest mismatch for themselves or the learners they support.
4. Develop an action plan that pairs at least one individual strategy with at least one workplace or clinical education strategy to address a priority area of worklife.

Instructor Biography

Dr. JJ Ferguson is an Associate Professor and the Assistant Program Director within Bethel University's Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program. His path in healthcare has been shaped by a commitment to clinical training, including completing a sports physical therapy residency at the University of North Dakota, earning dual board-certifications in sports and orthopaedic physical therapy, and completing a fellowship in the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists.

His clinical experiences ultimately inspired his Doctor of Science (DScPT) degree, where his doctoral research investigated the challenges of workplace burnout and professional well-being. Rooted in workplace mismatch theory, his ongoing peer-reviewed research focuses on looking beyond individual coping mechanisms to help organizations design supportive, systemic environments where employees can truly thrive.

He is grateful for the opportunity to share these findings with teams and colleagues through workshops focused on workplace well-being. Alongside his roles at Bethel, he continues to see patients in an outpatient clinical practice in De Pere, Wisconsin, where he lives with his wife, Brooke, and their two children, Cam (5) and Kinley (1 ½).