

PLENARIES

PLENARY 9: Advanced Rehabilitation Wheelchair Skills Training for Physiotherapists to Train People With Neurological Disorders

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Independent wheelchair mobility promotes function, confidence, safety, and community participation among people with neurological disorders. Physiotherapists therefore require knowledge and practical competency to teach advanced wheelchair skills safely and effectively. This session aimed to equip physiotherapists with structured techniques for training wheelstand (wheelie) skills, an essential competency for negotiating environmental barriers and challenging surfaces in patients with neurological disorders.

This face-to-face session combined theory, demonstration, supervised practice, and feedback. Participants learned to assess patient readiness, provide appropriate assistance, apply safe spotting techniques, and progress training according to individual ability. Practical activities included teaching patients to maintain a stationary wheelie for 30 seconds, propel in the wheelie position for 10 metres, and overcome obstacles and gaps safely. Techniques for transferring patients from the wheelchair to the floor and returning to the wheelchair were also covered.

Participants gained structured, hands-on competency in teaching wheelie skills, including readiness assessment, spotting and assistance techniques, graded progression, fall recovery, and floor-to-wheelchair transfer training, with emphasis on safety, balance control, communication, and independence throughout. Structured training in advanced wheelchair skills equips physiotherapists with the practical competency needed to safely teach wheelchair skills, supporting patients with neurological disorders to achieve greater independence and participation within their daily environments.