



LPN Decision-Making Tool

Part 3: Independence and Collaboration in Practice

This is the 3rd in a 3-part series of LPN decision making tools. The first part (Practice, May 2019) focused on scope of practice. The 2nd (Practice, September 2019) focused on assignment of care.

How will we do this?

LPNs practice autonomously (independently) as well as collaboratively. The level of independence an LPN has in their practice varies in relation to the needs of the client, the LPNs individual capacity or competence, and the supports and resources available in the practice environment.

INDEPENDENCE in practice requires:

- › an established plan for client care
- › that the expected outcomes of client care are being met
- › that the care (including assessment, intervention and evaluation) are within the skill set of the LPN

COLLABORATION in practice is required when:

- › there is no established plan for client care
- › the expected outcomes of client care are not being met
- › the required care (including assessment, intervention and evaluation) is no longer within the skill set of the LPN

The frequency and degree of collaboration, along with the decision of whom to collaborate with, will be determined by a number of factors, including employer policy, complexity of required care, and the skill set of the available care providers. All professionals have an obligation to provide the best possible care to their clients. Effective collaboration is an important component of safe care.

“in order to provide safe, competent, and ethical client care, nurses must practise in an environment that fosters collaboration between health professionals for the benefit of clients and the health-care system”.

– [Canadian Nurses Association, 2019](#)

MYTH: LPNs must not provide any care to a client with complex care needs.

FACT: While the LPN would not independently provide care when care needs become complex, the LPN may provide elements of care or participate in the ongoing care for this client.

MYTH: The LPN waits for the RN to develop the plan of care.

FACT: The LPN contributes to the development or updating of the plan of care.

“Effective teamwork and role clarity enable critical decisions to be made that support assignment of the most appropriate category of nurse to care for a client”.

– [RNAO Best practice guideline on intra-professional collaborative practice](#)