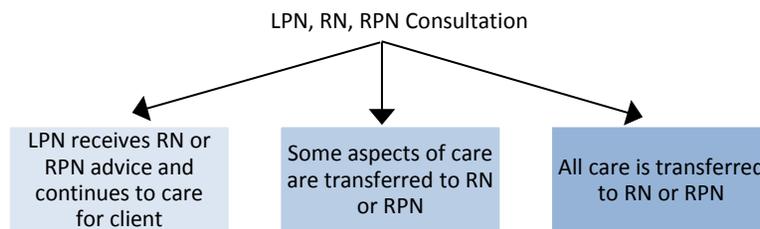


DRAFT 9: DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK - QUALITY NURSING PRACTICE



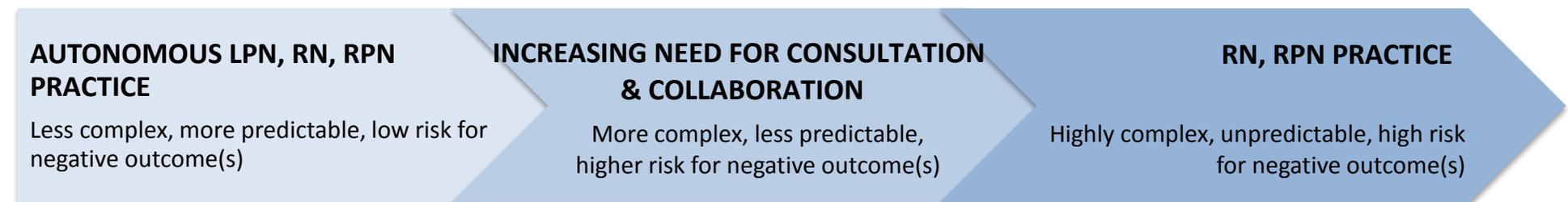
Collaboration and consultation are essential elements of safe, competent, ethical nursing practice. LPNs, RNs and RPNs are expected to collaborate with clients, each other and members of the health care team for the benefit of the client. Each provider is accountable for their practice and is expected to consult with others when any situation is beyond their individual competence. Effective communication skills are critical to successful consultation and collaboration.



The Three-Factor Framework

Making effective decisions about which nursing provider (LPN, RN or RPN) to match with client needs involves considering three factors of equal importance: the client, the nurse and the environment, and deliberating on how they apply to the situation.

CLIENT CONTINUUM OF CARE



Client Factors

Decisions about the utilization of an LPN, an RN and an RPN are influenced by: 1. Complexity, 2. Predictability, 3. Risk of negative outcome(s).

Nurse Factors (LPN, RN, RPN)

The factors that affect a nurse's ability to provide safe and ethical care to a given client include leadership, experience, decision-making and critical-thinking skills. Other factors include the application of knowledge, knowing when and how to apply knowledge, and having the resources available to consult as needed.

Environment Factors

Environment factors include practice supports, consultation resources and the stability/predictability of the environment. Practice supports and consultation resources support nurses in clinical decision-making. The less available the practice supports and consultation resources are, the greater the need for more in-depth nursing competencies and skills in the areas of clinical practice, decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, research utilization and resource management.

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LPNs, RNs and RPNs care for stable clients – those who have less acute, complex and variable care needs and more predictable outcomes. RNs and RPNs, because of their greater depth and breadth of foundational knowledge, also care for clients with more complex care needs and less predictable outcomes. When a client falls between the two ends of this care continuum, a LPN may meet some of the client’s care needs in consultation with a RN or RPN. The need for collaboration and consultation with the RN or RPN increases as a client’s care needs become more complex.

Collaboration

Collaboration is ongoing communication and decision-making with the goal of working toward identified client care outcomes. It respects the unique contributions and abilities of each member. Collaboration in the practice setting is evident when nurses:

- talk with one another, share perspectives, plan together and provide care,
- are clear about their roles and the roles of others, and
- support and assist each other in the interest of client care.

Consultation

Consultation is seeking advice or direction from a more experienced or knowledgeable nurse or other health professional. The client’s care needs, the nurse’s job description and the nurse’s individual competence influence both the amount of consultation required and who to involve in the consultations (see diagram on previous page).

The resources available in the practice environment influence the opportunity for consultation.