

Supporting LPNs With Significant Practice Issues



ANBLPN

Association of New Brunswick Licensed
Practical Nurses

AIAANB

L'Association des Infirmier(ère)s Auxiliaires
Autorisé(e)s du Nouveau-Brunswick

Mission

The Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses ensures the public of their commitment to safe, competent, and compassionate, ethical care by regulating and enhancing the profession of practical nursing.

Acknowledgements

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SUPPORTING LPNs WITH SIGNIFICANT PRACTICE ISSUES

The Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses (ANBLPN) is the regulatory body for Licensed Practical Nurses of New Brunswick. The mandate of ANBLPN is to protect the public; it does so by setting and enforcing the requirements for entry into the profession, the Standards of Practice, and a Code of Ethics. ANBLPN promotes the delivery of safe, competent and ethical care to clients through the privilege of self-regulation, and through standards of practice and continued competency for its members. ANBLPN maintains that licensed practical nurses (LPN) are accountable for their own practice and actions at all times. LPNs are expected to understand and maintain a practice that is consistent with:

- Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice set forth by ANBLPN;
- Legislative requirements documented in the Licensed Practical Nurses Act (2014), Regulations and Association By-laws, and;
- Policies and/or procedures set forth by the employer.

Key Concepts

The intended audience for this guide includes practical nurses, manager, administrators and clinical educators working with LPNs experiencing practice issues. This document is to help those supporting LPN practice to;

- Identify strategies to understand practice or practice issue context;
- Identify and describe practice issues;
- Clarify expectations.

ANBLPN has resources available to assist managers, educators and members themselves manage practice issues. While practice issues of an LPN are managed by the employer, ANBLPN serves as a consultant to the practical nurse and/or employer. As the regulator, ANBLPN offers support and resources that can be utilized in a practical nurses learning plan, but does NOT have a role in the development, implementation or evaluation of an employers' learning plan. These activities are the shared accountability of the practical nurse and employer.

It is important to remember that a learning plan or remedial education may not be effective for some LPNs. The LPN may be unable to make the necessary changes to his or her practice. In other situations, an LPN may choose to resign before making required practice changes. In either case, it is an employer's legal duty to notify ANBLPN if the nursing practice issue puts members of the public at risk.

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Assumptions about LPN Practice

1. The ANBLPN Standards of Practice represent the criteria against which members of the public, clients, employers, colleagues and LPNs, measure the practice of all licensed practical nurses.
2. Employers have an obligation to provide essential support systems, including human and material resources, so that the practice setting is one in which LPNs are able to meet ANBLPN Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and employment obligations.
3. Licensed practical nurses, as employees, are accountable to use the support systems to provide client care that meets the standards of practice, code of ethics and employer expectations.
4. Managers are responsible for having management strategies in place that promote safe, efficient, effective, ethical and competent care delivery and employee satisfaction. Strategies should establish a suitable learning environment, make practice expectations clear and have a well identified process for managing practice issues.
5. Licensed practical nurses are responsible for their own practice and for making changes to their performance if needed.
6. The most effective practice feedback is ongoing and linked to professional standards and employment expectations.
7. Practice issues of one employee can have a negative effect on client care, other staff, teamwork and the workplace.

The Support Process

It is crucial to have a plan to address a practice issue once it has been identified. It is important to reflect on the issues being brought forth, because sometimes, it may be a symptom of another issue. For instance, new grads may feel “pressured” into taking shortcuts in which they lack experience to be able to fully understand. A policy or long standing unit culture may be driving a “work around” practice. Finally, what appears to be an issue driven by a communication deficit, may in fact be a knowledge deficit. Whatever the issue, taking some time up front to try and understand the entire issue, will result in a more effective and efficient plan in the end.

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Nine (9) Step Process for Supporting LPNs with Significant Practice Issues







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<p>Preparation: Understanding the Context</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The context of a practice issue is often the sum total of a number of issues and circumstances around the issue. Reflecting on the following points may provide clarity of the context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What practices are concerning?• Are workplace or personal issues contributing to the practice?• What actual or potential harm is/may result from the practice?• Is client or staff safety an issue?• What is the practical nurses level of awareness of the issue?
<p>Preparation: Describe the Practice Issue</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Many practice issues result from combinations of unacceptable behaviors. The more specific and comprehensive the description of practice issue, the more successful the remedial approaches will be. To begin this work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify trends and patterns in practice by reviewing observations, verbal reports, complaints and any other documentation related to the LPNs practice.2. Use the ANBLPN Professional Practice Standards as an organizing framework to describe the specific practice issues in relation to the Standards (see Appendix A).3. Consider which components of the related competencies may be associated with the practice issues:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. <u>Knowledge</u>: anatomy and physiology, current treatments, medication administration, resources and policies.b. <u>Skill</u>: psychomotor skills, teaching clients and families, communication skills, doing mathematical calculations.c. <u>Judgement</u>: recognizes when to consult others, prioritize work, respect for colleagues and clients, awareness of own beliefs, sensitivity to feelings, personal values, team work and flexibility.4. Review past practice management strategies or learning plans. Identify what progress has been made to improve her/his practice.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. What assistance, educational activities or supports have been offered in the past?b. Has the practical nurse accepted the assistance or completed these activities and made use of the supports offered? If not, why not?c. Have these activities and supports made a difference in the LPNs practice? If so, how is this demonstrated?d. Has the environment changed? If so, how?


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<p>Preparation: Identify Practice Expectations</p> <p>3</p>	<p>It is critical to the success of any performance improvement program to clearly identify what is expected of the practical nurse. Practice expectations are the specific competencies (knowledge, skill, judgement) required to demonstrate safe, competent and ethical nursing practice. Make use of any available resource to clarify and set expectations. Practice expectations are the target behaviors for the practical nurse and makes the change process tangible.</p> <p>It is unlikely that the LPN has difficulties in all aspects of the role and they are more likely to be struggling with certain aspects of their practice. Use any of the following documents to help identify practice expectations unique to the individual at hand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ANBLPN Standards of Practice• ANBLPN Code of Ethics• ANBLPN Entry Level Competencies and Core Competencies• Job description• Unit or agency policies and procedures (e.g., documentation, confidentiality, infection control, harassment).• Other employment expectations (e.g., clinical competencies, specialty nursing standards).
<p>Meeting: Set Up & Prepare</p> <p>4</p>	<p>The primary goal of the meeting is to convey concerns and set practice expectations for the nurse in a way that is clear, fair, respectful and supportive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather the documents you may need at the meeting (e.g., notes, job description, past performance appraisals).• Set a time and location. Communication with necessary parties. Confirm with the LPN the purpose of the meeting and who will be attending (e.g., name, title, purpose of their attendance). Ensure sufficient time is allotted before and after the meeting.• Encourage the practical nurse to and how to prepare for the meeting.• Plan debriefing time for everyone in attendance and identify what resources will be required for this. <p>Emotions can run high during discussions and about practice issues. Keep the meeting on track by directing and redirecting the conversations back to the issues at hand, the actual or potential impact on clients or the development of a plan to correct the issues.</p>

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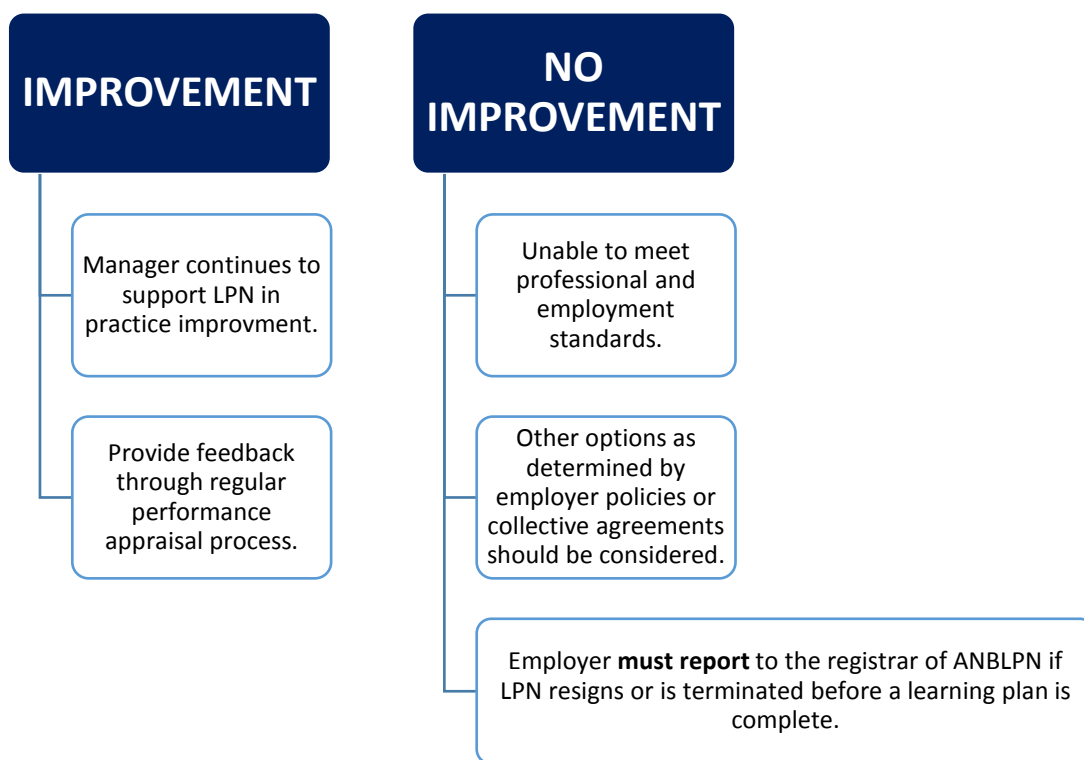
	<p>The following strategies will help keep the meeting moving in a forward direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan introductory remarks and the key points to be addressed; • Consider the employee’s likely reactions (e.g., upset, concern, denial, anger, lack of concern). Have a pre-developed plan to manage each response; • Have specific examples to describe concerns (See Appendix A) as well as positive feedback.
<p>Meeting: Opening Remarks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>Introduce those in attendance. Make sure everyone understands the reason why specific people are in attendance. Reinforce the confidential nature of the meeting. Outline the purpose goals and timelines for meeting.</p>
<p>Meeting: Define the Problem</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>State the issue as clearly as possible. Where possible make reference to the Standards of Practice and/or actual potential impact on client care. Make sure the practical nurse understands that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their current practice is no longer acceptable. 2. Change is required. 3. A plan will be developed to support the change process.
<p>Meeting: Set the Expectations</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>Be articulate and clear, as the expectations will lay the foundation for the learning plan.</p> <p>In all but rare cases, it is important that the practical nurse be given an opportunity to improve practice once issues have been identified. The individual learning plan for an LPN is developed based on their unique and specific needs.</p>
<p>Next Steps: Learning Plan</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>The manager is generally responsible to develop or oversee the development of a written action plan that includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Options; 2. Resources; 3. Specific actions;

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	<p>The manager is also accountable to make sure the practical nurse is aware of how, when and where to access the resources outlined in the plan.</p> <p>Where possible, the employee should be given a copy of her/his learning plan.</p> <p>The Plan:</p> <p>Designing and developing a learning plan is best achieved using a collaborative process which actively involves the practical nurse. The more the LPN is involved in the entire process, the greater likelihood of success.</p> <p>A learning behavior based approach is the recommended process to achieve practice change. The key elements of a learning plan include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Description of the practice issues2. Expected changes/outcomes3. Who will be involved in the change process4. How the changes/outcomes will be measured5. Required learning activities6. Resources to be provided by agency7. Time lines for feedback and completion of self-learning activities. <p>Set a date or time line for next meeting or when specific portions of the learning plan are to be completed. Include consequences if the practical nurse does not complete the plan as identified. If relevant, explore strategies to communicate with colleagues in regards to any changes that may take place as a result of the learning plan. (shift/work schedule changes, a buddy system, or shorter work days).</p>
<p>Next Steps: Follow Up Evaluation</p> 	<p>Follow up is an important, yet often, overlooked step in the remedial process. While specific follow-up will vary from situation to situation, there are a number of general points to consider.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Accurate and complete documentation is important. It serves as a record of attendance, topics of discussion, action plans/follow up plans developed, time lines for improvement, and a date for the next meeting. Document the meeting and provide a copy to the practical nurse.2. Identify the person responsible to monitor and document the progress of the LPN. Have clearly stated indicators of improvement to guide the practical nurse in gauging his/her own improvement (For example; At the end of mentored shift #3, you will competently administer

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	<p>medications to a team of 5 patients). Make sure the indicators are realistic.</p> <p>3. Relate to the practical nurse in other areas of her/his practice beyond the remediation. Take steps to avoid only interacting with the practical nurse in relation to the practice issue.</p>
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Further information is available on the ANBLPN website at www.anblpn.ca

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APPENDIX A – Addressing Unacceptable Practice

The professional conduct of all ANBLPN members is guided by the LPN Act, Regulations, Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and By-laws.

ANBLPN is responsible for establishing and enforcing Standards of Practice so that the public receives safe and ethical nursing care from competent practical nurses. While ANBLPN has the statutory responsibility to take action when a practical nurses ability to provide safe nursing care is questioned, all practical nurses have a responsibility to report unsafe practice or unacceptable behavior to the regulatory body.

The following guidelines can help you meet your legal and ethical obligations to protect the public both in and beyond the workplace.

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION: 4 STEP FRAMEWORK

STEP ONE – DEFINING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR/PRACTICE

Unacceptable behaviour/practice may be unethical behaviour, impaired practice or incompetence. Incompetence is a pattern of behaviour that demonstrates a failure to meet the Standards of Practice as a result of lack of competency (knowledge, skill, judgement), capacity or fitness to practice. Incompetence renders the respondent unsafe to practice practical nursing (LPN ACT 2014) and often results from repeatedly making the same or similar mistakes, not from an isolated act or single error.

Assess the practice by answering YES or NO to the following questions:

Y N

- Does the behaviour or practice fail to support safe, ethical, patient nursing care?
- Has there been a pattern of questionable behaviour and is it likely to continue?
- Is the nurse unable or unwilling to recognize and correct the issue behaviour?
- Have clients been, or likely to be harmed by this practice or behaviour.
- Does this behaviour involve theft, falsification of records, or a breach of accepted ethical standards in some other way?
- Is there documentation or other evidence of issue behaviour?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you should take action.

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STEP 2: DECIDING TO TAKE ACTION ON UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

When it is possible, it is always best practice to discuss your concerns directly with the practical nurse. This is often a difficult decision and the following reflections may help you decide what to do:

- What would you want done if you were the practical nurse with unacceptable behaviour?
- What are the usual procedures for dealing with these issues in your workplace?
- Can you discuss the facts of the situation objectively and without emotion?
- Can you create an opportunity to discuss the behaviour privately with the nurse?
- What is the likelihood of the nurse understanding and responding to what you say?

If you discuss your concerns directly with the practical nurse and the matter is resolved, it may not be necessary for you to take further action. However, some circumstances will require you to take action:

1. Concerns are not taken seriously by the practical nurse;
2. Practice/behaviour continues after you discuss your concern;
3. It is not wise to discuss your observations and concerns directly with the practical nurse (fear of reprisal)

If any of the above circumstances are in play, talk to your manager or the person to whom you report and use the reporting mechanisms in your workplace so others can take action.

STEP 3: REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR TO YOUR MANAGER

Document your concerns and discuss them with your manager. When documenting and reporting unacceptable behaviour:

- Obtain support. Consult resource people in the workplace or call an ANBLPN practice consultant. The practice consultant at ANBLPN can provide confidential assistance to you., answer question or help you review appropriate standards of practice (this is not reporting a colleague; you don't have to name the practical nurse).
- Describe the unacceptable behaviour in detail. Give the date, time, place, who was involved (use initials for client names), what happened, how it affected client care, what standards were not met.
- Sign your name. Anonymous reporting is less credible.
- Treat all documentation as confidential.
- Request acknowledgment that your information has been received and assurance that the issue will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- Be patient, as long as clients are not in danger, as these issues often require time to resolve.

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- If the unacceptable behaviour has not been dealt with appropriately within a reasonable time frame, inform your manager that you are considering reporting directly to ANBLPN.

STEP 4: REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR TO ANBLPN

When to Report to ANBLPN

Reporting to ANBLPN is required when there is a reason to believe that there is a danger to the public if the nurse continues to practice.

Who to Contact at ANBLPN

You will receive confidential guidance about your concerns by contacting:

Practice Consultants
Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses
384 Smythe Street, Fredericton NB E3B 3E4
506-453-0747
Toll Free: 1-800-942-0222
Fax: 506-459-0503

Practice Consultants can work with you and help you in resolving your concerns. Together, you will look at various options for action. Your identity during this consultation process is kept confidential. Should you decide to submit a complaint, you will be asked to provide detailed information about your complaint (see below) and you may be asked to participate in the process to resolve the concerns.

How to Submit a Complaint

A letter of complaint is a requirement of the complaint process and it includes the information listed below. If you do not have all of the information or access to it, do not let this stop you from submitting the complaint.

1. Full name and, if possible, registration number of the practical nurse whose behaviour/practice is unacceptable.
2. A detailed description of the unacceptable behaviour/practice with examples of specific incidents that support the complaint. For each incident provide the following:
 - Date, Time, Place
 - Who was involved
 - Names of nursing professionals and others who have direct knowledge of the alleged behaviour/practice

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- What happened?
 - How it affected client care, specific standards, workplace policies, procedures or guidelines that have not been met.
3. An outline of any action taken by the employer and others since the unacceptable behaviour/practice was first noticed, and a description of the practical nurses' responses to those actions.
 4. The date the practical nurse started working for the employer and, if applicable, when the employment was terminated.

Complaints should be submitted to:

Executive Director/Registrar – Joanne Graham
Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses
384 Smythe Street, Fredericton NB E3B 3E4
Tel: 506-453-0747
Toll Free: 1-800-942-0222
Email: execdir@npls.ca

The Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurse

384 Smythe Street, Fredericton NB E3B 3E4

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Fax: 1-506-459-0503 Email: practiceconsultant@npls.ca

Website: www.anblpn.ca