

# Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurse

## Learning Module



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# Acknowledgements

The Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR) is a federation of provincial and territorial members who are identified in legislation, and are responsible for the safety of the public through the regulation of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). The Council of the CCPNR recognized the need for a single code of ethics across member jurisdictions to articulate the ethical values and responsibilities that LPNs uphold and promote, and to which they are accountable.

The code of ethics guides LPNs' ethical reflections and decision-making across all areas of LPN practice, informs the public about the ethical values and responsibilities of the LPN profession, conveys the profession's commitment to society and serves as a guide for curriculum development and for public and employer awareness of the practice expectations of the licensed practical nurse.

The CCPNR approves and adopts the code of ethics for LPNs and thanks all participants who contributed to the creation of this document.

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The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.



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# Part I: About the LPN Code of Ethics

## 1. Introduction to this Learning Module

The Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses<sup>1</sup> was developed as part of the Inter-Jurisdictional LPN Project by the Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators (CCPNR). This Project sought to standardize the LPN Code of Ethics across the provinces.

The Code of Ethics is an integral part of the knowledge and competence of a Licensed Practical Nurse. LPNs must use a code of ethics and an ethical framework when making professional judgments and practice decisions. They must engage in critical thinking and inquiry to inform decision-making and use self-reflection to understand the impact of personal values, beliefs and assumptions in the provision of care.<sup>2</sup>

Having a Code of Ethics is not sufficient in itself. LPNs must be familiar with their ethical responsibilities, as well as have the knowledge and skills to make the best decisions in situations involving ethical issues.

This Learning Module was developed to assist LPNs to become familiar with the new Code of Ethics and to provide them with the knowledge and skills to apply the Code in their daily nursing practice.

The objectives of this Learning Module are to:

1. Explain what ethics are in the context of nursing practice
2. Outline why ethics are important in the LPN profession
3. Describe the consequences of unethical and ethical conduct
4. Familiarize LPNs with the Code of Ethics
5. Provide a framework for making ethical decision-making
6. Describe a few typical ethical dilemma scenarios that LPNs are likely to encounter in their practice
7. Provide some examples of ethical and unethical nursing behaviours
8. Provide quizzes and exercises to encourage self-reflection and self-assessment of knowledge regarding ethical decision-making
9. Provide a final quiz with a Certificate for those LPNs who want to include this learning activity in their commitment to lifelong learning and professional development.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, the term “licensed practical nurse” also refers to “registered practical nurse”

<sup>2</sup> Entry-to-Practice Competences for Licensed Practical Nurses

## 2. Expectations and Responsibilities

### What is ethics?

Ethics is the study of morality – careful and systematic reflection on, and analysis of, moral decisions and behaviour, whether past, present or future.

Morality is the values dimension of human decision-making and behaviour. Ethics is primarily a matter of knowing what is right, whereas morality is a matter of doing what is right.

Ethics is about behaviour and decision-making – not about scientific or technical questions as how to treat high blood pressure, but questions about values, rights and responsibilities.

### Why a code of ethics is important

LPNs must know and follow the profession's Code of Ethics because:

- Ethics is, and always has been, an essential component of health care.
- Ethical principles such as respect for clients, informed consent and confidentiality are basic to the health care provider-client relationship.
- Knowing the code of ethics prepares the Licensed Practical Nurse to recognize difficult situations and deal with them in a rational and principled manner.
- Ethics is also important in the LPN's interactions with the public, clients, colleagues, the profession, and self.

### Consequences of unethical conduct

Practicing in a manner that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics (through action or inaction – deliberate or otherwise) may lead to unintended client and team outcomes such as:

- Putting clients at risk
- Reducing effectiveness of nurse-client therapeutic relationship
- Disrupting health care team effectiveness
- Causing conflict and disharmony.

The most important of these is that clients may be put at risk when decisions are not ethically based. Unethical practice may contribute to findings of unprofessional conduct by the regulatory body.

## Professional obligation to report

Each LPN has the obligation to report to the appropriate person or authority if there are indications of unethical practice (such as incompetence, impairment or misconduct) of a colleague. This obligation is inherent in the Code of Ethics.

*Ethical Responsibility 2.5, “report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client’s safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.”*

*Ethical Responsibility 4.1, “LPNs take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.”*

The application of these principles is not always easy. It is important to recognize that a practical nurse may be reluctant to address a colleague’s practice for a number of reasons. However, it is equally important to understand that every LPN is accountable to work through their discomfort with the understanding that his/her primary responsibility is to advocate for the client.

The first step is to address the practice with the individual. Privately and professionally, concerns should be brought to the attention of the colleague. If, after a reasonable amount of time, there is no evidence of change in practice, the manager or supervisor should be notified. It is reasonable to ask to be informed when the manager addresses the issue with the colleague so there will be some sense of when change in practice can be anticipated.

It is critical to the delivery of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate care that practical nurses understand that if the practice issues remain unchanged, they *are still obligated to act*, even if they previously addressed the issues. In some cases, LPNs are expected to notify the provincial/territorial regulatory body about ongoing unresolved unethical practice of a colleague.

### 3. LPN Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics articulates the ethical values and responsibilities that Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) uphold and promote, and to which they are accountable. The Code serves to:

- guide LPN’s ethical reflections and decision-making across all areas of licensed practical nurse practice; and,
- inform the public about the ethical values and responsibilities of the LPN profession and convey the profession’s commitment to society.

LPNs use the Code of Ethics in conjunction with legal requirements, professional standards and competencies, and workplace policies that guide their practice and behaviour. In achieving these requirements, LPNs fulfill their contract with society for ethical practice.

Therefore, in order for LPNs to uphold and promote their Code of Ethics, they must be thoroughly familiar with them. In addition, LPNs are expected to recognize ethical situations, and have the skills to deal effectively with them.

LPNs’ primary responsibility is to the client<sup>3</sup> within the context of an inter-professional collaborative environment. Respect for the inherent dignity and rights of clients, colleagues and LPNs underpins the five ethical principles encompassed in the Code. The principles include:

1. Responsibility to the Public
2. Responsibility to Clients
3. Responsibility to the Profession
4. Responsibility to Colleagues
5. Responsibility to Oneself

The *Principles* are statements of the five ethical principles to which LPNs are held accountable. The *Ethical Responsibilities* that accompany each Principle are inter-related and are statements of expected professional conduct in LPN practice situations. The Principles and Ethical Responsibilities are not in any order of priority – collectively they reflect the LPNs’ overall commitment to society.

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<sup>3</sup> “Client” refers to an individual (or their designated representatives), families, and groups.

## Principle 1: Responsibility to the Public

*Licensed Practical Nurses, as self-regulating professionals, commit to provide safe, effective, compassionate and ethical care to members of the public.*

Key values in ethical responsibilities include:

- Professional competence and conduct
- Practice with qualifications
- Environment affects health
- Respect for individual rights
- Provide care for health and well-being
- Collaborate to promote health

## Principle 2: Responsibility to Clients

*Licensed Practical Nurses provide safe and competent care for their clients.*

Key values in ethical responsibilities include:

- Right to be informed and make decisions
- Advocate for client
- Client privacy and confidentiality
- Client safety
- Report unethical or incompetent care
- Individuality and right to choice
- Trusting therapeutic relationships
- Risk management
- Use new knowledge and technology

## Principle 3: Responsibility to the Profession

*Licensed Practical Nurses have a commitment to their profession and foster the respect and trust of their clients, health care colleagues and the public.*

Key values in ethical responsibilities include:

- Integrity of conduct
- Participate in advancing health care
- Merit self-regulation privilege
- Facilitate professional practice

## Principle 4: Responsibility to Colleagues

*Licensed Practical Nurses develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with nursing colleagues and other health professionals.*

Key values in ethical responsibilities include:

- Act on unprofessional conduct
- Collaborate with colleagues
- Educate colleagues
- Acknowledge roles and contributions
- Share expertise

## Principle 5: Responsibility to Self

*Licensed Practical Nurses recognize and function within their personal and professional competence and value systems.*

Key values in ethical responsibilities include:

- Honesty, integrity and trustworthiness
- Practice within capabilities and limitations
- Accept responsibility
- Disclose personal or legal conflicts
- Inform authority if unable to practice
- Engage in ongoing learning
- Manage conflict of interest
- Maintain physical and mental well-being

**NOTE:** Now is a good time to carefully read and study the LPN Code of Ethics found in Section 16 of this document. You will have to be familiar with the Code in order to answer the Quiz questions in the next section.

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## 4. Exercises and Quizzes

**Instructions:** The following 32 multiple choice and true/false questions are designed to test your knowledge of the material covered in Part I of this Ethics Learning Module. The correct answers are provided in Section 19.

1. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
2. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Educate colleagues and other health professionals about the LPN role and capabilities?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
3. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client’s safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
4. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Provide only those functions for which they are qualified by education or experience?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself

5. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
6. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Acknowledge colleagues’ roles and their unique contribution to the inter-professional team?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
7. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Respect the rights of all individuals regardless of their diverse values, beliefs and cultures?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
  
8. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Act promptly and appropriately in response to harmful conditions and situations, including disclosing safety issues to appropriate authorities?”
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself

9. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Respect and protect client privacy and hold in confidence information disclosed except in certain narrowly defined exceptions?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
10. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Inform the appropriate authority in the event of becoming unable to practise safely, competently and/or ethically?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
11. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Collaborate with clients, their families, and health care colleagues to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and the public?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
12. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Maintain the required mental and physical wellness to meet the responsibilities of their role?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself

13. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct oneself in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
14. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
15. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Disclose to the supervisor/employer any potential or existing personal or legal conflict that makes it difficult to participate in an intervention?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
16. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Safeguard health and personal information by collecting, storing, using and disclosing it in compliance with relevant legislation and employer policies.”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself

17. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Respect the expertise of others and share expertise and knowledge?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
18. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Report any situation where private or confidential information is accessed or disclosed without appropriate consent or legal authority, whether deliberately or through error?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
19. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Practice in a manner that is consistent with the privilege of self-regulation?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
20. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself

21. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
22. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Prevent or manage conflict of interest situations?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
23. Under which principle does the following LPN ethical responsibility fall – “Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media?”
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Oneself
24. The Code of Ethics is to be used only to guide LPNs’ ethic reflections and decision-making in practice.
- True  
False
25. The LPN Code of Ethics is only focused on how LPNs provide care to their clients.
- True  
False
26. The Code of Ethics is the sole document that LPNs should use in making ethical decisions.
- True  
False

27. The Responsibilities that accompany each Principle provide a brief descriptive statement of the requirements to which LPNs are held accountable.
- True  
False
28. The Ethical Responsibilities for each Principle are NOT in any order of priority.
- True  
False
29. Ethics is primarily a matter of knowing what is right; whereas morality is a matter of doing what is right.
- True  
False
30. All ethical questions in nursing are equally challenging.
- True  
False
31. Knowing the Code of Ethics prepares the LPN to recognize difficult situations and deal with them in a rational and principled manner.
- True  
False
32. Following the Code of Ethics will always have positive consequences for the LPN.
- True  
False

Check your quiz answers [HERE](#).

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# Part II: Application of the LPN Code of Ethics

## 5. Strategies for Ethical Decision-Making

Most people use the same processes for making ethical decisions as they do for other decisions. Some examples are listed below.

- Habit: Making decisions based on what they have done before
- Imitation: Making decisions by following the advice of another
- Obedience: Making decisions by following the rules and policies set out by an organization
- Feeling: Making decisions based on what feels the right thing to do
- Intuition: Making decisions based on a combination of prior belief and knowledge

These are subjective or personal approaches. Although helpful they do have some limitations because they are contextual to each person, may not be consistently applied and they may not take into account all the pertinent data.<sup>4</sup>

Table 1 outlines the recommended guidelines for LPNs' ethical decision-making.

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<sup>4</sup> Medical Ethics Manual, World Health Association, 2005, pp. 26-28

**Table 1: Guidelines for Ethical Decision-Making**

Steps in Decision Making	Decision Making Process
<b>Step 1:</b> Describe the issue and identify the nature of the problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of issue is it?</li> <li>• What ethical principles are involved?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2:</b> Gather the factual information relevant to the issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elaborate and clarify what happened.</li> <li>• What is the sequence of events?</li> <li>• What are the applicable policies, legislation or regulations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Does a workplace policy address the issue?</li> <li>○ What does the Code say?</li> <li>○ What does legislation or regulation say?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Who are the relevant stakeholders? How do they view the situation?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3:</b> Clarify the challenge or problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the issue?</li> <li>• What ethical principles are at stake?</li> <li>• What stakeholders need to be consulted or involved in resolving the issue?</li> <li>• Is unethical conduct by a peer or other professional colleague suspected?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4:</b> Identify options for action, recognizing that the best option may not be obvious at the outset.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the options that could resolve the issue?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5:</b> Assess the options in light of applicable policy, legislation, or regulation in terms of advantages and limitations of each.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the pros and cons of each option in terms of rectifying and/or satisfying the ethical principle?</li> <li>• Do all options fall within applicable laws or policies?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6:</b> Decide on a course of action taking all the gathered information into account.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the best option for the clients involved that upholds ethical principles?</li> <li>• How will you justify or defend your decision in light of ethical principles, applicable policy, legislation or regulation?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7:</b> Implement your decision as thoughtfully and sensitively as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you ensure that in the process of acting upon your decision you uphold ethical principles?</li> <li>• How will you explain and/or justify the reasons for your decision?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 8:</b> Assess the consequences of your decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the process you used to arrive at the decision and the decision itself.</li> <li>• Did things turn out as you thought they would?</li> <li>• Would you do the same thing again?</li> <li>• What went right? What went wrong?</li> <li>• Would others benefit from sharing the experience?</li> </ul>



## 6. Ethical Dilemma Scenarios

In the following Sections (7 to 13), there are seven different scenarios depicting the types of ethical issues that LPNs in Canada are likely to encounter.

Three types of exercises have been attached to each scenario. The intent of the exercises is to help the practical nurse apply the concepts in the Code of Ethics.

1. Self-reflective exercises
  - What is the best action for the LPN in the scenario to take?
  - Why? (Based on values in LPN Code of Ethics)
  - Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
  - How well did your decision turn out?
  - Would you do anything different in a similar situation?
2. Systematic analysis using the ethical decision-making guidelines
  - Describe the issues and identify the nature of the problem
  - Gather the factual information relevant to the issue
  - Clarify the challenge or problem
  - Identify options for action
  - Assess the options
  - Decide on a course of action
  - Implement the decision thoughtfully and sensitively
  - Assess the consequences of the decision
3. Supplementary exercises designed to help the practical nurse consider relevant employer or jurisdictional information.

The purpose of the scenarios is to give the practical nurse opportunity work through the scenarios by applying the ethical guidelines. Each nurse can decide how many scenarios he/she wishes to work through. The intent is that with increased exposure to opportunities to apply the framework to scenarios, practical nurses will be better prepared to engage in ethical decision-making in their nursing practice.

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## 7. Scenario 1: The Gift

Tracy works at a Long Term Care facility. Christmas is approaching and she has been feeling a little sad because she has not yet been able to save any money to buy gifts. She particularly wanted to get a special present for her mother. Her mom encouraged and supported her during the last few years of studying and hard work so that Tracy could achieve her dream of being a nurse.

Tracy is caring for Olga, a resident in her late 80's. Olga's younger sister Ethel is visiting from out of province. Ethel remarks, "I really appreciate the excellent care you are providing my sister. I am the only family she has left so there is no one to really come in and look after her." Ethel gives Tracy a sealed envelope that appears to be a Christmas card and says, "May you have a Merry Christmas, and thank you again for looking after Olga."

Tracy thanks Ethel and puts the envelope in her pocket. Near the end of her shift, Tracy remembers the envelope. She opens it to find a Christmas card and a \$250 gift certificate from a local jewelry store! Tracy knows that Ethel has already left to go home so she asks Olga "Where does your sister live?" Olga, who has dementia, is unable to answer the questions.

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – The Gift

1. What is the best action for Tracy to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?
5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## 2. Systematic analysis – The Gift

## My Notes

**Step 1:** Describe the issue and identify the nature of the problem.

- What kind of issue is it?
- What ethical principles are involved?

**Step 2:** Gather the factual information relevant to the issue.

- Elaborate and clarify what happened.
- What is the sequence of events?
- What are the applicable policies, legislation or regulations
  - Does a workplace policy address the issue?
  - What does the Code say?
  - What does legislation or regulation say?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders?
- How do they view the situation?

**Step 3:** Clarify the challenge or problem.

- What is the issue?
- What ethical principles are at stake?
- What stakeholders need to be consulted or involved in resolving the issue?
- Is unethical conduct by a peer or other professional colleague suspected?

**Step 4:** Identify options for action.

- What are the options that could resolve the issue?

## 2. Systematic analysis – The Gift

## My Notes

### Step 5: Evaluate the options

- What are the pros and cons of each option in terms of rectifying and/or satisfying the ethical principle?
- Do all options fall within applicable laws or policies?

### Step 6: Decide on a course of action

- What is the best option for the clients involved that upholds ethical principles?
- How will you justify or defend your decision in light of ethical principles, applicable policy, legislation or regulation?

### Step 7: Implement the decision

- How will you ensure, that in the process of acting upon your decision, you uphold ethical principles?
- How will you explain and/or justify the reasons for your decision?

### Step 8: Assess the results / consequences

- Evaluate the process you used to arrive at the decision and the decision itself.
- Did things turn out as you thought they would?
- Would you do the same thing again?
- What went right? What went wrong?
- Would others benefit from sharing the experience?

## 3. Points to ponder – The Gift

1. Your workplace/employer's policy on accepting different types and values of gifts.
2. Are there any circumstances where it would be appropriate to accept a gift?

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 8. Scenario 2: The Promise

Zana has been a Licensed Practical Nurse for 10 years. She is employed in an out-patient clinic in a large general hospital. Today, she is assigned to care for 16 year old Amanda who was brought to the clinic by her parents.

Zana enters the clinic room and introduces herself to Amanda. Zana explains that she will be completing a health assessment which will include asking her some questions about her health history. Amanda anxiously asks if the answers to the questions will be kept confidential and not disclosed to her parents. Zana promises Amanda that all the information she provides will be kept strictly confidential and will not be disclosed without her permission.

Amanda, visibly relieved, tells Zana that she regularly uses recreational drugs, including cocaine, most recently three days ago. She states that she has missed her last three periods and suspects she is pregnant. She admits to multiple sexual partners over the last several months and denies taking any precautions with any of them.

Amanda says, "My parents will be very angry with me if they find out any of this and you promised NOT to tell anyone else about this." Zana responds, "Have you thought about the impact of this on the baby?" Amanda replies, "I want an abortion". Zana is shocked at Amanda's candor and quick actions. Zana does not believe abortion is the answer and says, "What about adoption. There are so many good people who cannot have children?" Amanda is emphatic, "Please help me find a place where I can have an abortion without my parents knowing about it".

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – The Promise

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Zana to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?

5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – The Promise**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – The Promise**

1. Age that health information of a youth can be shared with the parents.
2. Scope of practice of a LPN in your jurisdiction related to referring a client (minor or adult) for further treatment or intervention.
3. Legal requirements in regards to providing medical treatments to minors.
4. Obligation to report drug use or risky sexual behaviour of a minor to the authorities.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 9. Scenario 3: Suspected Incompetence

Tara works in a large city hospital. Although she only graduated 2 years ago, her knowledge, skills and abilities are admired by her colleagues and supervisors. Tara attributes much of her success to Stacy, her mentor. Stacy has been an LPN for nearly 25 years and during that time has been a mentor and confidante for many new graduates. Tara is grateful for Stacy and her willingness to share her nursing knowledge, and over time they have become friends.

Stacy's husband was laid off and she is bringing home the only income. The pressure is mounting because he has not been able to find stable employment. They have two kids in university and a vehicle that has become less and less reliable.

Stacy is increasingly more absent-minded and less likely to pay attention to details. Tara has noticed that Stacy is forgetting to do routine things, and/or doing them in a careless manner. She believes that the stressors in her personal life are beginning to affect Stacy's work. Although no clients have been harmed, Tara is concerned that client safety may soon be compromised.

During their break, Tara asks her if anything is wrong. Clearly irritated, Stacy informs Tara that she is just tired. Stacy thanks Tara for her concern, but leaves the break room silently. She barely speaks to Tara for the rest of the shift. When leaving for the night, Tara says to Stacy, "Have a good evening". Stacy does not reply.

The next day, Tara discovers that Stacy failed to follow up on a client's lab results. Though the client was not harmed, his discharge was going to be delayed by 24 hours. The client was upset, but Tara managed to diffuse the situation. She tells Stacy what has happened, that the client is fine but upset. Stacy becomes angry then upset, "Please keep this to yourself Tara", she says, "You know I cannot afford to lose my job right now. I have two kids in university!"

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – Suspected Incompetence

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Tara to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)

3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?
5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – Suspected Incompetence**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – Suspected Incompetence**

1. Workplace / employer policies and support programs (i.e., EAP) for staff that experiencing difficulties coping with life circumstances.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 10. Scenario 4: Friend Requests

**B**renda is an LPN, working on a rehabilitation unit. Most clients are between 16-35 years of age and have been in a motor vehicle collision or workplace accident. Occupational therapists and physiotherapists work with nursing staff to help clients learn or re-learn basic computer skills. Social media platforms are used as a way of increasing computer skills, socialization, and interactive ability.

Brenda works many evening shifts, and often helps clients post updates and ‘chat’ on social media sites. Brenda is working with Roger a 24 year old, with a brain injury. She helps Roger, understand the concepts and process associated with sending ‘Friend Requests’ on a popular social media site.

When Brenda gets home after work she checks her personal social media page. She sees a ‘Friend Request’ from Roger and accepts it.

Her next shift at work Brenda notices that Roger has printed some personal pictures from her page and has posted them on the bulletin board in his room.

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – Friend Requests

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Brenda to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?
5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – Friend Requests**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – Friend Requests**

1. Workplace / employer’s policies regarding use of electronic and social media.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 11. Scenario 5: Fitness to Practice

Ryan is the team leader. He is responsible for assigning care to Unregulated Care Providers (UCPs), administering medication to residents, and performing numerous invasive nursing treatments including wound care and catheterizations. Ryan also assigns, manages, and mentors UCPs as they provide the required care for the residents. Ryan is the only regulated nurse on evening, nights, and weekend shifts, with a nurse manager available for consultation by phone if he requires additional guidance and advice.

Ryan is scheduled to work early Saturday morning. Late Friday evening Ryan heads out with his best friend Phil for a game of pool and a beer. Ryan, who is intoxicated, arrives home at 0300. He gets up at 0600, showers and makes it to work for his 0800 shift.

Helen, another LPN, is working with Ryan. She notices that his actions are not as efficient as usual and that he appears somewhat unsteady on his feet. Helen watches Ryan as he is working at the medication cart and notices that he is mumbling to himself and seems to be having a difficult time identifying and preparing the medications.

Helen approaches Ryan to offer her assistance and can smell alcohol on his breath. She asks Ryan if he is intoxicated, to which he exclaims “Well I might have been out last night, but I’m here to do my work this morning!”

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – Fitness to Practice

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Helen to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?
5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – Fitness to Practice**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – Fitness to Practice**

1. Workplace / employer's policy and procedures for dealing with employees who come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 12. Scenario 6: Bullying

Sharon is a new graduate LPN and is employed on a busy surgical nursing unit. Her transition from student nurse to LPN has been challenging at times, but Sharon is proud of how she has grown as a nurse in her first year of practice. Sharon understands that part of her success is due to her ongoing self-evaluation of her practice. Currently, Sharon is working towards increasing her capacity to manage interpersonal conflict.

Becky is an expert in her clinical nursing practice. As a new nurse, Sharon values Becky's competence. However, Becky is almost always difficult to approach, as she is condescending and aggressive toward Sharon. Becky's approach is consistent with colleagues, clients, family members, and other team members. Her favourite saying is "You are just going to have to learn how to deal with me!"

Sharon has had two uncomfortable occurrences with Becky over the last 3 months. Both times, Sharon was able to appropriately confront Becky and manage the situation. Though the issues were resolved, their working relationship has been affected and is now stressed and tense.

Tonight, Sharon and Becky are working the night shift together. At 0430, a client call bell sounds and Sharon answers the call. The client tells her that she is experiencing chest pain and shortness of breath. Upon further assessment, Sharon discovers the client has had chest pain since midnight. Sharon asks the client why she waited so long to report the pain and she replies, "I did tell the other nurse – Becky – around midnight, but she became very upset with me for ringing the call bell and bothering her. She said it was just gas pains and I should get back to sleep."

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – Bullying

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Sharon to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?

5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – Bullying**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – Bullying**

1. Employer's policies, procedure and programs for dealing with interpersonal conflict among staff in the workplace.
2. Employer's policies, procedures and programs in dealing with a staff member who is abusive to clients.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

## 13. Scenario 7: Professional Accountability

Troy and Lori, both LPNs, have worked together for several years. They have a great working relationship and friendship. About 6 months ago, Lori took a new position in an ambulatory clinic. When a posting became available in the same clinic, she encouraged Troy to apply, and he was awarded the position.

Troy was given 4 week's orientation to his new position. The LPN's role in this clinic is to greet the client, review their clinical data/plan of care, complete a health history and assessment, and provide any required health education or teaching. Most often, this is done before the physician sees the client in the clinic room.

The nursing care is completed in the context of a busy clinic so organization and efficient patient flow is essential. Each LPN is also responsible to make sure their clinic room is stocked with essential items and client charts are dispersed to the appropriate area once the client leaves the clinic. On procedure days, the LPN does this and assists the practitioner with the procedures when necessary.

Troy is adjusting to the pace and flow of the new practice setting. He likes the work and is getting used to the new routines, but occasionally gets frustrated. At lunch with Lori, he shares his frustration with the pace and she replies, "I don't do those assessments, I don't have time. If I do the assessments, I cannot get my room stocked or the charts shipped off and the Doc's get upset because they may have to wait. Flow is the most important thing here."

### 1. Self-reflection exercise – Professional Accountability

### My Notes

1. What is the best action for Troy to take?
2. Why? (*Relate your answer to the Values outlined in the LPN Code of Ethics*)
3. Have you ever found yourself facing a similar ethical decision?
4. How well did your decision turn out?

5. Would you do anything different in a similar situation?

## **2. Systematic analysis – Professional Accountability**

*(Please use the Template provided in Part III)*

## **3. Points to ponder – Professional Accountability**

1. Workplace policies and practices for making changes to improve efficiencies, quality care and reduce risks to clients.

See scenario feedback [HERE](#).

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## 14. Scenarios Feedback

The best decision for each of the example scenarios may vary based on other factors, and on the policies, regulations, and legislation in each workplace / jurisdiction. So there is no one right answer. The intent of the feedback section is to provide you with some things that could be considered in the course of applying the ethical decision-making framework.

### Scenario 1: The Gift

#### Situation

Accepting high-value gifts from clients can change the professional relationships between the nurse and the client and blur boundaries. Offering or accepting a gift may be perceived a “payment” for treatment.

#### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Shred or destroy the gift card	Action meets the obligation, however, can be wasteful.
Use the card to purchase a gift for her mother	This action does not meet ethical obligation, because it may blur the relationship and it is not honest.
Locate Ethel and return the gift card	Possible, however, may be difficult given Olga’s inability to recall where she lives. It may also offend Ethel.
Donate the gift certificate to the facility’s volunteer group to benefit all residents	Meets obligation and respects Ethel’s gesture.

#### Recommended actions

Tracy should keep her supervisor informed about whatever action she takes.

Tracy should make sure all the staff is aware of the policy and if one does not exist, she should help her team create one.

#### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 2.7 Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.
- 3.1 Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession.
- 5.1 Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions.
- 5.7 Prevent or manage conflict of interest situations.

## Scenario 2: The Promise

### Situation

There are multiple issues with a client (as at-risk behaviours, addiction and pre-natal care) in the context of a lack of communication among the family members. Zana is unsure how her personal values will affect the care of the client.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Request that another LPN be assigned to Amanda	This action will meet Zana's obligation to provide unbiased care.
Inform the nurse manager/physician and have them address the issue	This action will not address any of Zana's internal issues or make sure that Amanda receives the right care.
Keep Amanda's information confidential and give her the names of abortion clinics	The action meets her obligation.
Inform Amanda's parents and ask them what they want to do	This action will erode the therapeutic relationship.
Contact the local Right-to-Life organization and have them talk to Amanda about putting the baby up for adoption	This action is not appropriate and will erode the therapeutic nurse-client relationship.

### Recommended actions

Zana should ensure her manager is aware of her actions.

Zana should consider transferring the accountability of Amanda's care to another care provider if her internal value conflict may impact the care she provides.

Zana should be familiar with disclosure policies and understand the client's right to only share information of her choice.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 2.6 Provide care to each client recognizing their individuality and their right to choice.
- 2.1 Respect the right and responsibility of clients to be informed and make decisions about their health care.
- 2.3 Respect and protect client privacy and hold in confidence information disclosed except in certain narrowly defined exceptions.
- 5.4 Disclose to the supervisor/employer any potential or existing personal or legal conflict that makes it difficult to participate in an intervention.

## Scenario 3: Suspected Incompetence

### Situation

An LPN's deteriorating performance is placing client safety at risk. Stacy continues to practice despite providing a declining quality of care. The issue is that Stacy and Tara are friends and that their relationship may impact Tara's professional decisions.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Do nothing and hope that Stacy becomes competent again	Although this action may work out in the long run, it will not protect clients today.
Talk to Stacy and encourage her to speak to her supervisor about the problem and seek help	This action will help Stacy address the issue and Tara to support her friend and make sure clients receive safe care.
Report Stacy to her supervisor along with documentation on incidents where clients were put at risk	This action may help make sure clients receive safe care, but may erode the relationship.
Report Stacy to the LPN Regulatory Body	This action may have to come into play at some point; however, the first action is to talk to Stacy.

### Recommended actions

The first step is to talk to Stacy and encourage her to seek help, but indicate that if things don't change, Tara will have to have a conversation with the manager.

If Stacy does nothing, then Tara is obligated to report the situation to the supervisor / manager because of the risk to clients.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 1.1 Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
- 2.5 Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.
- 4.1 Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team
- 5.5 Inform the appropriate authority in the event of becoming unable to practice safely, competently and/or ethically.

## Scenario 4: Friend Requests

### Situation

By accepting the friend request, Brenda may have blurred professional boundaries with this client and that may affect the therapeutic nurse-client relationship.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Do nothing	Doing nothing is an action that will reinforce the boundary blurring.
Speak with her supervisor	This action does not address any of the issues.
Talk to Roger	Speaking openly and honestly about their professional relationship will help Roger see the difference between a therapeutic nurse-client relationship and a friendship.
Ask Roger to remove her personal photos from his wall	This will not address the underlying issue of boundaries crossing.
Delete her social media account	Although this will fix the problem, it does not address the underlying issue.
Ask that another LPN be assigned to Roger	Will not address the underlying issue.

### Recommended actions

Brenda needs to re-establish her professional boundaries with Roger. The first step would be to talk to Roger and explain the issue. If boundaries and a therapeutic relationship cannot be re-established, then Brenda must request another LPN be assigned to this client.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 2.7 Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.
- 2.3.4 Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
- 5.4 Disclose to the supervisor/employer any potential or existing personal or legal conflict that makes it difficult to participate in an intervention.

## Scenario 5: Fitness to Practice

### Situation

Ryan has shown up for work with impaired judgment and performance. Client safety is at risk. Helen is aware that Ryan is impaired.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Do nothing	Doing nothing is an action that will put clients at risk.
Tell Ryan to go home	This action will protect clients; however, it may not address the issue that he came to work impaired.
Call the supervisor or manager to let them know Ryan appears impaired	Notifying the supervisor will help protect the clients and address Ryan's actions.
Report Ryan to the LPN Regulatory Body	Although this may be necessary, it is a long range action and will not protect the clients on shift today.

### Recommended actions

The nurse's primary accountability is to protect the clients. This may require immediate intervention when a colleague is working when their fitness to practice is questionable.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 2.5 Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.
- 4.1 Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.
- 5.5 Inform the appropriate authority in the event of becoming unable to practice safely, competently and/or ethically.
- 5.8 Maintain the required mental and physical wellness to meet the responsibilities of their role.

## Scenario 6: Bullying

### Synopsis

Becky's actions are inappropriate and it is impacting on the care clients receive. Sharon is conflicted because she values Becky's technical capacity, but she is aware that clients may be not requesting help because they are afraid of her.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Talk to Becky about how her interpersonal approach is putting clients at risk	Becky may not even be aware of the impact of her actions. This may help her gain insight.
Develop improved conflict management skills to work better with Becky	This will not address the underlying issue.
Report Becky to the nurse manager for client and colleague abuse	This may help; however, it may also yield the opposite result if Becky feels like she is being targeted.
Report Becky to the LPN Regulatory Body	Although this may be necessary, it is a long range action and will not protect the clients on shift today.
Ask for a transfer to another unit	Although this may be necessary, it will not protect the clients on shift today.

### Recommended actions

Becky's behaviour is interfering with effective unit teamwork and is putting clients at risk. It is unlikely Becky will change her behaviour on her own.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 1.1 Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
- 2.5 Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.
- 4.2 Collaborate with colleagues in a cooperative, constructive and respectful manner with the primary goal of providing safe, competent, ethical, and appropriate care to individuals, families and communities.
- 4.1 Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.

## Scenario 7: Professional Accountability

### Situation

Lori is not doing the required client assessments and thus is putting clients at risk. Lori's reluctance to do assessment may be due to perceived workload, lack of ability to prioritize or lack of assessment knowledge.

### Analysis of Options

Option	Analysis
Do nothing	Doing nothing is an action that will put clients at risk.
Stop doing assessments to increase efficiency	This is not an appropriate action because it will put Troy's clients at risk.
Talk to Lori about the importance of assessing clients	This action will help Lori understand the risk of not assessing clients.
Talk to the supervisor about redesigning the workload processes	This may help; however, it may not address the overall issues of why Lori is not assessing clients.
Tell Lori's supervisor that she is not doing assessments	Although this may be necessary, it is recommended only after talking to Lori, and if her practice does not change.
Report Lori to the regulatory body	Although this may be necessary, it will not protect the clients on shift today.

### Recommended actions

The preferred option is for Lori to recognize that her conduct is unprofessional and seek support to begin doing the assessments as required. If Lori does not, then Troy has an obligation to report her to the clinic manager because client care may be compromised.

### Applicable Code of Ethics values:

- 1.1 Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
- 2.5 Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.
- 3.1 Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession.
- 4.1 Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.
- 5.3 Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable.

## 15. Exercises and Quizzes

**Instructions:** For the following list of behaviours, indicate whether each is ethical or unethical. Base your answers on the LPN Code of Ethics. Check your responses with the correct answers and applicable ethical responsibility shown in Section 19.

1. Practicing in a culturally competent manner is  
Ethical  
Unethical
2. Assuming power of attorney for an elderly resident in your long term care facility is  
Ethical  
Unethical
3. Making decisions for your competent client is  
Ethical  
Unethical
4. Passing on the performance of a task to the next shift because you 'are not comfortable' is  
Ethical  
Unethical
5. Forming a personal and social relationship with a client during the time that they are receiving care is  
Ethical  
Unethical
6. Reporting an identified breach of confidentiality or privacy is  
Ethical  
Unethical
7. Ignoring a client's religious practices while providing care because the client's beliefs are in contradiction with established hospital protocol is  
Ethical  
Unethical
8. Respecting the right and responsibility of clients to be informed and making decisions about their health care is  
Ethical  
Unethical

9. Having a personal online relationship with a former client is  
Ethical  
Unethical
10. Accepting cash gifts from the family of a nursing home client in return for expectations of enhanced care is  
Ethical  
Unethical
11. Forcing an unwilling resident to take a bath is  
Ethical  
Unethical
12. Reporting instances when client charts are left on computer monitors in places where others can see them is  
Ethical  
Unethical
13. Following a written order even if there is lack of rationale to support it is  
Ethical  
Unethical
14. Participating in internal and external committees working on finding ways to better need the health care of clients and the community is  
Ethical  
Unethical
15. Forcing a fully competent resident to take an analgesic for pain is  
Ethical  
Unethical
16. Asking a client's annual income on a consent form while working at a community influenza immunization clinic is  
Ethical  
Unethical
17. Being aware of, and familiar with, any previously known wishes or advanced directives if the client is incapable of consent is  
Ethical  
Unethical

18. Asking a colleague to complete a client's chart for you is  
Ethical  
Unethical
19. Taking time to help and mentor new practical nurses joining the team is  
Ethical  
Unethical
20. Keeping informed and participating in activities promoting public health and health education in the community is  
Ethical  
Unethical

Check your quiz answers [HERE](#).

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# Part III: Supplementary Resources

## 16. LPN Code of Ethics

### PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics articulates the ethical values and responsibilities that Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)<sup>5</sup> uphold and promote, and to which they are accountable. The Code serves to:

- guide LPNs' ethical reflections and decision-making across all areas of licensed practical nurse practice; and,
- inform the public about the ethical values and responsibilities of the LPN profession and convey the profession's commitment to society.

LPNs' primary responsibility is to the client within the context of an inter-professional collaborative environment. "Client" refers to an individual (or their designated representative(s), families, and groups.

Respect for the inherent dignity and rights of clients, colleagues and LPNs underpins the five ethical principles encompassed in the Code. These principles although distinct are inter-related and include:

1. *Responsibility to the Public*
2. *Responsibility to Clients*
3. *Responsibility to the Profession*
4. *Responsibility to Colleagues*
5. *Responsibility to Oneself*

LPNs use the Code of Ethics in conjunction with professional standards and competencies, workplace policies, and legal requirements that guide their practice and behaviour. In achieving these requirements, they fulfill their contract with society for ethical practice.

The *Principles* and *Ethical Responsibilities* are described on the following pages. The *Principles* are statements of the five ethical principles to which LPNs are held accountable. The *Ethical Responsibilities* that accompany each Principle are inter-related and are statements of expected professional conduct in LPN practice situations. The *Principles* and *Ethical Responsibilities* are not in any order of priority – collectively they reflect the LPNs' overall commitment to society. Appendix A provides Guidelines for Ethical Decision-Making.

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<sup>5</sup> For purposes of this document, the term "licensed practical nurse" also refers to "registered practical nurse."

## PRINCIPLE 1: Responsibility to the Public

*Licensed Practical Nurses, as self-regulating professionals, commit to provide safe, effective, compassionate and ethical care to members of the public.*

### **Ethical Responsibilities:**

LPNs:

- 1.1 Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
- 1.2 Provide only those functions for which they are qualified by education or experience.
- 1.3 Demonstrate an understanding that community, society and the environment are important factors in the health of individual clients.
- 1.4 Respect the rights of all individuals regardless of their diverse values, beliefs and cultures.
- 1.5 Provide care directed toward the health and well-being of the person, family, and community.
- 1.6 Collaborate with clients, their families, and health care colleagues to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and the public.

## PRINCIPLE 2: Responsibility to Clients

*Licensed Practical Nurses provide safe and competent care for their clients.*

### **Ethical Responsibilities:**

LPNs:

- 2.1 Respect the right and responsibility of clients to be informed and make decisions about their health care.
  - 2.1.1 Respect and support client choices.
  - 2.1.2 Assist and support client participation in making decisions about their health and well-being when factors reduce their capacity for making decisions in accordance with applicable legislation and regulation.
  - 2.1.3 Respect and adhere to the jurisdictional legislation on capacity assessment and substitute decision-making when the client is incapable of consent.
  - 2.1.4 Consider with other health care professionals and substitute decision-makers the best interests of the client and any previously known wishes or advanced directives that apply in situations where the client is incapable of consent.
- 2.2 Advocate for the client to receive fair and equitable access to needed health services and resources.
- 2.3 Respect and protect client privacy and hold in confidence information disclosed except in certain narrowly defined exceptions.

- 2.3.1 Safeguard health and personal information by collecting, storing, using and disclosing it in compliance with relevant legislation and employer policies.
- 2.3.2 Report any situation where private or confidential information is accessed or disclosed without appropriate consent or legal authority, whether deliberately or through error.
- 2.3.3 Ensure that any discussion/communication (verbal, written or electronic) is respectful and does not identify the client unless appropriate.
- 2.3.4 Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
- 2.4 Act promptly and appropriately in response to harmful conditions and situations, including disclosing safety issues to appropriate authorities.
- 2.5 Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.6 Provide care to each client recognizing their individuality and their right to choice.
- 2.7 Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.
- 2.8 Use evidence and judgement to guide nursing decisions.
- 2.9 Identify and minimize risks to clients.
- 2.10 Apply new knowledge, technology and scientific advances to promote safety, client satisfaction and well-being.

### **PRINCIPLE 3: Responsibility to the Profession**

*Licensed Practical Nurses have a commitment to their profession and foster the respect and trust of their clients, health care colleagues and the public.*

#### **Ethical Responsibilities:**

LPNs:

- 3.1 Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession.
- 3.2 Participate in activities allowing the profession to evolve to meet emerging healthcare needs.
- 3.3 Practise in a manner that is consistent with the privilege of self-regulation.
- 3.4 Promote workplace practices and policies that facilitate professional practice in accordance with the principles, standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable.

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<sup>6</sup> Applicable legislation and employer policies should also be consulted to determine in what circumstances reporting is required.

## PRINCIPLE 4: Responsibility to Colleagues

*Licensed Practical Nurses develop and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with nursing colleagues and other health professionals.*

### **Ethical Responsibilities:**

LPNs:

- 4.1 Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.
- 4.2 Collaborate with colleagues in a cooperative, constructive and respectful manner with the primary goal of providing safe, competent, ethical, and appropriate care to individuals, families and communities.
- 4.3 Educate colleagues and other health professionals about the LPN role and capabilities.
- 4.4 Acknowledge colleagues' roles and their unique contribution to the inter-professional team.
- 4.5 Respect the expertise of others and share expertise and knowledge.

## PRINCIPLE 5: Responsibility to Self

*Licensed Practical Nurses recognize and function within their personal and professional competence and value systems.*

### **Ethical Responsibilities:**

LPNs:

- 5.1 Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions.
- 5.2 Recognize their capabilities and limitations and perform only the nursing functions that fall within their scope of practice and for which they possess the required knowledge, skills, and judgement.
- 5.3 Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable.
- 5.4 Disclose to the supervisor/employer any potential or existing personal or legal conflict that makes it difficult to participate in an intervention.
- 5.5 Inform the appropriate authority in the event of becoming unable to practise safely, competently and/or ethically.
- 5.6 Engage in career-long learning to continuously develop the competencies required to meet the ethical and regulatory requirements of the profession.
- 5.7 Prevent or manage conflict of interest situations.
- 5.8 Maintain the required mental and physical wellness to meet the responsibilities of their role.

## 17. Scenario Analysis Template

### Systematic analysis

### My Notes

**Step 1:** Describe the issue and identify the nature of the problem.

- What kind of issue is it?
- What ethical principles are involved?

**Step 2:** Gather the factual information relevant to the issue.

- Elaborate and clarify what happened.
- What is the sequence of events?
- What are the applicable policies, legislation or regulations
  - Does a workplace policy address the issue?
  - What does the Code say?
  - What does legislation or regulation say?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders?
- How do they view the situation?

**Step 3:** Clarify the challenge or problem.

- What is the issue?
- What ethical principles are at stake?
- What stakeholders need to be consulted or involved in resolving the issue?
- Is unethical conduct by a peer or other professional colleague suspected?

**Step 4:** Identify options for action.

- What are the options that could resolve the issue?

### Step 5: Evaluate the options

- What are the pros and cons of each option in terms of rectifying and/or satisfying the ethical principle?
- Do all options fall within applicable laws or policies?

### Step 6: Decide on a course of action

- What is the best option for the clients involved that upholds ethical principles?
- How will you justify or defend your decision in light of ethical principles, applicable policy, legislation or regulation?

### Step 7: Implement the decision

- How will you ensure, that in the process of acting upon your decision, you uphold ethical principles?
- How will you explain and/or justify the reasons for your decision?

### Step 8: Assess the results/consequences

- Evaluate the process you used to arrive at the decision and the decision itself.
- Did things turn out as you thought they would?
- Would you do the same thing again?
- What went right? What went wrong?
- Would others benefit from sharing the experience?

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## 18. Final Quiz

This final quiz consists of 50 multiple choice and true/false questions designed to assess your knowledge of LPN ethics. This quiz is also available online where if you pass, you can obtain a Certificate of Completion and a printout of your Results. The correct answers for the questions below can be found in Section 19.

1. Being responsible for one's actions is known as:
  - a) Accountability
  - b) Advocacy
  - c) Autonomy
  - d) Competency
2. Which of the following ethical responsibilities fall within the Responsibility to the Public Principle?
  - a) Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
  - b) Use evidence and judgment to guide nursing decisions.
  - c) Acknowledge colleagues' roles and their unique contributions
  - d) Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions.
3. What action involves taking action on behalf of a client and family?
  - a) Advocacy
  - b) Compassion
  - c) Competency
  - d) Beneficence
4. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Maintain the standards of the profession and conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession* – belong?
  - a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
5. What term means that a nurse has an understanding and concern for a client's distress?
  - a) Compassion
  - b) Empathy
  - c) Feelings
  - d) Beneficence

6. Which of the following ethical responsibilities fall within the Responsibility to Colleagues Principle?
  - a) Conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity of the profession.
  - b) Disclose any potential or existing personal or legal conflict
  - c) Take action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the team.
  - d) Identify and minimize risks to clients.
  
7. What refers to the ability to integrate the knowledge, skill and judgment to perform in a role?
  - a) Competence
  - b) Capability
  - c) Beneficence
  - d) Rationality
  
8. Which of the following ethical responsibilities fall with the Responsibility to the Profession Principle?
  - a) Apply new knowledge, technology and scientific advances to client well-being.
  - b) Practice in a manner that is consistent with the privilege of self-regulation.
  - c) Advocate for the client to receive fair and equitable access to care.
  - d) Respect rights of individuals regardless of their values, beliefs and cultures.
  
9. What refers to the idea that a person must fully understand the potential benefits and risks of their choice of treatment?
  - a) Informed consent
  - b) Justice
  - c) Non-maleficence
  - d) Autonomy
  
10. A practical nurse is working in an occupational health clinic at a manufacturing company. The human resources manager asks for a list of employees who visited the clinic in the last week. What is the practical nurse's best action?
  - a) Refer the HR manager to the VP of Personnel.
  - b) Inform the manager that she cannot provide the list.
  - c) Give the names to the manager because he is her boss.
  - d) Provide the names because it is normal practice in this organization.

11. A client asks the practical nurse to get together for a drink a week after being discharged. What is the practical nurse's best action?
  - a) Agree to go as long as they meet in a public place.
  - b) Suggest they talk on the phone, rather than meet.
  - c) Politely decline the client's offer.
  - d) Ask for clarity about the purpose of their meeting.
  
12. A practical nurse overhears a conversation that a colleague is going for a drink with a former client. What is the practical nurse's best action?
  - a) Report the conversation to the nurse manager.
  - b) Encourage interaction with the client after discharge.
  - c) Discuss the overheard conversation directly with the colleague.
  - d) Invite yourself to the meeting to make sure that boundaries are not violated.
  
13. Which of the following ethical responsibilities fall within the Responsibility to Self Principle?
  - a) Maintain standards of practice, professional competence and conduct.
  - b) Prevent and manage conflict of interest situations.
  - c) Respect the expertise of one another and share expertise and knowledge.
  - d) Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.
  
14. A palliative care client refuses further treatment. What is the practical nurse's best action?
  - a) Support the client's choice.
  - b) Encourage the family to talk to the client.
  - c) Teach the client why treatment is important.
  - d) Notify the doctor to make the decision on behalf of the client.
  
15. An LPN is asked to give an unfamiliar medication. What is the practical nurse's next best action?
  - a) Administer the medication if the client has received at least 2 doses.
  - b) Ask another nurse for information on the drug.
  - c) Consult a credible pharmacology resource.
  - d) Ask another nurse to administer the medication.

16. A practical nurse observes a colleague charting vital signs in which there is no evidence to suggest that they were taken. What is the nurse's next best action?
- a) Discuss the observations with the colleague.
  - b) Take no action, unless you are assigned to care for the client.
  - c) Notify the manager of charge nurse.
  - d) Obtain the clients' vital signs for the colleague.
17. What is the principle of ethics which states that a competent person has the right to make decisions about what happens to his or her body?
- a) Autonomy
  - b) Beneficence
  - c) Non-maleficence
  - d) Justice
18. A client refuses a scheduled narcotic analgesic. What is the practical nurse's next action?
- a) Persuade the client to take the medication.
  - b) Ask the client why they do not want to take the medication.
  - c) Ask the doctor to explain to the client why taking his medication is important.
  - d) Document his choice and reassess his pain in 1 hour.
19. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Provide care to each client recognizing their individuality and their right to choice* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
20. The practical nurse is given a box of chocolates by a client. What is the nurse's best response?
- a) Thank you, I will enjoy these with my husband when I get home.
  - b) Thank you. I will take to the staff lounge for all to enjoy.
  - c) I cannot accept gifts from patients.
  - d) I prefer flowers to chocolates, because I am on a diet.

21. You observe another colleague crushing and mixing medication into food that is going to be fed to her client by a nursing student. What in the practical nurse's next best action?
- a) Acknowledge the colleague's creativity.
  - b) Discuss with the colleague about the importance of assessing the client before medication administration.
  - c) Remind the student to document the medication administration.
  - d) Nothing; this is best practice for clients with dysphagia.
22. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Provide only those functions for which they are qualified by education and experience* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
23. The client is prescribed a medication in which they have a documented allergy. What is the practical nurse's next best action?
- a) Notify the nursing supervisor of the situation.
  - b) Give the medication as ordered by the doctor.
  - c) Hold the medication and contact the physician.
  - d) Call the pharmacist and discuss acceptable alternative medications.
24. A colleague shows up for their scheduled shift acting intoxicated. What is the practical nurse's next best action?
- a) Notify the nurse manager and document the situation.
  - b) Determine if this is a breach of hospital policy.
  - c) Report the nurse to the nursing profession regulatory body.
  - d) Discuss your concerns with the colleague.
25. Which of the following ethical responsibilities fall within the Responsibility to Clients Principle?
- a) Maintain standards of the profession.
  - b) Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions.
  - c) Inform authority in the event you are unable to practice safely, competently or ethically.
  - d) Respect and support client choices.

26. A practical nurse is asked by an elderly client to assume power of attorney. What is the practical nurse's best response?
- a) I cannot do this, but I can help you get in contact with a lawyer.
  - b) Thank you, I will take my responsibility very seriously.
  - c) That is a good idea because you have become forgetful lately.
  - d) I am sure your son will be pleased not to have to carry that burden.
27. A colleague is observed sneezing into their hands and proceeding to a client's room. What is the practical nurse's next best action?
- a) Remind the colleague to wash their hands.
  - b) Nothing, colleagues are accountable to know to wash their hands.
  - c) Spray the hallway with a bactericidal spray.
  - d) Ask housekeeping to clean the client's room a second time.
28. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
29. A practical nurse reads a post-operative order "resume pre-op meds" on a client's record. What is the nurse's next best action?
- a) Contact the surgeon for clarification as this is not a complete order.
  - b) Transcribe the preoperative medication orders the surgeon has ordered.
  - c) Ask the pharmacist for a list of preoperative medications for this client.
  - d) Ask the anesthetist to clarify the order.
30. A practical nurse receives a fax from a doctor's office containing confidential information about a client that the nurse does not know. What should the practical nurse do next?
- a) Shred the fax immediately.
  - b) Contact the doctor's office to notify them of the error.
  - c) Fax the information back to the doctor's office.
  - d) Call the sending office and ask them to update their files.

31. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Recognize their capabilities and limitations and perform only the nursing functions that fall within their scope of practice and for which they possess the required knowledge, skills, and judgment* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
32. A client asks for their lab results. What is the practical nurse’s next best action?
- a) Provide the results to the client.
  - b) Ask the physician to give the client the results.
  - c) Ask the charge nurse to give the client the results.
  - d) Document the clients request in their chart.
33. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
34. A visiting clergy asks the practical nurse if a client has been made aware of her diagnosis. What is the practical nurse’s best response?
- a) Yes, the client is aware and taking it quite well.
  - b) I cannot tell you that. You will have to ask the physician.
  - c) Have you asked the client if she knows?
  - d) Do you need to know that to pray with the client?
35. A client is prescribed a placebo instead of analgesia. What is the practical nurse’s best action?
- a) Administer the placebo as prescribed.
  - b) Have the charge nurse administer the placebo.
  - c) Call the physician to discuss the purpose the placebo order.
  - d) Consult with the pharmacist to discuss dosing of the placebo.

36. To which Principle does the ethical responsibility – *Ensure that any discussion / communication (verbal, written or electronic) is respectful and does not identify the client unless appropriate* – belong?
- a) Responsibility to the Public
  - b) Responsibility to Clients
  - c) Responsibility to the Profession
  - d) Responsibility to Colleagues
  - e) Responsibility to Self
37. A Jehovah's Witness client asks the practical nurse if they should accept a blood transfusion. What is the best response by the practical nurse?
- a) What do you think the church elders will say?
  - b) How do you feel about the transfusion?
  - c) Would you like me to call the Chaplin to come speak with you?
  - d) Are you asking me if you should accept the transfusion?
38. A family member informs a practical nurse that a client continues to drive their car after their license has been suspended due to new onset seizure disorder. What is the practical nurse's next best action?
- a) Inform the police that the client continues to drive.
  - b) Inform the physician that the client continues to drive.
  - c) Discuss the safety risk with the client.
  - d) Discuss a plan with the family member.
39. Professional boundary issues are only applicable to nurses involved in a therapeutic relationship with clients.
- True  
False
40. Professional boundaries are fixed and usually clearly defined by relevant law, code of ethics and practice standards.
- True  
False
41. Romantic or sexually intimate relationships are not part of the therapeutic professional relationship.
- True  
False
42. Personal boundaries are the same for all patients and clients.
- True  
False

43. A private room/area should be used to discuss personal, sensitive, or confidential information.
- True  
False
44. The practical nurse may administer an unfamiliar medication under the supervision of a physician.
- True  
False
45. Taking no action is considered an action.
- True  
False
46. It is ethical to notify the nurse manager that you suspect a colleague is self-administering illegal drugs during work hours.
- True  
False
47. It is ethical to scold a difficult or misbehaving client in front of others.
- True  
False
48. It is ethical to use social media to develop and foster professional connections with other nurses.
- True  
False
49. It is important to maintain professional boundaries when using social or electronic media.
- True  
False
50. It is ethical to take photos or videos of clients on personal devices as long as the client or family gives you permission.
- True  
False

Check your Final Quiz answers [HERE](#).

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## 19. Answers to Quizzes

### Answers to Part I Quiz

- |                   |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. a. Public      | 2. d. Colleagues  | 3. b. Clients     |
| 4. a. Public      | 5. e. Oneself     | 6. d. Colleagues  |
| 7. a. Public      | 8. b. Clients     | 9. b. Clients     |
| 10. e. Oneself    | 11. a. Public     | 12. e. Oneself    |
| 13. c. Profession | 14. b. Clients    | 15. e. Oneself    |
| 16. b. Clients    | 17. d. Colleagues | 18. b. Clients    |
| 19. c. Profession | 20. e. Oneself    | 21. d. Colleagues |
| 22. e. Oneself    | 23. b. Clients    |                   |
24. False – The LPN Code of Ethics is also intended to inform the public about the ethical values and responsibilities of the LPN profession.
25. False – The Code also serves a guide as to how LPNs interact with the public, their profession, colleagues and themselves.
26. False – LPNs must use the Code in conjunction with professional standards and competencies, workplace policies and legal requirements to guide their practice and behaviour.
27. False – The *Principles* provide a brief descriptive statement to which LPNs are held accountable. The *Responsibilities* offer guidance for ethical decision-making in licensed practical nurse situations.
28. True – The Responsibilities collectively reflect the LPNs overall commitment to society.
29. True – Morality is the values dimension of human decision-making and behaviour.
30. False – Some are easy to make such as informed consent. Others are much more difficult especially when there is conflict or disagreement, or when ALL the alternatives have significant risks.
31. True
32. False – Situations involving the reporting of incompetence, impairment or misconduct in a colleague or oneself may have negative or unpleasant implications for the LPN.

## Answers to Part II Quiz

1. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
1.4: *Respect the rights of all individuals regardless of their diverse values, beliefs and cultures.*
2. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
5.7: *Prevent or manage conflict of interest situations.*
3. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
2.1: *Respect the right and responsibility of clients to be informed and make decisions about their health care.*
4. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
5.2: *Recognize their capabilities and limitations and perform only the nursing functions that fall within their scope of practice and for which they possess the required knowledge, skills, and judgment.*
5. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
2.7 Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.
6. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
2.3.2: *Report any situation where private or confidential information is accessed or disclosed without appropriate consent or legal authority, whether deliberately or through error.*
7. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
1.4: *Respect the rights of all individuals regardless of their diverse values, beliefs and cultures.*
8. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
2.1: *Respect the right and responsibility of clients to be informed and make decisions about their health care.*
9. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
2.7: *Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.*
10. Unethical – This behaviour is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility  
5.7: *Prevent or manage conflict of interest situations.*

11. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.6: *Provide care to each client recognizing their individuality and their right to choice.* And 2.7: *Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.*
12. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.3.1: *Safeguard health and personal information by collecting, storing, using and disclosing it in compliance with relevant legislation and employer policies.*
13. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.4: *Act promptly and appropriately in response to harmful conditions and situations, including disclosing safety issues to appropriate authorities.* And 5.3: *Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable.*
14. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility 3.2: *Participate in activities allowing the profession to evolve to meet emerging healthcare needs.*
15. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.1.1: *Respect and support client choices.*
16. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.3: *Respect and protect client privacy and hold in confidence information disclosed except in certain narrowly defined exceptions.*
17. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.1.4: *Consider with other health care professionals and substitute decision-makers, the best interests of the client and any previously known wishes or advanced directives that apply in situations where the client is incapable of consent.*
18. Unethical – This behaviour contravenes the Code of Ethics Responsibility 5.1: *Demonstrate honesty, integrity and trustworthiness in all interactions.* And 5.3: *Accept responsibility for knowing and acting consistently with the principles, practice standards, laws and regulations under which they are accountable.*
19. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility 4.5: *Respect the expertise of others and share expertise and knowledge.*

20. Ethical – This behaviour is consistent with the Code of Ethics Responsibility 1.6: *Collaborate with clients, their families, and health care colleagues to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and the public.*

## Answers to Final Quiz

- |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. a  | 2. a  | 3. a  | 4. c  | 5. a  | 6. c  |
| 7. a  | 8. b  | 9. a  | 10. b | 11. c | 12. c |
| 13. b | 14. a | 15. c | 16. a | 17. a | 18. b |
| 19. b | 20. b | 21. b | 22. a | 23. c | 24. d |
| 25. d | 26. a | 27. a | 28. e | 29. a | 30. b |
| 31. e | 32. b | 33. d | 34. c | 35. c | 36. b |
| 37. b | 38. c |       |       |       |       |

39. False – They also apply in teaching relationships with students, working with research participants, managing staff, and in working relationships with co-workers.
40. False – Healthy professional boundaries are flexible within the bounds of relevant law and sound professional judgment.
41. True – These types of relationships would go against Ethical Responsibility 2.7: *Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships, while maintaining professional boundaries.*
42. False – Boundaries are unique to each person and the practical nurse must know how to successfully navigate them.
43. True – The following Code of Ethics Responsibility applies: 2.3.1: *Safeguard health and personal information by collecting, storing, using and disclosing it in compliance with relevant legislation and employer policies.*
44. False – This contravenes the LPN Code of Ethics Responsibility 1.2: *Provide only those functions for which they are qualified by education or experience;* and 5.2: *Recognize their capabilities and limitations and perform only the nursing functions that fall within their scope of practice and for which they possess the required knowledge, skills and judgment.*
45. True – The following Code of Ethics Responsibilities may apply: 2.5: *Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client's safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.* And 4.1: *Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.*

46. True – The following Code of Ethics Responsibilities apply: 2.5: *Report to appropriate authorities and take other action in a timely manner to ensure a client’s safety and quality of care when unethical or incompetent care is suspected.* And 4.1: *Take appropriate action to address the unprofessional conduct of other members of the inter-professional team.*
47. False – Scolding clients goes against Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.7: *Develop trusting, therapeutic relationships while maintaining professional boundaries.*
48. True – The following Code of Ethics Responsibilities are relevant: 4.2: *Collaborate with colleagues in a cooperative, constructive and respectful manner with the primary goal of providing safe, competent, ethical, and appropriate care to individuals, families and communities.* And 5.6: *Engage in career-long learning to continuously develop the competencies required to meet the ethical and regulatory requirements of the profession.*
49. True – This is consistent with Code of Ethics Responsibility 2.3.4: *Maintain professional boundaries in the use of electronic media.*
50. False – The following Code of Ethics Responsibility applies: 2.3.3: *Ensure that any discussion / communication of a client (verbal, written or electronic) is respectful and does not identify the client unless appropriate.*

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## 20. Glossary

Here are some terms often used in writings and discussions of ethics in the health care sector.

**Accountable** – being answerable to someone for something; being prepared to provide an explanation for something one has done or not done.

**Advance directive** – is a statement, usually in writing, that indicates how a person wants to be treated if they are no longer able to make their own decisions (e.g. unconscious or demented).

**Advocate** – is to speak out or take action on behalf of another person or group.

**Autonomy** – is one of the principles of medical ethics which states that a competent person has the right to make decisions about what happens to his or her body.

**Confidentiality** – is client information that can only be shared with the client's informed consent, when legally required, or where failure to disclose the information could result in significant harm.

**Compassion** – is an understanding and concern for another person's distress.

**Competence** – is defined as the quality of being functionally proficient in performing the tasks and assuming the role of a specified position with the requisite knowledge, ability, capability, skill, judgment, attitudes and values.

**Consensus** – is a general, but not necessarily a unanimous, agreement.

**Double effect** – refers to a treatment that is normally used to help someone but which may also have an unintended negative effects, e.g., giving morphine to a dying patient will ease pain and suffering while hastening death through suppression of the respiratory system.

**Ethics** – is the study of morality – careful and systematic reflection on, and analysis of, moral decisions and behaviour. Ethics is primarily a matter of “knowing” whereas morality is a matter of “doing.”

**Feeling or desire** – is a subjective approach to moral decision-making and behaviour – what is right, feels right; and what is wrong, feels wrong.

**Habit** – is an efficient method of moral decision-making since there is no need to repeat a systematic decision-making process each time a moral issue arises similar to one that has been dealt with previously.

**Hierarchy** – is an orderly arrangement of people according to different levels of importance/authority from highest to lowest.

**Imitation** – is subordinating one’s judgement about right and wrong to that of another person, such as a role model.

**Intuition** – is an immediate emotional perception of the right way to act in a situation.

**Informed consent** – in ethics this usually refers to the idea that a person must be fully informed and understand the potential benefits and risks of their choice of treatment.

**Justice** – refers to the fairness with respect of distribution of medical resources.

**Obedience** – consists of following the rules or instructions of those in authority, whether you agree with them or not.

**Palliative care** – is an approach to the care of clients, especially those who are likely to die in the near future from a serious, incurable disease that focuses on the client’s quality of life, especially pain control.

**Privacy** – relates to the client’s expectation and right to be treated with dignity and respect and that their most personal information will be protected.

**Rational** – is based on the human capacity for reasoning, i.e. considering arguments for and against a particular action, and making a decision as to which alternative is best in this circumstance.

**Social media** – is a form of electronic communication that includes blogs, social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter), video sites (YouTube), and online chat rooms and forums.

**Virtue** – is the good quality in people, especially in their character and behaviour.

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**NOTES:**