



Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice & Decision-Making Framework

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Preface

The National Health Regulatory Agency (NHRA) is an independent regulatory body for healthcare in the kingdom of Bahrain.

Chaired by His Excellency Lieutenant General Doctor / Sheikh Mohamed Bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa, the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) is the highest Authority of NHRA. The NHRA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for operating NHRA technically, administratively, and financially. In addition, the CEO represents NHRA before the court and in its relationships with other parties.

NHRA is responsible for implementation and development of health regulations in both governmental and private sectors in the Kingdom of Bahrain. For more information about NHRA and its functions, visit our website www.nhra.bh.

Glossary

Accountability: Refers to the individual nurse being responsible and answerable for their own, or others' actions or inactions. This acknowledges a nurse's legal liability for his/her actions (ICN, 2010).

Basic, general nursing education: Is a formally recognized program of study providing a broad and sound foundation in the behavioral, life, and nursing sciences for the general practice of nursing, for a leadership role, and for post-graduate education for specialty or advanced nursing practice (ICN, 2020b).

Competence: Refers to the effective application of a combination of knowledge, skill and judgement demonstrated by an individual in daily practice or job performance. In the performance of nursing roles to the standards required in employment, competence reflects the following:

- knowledge, understanding and judgement.
- A range of skills — cognitive, technical or psychomotor and interpersonal; and a range of personal attributes and attitudes (ICN, 2010).

Delegation: Delegation involves the transfer of responsibility for the performance of a task from one individual to another while the person whose task is being delegated retains accountability for the outcome. It involves assessment of the needs of the client and the abilities of the person being assigned the delegated activities and includes the responsibility of the person whose task is being delegated for the ongoing direct or indirect supervision and monitoring of patient outcome and performance of the individual undertaking the delegated activities (ICN, 2008).

Direct Care: Refers to nursing care provided to individuals or families that is intended to achieve specific health goals or achieve selected health outcomes. Direct care may be provided in a wide range of settings, including acute and critical care, long-term care, home health, community-based settings, and educational settings (AACN, 2015).

Indirect Care: refers to nursing decisions, actions, or interventions that are provided through or on behalf of individuals, families, or groups. These decisions or interventions create the conditions under which nursing care or self-care may occur. Nurses might use administrative decisions, population or aggregate health planning, or policy development to affect health outcomes in this way. Nurses who function in administrative capacities are responsible for direct care provided by other nurses. Their administrative decisions create the conditions under which direct care is provided (AACN, 2015).

License: A permission granted by the Authority to practice a healthcare profession.

Licensing: A process of granting a legally protected professional title by the Authority.

Nursing: Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, education, and participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, are also key nursing roles (ICN, 2009).

Positive Practice Environments: Positive practice environments are health care settings that support excellence and decent work. They have the power to attract and retain staff, improve, quality of care, safety, patient satisfaction, and deliver cost-effective services. (WHPA, 2008).

Qualification: An educational evidence granted by universities, colleges, academic institutes or schools that are nationally recognized or formally recognized.

Responsibility: Refers to a nurse's obligation to perform competently at an acceptable level, the level to which the person has been educated. Responsibility means that a person has an obligation or duty to perform a role or function to an expected standard (ICN, 2010).

Scope of Practice: The range of roles, functions, responsibilities and activities, which a registered/licensed professional is educated for, competent in, and is authorized to perform. It defines the accountability and limits of practice (ICN, 2005).

Supervision: The active process of directing, guiding and influencing the outcome of an individual's performance of a task. Direct supervision refers to the situation when the supervisor is physically present when the task is being done. Indirect supervision occurs when the supervisor is not physically present but communicates instruction, directions and guidelines through various forms of communication – written, verbal or electronic (ICN, 2008).

Introduction

The Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice and Decision-Making Framework in the Kingdom of Bahrain has been developed by the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) in collaboration with practicing nurses/midwives from various work settings, professional nursing organizations/consultants, nurse managers, and nurse educators.

The scope of practice document sets the scope of practice for nurses and midwives practicing in the Kingdom of Bahrain. It should be used as reference for nurses, midwives, health care facilities, nursing educational institutions, other health care professionals and stakeholders in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

In line with current trends, regional and international nursing regulation guidelines, a permissive approach that is less prescriptive was utilized to develop the scope of practice for nursing and midwifery in the kingdom of Bahrain. It provides broad and flexible terms to permit freedom for innovation, growth and change that is consistent with current and future health needs in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Accordingly, the **scope of practice** is not limited to specific tasks, functions or responsibilities but is a combination of knowledge, judgement and skill that allows the nurse/midwife to perform direct care giving and evaluate its impact, advocate for patients and for health, supervise and delegate to others, lead, manage, teach, undertake research and develop health policy for health care systems. The scope of practice is dynamic and responsive to changing health needs, knowledge development, and technological advances (ICN, 2013).

The scope of practice of the individual nurse is influenced by a number of factors including:

- the nurse's educational preparation, professional practice and competence;
- local, national and international guidelines, policies and evidence;
- the practice setting;

- collaborative practice;
- Other factors, such as patient, family and/or community safety, needs and care outcomes (NMBI, 2015).

NHRA is committed to empowering nurses, midwives and employers to assume responsibility and accountability for their professional practice. The Decision-Making Framework detailed in this document, provides guidance to nurses/midwives for making decisions about their own scope of practice.

Employers have a responsibility to support nurses and midwives in practicing to and within their full scope of practice. This includes not placing nurses in situations where they are being asked to practice beyond their level of competence or outside their legal scope of practice and providing practice environments that support safe and competent practice (ICN, 2010).

Definition and Scope of Practice for the General Nurse

The General Nurse (GN) is a person who:

- a) Has successfully completed a programme of basic, general nursing education, that is nationally/internationally recognized and approved by the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the kingdom of Bahrain;
- b) Meets the requirements of licensure and registration within NHRA for entry into the profession to practice nursing and use the title “general nurse,” as well as continues to meet the standards of NHRA for re-licensure;
- c) Demonstrates and maintains competency in accordance with the scope of practice, competency framework, legislative acts and regulations pertaining to nursing practice in the kingdom of Bahrain.

The GN is a self-regulated health care professional who works **autonomously** and in collaboration with others. The GN’s scope of practice is not limited to specific tasks, functions or responsibilities but is a combination of using systematic and ethical approaches and applying knowledge, judgement and skill that authorize the nurse to:

- Practice based on the principles of the NHRA Code of Professional Conduct;
- Assess, plan, implement and evaluate the impact of direct/indirect promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative, palliative or supportive nursing care for individuals, families, groups, or communities and across the care continuum;
- Advocate on behalf of individual patients and their families to make the health system more responsive and relevant to their needs;

- Carry out health care teaching directed towards promotion of health, prevention of illness and/or self-care management of illness;
- Undertake research and develop nursing practice based on critical thinking and evidence-based research;
- Coordinate and collaborate with other members of the health care team to provide comprehensive, safe and competent care across all health care settings and promote and maintain the highest standards of quality in the health services;
- **Delegate** appropriate activities and tasks to other nursing colleagues and healthcare workers and support them through **mentoring**, **monitoring**, and **supervision**, where required;
- Create a positive working environment through supportive leadership and function as an effective member of the health care team at various levels of the health care system;
- Develop health and nursing policy for health care systems, program planning, and setting priorities for allocation of health resources.

Definition and Scope of Practice for the Practical Nurse

The Practical Nurse (PN) is a person who:

- a) Has successfully completed a programme of practical nursing education, that is nationally/internationally recognized and approved by the Higher Education Council (HEC) in the kingdom of Bahrain;
- b) Meets the requirements of licensure and registration within NHRA and use the title “practical nurse,” as well as continues to meet the standards of NHRA for re-licensure;
- d) Demonstrates and maintains competency in accordance with the scope of practice, competency framework, legislative acts and regulations pertaining to the nursing practice in the kingdom of Bahrain.

The PN is a person authorized to **practice within the limits** of a defined scope of practice and **under the supervision** (direct or indirect) of a registered nurse and/or midwife (ICN, 2008). The PN is authorized to practice within the limits of the defined legalized scope of practice, accepts accountability for own decisions and actions, as well as the related outcomes. The PN recognizes the boundaries of the scope of practice and the limits of one’s competence.

The PN is authorized to:

- Practice based on the principles of the NHRA Code of Professional Conduct;
- Accepts **delegated activities** in line with personal level of proficiency and legal scope of practice and provides feedback to persons delegating/assigning activities and supervising work;

- **Under the supervision** of the registered nurse and/or midwife participates in the planning and provision of safe, competent nursing care for individuals, families and the community in a variety of healthcare settings;
- Delivers basic and safe nursing care as prescribed and **delegated** by the registered nurse and/or midwife that is consistent with professional and organizational standards, policies, protocols and procedures.
- Performs care in routine situations and **assists** the registered nurse and/or midwife in carrying out selected aspects of standardized nursing activities/care plans;
- **Seeks guidance** from a registered nurse and/or midwife with the required knowledge, skills and when encountering situations that fall beyond own knowledge, competence or scope of practice;
- Works as a member of a collaborative health care team and contributes to the overall delivery of nursing and midwifery care.

Definition and Scope of Practice for the Specialist Nurse

A Specialist Nurse (SN) is a person who:

- a) Holds a current license as a Generalist Nurse (GN);
- b) Prepared beyond the level of a GN through successful completion of a post-graduate educational programme that meets the prescribed standard for specialist nursing practice (in a branch of clinical nursing field at the diploma, master's, or doctoral level) and is nationally/internationally recognized and approved by the HEC in the kingdom of Bahrain;
- c) Meets the requirements of licensure and registration within NHRA to practice nursing at a specialist level and use the title "specialist nurse," with area of specialty indicated, e.g. Specialist Nurse (Cardiac), as well as continues to meet the standards of NHRA for re-licensure;
- e) Demonstrates and maintains competency in accordance with the scope of practice, competency framework, legislative acts and regulations pertaining to the nursing practice in the kingdom of Bahrain.

The SN is a self-regulated health care professional who works **autonomously** and in collaboration with others. The SN is prepared to build on and **expand** the scope of the GN, through the acquisition of additional knowledge and competencies through formal education for the specialty role. A wider range of responsibility, accountability and autonomy for broader aspects of the management of specialized care are associated with this level of practice. The SN is authorized to function within an **expanded** scope of practice in a field of nursing specialty.

The SN's scope of practice also includes clinical, teaching, administration, research and consultant roles, directed towards the following activities:

- Practice based on the principles of the NHRA Code of Professional Conduct;
- Utilize evidence and contemporary knowledge, skills and clinical judgment in assessing, planning, implementing, evaluating direct/indirect specialized nursing care across healthcare settings;
- Formulates a care plan in a **specialty** with identified care outcomes based on nursing diagnoses, and findings from a nursing and health assessment, inputs from other health team members and nursing practice standards;
- Use a systematic approach and apply evidence-based practice to improve the standards of care and maximize healthcare outcomes of individual patients, families and communities as a whole;
- Provide **specialized** information/consultation through developing educational program, **teaching** and **mentoring**;
- Collaborate and form partnership with other members of multidisciplinary care team to improve and maintain safe, competent and quality healthcare services;
- Develop practice, policies, procedures, and the standards of the specialty services through a range of clinical leadership and professional activities.

Definition and Scope of Practice for the Midwife

The Midwife is a person who:

- a) Has successfully completed a midwifery education programme that is nationally/internationally recognized and approved by the HEC in the kingdom of Bahrain. The educational programme and preparation of Midwives is based on the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice and the Framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education (ICM, 2013 & 2016);
- b) Meets the requirements of licensure and registration within NHRA to practice midwifery and use the title of “midwife,” as well as continues to meet the standards of NHRA for re-licensure;
- c) Demonstrates and maintains competency in accordance with the scope of practice, competency framework, legislative acts and regulations pertaining to the Midwifery practice.

The Midwife is a self-regulated health care professional who works **autonomously** and in collaboration with others. The midwife is a person who is recognized as a responsible and accountable professional. The Midwife’s scope of practice is not limited to specific tasks, functions or responsibilities but is a combination of using systematic and ethical approaches and applying knowledge, judgement and skill that authorize the midwife to:

- Practice based on the principles of the NHRA Code of Professional Conduct;

- Work in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labor and postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn;
- Assess, plan, implement and evaluate care that includes preventative measures, promotion of normal birth, detection of complications in mother and newborn, assessment of medical care or other appropriate assistance and carry out of emergency measures;
- Provide health counselling and education for health care personnel, individual woman, families and the community as a whole; including antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and may extend to women's health, sexual or reproductive health and childcare.
- Coordinate and collaborate with other members of the health care team to provide comprehensive, safe and competent care for childbearing women and their families;
- **Delegate** activities and tasks to other nursing and midwifery personnel and support them through **mentoring, monitoring, and supervision**;
- Undertake research and develop midwifery practice based on evidence-based research to promote and maintain the highest standards of quality in midwifery services;
- Advocate on behalf of childbearing women, infants and their families to make the health system more responsive and relevant to their needs;
- Create a positive working environment through supportive leadership and function as an effective member of the health care team at various levels of the health care system;
- Participate actively with other professionals in policy development regarding women's health, and maternal and child health care.

Definition and Scope of Practice for the Advanced Practice Nurse/Midwife

The Advanced Practice Nurse/Midwife (APN or APM) is a person who:

- a) Holds a current license as a Generalist Nurse (GN) or Midwife;
- b) Has successfully completed an additional graduate education programme (minimum of a master's degree), that prepares the nurse/midwife with expert knowledge base, **complex** decision-making skills and clinical competencies for **advanced** practice (in one of the clinical Nursing/Midwifery specialties) that is nationally/internationally recognized and approved by the HEC in the kingdom of Bahrain;
- c) Meets the requirements of licensure and registration within NHRA to practice nursing/midwifery at the **advanced** practice level and use the title “advanced practice nurse/midwife,” with area of specialty indicated, e.g. APN (Paediatric) or APM, as well as continues to meet the standards of NHRA for re-licensure;
- a) Demonstrates and maintains competency in accordance with the scope of practice, competency framework, legislative acts and regulations pertaining to **advanced** practice nursing in the kingdom of Bahrain.

The APN/APM is a self-regulated health care professional who works **autonomously** and in collaborative teams with other health professionals within an authorized regulatory framework to promote health, prevent disease, and improve access and population health outcomes for a specific patient group or community.

The **advanced** practice scope in this document is based on the International Council of Nurses Guidelines on Advanced Practice Nursing (ICN, 2020a). The **advanced** scope of practice extends

beyond the generalist and specialized nurse/midwife in terms of **advanced** expertise, role functions, and mastery of a specific specialty with an increased and **expanded** level of practice that includes broader and more in-depth accountability.

The APN/APM utilizes advanced nursing/midwifery interventions that influence clinical healthcare outcomes for individuals, families and diverse populations and demonstrates the ability to integrate research, education, clinical management as well as policy and service planning skills. The APN is authorized to provide direct/indirect care:

Direct Care:

Involves direct interaction with patients, families and groups of patients to promote health or well-being and improve quality of life, including:

- Integrates **advanced** nursing skills and knowledge (of wellness, illness, self-care, disease and medical therapeutics) in the holistic assessment of people while focusing on **advanced** nursing diagnosis of symptoms, functional problems and risk behaviors that have etiologies requiring **advanced** nursing interventions to prevent, maintain or alleviate;
- Provide **advanced** nursing/midwifery therapeutic interventions and self-care management education in the management of individual patients, families, populations with common, chronic and **complex** health conditions based on established protocols and evidence-based guidelines;
- Utilizes assessment data, research and theoretical knowledge to design, implement and evaluate nursing interventions that integrate **delegated** medical treatments as needed; and orders **advanced** nursing/midwifery therapeutic interventions;
- Provides **advanced** nursing/midwifery consultation, refers patients and accepts referrals from other services/healthcare professionals to maintain continuity of care based on established protocols;

- **Delegates** activities to other healthcare personnel, according to ability, level of preparation, proficiency and scope of practice;
- Carry out other activities that **extend** beyond the current scope of practice of the **advanced** practice when authorized by NHRA and in accordance with standard protocols and guidelines.

Indirect Care:

Involves indirect provision of care through activities that influence the care of patients, but do not involve direct engagement with populations this includes:

- Serves as a consultant to other nurses/midwives and healthcare professionals in managing highly **complex** patient care problems and in achieving quality, cost-effective outcomes for populations across healthcare settings;
- Develops, plans and directs programs of care for individuals and populations and provides direction to nursing personnel and others in these programs of care;
- Provides leadership in appropriate use of research/evidence in practice innovations to improve healthcare services;
- Develops evidence-based/evidence-informed guidelines or protocols for **advanced** practice care and professional development activities;
- Evaluates patient outcomes and cost-effectiveness of care to identify needs for practice improvements within the clinical specialty or program;
- Serves as a leader of multidisciplinary groups in designing and implementing alternative solutions to patient care issues across the continuum of care;
- Assume a leadership role and engage in health policy development and planning activities to ensure delivery of effective, responsive and quality healthcare services.

Scope of Practice Decision-Making Framework for Nurses and Midwives in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Legislation cannot list every possible activity that a nurse/midwife is or is not permitted to perform. The following **professional decision-making frameworks** were adapted from the ICN regulation series pertaining to the Scope of Nursing Practice and Decision-Making Framework Toolkit (2010).

The professional decision-making frameworks provide guidance to individual nurses/ midwives to make decisions about:

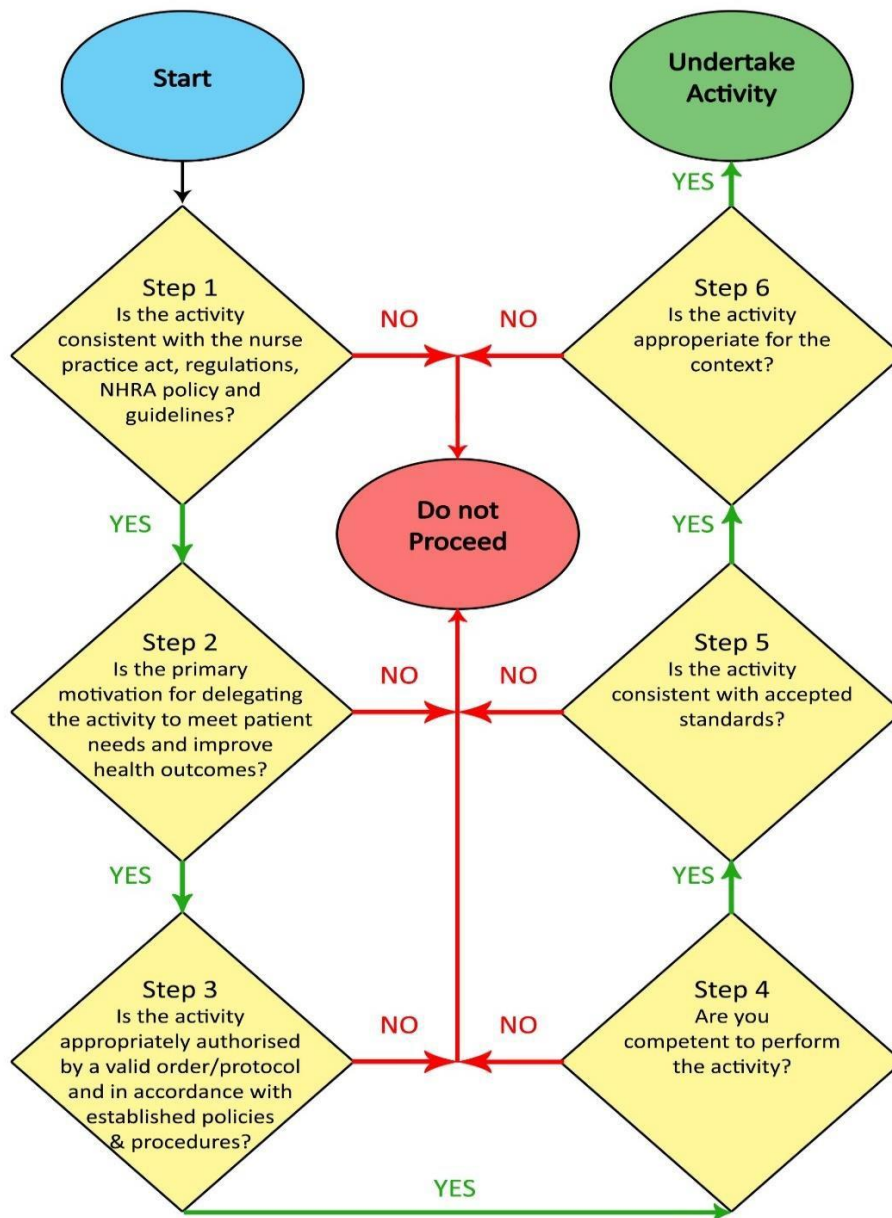
- What activities fall within their own scope when faced with new procedures, protocols and activities in their daily practice [flowchart 1].
- **Delegating** tasks to other nurses or unlicensed health care workers, to ensure that the person who is given the task to carry out is able to provide the care in a safe and competent manner [flowchart 2].

In order to make informed decisions about practice, the decision-making frameworks should be used alongside other professional practice guidelines and standards, including regulations and legislation related to nursing/midwifery, the code of professional conduct, competency standards and policies.

In the decision-making process, if all conditions outlined in the framework are met, then the nursing activity is considered to be within the scope of practice and the nurse can proceed and perform the activity. If any of the elements are not satisfied, the nurse should not proceed with the activity.

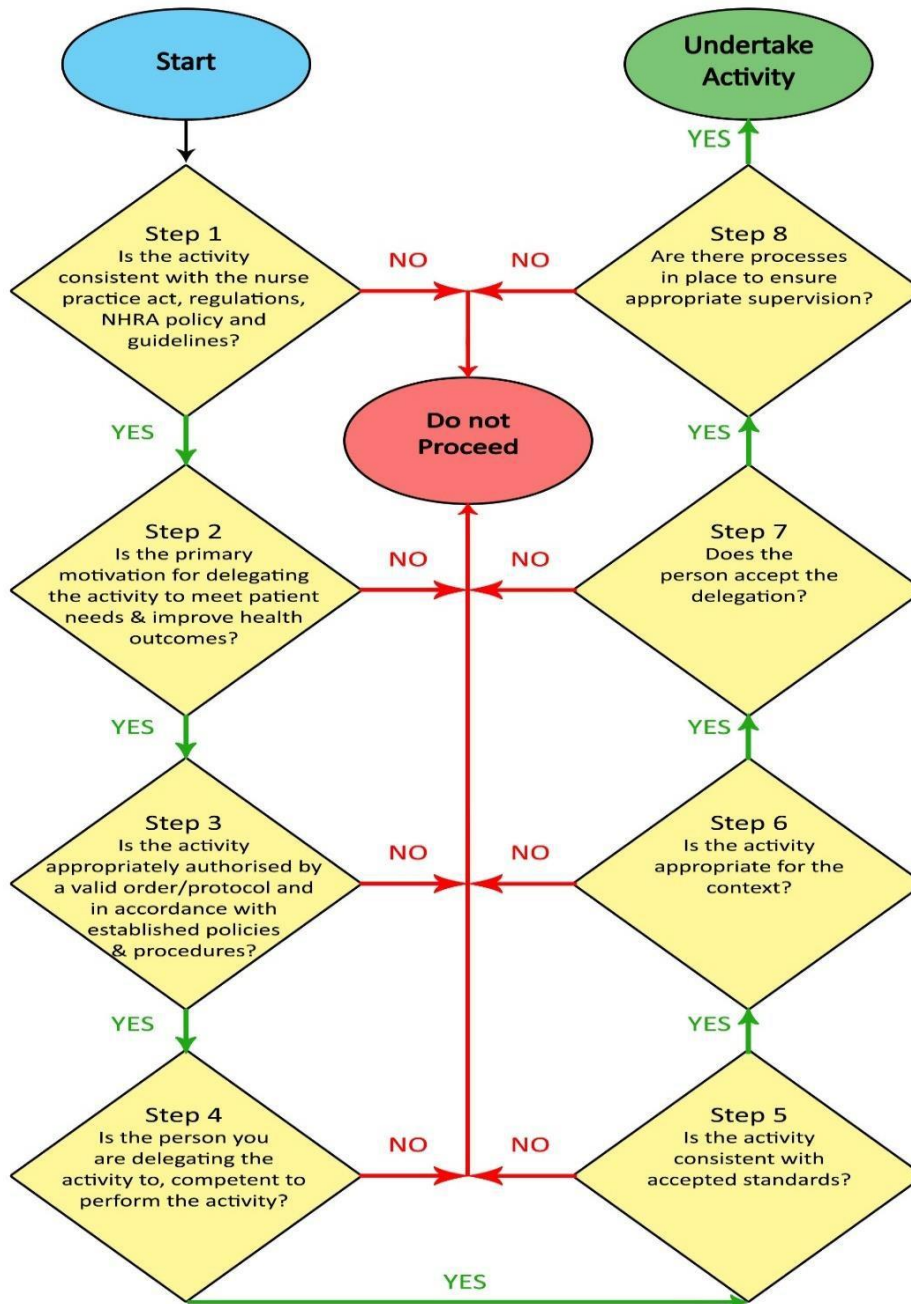
The decision-making frameworks have been designed to reflect the traffic light color-coding where yellow indicates caution and reflective questions for decision making, green suggests safe decisions/practice, and red signifies unsafe activities that are beyond the scope of practice of the individual nurse, midwife or other support health care workers.

Flowchart (1): Making decisions about individual scope of practice:



(Adapted from ICN, 2010)

Flowchart (2): Delegating an Activity:



(Adapted from ICN, 2010)

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