Module 2: Continuing Competence

2.1 Welcome

No narration, only music.
2.2 Topics

Module Topics

- Importance of ongoing learning
- LPN continuing competence program
- Four-step competence program
- Competence development strategies

Narration

JILL: Hi ... I’m Jill, and with me is Carlos. Welcome to Module 2 of the Learning to Learn course.

CARLOS: I see that this module is about the Continuing Competence Program for Alberta Licensed Practical Nurses. What topics are we going to cover?

JILL: The first topic is the importance and benefits of healthcare professionals committing to lifelong learning. Next, we will define and describe continuing competence. We’ll then explain the four-step Continuing Competence Program for LPNs. Finally we’ll look at competence development strategies or the many different ways to learn.

CARLOS: Sounds like some interesting and important topics. Let’s begin.

JILL: Okay.
2.3 Benefits

**Narration**

**JILL:** So Carlos, what are some reasons that LPNs should engage in ongoing professional development?

**CARLOS:** The most obvious reason is to keep our nursing knowledge and skills up-to-date.

**JILL:** Yes, in order to be effective nurses, we must maintain and enhance our professional competence. Any other reasons?

**CARLOS:** Another important reason is to keep our nursing licenses! In Alberta, all regulated health professions are required by law to have a continuing competence program. LPNs must meet the Continuing Competence Program requirements in order to renew their annual registration and practice permit.

**JILL:** And the reason healthcare professionals are required to participate in a continuing competence program is to stay current in practice to support the overall mandate of public protection. Maintaining professional competence is important in ensuring that practitioners provide safe and ethical care to clients and patients.

**CARLOS:** Another good reason to keep on learning is that the more I know, the more comfortable, confident and satisfied I am with my nursing practice and profession.

**JILL:** Yes, I agree with you. Related to that reason is that by developing and expanding our competence, we’ll have more options and choices regarding future work opportunities.

**CARLOS:** So I guess this means that to be a competent LPN we are required to engage in continuous professional learning.
2.4 Competence

Professional Competence
Proficient in doing job

Competency includes:
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes
- Judgment

Narration

JILL: Let’s back up for a moment and define professional competence.

CARLOS: To me professional competence is being proficient in doing a job.

JILL: Yes, that is correct. The technical definition is that competency is being able to perform the work task. Being competent requires a person to have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment to do an effective job.

CARLOS: And what is a continuing competence program?
2.5 Continuing competence

Continuing Competence Program

Requirement for annual registration
Planned and organized learning
Must meet priority learning needs
Should NOT be solely based on:
- Personal interests
- Convenience and availability
- Recurring certification requirements

Narration

JILL: A Continuing Competence Program or CCP is a requirement for Alberta LPNs to renew their annual registration with their College. The continuing competence program is a process assisting LPNs with maintaining their competence through the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgments necessary to work in their profession. The CCP is a way of supporting a high-level of expertise, competence and appropriate ethics in performing the job. Most regulated health professions have some form of continuing competence program in place.

CARLOS: I believe that one of the important components of the College’s Continuing Competence Program is that it focuses on the priority learning needs of the LPN.

JILL: Yes, research has shown that much unstructured, informal professional development involves topics of personal interest; learning opportunities that are convenient and available; or, recurring certification requirements such as CPR and First Aid. This haphazard approach to learning rarely results in development of competencies that are critical to effective job performance. We’ll talk more about identifying learning needs shortly.

CARLOS: Great!
2.6 CCP requirements

**Narration**

**JILL:** As required by Regulation, the LPN Continuing Competence Program consists of three requirements. The first is that LPNs complete a self-assessment based on the Competency Profile, to indicate areas where continuing competence activities can be undertaken for the next registration year.

**CARLOS:** The second is that a learning plan be prepared that identifies the continuing competence goals for the next registration year and the learning activities to be undertaken to achieve those goals.

**JILL:** And the third is that the LPN provide a list of continuing competence activities undertaken during the past registration year. LPNs must meet these continuing competence requirements to renew their practice permit on an annual basis.

**CARLOS:** I see that there is one additional, relatively new requirement.

**JILL:** That’s right Carlos. Beginning in 2019, practice hours became part of the Continuing Competence Program. LPNs are required to have a minimum of 1,000 practice hours in the preceding four years in order to maintain their eligibility for a practice permit.

**CARLOS:** That’s good to know.
2.7 Competence development

Narration

**JILL**: Let’s take a look at the framework of the College’s Continuing Competence Program for Alberta LPNs. There are four steps or components to this program.

**CARLOS**: The first step is an annual self-assessment to identify the priority learning needs of the LPN for the upcoming registration year.

**JILL**: The second step is to prepare a learning plan for the upcoming registration year specifying goals and planned learning activities.

**CARLOS**: The third step is to implement the learning plan by undertaking the continuing competence activities and reporting on the number of practice hours.

**JILL**: And the final step is that the College performs an audit of selected LPNs to ensure that they have met all of the CCP requirements. We will now take a more detailed look at each of these steps.
2.8 Step 1: Self-assessment

**Step 1: Self-Assessment**

Prior to registration renewal
Self-reflection on practice
Review LPN Competency Profile
Require increased skill or knowledge
Areas where practice can expand
Education to maintain competence

**Narration**

**CARLOS**: LPNs are encouraged to complete their self-assessment every year prior to completing their registration renewal application. By doing this self-assessment, they are in a better position to identify their learning plan for the upcoming year.

**JILL**: Self-assessment is a process where the LPN reflects on the knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgments they currently demonstrate. The process of self-assessment is based on individual reflection. The processes and outcome may differ between individual LPNs.

**CARLOS**: Using the Competency Profile to guide this process, an LPN can identify areas of practice that require increased skill or knowledge. The LPN can use the self-assessment process to identify areas of interest where their practice can expand; and also areas in which further education is needed in order to maintain competence.
2.9 Step 2: Learning Plan

Narration

**JILL:** LPNs must submit an annual Learning Plan for the upcoming registration year. The Learning Plan is developed through the self-assessment process and consists of a minimum of two competencies that are identified using the Competency Profile. The College’s registration year is January 1 to December 31.

**CARLOS:** The learning plan must include four components. The first is continuing competence goals. The LPN must identify the major competency area and the competency as listed in the Competency Profile to determine the learning goal.

**JILL:** The second component is resources and strategies. The LPN must identify HOW the continuing competence goal will be achieved. Various methods can be used to meet the goal including books, videos, articles, workshops, in-services, conferences, courses, and so on.

**CARLOS:** The third component of the learning plan is a target date. The LPN has to identify a timeline for completing the continuing competence goal.

**JILL:** And the final component is evaluation. The LPN will describe how their knowledge, skills, abilities and judgments may change as a result of meeting the learning goals.

**CARLOS:** Meeting the mandatory requirements of the CCP learning plan includes a) identifying a learning plan for the upcoming registration year, and b) declaring compliance with the learning plan for the previous registration year.

**JILL:** Yes, that is an important point and a good reminder.
2.10 Step 3: Learning activities

Narration

**JILL:** Step 3 includes Completion of Evidence of Learning and Practice Hours. Both of these are required to fulfil the continuing competence expectation and maintain registration with the College. Evidence of learning requires the LPN to complete and document the learning as outlined in the Learning Plan. This includes keeping evidence that they participated in the learning activity.

**CARLOS:** Some ways to record evidence of completing a learning activity include: transcripts and certificates ... attendance records ... Alberta Health Services learning link records ... workshop or conference programs or brochures ... verification of learning in a letter from an employer ... and pictures or screen shots of books, web pages, journal articles and so on.

**JILL:** LPNs are required to retain continuing competence information including their self-assessment, learning plan, and evidence of continuing competence activities for a minimum of four years. That information may be requested by the College if they are selected for an audit.
2.11 Step 3: Practice hours

Narration

CARLOS: Practice hours worked during the registration year are declared on the registration renewal application. This declaration should include the hours the LPN expects to work until the end of the year.

JILL: These hours are used as a way of ensuring ongoing competence as an LPN. LPNs are required to practice a minimum of 1,000 hours in the preceding four-year period. The hours reported may be validated through the CCP audit process.
2.12 Step 4: Audit

**Narration**

**JILL**: Each year, LPNs are selected to participate in the Audit process. The Audit process verifies that LPNs have met the requirements of the Continuing Competence Program.

**CARLOS**: The audit validates compliance with the declaration made on the registration renewal application that the learning plan activities have been completed and that the practice hours have been accurately reported; and that appropriate documentation and/or response to questions have been submitted.
2.13 Non-compliance

Narration

**JILL:** LPNs who do NOT meet the requirements of the Continuing Competence Program at the time of renewal may have their practice permit suspended for the upcoming registration year.

**CARLOS:** LPNs declare compliance with the Program through submitting their learning and practice hours on the renewal application.

**JILL:** A final point is that if it is determined through the audit process that the LPN provided false information, the LPN’s actions may be referred to the Complaints Director.

This brings us to the end of the College’s Continuing Competence Program. We’ll conclude this module by describing some considerations regarding ways to learn.
2.14 Learning format

Learning Format
Your most effective learning format will be influenced by:

- personal commitment and time
- need for a flexible schedule
- resources—money, technology, transportation, support group

Narration

JILL: Learning can be done in many different formats. The format that works best for you will be influenced by several factors. These include your personal commitment and the time you have available to learn.

CARLOS: Your choice of learning format will also depend on your need for a flexible schedule; and the resources you have available such as money, technology and knowledge about how to use it, transportation, and support groups.

JILL: So it is important for you to choose the learning format that works best for you. Otherwise, it may be difficult to achieve the objectives you laid out in your Learning Plan.
2.15 Competence strategies

**Narration**

**JILL:** LPNs need to be reminded that there are many different ways to maintain and enhance their professional competencies.

**CARLOS:** In addition to the formal credit courses offered by educational institutions, there are many online courses and webinars. Many excellent online courses are available on the College’s website.

**JILL:** Other ways of participating in professional development include review of educational videos and professional publications ... participating in seminars and workshops ... attending professional conventions and conferences ... and doing case reviews and client rounds.
2.16 More strategies

More Competence Strategies

More ways you can learn:
- Presentations at meetings and conferences
- Profession AGM and meetings
- Professional committee work
- Revision of policies and procedures
- Training / mentoring staff or students
- Study groups or clubs

Narration

CARLOS: And here are a few more ways to learn.

JILL: Preparing and doing presentations at professional meetings and conferences ... attending and actively participating in the College’s events and meetings ... chairing or being a member of one of the College’s committees ... helping develop and/or revise policies and procedures for the College and/or employer ... providing training and mentoring for new staff and students ... and setting up and being part of a study group or club.

CARLO: WOW that is some list!

JILL: Yes, there are many, different ways to learn. So there are no excuses about not being able to find a suitable learning activity! Select the ones that work best for you!
2.17 Summary

**Summary**

Importance of ongoing learning  
LPN continuing competence program  
Four-step competence program  
Competence development strategies

**Narration**

JILL: Well, that brings us to the end of this second module. Carlos, care to summarize what we covered?

CARLOS: Okay! We began this module by discussing the importance of ongoing learning and professional development. We then defined competency and a continuing competence program. Next, we took a fairly detailed look at the four-step LPN Continuing Competence Program. The four steps were: self-assessment, learning plan, continuing competence activities; and audit. We also explained a new CCP requirement – that of keeping and recording annual practice hours.

We then listed the many different ways that learning and professional development could take place. Did I miss anything?

JILL: You’ve covered the key points. Goodbye for now. Carlos and I will see you again in the next module.

CARLOS: Bye.
2.18 The End

The End

You have now completed this video presentation. What would you like to do next? Click the appropriate button below.

DO AGAIN    EXIT

Narration

No narration, only music.