

Midwifery practice decisions summary guide

NOTE: the order in which these issues are considered may vary according to context

Identify client need/benefit

- Has there been a comprehensive assessment by the midwife to establish the woman or newborn's needs or a group's need for improved access to care?
- Has there been appropriate consultation with the woman/her family/significant others?
- Is the activity in the woman or newborn's best interests?

Reflect on scope of practice and midwifery practice standards

- Is this activity within the scope of practice for midwifery?
- Have legislative requirements (eg specific qualification needed) been met?
- If authorisation by a regulatory authority is needed to perform the activity, does the person have it or can it be obtained prior to acting?
- Will performance comply with midwifery practice standards/evidence?
- If other health professionals should assist, supervise or perform the activity, are they available?

Consider context of practice/organisational support

- Is this activity/practice supported by the organisation?
- If organisational authorisation is needed, does the person have it or can it be obtained before acting?
- Is the skill mix in the organisation adequate for the level of support/supervision needed to safely perform the activity?
- Have potential risks been identified and strategies to avoid or minimise them been identified and implemented?
- Is there a system for ongoing education and maintenance of competence in place?
- If this is a new practice:
 - Are there processes in place for maintaining performance into the future?
 - Have relevant parties been involved in planning for implementation?

Select appropriate, competent person to perform the activity

- Have the roles and responsibilities of midwives and non-midwives been considered?
- Does the person who is to perform the activity have the knowledge, skill, authority and ability to do so either autonomously or with education, support and supervision?
- Have all factors associated with delegation been considered?
- Is the required level of education, supervision/support available?
- Is the person confident and do they understand their accountability and reporting responsibilities in performing the activity?

YES TO ALL

ACTION

Proceed to:

- perform the activity OR
- delegate to a competent person
- document the decision and the actions

EVALUATE

NO TO ANY

ACTION

- Consult/seek advice (unit manager, facility director, other health professional) OR
- Refer/collaborate OR
- Plan to enable integration/practice changes if appropriate (including developing/implementing policies, gaining qualifications as needed)

Document and evaluate and, if change still desired, commence process again