Scope of Practice for Certified Lactation Counselor® (CLC®) Certificants

The Certified Lactation Counselor® is a professional lactation care provider who has demonstrated the necessary skills, knowledge and competence to provide clinical breastfeeding support and management to families who are thinking about breastfeeding or who have questions or problems during the course of breastfeeding/lactation.

The CLC® credential is certified by the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice (ALPP). This certification programme is accredited under standard ISO/IEC 17024:2012 with the ANSI American National Accreditation Board (ANAB).

This Scope of Practice includes the activities and skills for which CLC certificants are educated and in which they have demonstrated competency and are authorized to perform. CLC certificants provide lactation counseling and support through the clinical application of their knowledge and skills to evaluate individuals, identify issues or predisposition to potential issues, educate clients they work with, develop care plans for those individuals, and provide comprehensive counseling on how to address the complex problems, concerns, worries and questions of their clients related to breastfeeding and human lactation.

Thus, CLC certificants have demonstrated the skill, knowledge and competence to support families, including, but not limited to, providing the following services:

1. Conducting comprehensive clinical assessments related to breastfeeding and human lactation, including taking a comprehensive maternal and infant feeding history.
2. Evaluating breastfeeding and milk transfer using evidence-based tools.
3. Developing an evidence-based care plan specific to the needs identified through assessment and counseling and implement it to help clients meet their personal breastfeeding goals, while incorporating cultural humility and social appropriateness.
4. Constructing and maintaining conditions that predispose an uncomplicated breastfeeding experience through counseling, education, clinical management and support, such as providing counseling milk supply challenges, breastfeeding-related pain and infant weight gaining.
5. Facilitating and educating on breastmilk collection strategies, such as the skills required for hand expression of breastmilk and knowledge and skills to utilize commercial pumps.
6. Assessing for, monitoring and evaluating physical, behavioral, cultural and social conditions that predispose both uncomplicated breastfeeding experiences and complex breastfeeding experiences.
    a. Facilitating successful lactation in event of maternal health conditions and treatments;
    b. Addressing maternal-related challenges as they relate to infant feeding;
    c. Facilitating breastfeeding in infants with special health needs, including the premature infant, cleft lip and/or palettes; paralysis; etc.
    d. Counseling and educating individuals appropriately regarding mood and anxiety disorders in the post-partum period, including utilizing tools for assessment.

7. Assessing ability for sustained lactation during separation from infants due to various reasons, including natural disasters, emergencies and war.
8. Using counseling skills and education techniques that enhance competent and supportive clinical practice.
9. Providing evidence-based information regarding breastfeeding and medications, tobacco use, alcohol and illicit drugs.
10. Providing evidence-based information regarding complementary and alternative therapies.
11. Working collaboratively as members of the healthcare team and to provide referrals to other providers as needed on the continuum of the healthcare team.
12. Identifying and recognizing violations of the WHO's Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (i.e. powdered infant formula advertisements in healthcare settings; sponsored social media posts; incorrect preparation incorrect preparation instructions on powdered infant formula can labels; etc.)
13. Applying the concept of an individualized approach to counseling and management of breastfeeding and lactation from preconception through weaning.
14. Assessing physical, nutritional and psychosocial aspects and the mental status of the breastfeeding dyad.
15. Using appropriate, effective and client-centered communication skills.
16. Identifying opportunities to offer information/education within the counseling encounter to individuals, whole family constellations, community and the healthcare team, as well as the ability to counsel and educate during pregnancy and beyond regarding breastfeeding/lactation.
17. Recognizing own and others' attitudes, values and expectations about infant feeding and healthy lifestyles.
18. Identifying and advocating for aspects of breastfeeding management programs that facilitate optimal health outcomes.
19. Demonstrating knowledge of programs, policies and legislation on state, national and international levels that promote, protect and support breastfeeding.
20. Facilitating the development of, and advocate for, public health strategies and/or policies that serve to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
21. Participating as a member of the healthcare team by coordinating care consistent with standards of professional ethics and behavior.

Thus, CLC certificants are committed to:

1. Promoting breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding and care.
2. Counseling and educating pregnant individuals and families regarding breastfeeding.
3. Providing care supportive of the whole family constellation when providing breastfeeding/lactation support.
4. Maintaining knowledge and skills through regular continuing education.
5. Reporting safety issues to the appropriate authority, following the laws relating to confidentiality.

6. Assuring that documentation is factual, accurate, timely, organized and compliant with standards outlined in the ALPP Code of Ethics and Documentation Guidelines for CLCs, as well as those specified by specific agencies or legal entities.
7. Reporting violations of the Scope of Practice to ALPP, as outlined in the Code of Ethics for CLCs.
8. Disclosing any financial or other conflicts of interest in relevant organizations providing goods or services, as outlined in the Code of Ethics for CLCs.
9. Ensuring that professional judgement is not influenced by any commercial considerations, as outlined in the Code of Ethics for CLCs.
10. Notifying ALPP if convicted of criminal misconduct, or if sanctioned by another profession, as outlined in the Code of Ethics for CLCs.
11. Adhering to all aspects of the Code of Ethics for CLCs, as well as all laws pertinent to the community in which the CLC practices.