

RETIRED DOCUMENT

This document is retired, effective April 1, 2026, corresponding with the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA) in-force date. As this document is retired, it is not considered **standard** or **guidance** under the HPOA. However, until it is replaced by a HPOA-compliant resource, licensees may find it useful as general information for their practice.



College of

HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS OF BC



Physical Therapists

Assessment of Risk - Assigning a Task to a PTSW

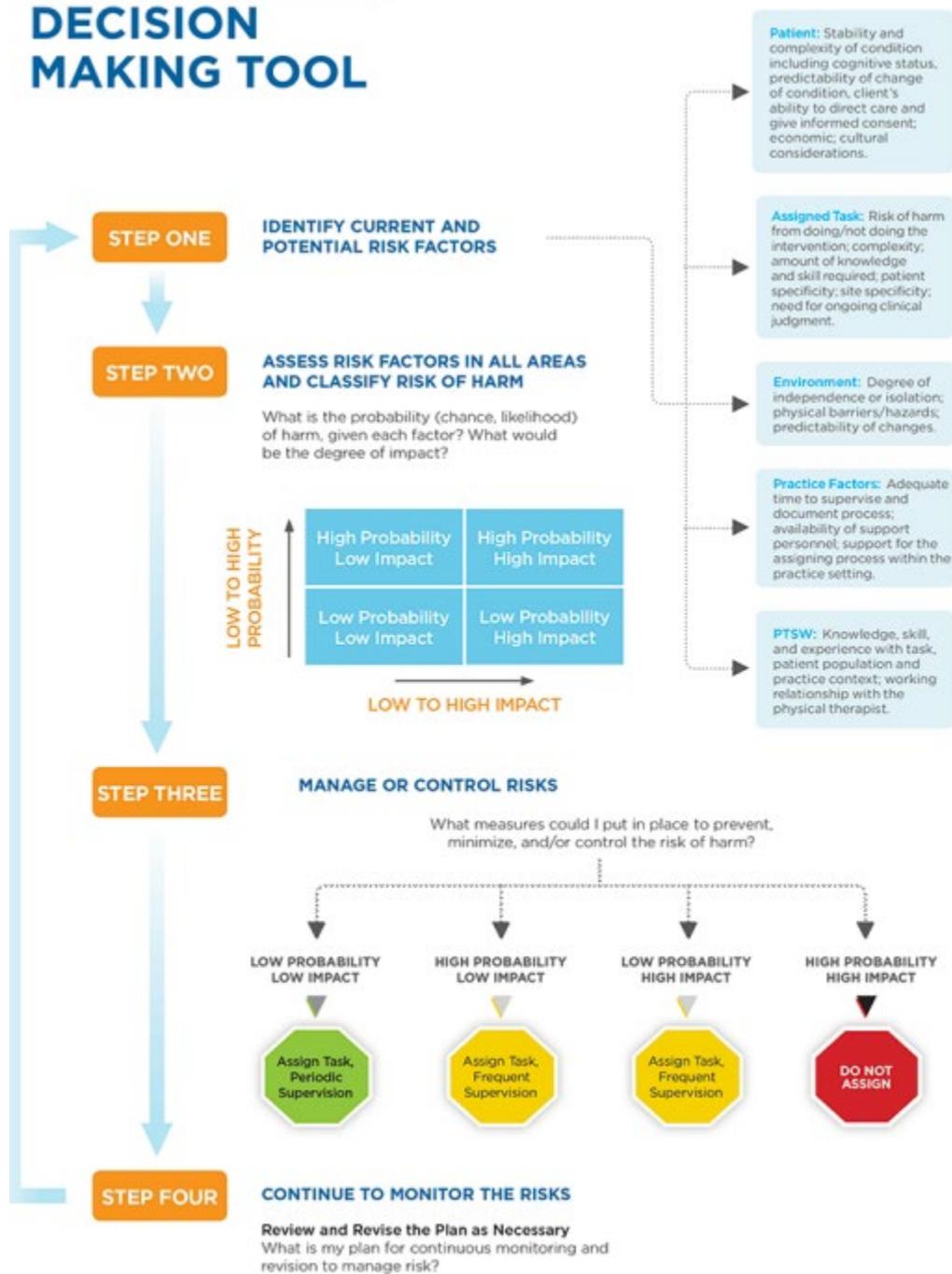
Physical therapists often work with physical therapist support workers (PTSWs) who provide physical therapy services to clients under supervision. Physical therapists are accountable for client care and for supervision of the PTSW. They are expected to assess the competence of the PTSW and to consider the level of risk of the task being assigned before formally assigning the task to a PTSW, in accordance with the Practice Standards, especially the Standard of Practice: Supervision and Standard of Practice: Documentation.

A few things to keep in mind when assessing the level of risk:

- Risk requires consideration of many aspects of your practice:
 - The status of the client – stable/predictable or unpredictable
 - The competence / experience of the PTSW, including with the particular task you are considering for assignment. They may have many years of experience with some clients or on a different unit, but limited experience with this particular client or on this particular unit.
 - Your own competence / experience with this particular PTSW, this particular client, this unit, the particular task you are considering for assignment.
 - The level of supervision of the PTSW required (direct / indirect) and your availability to provide that level of supervision.
- The algorithm below has been designed to help physical therapists through the decision-making process as they consider the risks in assigning a task to a PTSW.



DECISION MAKING TOOL



Adapted with permission from College of Occupational Therapists of British Columbia (2011). Supervising Support Personnel. Retrieved from https://cotbc.org/wp-content/uploads/COTBC_Practice-Guideline_Supervision2011_2.pdf.