

Personal Support Worker

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Personal Support Worker program prepares students to deliver appropriate short or long-term care assistance and support services in either a long-term care facility, acute care facility, community or in home care. The program will educate and train graduates with the necessary tools and skills to deliver appropriate, timely, and respectful client-focused care to the persons with cognitive impairment or mental health issues, newborns and children of all ages and elderly, persons with disabilities, those recovering from illness, surgery or injuries and their families.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Career paths are wide and varied. Successful graduates can expect careers in long-term care facilities, private home care and hospital settings.

CERTIFICATION

- National Association of Career Colleges for Personal Support Workers
- WHMIS Awareness Certificate
- St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid with Heartstart

PREREQUISITES

- Grade 12 or equivalent or mature student status
- Clear Conduct Certificate
- Vulnerable Sector Search
- Clear medical certificate indicating current immunization and free from communicable diseases
- Demonstrated fluency in English (oral and written)

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must obtain an overall grade, in each module of at least 70% in order to graduate and receive a diploma. A student must complete all requirements of Student Success Strategies as well as the Field Placement requirements.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Course	Hours
Student Success Strategies	20
PSW Foundations	55
Safety and Mobility	40
Body Systems	30
Assisting with Personal Hygiene	30
Abuse and Neglect	15
Household Management, Nutrition, and Hydration	30
Care Planning/ Restorative Care/ Electronic Documentation/ Working in the Community	30
Assisting the Family/ Growth and Development	25
Assisting the Dying Person	30
Assisting with Medications	20
Cognitive/ Mental Health Issues and Brain Injuries	40
Health Conditions	45
Acute Care	80
Software Lab: Computer Fundamentals	40
Career Planning and Preparation Level I	20
Career Planning and Preparation Level II	20
Field Placement I	3 Weeks
Field Placement II	3 Weeks
Field Placement III	3 Weeks
Total	35 Weeks

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MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

In this orientation module, emphasis is placed on thinking about achieving success from Day One. This module stresses the importance of developing non-technical skills to enhance personal, academic, and career success. These skills include effective goal setting, understanding learning styles, practical time management, memory and test-taking techniques, maintaining motivation, efficient note taking along with money management and writing techniques.

PSW Foundations

This module provides an overview of the Personal Support Worker role in a variety of settings. Students will learn the principles of client-centered versus client-directed care, emphasizing the individuality of the client and his/her relationship with family, friends, and others. This module introduces the concept of individuality of all persons, their experiences, rights, interests, beliefs, and needs. Students will be introduced to the role and scope of responsibilities of PSWs, including the variety of settings, work relationships, stress and time management, and applicable legislation. Consequences of exceeding the scope of the PSW role will also be covered. This module will also introduce students to interpersonal skills and communications, including conflict resolution and problem solving.

Safety and Mobility

This module deals with aspects of safety as they relate to both the consumer/client and the worker. One of the fundamental activities of the Personal Support Worker is assisting the consumer/client with routine activities of living. It is essential that the PSW provide assistance in a manner that is effective, safe, and provides for client comfort. As part of this, the PSW must be aware of potential risks posed by unsafe equipment or settings and the appropriate actions to take if unsafe situations are identified. Infection control methods will be taught, as infections can cause distress for both the consumer/client and the worker. This module will also discuss body mechanics as well as consistency in transferring, lifting techniques, and the use of equipment to increase safety and reduce client anxiety, confusion, and dependency. Students will also learn the importance of proper positioning in a bed or chair for the comfort and safety of the client.

Body Systems

This module will introduce the student to the basics of anatomy and physiology. Students will gain an understanding of human body systems in order to apply that knowledge in their daily work as a Personal Support Worker. These body systems are: the musculoskeletal, digestive, urinary, integumentary, reproductive, cardiovascular, respiratory, nervous, and endocrine. Common disorders and age-related changes for each body system will also be covered.

Assisting with Personal Hygiene

PSWs must have the knowledge, skill, and sensitivity to provide appropriate assistance to another person, since a significant number of clients for whom they provide service have disabilities that affect their ability to look after their personal hygiene. The Personal Support Worker will assist clients with all activities or routines of daily living. These tasks include bathing, grooming, mobility considerations, toileting, and skin care. This module will consider caring for the ill, disabled, injured, and/or a confused

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client. Frailness, dignity and levels of dependence will be considered. Personal hygiene involves personal safety, self-esteem, and dignity considerations.

Knowledge about the structure, function, ageing changes, and common conditions of the skin is reinforced in this module. Personal care measures around the clock will be considered. A focus on humanistic health care will build the foundation of this module. Oral care, perineal care, infection control, bathing techniques, grooming, dressing, bed making, shaving, hair care, skin care, and much more will be covered in this unit.

Abuse and Neglect

Family violence is a significant aspect of current society, incorporating child abuse, spousal abuse, and elder abuse. Research also indicates an increased awareness among support workers of abusive behaviour toward clients. This module introduces students to the concepts of family violence and abuse, including its possible signs, as well as appropriate actions to be taken if abuse is suspected, including legal requirements. Personal beliefs and attitudes about family violence and abuse are examined, as is the concept of worker abuse of the client. Finally, abuse of the worker is discussed. Personal Support Workers identify the concept of abuse and are able to recognize both causes and indicators. They are able to identify the requirements of legislation and to respond in accordance with legislation, employer policy, and provisions of the service contract or support plan. They recognize that the PSW may also be the focus of abuse.

Household Management, Nutrition, and Hydration

In this module students will learn to assist the client with their nutritional needs, household activities, and household management according to client preferences, comfort, and safety within employer guidelines as required. Nutritional needs include planning balanced nutritious menus, preparing shopping lists, shopping, safe handling of food, storage, and specific cooking techniques. Special dietary needs of infants, pregnant and nursing mothers, persons with specific conditions (diabetes, feeding tubes, etc.), as well as persons with specific cultural and religious preferences will be addressed. Students will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate skills in a lab environment.

Care Planning/ Restorative Care/ Electronic Documentation/ Working in the Community

Support of various types is the main function of the PSW. Yet, support is more than providing help – it relies on a number of factors, not the least of which are skill and sensitivity. Optimal support refers to the ability to provide sufficient support to assist clients to do what they wish without inhibiting them. This module builds on the materials presented in the introductory module PSW Fundamentals. It identifies the support to be provided and the significance of the support to the client, and of the need for the support. Supporting the client to relearn/regain routine abilities and issues of the rights of the client as a receiver of support will be presented. The care plan or service contract is the framework within which the worker provides support to the client. The worker must know the purpose of planning, the ways in which planning is done, and the persons who are involved, including client, support workers, caregivers, and professionals. As members of the support team, PSWs will learn about implementing parts of the care plan and communicating information accurately and without judgment. These activities are conducted in accordance with employer guidelines (agency or client). Students will also be introduced to working in the community health care environment, providing support to patients and families in communities, including Individual Homes and Retirement Homes, Long Term Care Facilities, Acute Care Settings and Acquired Brain Injury Programs.

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Assisting the Family/ Growth and Development

This module builds a foundation for students to understand family characteristics in terms of structure, functions, roles, lifestyles, and relationships. The influence of cultural values, practices, religious beliefs as well as the effects of illness, stress, disability on family relationships will be emphasized as central to the PSWs ability to provide effective support. This module also explores the role of the PSW in providing respite and assistance to families and their children, including those with special needs. Observation of selected commonly occurring conditions related to family functioning and life cycle events are included. A central focus is on the need for awareness of and sensitivity to family reactions to the presence of the PSW, family routines, preferences, and involvement in decision-making. Assisting the family with specific practical approaches in balancing care giving and rest, skills related to infant and childcare, as well as assisting a child with special needs are addressed. The stages of growth and development throughout the life cycle are also discussed.

Assisting the Dying Person

In this module, students discuss the concept of dying as a part of life and the possible impact of life-threatening illness on the person and their family. Students will also examine personal beliefs about life-threatening illness, dying, and the provision of support to the dying person and their family and friends. Assisting the dying person to maintain a desired lifestyle and respecting their right to make decisions with regard to support are also discussed. Specific approaches within the scope of the support worker to reduce discomfort or pain within the context of a plan of support/care are covered. Care of the person at the time of death, care of the body after death, as well as any procedures that must be followed are discussed.

Assisting with Medications

The PSW's ability to assist a client with medication is essential in supporting client independence or in supporting a family caregiver to attend to tasks or take needed respite. Students gain basic knowledge of the drugs used in the treatment of common diseases and disorders, including drug classification, use, therapeutic effects, side/adverse effects, brand/generic names, dosage forms, routes of administration, and directions for use of these medications. Students will identify purposes of medication, required instruction/information about medications to be administered, and cautions with regard to medications.

Students will develop and demonstrate skill in reading and interpreting information on prescription containers and demonstrate assistance with oral/topical medications, as well as eye, ear, and nose drops. The importance of observation for both desired and undesired outcomes and procedures to be followed in the event of concern about or problems with medications will be discussed. PSWs are able to provide specific assistance with medications (oral, topical, eye, nose or ear drops) to the client, in keeping with the directions stated in the client care/support plan, and under the direction and monitoring of an appropriate person, whether health professional, caregiver, or family member. ***It is understood that this assistance is provided on the basis of case-by-case instruction by the appropriate person and cannot be generalized among clients or between support workers.***

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Cognitive/ Mental Health Issues and Brain Injuries

Personal Support Workers recognize that behaviours or changes in behaviour can be related to illness or other conditions such as cognitive impairment, brain injury, substance abuse or mental illness. They use approaches and techniques to assist clients with these changes or conditions in keeping with the care/support plan and report observations to the appropriate team member. They also identify factors that can increase the risk of suicide, and recognize signs of possible suicidal behaviour. This module introduces students to common psychiatric conditions (affective disorders and schizophrenia), substance abuse, cognitive impairment, and brain injuries. The possibility of multiple conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and depression will be discussed. The role of the family caregiver as well as the importance of observation, documentation, and reporting will be reviewed.

Health Conditions

As the result of an ongoing condition, many clients will require the assistance of another person in order to accomplish routine activities of living. Although PSWs are not expected to make functional assessments, they do require an understanding of the effects of disability, disease, or condition on functioning in order to provide appropriate assistance. As partners in a support or care team (along with the client and others), PSWs need to understand why, what, when, and how maintenance, rehabilitation, and restorative care are used to benefit the client. They will likely assist the client in a variety of activities, and must be able to interpret and carry out the instructions of clients and professionals involved with the client so the client receives the maximum benefit from their assistance.

This module introduces students to basic concepts of assistance as well as the general effects on the person of common disabilities, ongoing conditions, and diseases. Focusing on the importance of providing support safely, effectively, and comfortably, students will gain skill in necessary techniques. Concepts of maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration are discussed, as is the importance of the support team in providing assistance. Activities will be discussed that require additional training, who is responsible for providing the training, and transferability of these additional skills.

Acute Care

This provides you with the additional knowledge and skills you need to support clients in the acute care hospital setting. You will learn to assist the health care team with measuring height, weight and vital signs, heat and cold applications, meeting client oxygen needs, physical examinations, peri-operative care, medications and enteral nutrition, IV therapy. You will also learn urinary and fecal elimination and wound care.

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Software Lab: Computer Fundamentals

Through a combination of theory and hands-on-practice, this module examines the role and use of the computer in today's workplace. Emphasis is placed on those computers outfitted with the Microsoft Windows operating system. Students will review basic computer concepts, Windows OS usage, and complete hands-on training exercises in business-standard software applications, including Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Word. Keyboarding skills are also honed via daily keyboarding exercises and drills.

Career Planning and Preparation Level I

This module introduces tools for planning and preparing for a successful job search, so that students can maintain a career-focused approach throughout their education program. Students will learn about the "Hidden" Job Market and ways to access it in their upcoming job search, how to research opportunities and network for industry contacts, and use appropriate etiquette when communicating with prospective employers. Students will identify their personal skills, values and preferences for the workplace, begin preparation of a professional resume and references, and organize proof documents for their career portfolio. Class discussions on various self-management topics introduced in Student Success Strategies will round out this module, which is a pre-requisite for Career Planning and Preparation - Level II.

Career Planning and Preparation Level II

This module continues to build on the concepts and skills introduced in Career Planning and Preparation - Level I. Students will learn how to conduct an effective job search and identify various methods of applying for work with today's technology. Students will create a personal list of "Top Employers" and target current industry opportunities, while finalizing their professional resume, portfolio and career correspondence. Students will learn to identify the different types and forms of interviews, practice responding to typical questions, and practice follow-up, evaluation and negotiation techniques they can use to ensure success. Self-management topics from Career Planning and Preparation - Level I will be reviewed, with a focus towards on-the-job success in both learner placements and post-graduate employment.

This module is designed to equip students with the skills necessary for success in today's health care environment. Topics covered include jobs which require professionalism, definitions and key elements of professionalism, why professionalism is important to all involved in the health care environment, making a commitment to the job, how to contribute to the specialized workplace, working with others and ensuring success in the field placement and career.

Field Placement I – 3 weeks

Field Placement II – 3 weeks

Field Placement III – 3 weeks

The placements are provided in a long-term care facility, acute care facility, and community or with a home care agency. Placements offers students the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills through experiential learning.

The clinical training component includes full-time hours in acute care, long term care and community that is instructor-led and community and long-term care with the training host. The shift rotation may vary from 7.5 to 12 hour shifts, scheduled throughout a 24/7 work week. The training host does not provide remuneration for the clinical training.

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