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Six Myths About PSWs & the Work They Do

Myth 1 - There is no standard for PSW training in Ontario

PSWs in Ontario must be trained to the standards approved by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care and OCSA. These standards were approved by the Ministry in May, 1997 and are still in force today.

Myth 2 - All PSWs are created equal

While all PSWs are expected to have the same basic training in order to graduate from a PSW programme, each PSW's overall skills, interests and abilities make her (or him) unique. Some PSWs work in community care. Others work in long term care homes. Some PSWs specialize in palliative care or child care.

Myth 3 - A PSW can work as a PSW anywhere in Canada

There is no Canada-wide standard for the work PSWs do. Each province sets out requirements for their workers who provide personal support. The provinces differ in what they require, in part because each province's long term care system is unique to that province. In other words, PSWs may do different things in different provinces, and the training they take will reflect that.

Myth 4 - A PSW pin is proof that a PSW is “registered” in Ontario

The term *registered* means that a person is a member of a professional college and holds a registration or is licensed by a provincial agency. In Ontario, as in all other provinces, PSWs are not registered; they do not have to have a license to practise as a PSW. Having a PSW pin means that a person has met the requirements the issuing agency has for people wishing to buy a pin.

Some people get confused by the number on the back of OCSA's pin (and on pins issued by other agencies). This number identifies the pin, but is not a registration number.



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Myth 5 - If a PSW writes a “national” exam, she is considered “registered” and is able to work anywhere in Canada

As the paragraph above describes, there is no national standard for personal support work. As a result, there is no exam or programme that will prepare a PSW to work in all provinces. As well, no province registers PSWs.

Myth 6 - PSWs are unregulated and thus are not professionals.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The overwhelming majority of PSWs are caring, dedicated and honourable caregivers. They dedicate themselves to supporting clients, to ongoing training and learning. They identify clients’ needs and seek to meet them wherever possible. In every sense, PSWs are professionals.

For more information on personal support workers and PSNO, visit our website:
www.psno.ca