



OCSA

Ontario Community
Support Association

United in our commitment to care

Personal Support Worker Training Backgrounder

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The Training Program and Standards

Ontario's Personal Support Worker (PSW) training program is a single program that consolidates and replaces the former Health Care Aide, Home Support Worker Levels I, II and III and Personal Attendant and Respite Worker training programs. The Government of Ontario approved the PSW program on April 28, 1997.

PSWs provide health care services in long-term care facilities, in the community for home care providers, in adult day programs, supportive housing settings, group homes, hospitals, educational facilities and many other settings.

A PSW is an unregulated health care worker. There is no registration examination for the Personal Support Worker to enter into practice. There is no regulating body for graduates however the scope of practice is determined by the Regulated Health Professions Act. Certificates are issued upon graduation of the program by the training institution.

PSW training is offered by Community Colleges, private vocational schools, Boards of Education and not-for-profit

organizations. All organizations providing this training base their programs on the document "Personal Support Worker Training: Outcomes and Module Outlines" which was published by the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA) in January 1997.

The PSW training is set up in modules with two official exit points:

- **Personal Attendant** – Completion of the first seven modules; responds to the needs of attendant care workers and the client/consumers they serve who wish to be active in directing their own care, and in training attendants to meet their individual needs; students who wish to confine their role to basic homemaking may also exit the program after the first seven modules.
- **Personal Support Worker** – Completion of the entire program (14 modules); responds to the needs of workers who require the full range of training to work with clients who have a wide variety of individual needs and varying degrees of ability to direct their services.

The Development of the Personal Support Worker Curriculum

The development of the PSW curriculum was a joint initiative of the Ontario Government and the Ontario Community Support Association.

The curriculum development was a collaborative effort that included all stakeholders. A Training Resource Group with representation from employees in the system and their unions, consumers, students, employers and educators developed recommendations for provincial training standards and a model curriculum for workers providing personal care and support services in long-term care facilities and in clients' homes.

OCSA and the Canadian Red Cross Society conducted pilot tests of the PSW training program across the province. More than 100 workers who were already employed by homemaking

agencies took part. Tests were done in a mix of seven rural and urban sites, using different training delivery models including the college system, a private vocational school, distance education and association-based and agency-based training.

In the course of pilot testing, new tools were developed: an evaluation plan, standardized evaluation instruments, a prior learning assessment tool and guideline, a technical literacy test, and a student record of learning. These tools have been published in the "Instructor's Guide for the Personal Support Worker and the Personal Attendant Worker Program." This document is available from OCSA.