Recommendations for PSW In-service Training in Long Term Care

The following are our recommendations for In-Service training for PSWs providing care in Long-Term Care in Ontario:

1. A Standardized approach to in-service training should be implemented. Each Long Term Care Home should have a set of mandatory and a selection of elective training options to provide to frontline staff. Examples of topic areas to be considered:
   - Recognition of elder abuse
   - Workplace ergonomics
   - Workplace violence
   - Communication Skills: How to be heard
   - Aggressive behaviours
   - Depressions/Mental health and addiction issues
   - Palliative Care
   - Dealing with repetitive loss
   - Chronic Disease Management

2. The remaining Health Care Aides should be bridged to the PSW level. Funding should be provided to LTC homes for this purpose. This could be achieved through work and learn programs with providers who can deliver flexible training that fits the learning and scheduling needs of the LTC Homes.

3. Supervisors and other interdisciplinary team members should be required to complete in-service training which will provide them with an understanding of the scope of practice and value personal support workers bring to care.

On the job learning can be done and should be developed. PSWs should be given the opportunity to part take in case study “rounds” with the multi-disciplinary team members to learn more about support to residents with specific diseases. This allows the staff access to information they can readily apply yet may not be exposed to in their daily routines. This would facilitate more on the job learnings and teachable moments for PSWs.

1. PSWs should receive in-service training in proper procedure for writing progress notes and how to document changing client conditions.
In-Service PSW training should be provided based on adult education best practices:

- Training should be delivered in a variety of learning formats and be sensitive to the diverse linguistic and cultural mix of staff.

- Training should be flexible and the approach length and time to provide enough information for staff to truly understand what they have learned.

- Training is most effective when it is interactive and that usually involves case study discussions. LTC Homes should also consider online training options for staff that could be completed either at work or at home.

- The Management staff should be engaged and participate in the design of training modules that are specific to the needs of their facility and their PSW’s.

- Training opportunities should be ongoing given the transitory nature of some staff. The key to the training is the commitment of the supervisory/management staff. It starts from the top down and in those facilities where management is clear about the expectations.

- Training should be a major component of the ongoing support and professional development of staff. Instead of a pass or fail on compliance, the Ministry should consider recognizing LTC Homes that have excelled and exceeded the requirements for training and provide incentives for those homes that are committed to improving educational opportunities. Well trained and committed staff result in better health care outcomes for residents.

- Supervisory training is critical and should be recognized as essential to building better relationships and understandings with frontline staff.

- Instead of requiring each home to have a training coordinator, the Ministry should consider having a PSW Training Resource Consultant for each LHIN that could support ALL employers of PSWs. That person could work closely with the local PSW training committees (that resource local community agencies in PSW certificate training) as well as liaise with other resource consultants (such as the psycho-geriatric resource consultants, outreach teams and others) with the overall aim of providing appropriate and valid training in best practices and enhancements for LTC Homes and Home and Community Support providers.
Recommendations that Support ALL PSWs in the Province

1. **Develop and Enforce Scope of Practice Standards for PSWs**

Practice standards support a clear, shared concept of the scope of role for personal support workers, clients, educators, employers and the general public. They are essential, as they are recognized as the authoritative basis of what a health professional can do (or not do) and the principles of how a health professional should perform the activities within the scope of practice. Virtually all health care professionals have standards or scope of practice statements.

There also is a need for enforcement measures once those standards are in place. The Ministry should empower an alliance of stakeholders or establish another mechanism to ensure the standards are being adhered to.

2. **Enforce Training Standards**

An oversight mechanism to assess appropriateness or suitability of the current training programs should be developed. There should also be a mechanism to ensure that training organizations maintain the standards. Monitoring training organizations for adherence to the provincial training outcomes would greatly improve the quality of and better prepare PSWs for the workforce.

Implement a mechanism to disseminate best practice and resource information appropriate to the PSW role. This could be performed by the oversight body referenced above or by another entity.

3. **Require Training for PSW Supervisors**

Supervisors need to understand and appreciate the role PSWs play and provide varying opportunities for professional growth and skills development. PSWs need to be supported by Supervisors who are well equipped to oversee staff dealing with clients and recognize residents’ changing needs and conditions.

4. **Provide Ongoing Funding for staff education and PSW Training**

Funding for on-going staff education and PSW training is needed to address the increase in client acuity and the changing care profile we are seeing in the sector. Funding should also provided to employers for replacement workers to facilitate the opportunity for workers to attend training sessions.

The Personal Support Network of Ontario (PSNO)

The Personal Support Network of Ontario (PSNO) has both representation and respect in the Long-Term Care and Home Care sectors. PSNO is the only PSWs association with province-wide PSW and employer support. PSNO is a division of the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA).

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