PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKER
Course Length: 26 weeks

OBJECTIVE
Personal Support Workers assist with the tasks of daily living. Services are provided in homes and apartments in the community, in long-term facilities, congregate housing settings and day programs. Personal Support Workers must develop a broad range of abilities beyond dexterity skills. They must provide not only for the comfort, safety and well-being of their clients, but also demonstrate sensitivity and respect for those in their care. The attitude, abilities and approach of the worker are critical to the well-being and health of the people they support.

This course follows the National Association of Career Colleges common standards curriculum. In order to graduate from the program, a student must pass a national exam created by the NACC and administered at the college. When screening applicants many employers look for Personal Support Workers that have NACC certificates.

PSW 001 INDIVIDUALITY OF THE PERSON
This module introduces students to the concept of individuality of all persons, their experiences, rights, interests and needs. Students will be given the opportunity to identify and examine their own beliefs, values and attitudes about ageing, disability, independence and interdependence. The module encourages students to assume the consumer/client wishes to be involved, unless there are specific indications that she/he does not.

PSW 002 ROLE OF THE PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKER
In this module students will be introduced to the role and scope of practice of workers providing support to consumers/clients and families in individual homes and long-term care facilities. The variety of settings, work relationships, level of supervision, the need to adapt to varying settings as well as, time and stress management will be covered. Legislation related to the worker, the work setting and consumer/client rights will be discussed. Finally the student must recognize that they cannot be all things to all people and the consumer/client must not be exposed to unsafe practice. Students will be introduced to the Regulated Health Professions Act.

PSW 003 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
This module introduces students to the importance of communication and interpersonal skills essential to establishing and maintaining effective relationships with consumers/clients. The components of messages, the ways in which they are given, and factors affecting communication are discussed. Problem solving and conflict resolution skills will be presented

PSW 004 SAFETY
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 client with routine activities of living. It is essential that the PSW provide assistance in a manner which is effective, safe and provides for the client’s 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.

PSW 005 ASSISTING A PERSON WITH MOBILITY
The Personal Support Worker practices good body mechanics in many aspects of the work she/he performs to ensure safety and comfort for her/himself and the client. It is recognized that workers in this field are at risk for developing back injuries from improper use of body mechanics. Consistency in transferring, lifting techniques and the use of equipment increases safety and reduces client anxiety, confusion and dependency. This module also discusses promoting proper positioning in a bed or chair for the comfort and safety of the consumer/client.

PSW 006 ABUSE
Family violence (incorporating child abuse, spousal abuse and elder abuse) is a significant aspect of current society. As well, research 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 (including legal requirements) if abuse is suspected. Personal beliefs and attitudes about family violence and abuse are examined, as is the concept of worker abuse of the client. 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 PSW’s may also be the focus of abuse.

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PSW 007 HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT AND MEAL PREPARATION
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.

PSW 008 PROVIDING OPTIMAL SUPPORT/CARE PLANNING
Support of various types is the main function of the PSW. The word appears in the program title. 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 identifies the support to be provided and the significance of the support (and of the need for the support) to the client. Supporting the client to relearn/regain routine abilities and issues of the rights of the client as a receiver of support will be presented.

PSW 009 ASSISTING A PERSON WITH PERSONAL HYGIENE
The PSW is required to have knowledge, skill and sensitivity to provide appropriate assistance to another person, since a significant number of clients for whom the Personal Support Worker provides service have disabilities which affect their ability to look after their personal hygiene. Sufficient knowledge about the structure, function, ageing changes and common conditions of the skin is covered in this module to enable the PSW to understand why specific personal hygiene methods are recommended. The necessity of a positive attitude and sound interpersonal skills when working with clients experiencing a disability is discussed. The importance of supporting the client’s control over their own personal hygiene to the extent possible/desired is also covered, as is the need to respect the client’s right to make choices as to how they wish assistance to be given. Throughout the module, sensitivity and respect for the client’s dignity and privacy while providing assistance is stressed.

PSW 010 ASSISTING THE FAMILY
This module assists students to understand the characteristics of today’s families in terms of structure, functions, roles, lifestyles and relationships. An understanding of 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 PSW’s ability to provide effective support. This module also explores the PSW’s role in providing respite to and assisting families/significant others and their children, including those with special needs.

PSW 011 COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
Personal Support Workers recognize that behaviours or changes in behaviour can be related to illness or other conditions, such as cognitive impairment, substance abuse or mental illness. They identify factors which can increase the risk of suicide and recognize signs of possible suicidal behaviour. They use approaches and techniques to assist consumers/clients with these changes or conditions in keeping with the care/support plan and report observations to the appropriate team member. This module will introduce the student to common psychiatric conditions (affective disorders and schizophrenia), substance abuse and cognitive impairment. The possibility of multiple conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease and depression will be discussed.

PSW 012 ASSISTING A PERSON TO MANAGE ONGOING 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 will not be expected to make functional assessments, they will 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) they 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 the student 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, the student has the opportunity to gain skill in necessary techniques. Concepts of maintenance, rehabilitation and restoration are discussed, as is the importance of the support team in providing assistance.

PSW 013 ASSISTING A PERSON WITH MEDICATIONS
The PSW’s ability to assist a client with medication may be essential in supporting the client’s independence, or in supporting a family caregiver to attend to tasks or take needed respite. 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. Finally, procedures to be followed in the event of concern about or problems with medications will be discussed.

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PSW 014 ASSISTING THE PERSON WHO IS DYING
This module allows students to discuss the concept of dying as a part of life and the possible impact of life-threatening illness on the person and their family. They will also have the opportunity to examine personal beliefs about life-threatening illness, dying and the provision of support to the dying person, her/his family and friends. Assisting the dying person to maintain a desired lifestyle and respecting her/his 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 or care) are covered. Care of the person at the time of death, care of the body after death, as well as any procedures which must be followed are discussed. Finally students will have the opportunity to examine personal reactions to the death of a client and to learn and demonstrate ways in which they may assist grieving family members.

Theory & Practice (in School – includes testing) 300 Hours

PSW 015/PS016 CLINICAL PLACEMENT
Often referred to as practical or practicum, Clinical placement provides the students with an opportunity to practice their new skills in a work setting. While on placement students gain experiences in a wider range of PSW skills, become more self confident, and in some cases, receive offers of employment from the placement site.

Supervised Clinical Placement (with the school’s teacher) 180 Hours
Precepted Clinical Placement (with Nursing Home & Community Preceptors) 175 Hours

FEATURES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKER PROGRAM CERTIFICATE COURSES

MS 100   FIRST AID AND CPR 16 HOURS
  •   This 2-day course is designed to bring students to the St. John's Ambulance Standard Level First Aid and Level A CPR.

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING CERTIFICATE 4 HOURS
  •   The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse

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