

Personal Support Worker Lead Module

Quality Palliative Care in Long Term Care Alliance (QPC-LTC)



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For more information regarding the project please visit www.palliativealliance.ca or email our team at palliativealliance@lakeheadu.ca

What is a Personal Support Worker Lead?

A PSW Lead is a Personal Support Worker who assists in the development and promotion of a Home specific program to improve the quality of life for residents living in LTC. They promote education and provide support to families and all staff.

A PSW Lead has a vision for improving, enhancing and developing the programs in the Long-Term Care home. They possess a drive, a passion, and a commitment to achieve goals within the home, as well as the necessary skills to work towards achieving those goals.

A PSW lead welcomes challenges and through perseverance moves forward despite obstacles. They have the confidence to advocate for what is in the best interest of the resident and to works towards improving existing policies and procedures.

A PSW Lead must be an individual that others respect and trust and feel comfortable with. They must be easy to talk to and have effective listening skills. A PSW Lead is someone who is willing to educate themselves through professional development opportunities, in-services, training sessions, conferences, etc.

Roles of a PSW Lead:

Facilitator
Communicator
Supporter
Advocate
Promoter
Creator
Mentor
Educator

Why Have a PSW Lead?

A PSW Lead is a vital role in a LTC home because a leader sets the direction for other staff members and is able to encourage and entice coworkers to accomplish goals that they might not otherwise do on their own. As LTC is often a very busy place, the Lead ensures that goals and initiatives in the home remain on track.

By leading through example, their actions encourage and inspire others to work towards improving the quality of care in LTC.

They help staff see their own potential and help others visualize what is possible.

“This experience gave me a personal growth that I never would have thought possible. It gave me the confidence to be more self-assured when working with my residents/families, and co-workers. The ability to present in front of a large group of people was something I have learned to do with higher expectations of myself and my work environment” (PSW Lead)

Having a Personal Support Worker Lead in our home has helped to empower staff... Staff do not feel a hierarchy approach with the home, but more of a Team approach. We all worked together to find our own voice.

It is important to have a knowledgeable and reliable go-to person that other staff can look to for information and support. The Lead is also needed to disseminate information from management.



“A lead is instrumental in being the liaison between co-workers and management. Someone that staff trust to go and speak on their behalf. Management has a lead that they can depend on to bring back pertinent information to staff” (PSW, Lead).

“A PSW Lead is a connection to community partners –a go to person- that is a constant resource for them. A person that they get to know, and trust” (PSW Lead)

What are the Differences between Care Planning and Advance Care Planning?

PSW Leads must possess strong leadership qualities which include:

honesty, ability to delegate, strong communication skills, sense of humour, confidence, commitment, positive attitude, creativity, intuition, ability to inspire. They must have the ability to motivate co-workers and tap into their strengths and work to eliminate their weakness.

Other attributes of a PSW Lead may include:

Trustworthy	Approachable	Respectful
Motivator	Rally the team	Upbeat
Friendly	Adaptable/flexible	Dedicated
Team Player	Life-long learner	Advocate
Facilitator	Good mediator	Perseverance
Patience	Passionate	Gentle



What are the Responsibilities of a PSW lead?

What are the responsibilities of a PSW lead?

PSW Leads have various responsibilities which may change depending on the specific program/committee they are involved with.

Overarching responsibilities:

- **Directing** -keeping tasks and activities on the right track and maintaining of momentum until completion.
- **Coaching** -they need to challenge, stimulate and guide their coworkers.
- **Supporting**- they must offer positive feedback, ask for feedback, disclose their own feelings, and never to afraid to ask, "What's wrong?" Supporting includes being able to recognize burnout and compassion fatigue, and offer strategies for help. *"A lead fosters self care in their co-workers. There has to be reassurance that staff are supported, and valued. When staff have experienced the feeling of self-confidence and pride, it inspires them to help/support others. Then together we can make a difference"* (PSW Lead).
- **Delegating**- they need to be able to select the proper person for the specific task or role by being aware of their coworkers' strengths and weaknesses as well as what motivates and frustrates them.



Specific / Task Oriented Responsibilities May Include:

Education:

- Providing education/in-services/huddles to co-workers
- Attending educational opportunities like in-services, seminars, conferences, etc.

Active Participation/Communication:

- Attending team meetings
- Communicating the importance of attending monthly team meetings to other co-workers, ex. post announcements about the meetings, book rooms, help make up the agenda for the meetings and sometimes facilitate meetings.
- Initiating interventions/initiatives in the Home as needs arise
- Working effectively and collaborate as a member of an inter-professional team
- Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Cycles -planning an initiative, trying or testing the initiative in the LTC home, examining how it is working/not working/what could be improved. After revising the initiative, and working out the obstacles/problems, putting the initiative in place.

Creating Program Awareness:

- Learning and understanding the policies and procedures in the home pertaining to your committee/program.
- Contributing to newsletters in the LTC home
- Promoting education, committees, programs, and interventions
- Educating coworkers on initiatives pertinent to the specific program/committee
- Creating posters to make coworkers aware of happenings within the home
- Filling program boards with information and keeping them up-to-date and

I have new insight with all departments (housekeeping, dietary, maintenance, life enrichment, spiritual, registered staff, and management) in respect to what their role is and how it connects to mine.

Being a lead in my home has opened doors for opportunities - presenting at conferences throughout Ontario and Newfoundland, webinars, facilitating meetings, and workshops.

It has broadened my opportunities in my field. I am exploring the very possibility of teaching a course at the college on palliative care in LTC Homes.

Dissemination of Knowledge:

- Public speaking, presentation, co-present
- Mentoring and helping train new PSW staff, students, and other coworkers

Advocacy:

- Supporting the residents and family in the choices they make, particularly when representing them at committee meetings.
- Advocating for PSWs, residents, families, management, maintenance, dietary, laundry, etc.

Additional Duties:

- Caring for residents, families, and coworkers
- Multitasking
- Balancing Lead activities and in conjunction with PSW duties/job requirements and personal life.
- Exploring self-care strategies.
- Multi-tasking -balancing work, life, and play.



PSW Lead Job Description

We are looking for a Personal Support Worker Lead at our home to champion change and actively help with new and existing programs, initiatives, and committees. The PSW Lead will act as a liaison between the frontline staff, management, residents and their families, and the larger community.

The main aim of the PSW Lead is to promote, develop, and sustain the programs and the committees within the LTC home that will improve the quality of life for residents in LTC homes and promote the core values of our LTC home. The role provides PSWs the opportunity to participate in exploring new possibilities in our home and supporting, promoting, and mentoring co-workers.

The Personal Support Worker (PSW) Lead would be replaced during Lead activities in order to work closely with the management involved with the committee to assist in the development and promotion of a Home specific program. PSWs who take on this role can expect to become more knowledgeable and skilled in addressing the needs of the residents and families, and to participate more fully as valued members of the team in LTC.

Qualifications:

- Demonstrate an interest in _____ and can envision change within the LTC homes
- Commitment to ensuring the success of the _____ program in the LTC home
- Possess the necessary leadership qualities
- Skilled in both oral and written forms of communication and a team player
- Ability to use, or openness to learn computer programs such as Word, Power Point, and Publisher as well as internet and email

Having the staff empowered, helps with staff advocating for their residents/family by understanding better how to go about retrieving the correct information from the correct source and putting it in place with the support from the Palliative Care Resource Team.

Staff do not feel a hierarchy approach with the home, but more of a Team approach. We all worked together to find our own voice. A lead helps to develop, maintain and sustain the 40 initiatives within our home that had been developed with the help of our partners at Lakehead University -CERAH.

A PSW Lead helps to push LTC Homes to the forefront in palliative care in the province through presentations and articles with media, conferences, workshops and webinars. Helping to bring awareness that we do excellent Palliative Care right to End of Life.

PSW Lead Selection Process

1. The PSW must **apply** for the position.
2. Submit a resume (for external applications only).
 - Resume can be scored according to the rating scale provided (Appendix ?).
 - Complete a written application.

Possible Questions to consider:

- Why do you think you would be a good PSW Lead for the _____(ex. palliative care, falls prevention, continence, etc.) program? Please discuss your skill set, professional development/education experience, or any other experience you may have that would be pertinent to this position.
- Discuss your vision for change in _____(ex. palliative care, continence, fall prevention, health and safety, etc)?
- What are the challenges you foresee in making these changes? How do you think you will combat these challenges?
- Explain how you feel you are equipped to deal the challenges of this position.
- What do you think makes you a good leader?



How Can Management Support PSW Leads?

- Have knowledge of policies and procedures which directly impact the given program in the Home. for the implementing programs.
- Come to program meetings to show support.
- Have a positive attitude towards the committee by acknowledging the work that has been done through regular feedback.
- Promote the program through newsletters, staff meetings and in everyday work when appropriate. For example, if management observes that a resident may benefit from a program or intervention, they could connect staff with the appropriate program Lead.
- Provide staff with handouts, pamphlets, in-services, and also all necessary information pertaining to the program on the intranet.

Potential barriers that may come up:

- When the Leads do not feel supported by management, they risk experiencing burnout, lack of engagement, or resignation from the program.
- Cancellation of meetings -when multiple meetings are cancelled staff may feel that their program is not a high priority in the home.
- Lack of encouragement from management -management has to show their support in order to move forward with the vision of the home. Management should lead by example.
- Provide organizational context: ie. infection control
- Continue momentum
- Encourage people to learn, practice, and participate.
- Mentor the Leads
- Offer in-services with information about the specific program.
- Active and consistent participation from management.
- Openness to suggestions from PSW Leads to keep all staff involved and interested.
- When everybody takes part in supporting and promoting the program the home benefits. Through conferences, research, and community involvement, the home becomes a leader in excellence for LTC.

Key Partners



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