

A Day in the Life of a PSW

Presented by the Ontario
PSW Association

OPSWA
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PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS
ASSOCIATION



The Personal Support Worker (PSW)

- The Personal Support Worker plays a pivotal role in the delivery of health care across all settings and as such a description of a daily routine presents some difficulties.



Personal Support Worker & LTC



Health care professionals' routines are shaped by patient needs and care requirements and, when applicable, regulatory and legislative requirements.



For the benefit of this presentation, we will be providing a general overview of the pattern of the daily life of the PSW based on the care setting of the patient.

Long Term Care in Ontario

Daily Life of a PSW in Long-Term Care (LTC)

- Highly time-sensitive work environment
- Day typically begins with waking up residents

Main Shifts in LTC:

- **Morning Shift**
- **Afternoon Shift**
- **Overnight Shift**

Additional Roles/Shifts (varies by facility):

- **Bath Nurse** – Responsible for resident hygiene and bathing
- **Float PSW** – Assists where needed throughout different units or tasks

Morning Shift - Early/mid

Morning

Morning Shift Routine - PSW Duties

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before shift begins
- Shift debrief with overnight staff

Morning Resident Care:

- Wake up residents and assist with the morning routine
- Help dress
- Assist with toileting
- Change incontinence products
- Wash face, underarms, and peri area
- Brush teeth or clean dentures
- Apply body lotion
- Brush hair

Additional Duties:

- Assist fellow PSWs with lifts and transfers
- Load residents into the dining room
- Assist with feeding residents who need help
- Return residents to their rooms after meals
- Toilet if needed
- Shower residents on the designated list for the day

Morning shift - late morning/early afternoon

- **Snack cart:** Comes around late morning
- **Restock personal care carts:**
 - Replenish required briefs and peri cloths in each resident's room
- **Documentation:**
 - Fill out daily care reports for each resident
- **Resident support:**
 - Assist residents who want to attend events in the common area
- **Prepare for lunch:**
 - Get residents ready
 - Bring all residents to the dining room
 - Assist with feeding as needed
- **Post-lunch care:**
 - Take residents back to their rooms
 - Transfer them to bed or toilet
 - Perform personal care tasks
- **Final documentation:**
 - Complete daily care reports for each resident
- **Shift handoff:**
 - Debrief with Afternoon Shift staff

Afternoon – early evening shift

- Ensure all residents have the required incontinence products/pre-clothes
- Take the snack cart around to all residents
- Assist residents with toileting and transfers
- Escort residents to events or back to their rooms afterward
- Begin preparing residents for dinner
- Assist residents to the dining room
- Help feed residents as needed
- Return residents to their rooms.
- Escort interested residents to event in common area.
- Begin bedtime preparations.
- Shower residents on your list. Put residents to bed, one at a time.
- Assist coworkers with lifts/transfers.
- Complete daily care documentation.
- Complete secondary checks and brief changes
- Restock personal care carts.
- Stock resident rooms with briefs and peri cloths.
- Retrieve residents from common area and assist to bed.
- End-of-shift report and debrief with overnight staff.

Overnight Shift

- Do rounds in each resident's room
- Answer call bells as needed
- Reposition residents every 2 hours (Q2H)
- Help residents who wander or experience sundowning
- Restock carts and the utility closet
- Complete daily care reports (In some homes).
- Fold and put away laundry
- Clean 5 or 6 wheelchairs nightly
- Early rising residents – help get them ready for the day
- Debrief with morning staff

The Other Side of PSW Duty

- The majority of PSWs are women, often single mothers aged 30 and older.
- Many PSWs are employed in multiple part-time roles to earn a livable income.
- PSWs report working short-staffed in 91% of their shifts.
- The profession experiences a high rate of physical and emotional burnout.
- PSWs often face competition from agency staff, who may not be held to the same training or qualification standards.
- Inconsistent staffing and pay disparities between agency and in-house workers contribute to job dissatisfaction and retention challenges.





Random Events: What Can Happen and What Does Happen

- Family members visiting residents
- Families requesting immediate attention or care
- Families interrupting staff duties
- Resident death
- Communication from hospitals
- Staffing shortages
- Infectious disease outbreaks
- Security breaches or unauthorized individuals on the premises
- Fire emergencies
- Changes in medications or adverse drug reactions
- Admission of new residents
- Interpersonal conflicts between residents

The Ontario PSW Association

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PSW WEEK

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