

Module 1

YOUR JOB AS A HOME SUPPORT WORKER

- Tasks & Responsibilities
- Dependability
- Accuracy
- Following Rules and Instructions
- Ethics
- Legal Aspects
- Personal Practices
- Incidents

YOUR JOB AS A HOME SUPPORT WORKER

Tasks & Responsibilities

The tasks and responsibilities expected of you are summarized in your Job Description. It is very important that you understand this and agree to it, then there will never be a misunderstanding later as to what you will be expected to do.

By being very familiar with the responsibilities and expectations employers, clients and team members have of you, you will be able to act in the proper manner and feel more comfortable.

As an important member of the Health Care Team, you will be given many assignments. You are expected to care for your clients with thought, consideration and respect. If you do not know a procedure, ask! It is also your responsibility to be a contributing member of the Health Care Team. Share your ideas, your thoughts, and your knowledge. Your clients will benefit, your fellow employees will benefit and the agency will benefit.

A Home Support Worker is responsible in assisting in the care and comfort of their clients.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Performs work for the care and comfort of clients, e.g. assisting with dressing, shaving, bathing, feeding, walking, etc.
2. Maintains a standard of cleanliness for the client's surroundings: does light housework. This does not include shovelling snow, gardening, moving furniture, and heavy lifting.
3. Observes any unusual behaviour or changes in the client condition and reports the same to the supervisor.
4. Prepares and assists with meals.
5. May be required to accompany clients on outings or appointments.
6. Attends to the personal needs of clients.
7. Provides appropriate documentation.
8. Performs other related work as required.
9. Takes pride in his/herself and his/her work performance.

Working in a Client's Home

You will be caring for people in their homes, and until they get to know you, you will be considered a stranger. It will be an important part of your first meeting with clients and family to assure them that you are in the home to help and to abide by their routine as much as possible.

While we, the agency, trust you and know you are an honest and considerate person, the client does not – yet.

Here are some tips to help decrease the fears clients may have about you as a new person:

- *Dress professionally:* this helps to identify you as a member of the Health Care Team.
- *Wear your name tag:* this tells the client who you are.
- *Introduce yourself* immediately in a clear, quiet voice: identify your agency and your job title. Write down the information if they ask you to.
- *Discuss with the client your responsibilities and tasks:* assure the client you are there to work in his/her home in a manner that is comfortable for him/her. You are not there to change everything.
- *Ask the client if he/she has any questions.*

Equipment

It is always necessary to have the proper supplies and equipment to perform your tasks. In many cases you will have to improvise by using an item for a task that it is not originally designed to do.

Dependability

Home Care is organized to function effectively when a certain number of people are on the job. If you are not there, a client could be deprived of the care he/she needs. Also, your absence may cause fellow workers to have an overload of work. It is very important that you arrive promptly for every shift, unless you are ill. If you are sick, call the office or, after hours, call the On-call Emergency Line.

Dependability means more than coming to work every day and coming in on time. It means your supervisor can rely on you to do things at the proper time and in the proper way.

Accuracy

As part of the Health Care Team, you will be concerned with human lives and feelings. What might appear to you to be a tiny mistake or oversight could affect the recovery of your client.

It is important for you to follow your supervisor's instructions exactly. Be accurate when you are recording a temperature. Be careful in making a bed. If you make a mistake, report it. If you do not understand something, ask again.

Always remember: there is a reason for every step of the client's care.

Following Rules and Instructions

Rules & Protocols are made to give everyone guidelines for their work. Here are some good rules to remember in your work. They can help to make you a better Home Support Worker and can help you in your relationship with your fellow Health Care Workers:

- Be accurate to the best of your ability
- Follow carefully the instructions of your supervisor
- If you do not understand something, ask!
- Report accidents/incidents or errors immediately to your supervisor
- Keep information about clients confidential, except when it might affect the client's health
- Do not waste supplies and equipment
- Be ready to adjust quickly to new situations
- Try to get things done on time – use a systematic work schedule
- Report all complaints, no matter how small, to your supervisor
- Perform all your duties in a spirit of cooperation

Ethics

Ethics is a code of rules set up to govern behaviour. Although Home Support Workers do not take an oath of ethics as nurses or doctors do, it is assumed they will work within an accepted set of rules for client care:

- Do your job correctly to the best of your ability
- Be honest with your clients and their families
- Respect the rights of clients and their families – maintain confidentiality
- Respect your clients' homes and property

Legal Aspects

Clients must be cared for properly and within the law. When you accept this job, you also accept this responsibility.

As an agency, we assure the legal responsibilities for your actions as long as you work within the guidelines of the Agency Policies. It is your responsibility to know what tasks you have been assigned and to carry them out according to instructions. If you have any questions, ASK! If you are in doubt as to what to do, report the situation to your supervisor. It then becomes your supervisor's responsibility to interpret this report and tell you what to do about it.

Confidentiality

As a Home Care Worker, you will be aware of many details of your client's life. It is critical that this information be shared only with those involved directly in their care and only relevant to that care. It is not appropriate for you to share information about your client to family or friends or social settings. It is appropriate to discuss details of the care with other representatives of Compassion HomeCare who are able to assist in developing a care plan or instructing other staff members who will be working in the same home. There are, however, limitations of confidentiality. If you witness or have knowledge of incidents of elder abuse or neglect, you will need to report this to your supervisor for further investigation. Moreover, if you are witness to situations of child abuse/neglect, you must report this information to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services for further investigation. If you have any questions regarding confidentiality, please discuss them with your Office Manager or designate. Please note that breaching confidentiality can lead to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or dismissal. By signing the "Statement of Confidentiality" you indicate that you understand this information and the consequences of not maintaining confidentiality.

Personal Practices

All members of the Care Team are teachers by the example they set. They influence each other and their clients and their families. The practice of good personal hygiene becomes a teaching tool.

Remember:

- Dress properly and neatly
- Bathe daily
- Use an unscented deodorant
- Keep your mouth and teeth clean and in good condition
- Keep your hair clean and neat
- Wear clean clothes every day
- Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes with non-skid soles
- Repair rips and replace missing buttons on your clothing
- Do not wear jewellery such as earrings, bracelets, pendants or large rings
- Keep your nails short and clean
- Wear conservative makeup
- Do not use perfume or scented sprays
- Keep yourself in good health by eating properly
- Get plenty of sleep – be alert when you come to work
- Always wear your name tag
- A wristwatch with a second hand is a good idea

Accidents & Incidents

An accident/incident is an event that does not fit the daily routine of the home/agency where you are working. It may be an accident or an unusual happening.

Types of accidents/incidents are:

- Client, visitor or employee accidents/incidents
- Accidents/incidents that happen to you any time while you are on the job
- Accidents/incidents occurring on the outlying property of the client's home, such as sidewalks, parking lots or entrances

Whenever an accident/incident occurs, a report must be made to your supervisor within three days of the occurrence. Report any accidents/incidents you observe or experience. Also, report any conditions you think might lead to an accident/incident. It is imperative that Compassion HomeCare properly investigate all accidents and incidents. Only by examining the events that lead to or may lead to an accident/incident will clients, family members and other staff be prevented from injury.