

On My Way



Aboriginal Women  
Caring for Community  
as a Personal Support Worker



NATIVE WOMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
ASSOCIATION DES FEMMES  
INDIENNES DU CANADA  
2011

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## Message from NWAC Health Director

The *On My Way: Aboriginal Women Caring for Community as a Personal Support Worker* guidebook provides “hard to reach” Aboriginal women with practical information to assist in achieving their goals of pursuing a career in health. The career of Personal Support Worker (PSW) is one that is easily accessible and requires less than one year to complete. It is in high demand given the rate of aging Canadians and the increased need in home-care, long-term care homes, and hospitals.

Hard to reach Aboriginal women include low income and single moms of all ages. They may not have completed high school, or struggle with addictions and mental health issues, or may have a criminal record.

This practical guidebook is easy to read, visually appealing, and small enough to fit into a purse. It is culturally relevant and reflects Aboriginal values and traditional teachings. Its instructional format is intended to motivate the reader and inspire them to give back to their community by doing what comes naturally – providing care.

Erin Corston (Wolski), Health Director  
Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC)



# Acknowledgements

This guidebook is dedicated to all the students, teachers and personal support workers who facilitate community wellness for our Elders and others who require extra care. Their commitment to the wellness of others is seen through their selfless and tireless work.

NWAC would like to acknowledge the contributions of those interviewed in the development of this guidebook: Karen Doucette, Evangeline Francis, Atasha Goodwin, Charmaine Louie, Alec “Dickie” Louie, Patsy Noakes, Judy Nowgabow, M. Josie Peters, Joanne Roberts and the NWAC Health staff who assisted wherever they could.

We trust that this guidebook will provide the necessary information and tools to foster empowerment to the hundreds of Aboriginal women who continue to strive for a hopeful and thriving future despite all challenges.

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# Introduction

Aboriginal women have always contributed to the health and well-being of their communities. They play a vital role as caregivers and nurturers in the family. Often the female caregiver who is a wife, a mother, a daughter, an aunty, or a grandmother tend to be the main support for the disabled, the ill, and elderly as unpaid caregivers.

Aboriginal women naturally use their culture and knowledge, and view health in a holistic way. Holistic health means looking at more than just the physical aspects that impact a person's well-being. For example, your ability to learn a language or new skill (mental), your ability to cope with stress (emotional), your participation in cultural ceremonies (spiritual), and other lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise (physical). The physical, mental, emotional and

spiritual aspects of a person are all connected and impact on one's health to help achieve balance and well-being.

## How to use this guidebook

This guidebook will provide you with useful information to help you reach your educational and career goals. This guidebook is divided into seven sections. It describes the role of a PSW and their responsibilities. It provides a list of PSW training programs in Canada, web links, and on-line sources of support. It also includes worksheets and budget sheets to help get you started and job interview and other tips to get you through school. Glossary terms are highlighted throughout the text in **colour**. Please consult the glossary to clarify any terms used in this guide.

## Medicine Wheel



The Medicine Wheel is a symbol used by many Indigenous cultures throughout North America as a symbol of the life, health and values of an individual, community or Nation. It is not used in all First Nations and Métis communities and is also not a concept used in Inuit culture.<sup>1</sup>

NWAC aims to honour Aboriginal women for the role they play by encouraging them to use their strengths and natural abilities to start a paid career as a **Personal Support Worker**. Working as a PSW may be a career that is rewarding for you. You'll play an important role in improving the quality of life for someone important to you, or anyone who needs **long-term care**.

# What is a Personal Support Worker?

A PSW is also called Long-term, Home, and Personal Care Aide, Geriatric and Nursing Aide, Health Care Assistant, Resident Care Attendant, and Community Support & Outreach Worker. As a PSW, you will provide care for seniors or others recovering from surgery, injury or illness, those with cognitive impairment or special needs, and terminally ill individuals. You may be employed to provide care in long-term care or assisted living facilities, retirement homes, group homes, hospices, or client homes in the community.

## Responsibilities/Duties:

- Help with **personal care**: bathe, groom, dress and exercise;
- Assist with **home management** duties: prepare meals, cleaning, and shopping;

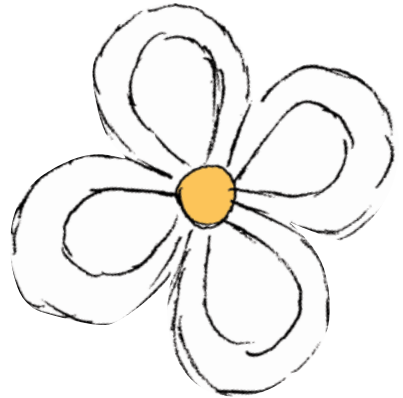
- Dietary planning and feeding;
- Record blood pressure, temperature, pulse, respiration, bodyweight and height;
- Observe and report behavioural changes;
- Collect samples for medical tests and administer medications;
- Provide emotional and support services to clients and families;
- Companionship and compassionate listening; and
- Assist on outings and activities.

## Other possible duties:

- Assist with Palliative Care for patients who have **Alzheimer's** or **Dementia**
- Assist with **Respite Care** to temporarily relieve other caregivers from duties

## Personal traits/qualities that make a successful PSW:<sup>3</sup>

- Communicate clearly and have good listening skills;
- Caring and compassion: empathy, and patience
- Confident and self-accepting;
- Enjoy working with people, friendly, and sense of humour;
- Able to problem solve and be organized;
- Willingness to learn, change and develop new skills;
- Openness to understand different points of view and be flexible; and,
- Respect for confidentiality.





# Why become a PSW and is it right for you?

In the words of a PSW:

*“Working in the community, it gives back”;*

*“There is no shortage of jobs in this field.*

*They are always looking for people”;*

*“It feels pretty good at the end of the day, it’s rewarding. You did something for the person that makes them feel good”;*

*“There is one guy we take care of – we do his breakfast, lunch, and supper, his doctor appointments, and help him with other stuff. You know he appreciates it.”*

PSW training gives you basic knowledge in biology, communications, working with people, developmental and behavioural health, health conditions and diseases, mental health, and palliative care. This knowledge provides an excellent foundation to work in any health

field. PSW training allows you to explore your strengths and interests. It provides options to those who want to further their career by opening doors to diverse health fields such as nursing, psychology, and health research.

**Homecare workers are the heart of the home care team. They make it possible for individuals to live with dignity and a sense of independence in their own homes. They make it possible for families to remain together. They help keep people at home where they are happier and healthier than in institutions. They are the eyes and ears to the outside world for home-bound clients for whom they are the primary contact with the outside world**

(OACCAC, OCSA, and OHHCPA. 2000, p.7)

**“I started looking at a career that was in demand. I lived with my Grandparents since I was young, so I felt a career as a PSW would be the way to go.”**

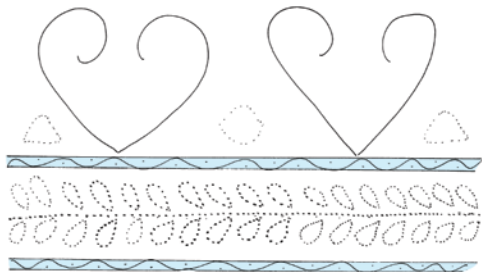
**“I was a care-aid for my Grandfather who I lived with. I liked all the stories and the cultural values I learned. When working with clients, I was able to offer them support while respecting their needs.”**

**“I get to meet people in my culture that I normally would not have met. I like working with people and enjoy seeing them happy. I like learning new things from workshops. This is a positive environment to work in.”**

**“Doing homecare for my mother- in- law was very rewarding because it meant that she got to stay at home longer instead of being put in a nursing home. It extended her stay at home, in the community with her family and friends.”**

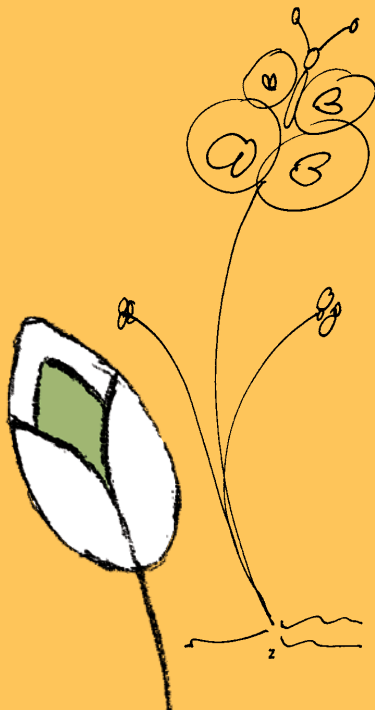
**We are in the midst of a population movement in our country which is going to continue to expand over the next 25 years. We now have ‘seniors’ in general as our country’s fastest growing population group. At present 4 of 5 seniors live in cities (one-third live in Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal) and retirement communities are growing.**

(Randall, 2011)<sup>4</sup>



## Wages for PSWs<sup>2</sup>:

PSWs are in high demand in Canada. Especially in Aboriginal communities since we are the youngest and fastest growing and we have a large number of elderly people. With modern scientific advances in health care, there are higher chances of living longer. With the growing interest in preventing disease and maintaining good health, there are increasing employment opportunities. In Canada, PSWs can expect to earn an hourly wage ranging from C\$11.72 to C\$19.22; annual salaries range from C\$24,211 to C\$40,166. These are average starting wages only. Wages change depending on the employer, work setting, and your education and work experience. For example, you may be paid \$17/hour for reserve homecare to \$20/hour in group homes when you gain more experience.



# Where to go for education/training for a PSW



There are Personal Support Worker education/training programs in trade schools, colleges & universities across Canada. Programs range from 8 months to one year and offer a wide range of course work. Some programs may not include Aboriginal-specific content but look at culture more broadly. Also, new students are encouraged to ask about Aboriginal student centres within their school that will provide cultural support such as counselling services, talking with Elders, and traditional ceremonies.

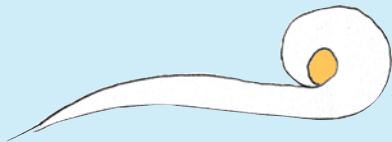
## Admission Requirements

Each school has their own unique admission requirements. Schools may require all personal support students to complete the following before starting the program or placement training.

- Grade 12 (High School Diploma) at the General Level or equivalent, OR **mature student** status (19 years of age or older, and out of school for one year or more);
- English, Grade 12;
- Immunization record, up to date Hepatitis B vaccine;
- Standard First Aid and CPR Level “C”; and
- A Police Records check for **Vulnerable Sector Screening** (a specific type of criminal records check) is required before the student can participate in the practical placement.
- Tuition fees vary across programs, but typically a learning centre course costs approximately \$1000 and a college course costs about \$2500. Supplies such as text books, shoes, uniform, for example, are not included in the tuition costs.

## Work Placement

Students need to complete a certain amount of work placement hours before they can graduate from their PSW program. Work placement consists of clinical work and consolidation work. Students are supervised with teachers on-site when they do their clinical work. And, consolidation involves a student shadowing an experienced PSW in community homes and agencies. The number of hours can vary from 200 hours or more depending on the program. Students of PSW programs have reported job offers before they even graduate and credit this to the excellent experience they obtain through their placements.



## COSTS

Knowing the costs of your program and supplies, and your regular living expenses will help you start a budget for school. In the example on page 15, a single mom with two kids is going to school in Ontario. Know that costs vary per province but if this single mom works with the school counsellor to plan ahead she can save on expenses. For example, receiving a child subsidy and going to her local fire department to get a cheaper rate on CPR training is a good start. Also, buying used books can save her at least 50% to 75%. In this case, she could save approximately \$470.00/month on her expenses. Planning ahead is the key to saving money.

Other ways you can save money is not buying an annual parking pass, if you only require parking twice a week on campus. Paying a daily rate can in fact be cheaper. Please look for other tips in this guidebook to help you save even more money.

Please see *Appendix C* for budget worksheet.


STUDENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	MONTHLY BUDGET	MONTHLY ACTUAL	8 MONTH BUDGET	ACTUAL BUDGET
<b>INCOME:</b>				
From Jobs				
From Parents				
From Student Loans				
From Scholarships				
From Financial Aid				
Child Tax Benefit				
Child Support				
Band Living Allowance				
Band book Allowance				
Band covers Tuition				
Miscellaneous Income				
<b>INCOME SUBTOTAL</b>				
<b>FIXED EXPENSES:</b>				
University Registration Fees				
Tuition & Student Fees				
School Books & Supplies				
Rent or Room & Board				
Health Insurance				
Auto Insurance				
Computer Expense				
Daycare				
Parition Costs				

**Visit with a school counsellor and ask how to apply for College Scholarships and bursaries and review the lists provided in this guidebook. Use the Budget Worksheet in Appendix C to organize your expenses and submit with your scholarship application.**

**Remember: often scholarship monies remain unused because not enough people apply. Apply for every scholarship or bursary you are eligible for because this is free money!**


**Your provincial school loan can potentially be \$10,000 per school year. Apply early so the funding starts at the beginning of your first semester. Your Financial Officer can assist you with the on-line application.**



**Plan for your daycare needs well ahead since during placement, some shifts begin at 6 am or shift work is required. Speak to family members who may be able to assist.**

**Keep your expired monthly transit passes and receipts. You can use these to claim a non-refundable tax credit on your personal income tax. You can save up to \$100. For more information, see the Government of Canada tax credit page at [www.transitpass.ca](http://www.transitpass.ca).**

**Ask your school counsellor about the opportunity to get paid as a tutor.**



**You are expected to provide a police check vulnerable sector screening when you enter the program. But you may require a second screening for every placement (practical work experience). Each screening costs about \$15-\$25. If you state that you require this for an educational institute you may be able to get a slightly lower rate.**

**You can lower your costs in getting your CPR & First Aid Training provided by either St. John's or the Red Cross. Check with your local fire department and ask if you can join in their training.**

## Sample STUDENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	MONTHLY BUDGET	MONTHLY ACTUAL
INCOME:		
Jobs (Tutoring)	\$300.00	
Parents	\$250.00	
Student Loans (i.e.OSAP - \$5,000)	\$800.00	
Scholarships		
Financial Aid		
Child Tax Benefit (Ontario)	\$300.00	
Child Support (2 children x \$200)	\$400.00	
Band Living Allowance	\$1,240.00	
Band covers Books (\$400 x2)	\$100.00	
Band covers Tuition (\$ 2,500)	\$312.50	
Miscellaneous. Income		
INCOME SUBTOTAL	\$3,702.50	
FIXED EXPENSES:		
University Registration Fees	\$11.25	
Tuition & Student Fees	\$312.50	
School Books & Supplies	\$ 90.63	
Rent or Room & Board	\$ 1,000.00	
Health Insurance	\$62.50	
Auto Insurance	\$125.00	
Computer Expense	\$118.75	
Daycare	\$62.50	
Pardon Costs	\$81.25	
CPR & First Aid Training	\$16.25	
Police Check (VSS) (3x \$25)	\$9.38	
Immunization - Hepatitis	\$8.13	
FLEXIBLE EXPENSES*		
Utilities (Heat & Hydro)	\$275.00	
Telephone	\$75.00	
Groceries	\$450.00	
Gas & Car Maintenance	\$200.00	
Parking	\$40.00	
Public Transportation	\$52.00	
Toiletries	\$50.00	
Eating Out/Vending	\$75.00	
Entertainment	\$35.00	
Uniforms & Shoes	\$25.00	
Daycare Costs (\$25/week)	\$100.00	
Bottles, Diapers etc. (\$40/week)	\$160.00	
Children's Clothes/shoes	\$120.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$75.00	
EXPENSES SUBTOTAL	\$3,630.14	
NET INCOME (INCOME LESS EXPENSES)	\$72.36	

\*Your Personal choices affect these expenses.



## Sample STUDENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	8 MONTH BUDGET	ACTUAL BUDGET
INCOME:		
Jobs (Tutoring)	\$2,400.00	
Parents	\$2,000.00	
Student Loans (i.e.OSAP - \$5,000)	\$6,400.00	
Scholarships		
Financial Aid		
Child Tax Benefit (Ontario)	\$2,400.00	
Child Support (2 children x \$200)	\$3,200.00	
Band Living Allowance	\$9,920.00	
Band covers Books (\$400 x2)	\$800.00	
Band covers Tuition (\$ 2,500)	\$2,500.00	
Miscellaneous. Income		
INCOME SUBTOTAL	\$29,620.00	
FIXED EXPENSES:		
University Registration Fees	\$90.00	
Tuition & Student Fees	\$2,500.00	
School Books & Supplies	\$725.00	
Rent or Room & Board	\$8000.00	
Health Insurance	\$500.00	
Auto Insurance	\$1,000	
Computer Expense	\$950.00	
Daycare	\$500.00	
Pardon Costs	\$650.00	
CPR & First Aid Training	\$130.00	
Police Check (VSS) (3x \$25)	\$75.00	
Immunization - Hepatitis	\$65.00	
FLEXIBLE EXPENSES*		
Utilities (Heat & Hydro)	\$2,200.00	
Telephone	\$600.00	
Groceries	\$3,600.00	
Gas & Car Maintenance	\$1,600.00	
Parking	\$320.00	
Public Transportation	\$416.00	
Toiletries	\$400.00	
Eating Out/Vending	\$600.00	
Entertainment	\$280.00	
Uniforms & Shoes	\$200.00	
Daycare Costs (\$25/week)	\$800.00	
Bottles, Diapers etc. (\$40/week)	\$1,280.00	
Children's Clothes/shoes	\$960.00	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$600.00	
EXPENSES SUBTOTAL	\$29,041.00	
NET INCOME (INCOME LESS EXPENSES)	\$579.00	

\*Your Personal choices affect these expenses.



**If you have a criminal record, work on getting a pardon before you start school. Otherwise, many placements will not allow you in. In this situation, you would be challenged to finish the program since you are expected to have a certain amount of placement hours before graduation. Frustration can be avoided if you start early as this can sometimes take several years to complete.**



# Trade Schools and Colleges that offer a PSW Program

## Canadian Schools Directory - Trade Schools, Colleges & Universities

This website provides information on PSW programs from Trade Schools and Colleges in Canada. This site also lets you request information from any of the schools.

See website: [www.trade-schools.ca/programs/personal-support-worker.asp](http://www.trade-schools.ca/programs/personal-support-worker.asp).

## Personal Support Worker Canada

This website provides a list of direct links to available PSW programs. It includes colleges, trade schools and large learning institutions. To find a course that is available at a local learning centre simply type in personal support worker and the name of your town into the google search box located in the upper right hand corner of the page.

See website: [www.personalsupportworker.ca/psw\\_school.html](http://www.personalsupportworker.ca/psw_school.html).

## ParaMed Home Health Care

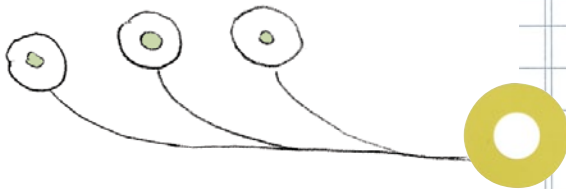
On this website, under the In-Service & Education tab, information is provided on **PSW college certificate** programs in Canada. It also lists bridging programs to assist you in upgrading from PSW certificate to a degree program in health care. For example, you can upgrade a PSW certificate to a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.

See website: [www.homecarejobs.ca](http://www.homecarejobs.ca).

## Oshki–Pimche-O-Win

Oshki–Pimche-O-Win is an Aboriginal post-secondary education and training institute located in Thunder Bay. They offer a practical upgrading program to prepare individuals to successfully write and pass the General Educational Development (G.E.D.) exams. The G.E.D. is a Grade 12 equivalency recognized by business and industry. They also offer a Personal Support Worker program.

See website: [www.oshki.ca](http://www.oshki.ca).



# What are some of the potential challenges in continuing education?

Some of the possible challenges in obtaining a certificate as a PSW but that you can overcome include:

1. Attaining a high school diploma or G.E.D.
2. Securing adequate financial support
3. Balancing time and family commitments
4. Securing childcare
5. Having a criminal record

**“The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome.”**

- Helen Keller

## 1. High School Diploma or G.E.D.

With a post-secondary education, Aboriginal women have an opportunity to be employed in a growing industry as a PSW.

There are Alternative/Adult Education Programs for Aboriginal Youth and Adults to assist you in obtaining your high school diploma or G.E.D.. See Appendix A for a list of Learning Institutions.

Most Friendship Centres, located in urban areas, offer alternative secondary school education programs to assist you in obtaining your high school diploma or G.E.D. They also have employment and training services to help you find work and child care services. See the National Association of Friendship Centres website at [www.nafc.ca](http://www.nafc.ca) for a friendship centre near you.

**We know that seniors are now our country's fastest growing population group but the number of persons aged 65 and over is expected to double from nearly 4 million in 2000 to almost 8 million by 2026.**

- (Randall, 2011)

## 2. Financial Support

A major challenge when deciding to attend school is money concerns. You may wonder how you will pay for tuition, living costs, and childcare. There are many funding options available to Aboriginal peoples to ease the financial burden. Here are just a few:

### Federal funding

Status First Nation individuals are eligible for post-secondary education funding from the federal government - Aboriginal & Northern Affairs Canada. Formerly known as Indian &

Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), they cover costs such as tuition, books and living costs. Eligibility depends on what kind of program you are taking and whether it is part-time or full-time. See website:

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/ep/pse1-eng.asp](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/ep/pse1-eng.asp).

Registered Inuit who have been living outside of the Northwest Territories or Nunavut for 12 consecutive months may be eligible for funding through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program to cover tuition, travel, books and living expenses. Inuit students living within their territories may access funding from their territorial governments. See website:

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/ep/pse1-eng.asp](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/edu/ep/pse1-eng.asp).

There is no direct federal funding available for Métis. However, recognized Métis may be eligible for post-secondary education funding from the Belcourt Brosseau Métis Award which assists Métis Albertans with post-secondary education and skills development in the amount of \$2,000 to \$6,000. See website:

[www.ecfoundation.org/forstudents/belcourtbrosseaumetisawards](http://www.ecfoundation.org/forstudents/belcourtbrosseaumetisawards).

## Provincial funding

Check with the Financial Aid office at the school you've chosen to attend to see if your program is eligible for funding. What you should know about provincial funding is whether they can fund a program that is one year or less. Each province may have different criteria. For example, the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will fund programs that are 12 weeks or longer from a recognized

educational institution. You may not be eligible if you are only attending part-time but check with the school to see what resources and information they can provide.

If you do not qualify for provincial or federal post-secondary education funding, you may need to seek funding from a bank that offers student loans. You can also search and apply for scholarships and bursaries on your school website or ask your school counsellor.

**“I found it easy to access band funding and people can get subsidized daycare. It was an awesome PSW program that got easier and easier especially with the help of the scheduler!”**

**“I would recommend becoming a PSW because it is an excellent start to a career in the health field.”**

## Scholarship, Bursaries & Grants for First Nations, Inuit and Métis

### Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY)

Offers financial support to First Nation status or non-status, Inuit or Métis individuals who are attending either high school or a post-secondary institute full-time. Mature students and adult education programs are included.

Offers \$750 to students pursuing a high school diploma as an incentive to stay in school.

Offers a minimum amount of \$2,500 to students pursuing a post-secondary education in any discipline.

See website: [www.ccab.com/foundation\\_for\\_the\\_advancement\\_of\\_aboriginal\\_youth](http://www.ccab.com/foundation_for_the_advancement_of_aboriginal_youth).



### National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF)

Offers a bursary aimed towards mature Aboriginal women (First Nation status or non-status, Inuit or Métis) with dependent child(ren) living in an urban setting in Ontario. Women can apply for the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) Bursary Award intended for post-secondary studies or training and development programs that may be less than two years in length.

No maximum amount, the bursary is based on your financial need and available funding.

See website: [www.naaf.ca/download\\_applications](http://www.naaf.ca/download_applications).

**“Overall, I found it to be an easy program. There is a good curriculum. You get a lot of support and the teachers are excellent! You can get free tutoring and as a student you can get paid to become a tutor.”**



*Conoco Phillips Aboriginal Awards Program*  
Supports Aboriginal students pursuing high school upgrading and post-secondary education.

Funding amounts are based on the level of education the applicant is pursuing: \$1,000 for high school/academic upgrading and \$2,000 for college or technical institute.

See website:

[www.conocophillips.ca/EN/careers/university/scholarships/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.conocophillips.ca/EN/careers/university/scholarships/Pages/index.aspx).

*PSW Professional Development Scholarship*

Annual scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 is awarded to Personal Support Workers in the province of Ontario who wish to further their education and are focusing on Home and Community Support.

See website:

[www.psno.ca/awards-scholarship.php](http://www.psno.ca/awards-scholarship.php).

*Native Women's Association of Canada Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Scholarships* of \$1,000 is available in 2012 to Aboriginal Women under age 30. They must be pursuing or just completing their post-secondary studies. Please check the website for application deadline at: [www.nwac.ca](http://www.nwac.ca).

*CanLearn* is an online post-secondary education resource. It provides information to assist people in deciding what and where to study and how to cover the costs. It provides resources such as: interactive planning tools, savings program information, student loans, and scholarships. See website:

[www.canlearn.ca/eng/index.shtml](http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/index.shtml).



Aboriginal Skills & Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) provides a full range of employment training programs and supports for the educational success of Aboriginal people. ASETS is designed to help Aboriginal people prepare for, find, and keep high-demand jobs now and in the long term. All Aboriginal people, regardless of status or location, may access its programs and services. These include: job-finding skills and training, programs for youth, programs for urban and Aboriginal people with disabilities, and access to child care. See website: [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/aboriginal\\_employment/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/aboriginal_employment/index.shtml).

The Aboriginal Canada Portal also provides information regarding financial assistance, bursaries and scholarships. See website: [www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao20011.html](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/site.nsf/eng/ao20011.html).



**Sometimes websites links do not work. When this happens, you can do your own search on Google at [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca).**

**In the case of funding, type in some keywords such as “Aboriginal”, “funding”, “student loans”, “grants” “bursary” and your province. This will bring up many websites to choose from.**

Please see Appendix B for additional student assistance and funding website links.

### 3. Time and Family Commitment

Balancing the time to study, work and take care of your family is challenging but possible. The Mapping Your Career Worksheets and Calendar included in this guidebook may be useful to stay on track in reaching your goals. Planning your schedule will help keep you organized and manage your time wisely. You can contact student support services to assist you in making and sticking to a schedule.

The Alberta Employment and Immigration developed a workbook, *Adult Planner Back to School* which includes everything you need to know about going back to school—making a plan, anticipating the challenges and knowing where to go for support. This workbook deals with how to cope with change, organize your life, take care of the kids, and more. It also covers effective study habits so you can balance your school and home life. See website:

[alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/AdultPlanner.pdf](http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/AdultPlanner.pdf)

### 4. Childcare

It is possible to educate yourself while supporting and raising a family. There are many resources available to assist you in your childcare needs. Below are some programs available.

#### Aboriginal Head Start Program

Aboriginal Head Start is a community-based children's program that supports the healthy development and learning of First Nations, Inuit and Métis preschool children who are 2½ - 6 years of age. Programs are delivered across Canada in rural and urban areas and are at no cost to families. See website:

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/index-eng.php)



Health Canada (HC) delivers the *Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve (AHSOR)* Program for First Nations children and families living on reserve. For more information, call 1 800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). Ask for the Head Start program contact in your region. See website: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa\\_intro-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/famil/develop/ahsor-papa_intro-eng.php)

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) delivers the *Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities (AHSUNC)* Program which focuses on early childhood development for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and their families living off-reserve. For more information go to call (613) 952-1220 or email: [DCA.public.inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca](mailto:DCA.public.inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca). See website: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/ahsunc-papacun/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/prog-ini/ahsunc-papacun/index-eng.php).

## The First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative

The First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI) provides access to quality child care services for First Nations and Inuit children whose parents are starting a new job or participating in a training program. The FNICCI is a component of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). See website: [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/aboriginal\\_employment/childcare/index.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/employment/aboriginal_employment/childcare/index.shtml).

## Friendship Centres


Friendship centres are located in urban centres across Canada and offer a variety of family programming for Aboriginal families including daycare services. For more information call 1-877-563-4844 or visit the website at [www.nafc.ca/programs.htm](http://www.nafc.ca/programs.htm).

## Provincial/Territorial Childcare Subsidy Programs

Provinces and territories are committed to helping families obtain affordable, accessible, safe, and quality childcare. They provide childcare subsidies to help families pay for part or all of the child care costs. Cost will be covered for licensed full and part-day non-profit and for-profit, and family day care homes. They can help parents who are going to school and/or are in a low income tax bracket.

First, you must find a subsidized childcare space from a licensed childcare centre or home childcare program and reserve a spot for your child. Then, you contact the childcare subsidy office in your area to make an appointment. The office will inform you of the necessary supporting documents required to bring with you to the appointment so they can assess whether you qualify for the subsidy.

For more information on early childhood development programs and child care services available in your province/territory, go to the Early Childhood Development website at [www.ecd-elcc.ca](http://www.ecd-elcc.ca).




**Apply for a childcare subsidy and placement one year before your studies begin.**

## 5. Criminal Record

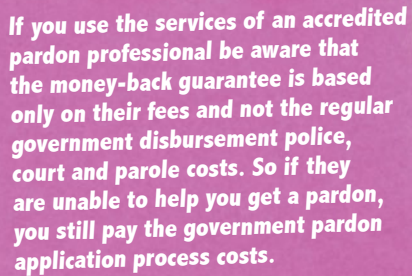
While you might think that having a criminal record prevents you from achieving success, you need to know that you can apply for a pardon. A pardon is necessary before you start school so you are able to obtain the police records check for vulnerable sector screening. This check is required for your field and clinical placements in your PSW program.

To begin the pardon process on your own, contact the **Pardons Info Line at 1-800-874-2652** for updated information on fees, frequently asked questions, and application. Please note that pardons are not automatically granted and it depends on eligibility for a pardon. The costs for the pardon application process will be \$650 after July, 2011. Additional costs may apply for fingerprints and in Alberta only there are costs associated with the court information form.



**Apply for a pardon at least one year ahead before applying for school. If you choose to use the services of an accredited pardon professional, know that it is more costly and that a professional cannot speed up the application process. You can go through this process yourself and save money.**

The Pardon Application Guide and Form and Factsheet are available through the Parole Board of Canada at [www.npb-clcc.gc.ca](http://www.npb-clcc.gc.ca). The John Howard Society of Alberta is another useful link which outlines the pardon process. See website: [www.johnhoward.ab.ca/pub/pardons/guide.htm](http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca/pub/pardons/guide.htm).



**If you use the services of an accredited pardon professional be aware that the money-back guarantee is based only on their fees and not the regular government disbursement police, court and parole costs. So if they are unable to help you get a pardon, you still pay the government pardon application process costs.**

After a pardon, you are not legally obligated to tell a potential employer that you ever had a criminal record. Your criminal record will not turn up in criminal record check. But there are ways potential employers ask questions to learn if you have ever had a criminal record.

For example, they may ask the question, “are you bondable?” on an employment application. If you have a criminal record for which you have not yet received a pardon, you must legally answer “no” to the question. It is at this point the employer will know you have a criminal record. See *Preparing for a Job Interview* for more information on what questions you do not have to answer.



Once you have received the pardon, go to your local police station that can provide the police records check conducted by the **Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC)**.

Let them know you require this information for an educational institution, and provide the name of the school and where your placement will take place including your duties. You do not need this for your school application but you will need it shortly after starting school.

Your school program coordinator will provide specific information to you about your placements and duties at the beginning of your first semester. You may be expected to get more than one for each placement because the record is dated.





# Mapping Your Success - The Path to Becoming a Personal Support Worker

## Step 1:

Decide on what school (Trade School or College) you want to attend and see if you meet the requirements. Contact the Admissions Office and ask for application information and forms.

## Step 2:

If you are missing any requirements (i.e. high school diploma or a G.E.D.), make an appointment with an Education Counsellor to discuss what you need and how you can complete them.

## Step 3:

Once you meet all of the requirements, ask the Admissions Office on how to register for the program (either on-line or with the forms).

## Step 4:

Start planning how you will budget for your program (i.e. finances, family commitment, and daycare). Make an appointment with the Financial Officer at the school who can assist you with looking for resources for funding.

## Step 5:

Get Schooled as a Personal Support Worker in an 8 month to 1 year program including the work placement needed for graduation.

## Step 6:

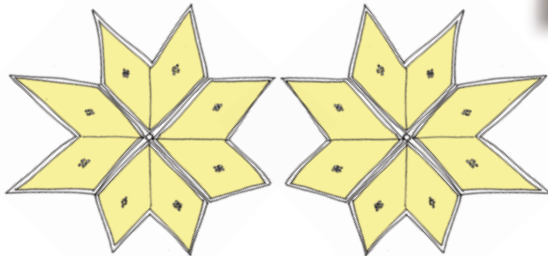
After you complete the PSW Program, begin your job search. Often programs will assist you in your job search.

Please see [Appendix C](#) for the Mapping Your Success Worksheets and Calendar.

tab add

## PSW Career websites

Once you have graduated, the school will assist you in placements but you may want to research it on your own where you want to work. Provided, on pg. 34, are various links to different job portals that will be useful in your search. It is advised that you do this research to become familiar with the types of employers and varying wages. Knowing this information is especially helpful if you need to negotiate a salary with a potential employer.



**Go to a library or a friend's house if you do not have Internet at home.**

**To search other job banks, use Google at [www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca) and type in keywords such as "job and PSW", "PSW and Aboriginal and Job postings", "employment and PSW", "PSW Jobs.com" or "Healthcare jobs and PSW" and include your province.**

*If any of the following links do not work, type the name of the organization provided into google and hit “enter”.*

Aboriginal Health Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI) information on PSW careers as presented by Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN):  
<http://ahhri.nan.on.ca/article/health-careers-personal-support-worker-153.asp>

Canadian Job Bank:  
[www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)

Career Builder:  
[www.careerbuilder.ca/CA/Default.aspx](http://www.careerbuilder.ca/CA/Default.aspx)

HCareers.com:  
[www.hcareers.com](http://www.hcareers.com)

MedHunters PSW Job Listings:  
[www.healthcareers.com/Default.aspx?TabId=138&catid=2280](http://www.healthcareers.com/Default.aspx?TabId=138&catid=2280)

Indeed Job Search Canada:  
[www.indeed.ca](http://www.indeed.ca)

Monster Canada:  
[www.monster.ca](http://www.monster.ca)

Workopolis:  
[www.workopolis.com/EN/Common/HomePage.aspx](http://www.workopolis.com/EN/Common/HomePage.aspx)

Aboriginal Portal Canada - Employment Portal:  
[www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/jc/site.nsf/eng/menu.html](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/acp/jc/site.nsf/eng/menu.html)

Inclusion Network -  
Canada's National Aboriginal Job Site:  
[www.inclusionnetwork.ca/aboriginal-jobs/index.htm](http://www.inclusionnetwork.ca/aboriginal-jobs/index.htm)

# Working in Your Home Community - Challenges and Approaches for Success



Working in one's home community can be very challenging given the small size of community. Several of the issues you will face include: creating trust between you and your clients, privacy, confidentiality, family conflict, and burn-out. PSWs are expected to sign confidentiality agreements when they start working with a new client.

A new PSW can establish trust with their clients by being friendly and open. But most importantly, the tone of your voice and your body language matters. Having a calm reassuring tone is what the client's want and expect.

**Approach:** Give a little bit of history about yourself when you first meet your clients. Clients tend to open up more when you are personal. Ask your clients how they are feeling but limit the amount of questions you ask so

you are not perceived as intruding in their privacy. Never stand with your arms crossed. It gives a negative message. Instead, maintain an open body stance with good posture as it relays a positive message that you want to be there to assist and comfort them.

New PSWs will quickly learn that the clients they serve are very private people. Clients need reassurance that what happens in the home stays in the home. Clients want to know you will keep their confidentiality and respect their privacy. At times achieving this may seem political. For example, families may not get along and may try to “police” each other through you. Often, you may care for two members of the same family who live in separate residences but have family **conflict**.

For example, the PSW visits with the father after visiting the daughter. The father asks private information about the daughter.

**Approach:** Never disclose any information about any client and gently explain that you respect all clients' privacy. Encourage the father to speak with his daughter directly but never get pulled into family **conflict**. PSWs who maintain confidentiality and privacy for their clients also gain respect.

Easing the fears of your clients is important. When people are ill, their bodies are going through changes that they may not understand. For example, you come across a skin breakdown (i.e. open bed sores) that need to be bandaged.

**Approach:** explain to your client what you found and what you are doing to take care of the problem. Calming the fears of your clients is another way to comfort them.

Bringing culture into care is something that can benefit clients. For example, knowing your ancestral language and sharing it with your clients.

**Approach:** the simple act of saying "hello" or "goodbye" can be encouraging to clients who want to speak their first language. One PSW shared that when she replied back in Ojibwe, she could see how it energized her client.

Sometimes clients rebel. For example, if a client has a bad day, they may kick the PSW out of their home.

**Approach:** Since PSWs work closely with the registered nurse to monitor the care of the client, the nurse may come in instead of the PSW. PSWs should always maintain professionalism even when clients are sometimes uncooperative. This ensures an easier time to go back into the home and resume a regular schedule with your client.

**“Like Mother Earth, we have a responsibility to regenerate and replenish ourselves and to allow others to assist us in that process.”**



(Anderson, 2000, p.230)

Burn-out is a top issue for PSWs, especially in a small community where care-givers or PSWs care solely for family or provide care in different jobs. The job is physically demanding because of the requirement to lift patients. Learn to recognize signs of exhaustion such as feeling tired for longer periods of time, feeling depressed, angry, or impatient.

Recognize physical pains like headaches, shoulder pain, and feeling like you are “trapped” are also signs of burnout. As a PSW, you must learn to balance your life with the services you provide in homecare.

**Approach:** Take regular respite care – at least every month you need time for rest and relaxation. Exercising (i.e. running, yoga, aerobics etc.) at least 3 times a week can strengthen your body and relieve stress. Learning meditation can de-clutter your mind and massage is beneficial to help boost your immune system. Eating regular balanced meals also maintains your strength and energy.

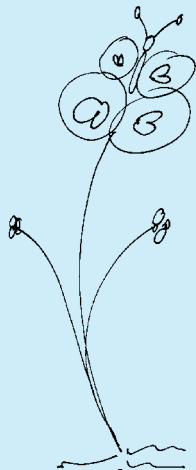
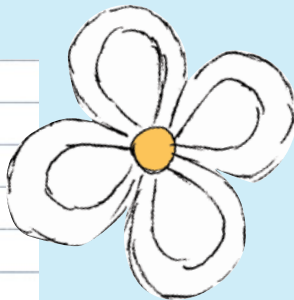
**“Grandma’s quality of life was better for an extra three and half years because of the care she would not have necessarily gotten in the nursing home - like lots of hugs and kisses!”**

**“Because there is a lot of lifting in this job, you are at high risk of back injury if you lift a person the wrong way. We do have training on how to move a person safely.”**



**“When it’s a small community, the Aboriginal PSWs here know the clients – their likes and dislikes. With Alzheimer’s her health deteriorated increasingly and she reverted back to her native language and childhood memories. At home, the PSWs could speak to her in the Ojibwe language which she really liked.”**

**“I tend to get attached to a lot of people and we’re a small community.”**



**“I went to a career website and they helped prepare me for a job interview. They tested how I answered questions, watched my body language – they really helped me become the person you’d want to hire.”**

# Preparing for a Job Interview — what to ask, how to ask and what not to answer

Preparing for a job interview can feel challenging but the key to a successful interview is to be prepared and have some idea of what to expect. This section will outline what you should focus on in the interview so you can approach it with confidence. Remember that in the interview you are expected to “sell” yourself and demonstrate that you have the skills and the qualifications to do the job. First impressions count so your appearance, manner, and attitude are just as important as your timely arrival for the interview. Arriving ten minutes early will always make a good impression to your potential employer.



A potential employer will look for:

## Types of experiences

Potential employers will want to know that you have experience as a caregiver in some capacity. They will also want to know that you are able to work with others as part of a team. Even if you do not have a lot of experience working in health, never underestimate other interests that may be useful as examples. Team sports or other extra-curricular activities such as volunteering can be used to present your cooperative abilities. You will be expected to show that you have completed a program related to doing work as a PSW and explain how you can draw on your life experience. Life experience is a huge asset when working with different populations.



## Types of skills

Good interpersonal communication skills are very important in addition to being organized. These skills can be demonstrated in an interview by answering the question directly but briefly. Be prepared to have examples where you are able to show how you set priorities based on needs of the client and/or organization. Also, be prepared to demonstrate how you can follow policy and procedures yet know when to make exceptions when required. You may also be asked how you handle conflict in the workplace (or in class group assignments). How you answer this question will show whether you are able to maintain a level of professionalism and respect at all times.

## Types of qualities

Future employers want to know how you are responsible and accountable in the workplace. Be prepared to show how you are a problem solver. For example, if you tend to work a lot of overtime state how you are learning to create balance between work and personal time. Show you can think outside the box and can maintain an attitude of non-judgment. Providing examples of how you are able to establish boundaries and stay within them is also a question you can expect in an interview. Remember your PSW training will teach you and assist you in this area.



## Questions you may be asked:

Some standard questions you may be asked include:

Tell me about yourself.

Why did you decide to become a PSW?

Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.

Why should we hire you?

What have you learned from past mistakes on the job?

In answering any of these questions, keep your answers brief and answer in about two minutes or less. In the first question, you can talk about family, interests, extra-curricular activities like running for example. For the second question, this is your personal story and you decide how much of it you want to share. Always be ready to provide your strengths (such as hardworking, energetic, dependable etc.) and your

weaknesses. For example, hardworking can also be a weakness if you do not give yourself time to rest. When you are a PSW it will be important to show you take time to rest to ensure you are in tip top shape to serve your clients. For the fourth question, recall your strengths and how clients will benefit from your skills and abilities. For the fifth question, recall a conflicting situation and how you were able to turn it around to maintain a good relationship with co-workers for example. You may also be asked questions or given hypothetical scenarios to demonstrate how you would handle situations that deal with emotional/mental dilemmas of clients, ethical decisions, or emergency situations. This is one way that potential employers gauge an understanding of your ability to deal with challenges and unexpected situations.

## Details of the job that the employer will want to know you are aware of:

Employers will want to know that you are aware that in the job of a PSW nothing goes as planned. Juggling schedules is often required and your ability to be flexible is an asset. Families often want reassurance that their family members are receiving the best of care and so may question your approaches to care. Sometimes a PSW is dealing with an unhappy client or family member. Knowing how to balance the stresses with the responsibilities of the job is also what employers require.

## Be prepared to ask questions but also know what questions you do not have to answer.

As an interviewee you will have the opportunity to ask questions. Have two or three questions prepared such as asking about other job duties that may not have been discussed in the interview. Questions you are not required by law to answer are any personal questions not related to the job. For example, you do not have to answer any questions related to race, gender, age, religion, marital status, disabilities, sexual preference, and ethnicity. But there is one exception, if your name gets flagged under the **CPIC**, then you do have to disclose.



This would only occur if a person was convicted of a sexual offense. For more information see *Fact Sheet on Pardons* through the website cited in this guidebook.

Never answer a question that is phrased as “Have you ever had a criminal record” or “Have you ever been pardoned from a criminal record”? When you receive a pardon, you do not have to admit that you had a criminal record. When you are pardoned your record is sealed from public information. Therefore, you can decline to answer this question or simply say, “no.”

But if a federal employer wants to know about a person’s criminal record history, the question should be phrased: “Have you ever been convicted of an offence for which you have not received a pardon?” In this case a pardoned individual can answer “no.”

This question is phrased in such a way that it is more in line with federal and provincial human rights legislation. It allows protection against discrimination based on an individual’s criminal record.

Remember for your interview, be neatly and conservatively dressed. Show your enthusiasm, be yourself and approach the interview with confidence. The employer is just as excited about hiring you as you are to work for them. No matter how you feel the interview went, always provide a firm handshake. Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to speak with them and leave with a warm smile.



## Q & A

Q/ Work placement hours are required in the PSW program. Is there any monetary compensation from the college or the placement facility for completion of these hours? And, how many hours are students expected to complete?

A/ Yes, there are work placement hours to complete but there is no monetary compensation. Over a school year (8 months – 1 year) for example, a student can expect to put in 200 hours (or more) depending on the program. The school helps with finding placements. You must complete the hours in order to graduate.

Q/ Can I work more hours to complete my work placement faster?

A/ When students are going to school full-time, it is usually advised to maintain 10 to 15 hour work weeks otherwise, students who work longer hours tend to get off-track from their studies or other responsibilities. In PSW programs the hours you work are regulated by the program and the placement. Working two days a week for six hour shifts is an example of scheduling for clinical and community work.

Q/ Are your learned PSW skills transferable or recognized across provinces?

A/ Often the skills are transferable. You may still have to write a provincial exam, which is unregulated, or you may be required to take an extra course or two. Always keep your transcripts and course outline to show them to potential employers who will want to evaluate your training and skills.

Q/ Does our training help deal with client's who have mental health problems like dementia or Alzheimer's?

A/ Not all clients that you deal with will have dementia. In your PSW training, you will learn how to monitor their mental health and any symptoms they may have. You will also learn strategies to deal with these

types of conditions and also relieve any stresses for the client related to their condition.

Q/How will I know if I am close to burn-out and when I may need respite care?

A/ Part of the challenge of being a PSW is the potential for burn-out. You will learn how to monitor your own symptoms such as becoming impatient with the client, experiencing fatigue or pain in your shoulders or other parts of your body. You should have the discussion with your employer to make arrangements for regular respite care to avoid burn-out. Self-care is an important part of being a PSW.

Q/ Does a PSW need to be registered or **certified** upon graduation?

A/ No, not in most provinces. Some private career colleges use this as a marketing strategy to attract students. But a final exam after graduation is not official, recognized or required. Do not pay to take an exam after graduation or to get certification. All you need to get a job as a PSW is the certificate you receive upon graduation. There is one exception. In Ontario, after July, 2011, there will be legislative changes to begin a certification process. College programs in Ontario are preparing to ensure students receive certification in addition to their program certificate. There will be no additional charges. Please Note: any tests requiring payment are not regulated and there is no such thing as a PSW Diploma at this time. See website: [www.psno.ca/faq.php](http://www.psno.ca/faq.php).

Q/ What other kind of certification do I require as a PSW?

A/ The only certification you require is CPR and First Aid training which you must already be working towards when you first enter the PSW Training.

Q/ Can I be discriminated against because I had a conviction but I am now pardoned?

A/ You are protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act against discrimination but there may be those in your community who will still question your motives or ethics. If you do experience discrimination on the job, own up to the fact that in the past you made mistakes. Explain that today you are making better choices and you chose to do work as a PSW that gives back to community. Usually, when others see that

you take pride in creating positive change, they will no longer attempt to shame you for wrongdoings in the past.

Also, during a job interview you cannot be asked questions where you must reveal that you are pardoned as you are also protected under the Criminal Rights Act. For more information see the website:

[www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml#3](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml#3).

Q/ Am I expected to do heavy lifting on the job?

A/ Yes. It is important to be physically fit and able to lift about 100 lbs. Your training will teach you how to lift properly to avoid injury and maintain safety for the clients.

Q/ What if there is a conflict within a family or I have previously experienced conflict with this family?

A/ Conflict will occur from time to time and is a normal process of life. So expect this as a PSW when working with clients. Most programs will offer training on interpersonal communication skills and conflict resolution techniques. This training is intended to establish and maintain effective relationships with your clients. Work with your teachers and supervisors who will have experience in dealing with conflict and can guide you. See more information in the Useful Resources section on pg 48.





## Useful Resources

Alberta Employment and Immigration (2007). *Adult Back to School Planner*. See website: <http://alis.alberta.ca/pdf/cshop/AdultPlanner.pdf>.

Jamal, Azim, and McKinnon, Harvey. (2009). *The Power of Giving How Giving Back Enriches Us All: Creating Abundance at Home, At Work, and In Your Community*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.

Parole Board of Canada Factsheet: [www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml)

Pardons Canada: [www.npb-clcc.gc.ca](http://www.npb-clcc.gc.ca).

*Payscale Canada*. Updated website June, 2011.

[www.payscale.com/research/CA/Job=Personal\\_Support\\_Worker\\_%28PSW%29/Salary](http://www.payscale.com/research/CA/Job=Personal_Support_Worker_%28PSW%29/Salary)

Personal Support Worker Canada: [www.personalsupportworker.ca/psw\\_information.html](http://www.personalsupportworker.ca/psw_information.html)

The About Conflict website:

[www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/aboutwhatisit.htm#theroleofperceptions](http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/aboutwhatisit.htm#theroleofperceptions)

The Centre for NonViolent Communication (NVC) website: [www.cnvc.org](http://www.cnvc.org)

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Native Women's Association of Canada (2006). Number of Aboriginal People in Canada's Prisons Growing: New Investments to Address Poverty and Secure Better Education Outcomes Needed to Address Crisis in National Organization. Ottawa: Native Women's Association of Canada.

OACCAC, OCSA, and OHHCPA (2000). The Role and Value of Homemakers/Personal Support Workers in the Health Care System: A Discussion Paper. Ontario: Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres, Ontario Community Support Association, and Ontario Home Health Providers' Association.  
See website: [www.ocsa.on.ca/userfiles/HPSWintheHCS%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.ocsa.on.ca/userfiles/HPSWintheHCS%5B1%5D.pdf)

Parole Board of Canada Factsheet: [www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml)

# Glossary

**Alzheimer's:** is a complex disease that affects the brain when vital nerve cells in the brain become damaged. Overtime, irreversible damage occurs eventually leading to death. Alzheimer's is one form of dementia and symptoms include: memory loss that affects day-to-day living; difficulty performing familiar tasks; problems with language; disorientation of time and place. Those with Alzheimer's disease have poor or decreased judgement; problems with abstract thinking (ie. Balancing a cheque book); misplacing things; changes in mood, behaviour or personality; and loss of initiative. But changes such as these do not affect a person's ability to respond to and experience emotions such as joy, love, anger, fear, or sadness.<sup>5</sup>

**Certificate:** is what you receive to verify you have successfully completed a PSW program.

**Certified/Certification:** this is different from obtaining a certificate upon graduation. Certification usually refers to official recognition of extra training or taking a "provincial Certification Exam" that provides a greater level of knowledge in a chosen profession. But in the case of a PSW, there is no such exam and although some private colleges ask students to take their exam, these exams are not official, recognized or required. Ontario will soon begin a certification process but the school will assist you in getting certified upon graduation at no extra charge.

**CPIC:** the Canadian Police Information Centre is a computerized information system that provides all Canadian law enforcement agencies (i.e. Police Stations) with information on crimes and criminals. CPIC is operated by the RCMP. For more information just google: CPIC.

**CPIC Agency:** A Canadian police agency that is authorized to access the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) for the purposes of conducting Criminal Record and/or Vulnerable Sector Name Checks. Your local police station can access CPIC.

**Criminal Records Check:** this is a check for any outstanding offences that an individual holds across Canada. The cost is approximately \$45 and can be obtained from a police station on the spot. Do not confuse this with a Police Records check for Vulnerable Sector Screening.

**Conflict:** Conflict is always going to be a part of life. Conflict often arises when people perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Examples are a perceived threat to maintaining confidentiality, or issues of trust and safety. It is best to work with your supervisor and/or teachers when conflict arises who can guide you and help find a resolution. Remember that working through a conflict takes time.<sup>6</sup>

**Dementia:** is a loss of brain function that occurs with certain diseases. Symptoms of dementia include: loss of memory, judgment and reasoning, changes in mood and behaviour. Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia.

**Home Management:** provides light housekeeping duties, meal preparation and shopping for the individual being cared for.

**Mature Student:** Generally, a mature student is anyone who is over the age of 19 years old and has been out of school for a minimum of two years. Each school may define mature student status

differently. But mature students often have additional responsibilities (children, mortgage or car payments). How to take care of these added financial responsibilities may be challenging when returning to school but is possible with careful planning.<sup>7</sup>

**Palliative Care:** is the specialized area of healthcare that focuses on relieving the suffering of a person whose is living with a chronic or incurable disease. For example, 85% of people cared for in palliative care have cancer. Palliative care provides comfort and support to the person and their family.<sup>8</sup>

**Pardon:** For anyone who was convicted of a criminal offence, has completed their sentence and has shown they are law-abiding citizens, a pardon will ensure your criminal record is kept separate and apart from other criminal records. Under the Criminal Records Act (CRA), the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) has the authority to grant, deny, or revoke pardons. If eligible, persons with a criminal record can submit a Pardon Application which costs \$650 as of July, 2011. See the Parole Board of Canada website at: [www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml#1](http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/infocntr/factsh/pardon-eng.shtml#1)

**Personal Care:** consists of assisting with bathing, grooming and dressing, feeding and assisting with exercise and outings for the individual who cannot care for themselves.

**Personal Support Worker (PSW):** a health worker that provides basic health care and assistance with activities of daily living to those that are not fully able to care for themselves. This includes seniors, individuals with physical disabilities, and individuals with mental disabilities, amongst others. There are other titles for similar positions also referred to as Personal Care Attendant, Nursing Assistant, or Health Care Assistant.

**Police Records Check for Vulnerable Sector Screening:** This is what is required for any student who will be trained in a program that requires field or clinical placements. This is also required for any person who is applying for a job and that will hold some type of authority over a child or any person who may be viewed as vulnerable such as the elderly. The cost for this check is \$15 to \$25 and takes about 2 weeks to receive.

**Long-term Care (LTC):** includes the range of medical, social, or personal care services to help people who have chronic (serious), terminal illness or disability needs. The care can be provided at home, in the community, in nursing homes, and/or long-term health facilities on a recurring or continuing basis. Long-term care may be needed by people of any age however it is most common among the elderly.<sup>9,10</sup>

**Respite Care:** is the break needed for caregivers to take time to rest and recover from their caregiving duties. Someone else temporarily takes over some of the duties for a day or up to three days to allow caregivers time to relax or to attend to their own family and personal needs. Respite care relieves some of the stress related to caregiver's workload and helps to prevent burn-out.

**Standard First Aid and CPR Level "C":** is a level of training that is more than just the basic first aid knowledge and skills. It is a 2-day program that involves 18-20 hours of training. It provides additional CPR skills that are necessary for healthcare professionals (PSW, physicians, nurses, paramedics, etc.). It includes the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Operator Certification.<sup>11</sup>

## APPENDIX A: Aboriginal Youth/Adult Education Learning Institutions

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) is available at the website:

[www.cmec.ca/Pages/Default.aspx](http://www.cmec.ca/Pages/Default.aspx).

This site provides a map with the names of all the provinces and territories. Click on the province or territory of your choice and it provides a link to the Minister of Education in that particular region. Click on this link and it brings you to a home page where you can continue the search for adult learning opportunities, high school upgrading or G.E.D. Many sites also have information on funding.

For convenience, each province or territory quick link is provided below and any other available information such as address or telephone number (if available).

### Yukon

Adult Education: Whitehorse  
Individual Learning Centre

[www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/  
individual\\_lc/index.html](http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/individual_lc/index.html)

Telephone: (867) 667-5141

### Northwest Territories

Adult and Post-Secondary Education

[www.ece.gov.nt.ca](http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca)

Telephone: (867) 669-2399



## Nunavut

Adult Learning and Post Secondary Services  
Department of Education  
P.O. Box 390, Arviat, NU X0C 0E0  
[www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=3](http://www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=3)  
Telephone: (867) 857-3050

## British Columbia

Ministry of Advanced Education  
PO Box 9882 STN PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC V8W 9T6  
[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/welcome.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/welcome.htm)  
Telephone: (250) 356-9733 or (250) 387-5839

## Alberta

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology  
High School Upgrading  
[www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/planning/choosing/upgrading.aspx](http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/planning/choosing/upgrading.aspx)  
Telephone: (780) 427-5400

## Saskatchewan

GED Office: Program Innovation Branch,  
Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment  
and Immigration  
12th floor, 1945 Hamilton Street  
Regina SK S4P 2C8  
Email: [GED@gov.sk.ca](mailto:GED@gov.sk.ca)  
[www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/ged](http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/ged)  
Telephone: (306) 787-5597





## Manitoba

Adult Learning & Literacy (ALL)

350 - 800 Portage Avenue Winnipeg, MB  
R3G 0N4

[www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/index.html)

Telephone: (204) 945-8247

Toll Free 1-800-282-8069 ext. 8247

Email: [all@gov.mb.ca](mailto:all@gov.mb.ca)

## Ontario

[www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/adultlearning/](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/adultlearning/)

To find classes in your area, call  
Employment Ontario

1-800-387-5656 or

Search under “Adult High School Credit  
Program” on the Employment Ontario website:

[www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/search.asp](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/search.asp)

## Quebec

Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports

[www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/elevs/index2\\_](http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/elevs/index2_en.asp?page=retour)  
[en.asp?page=retour](http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/elevs/index2_en.asp?page=retour)

Telephone: (418) 643-7095

## Newfoundland & Labrador

High School Certification Office  
Department of Education

P.O. Box 8700

3rd Floor, West Block

Confederation Building

St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

[www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/adultlearning/](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/adultlearning/ged.html)  
[ged.html](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/adultlearning/ged.html)

Telephone: (709) 729-7919

## Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL)

[www.gov.ns.ca/lae/adult.education/default.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/lae/adult.education/default.asp)

Telephone: 1-877-go-NSSAL or 1-877-466-7725

## Prince Edward Island

GED Testing Program

Department of Innovation and  
Advanced Learning

PO Box 2000, Charlottetown, PEI C1A 4K9

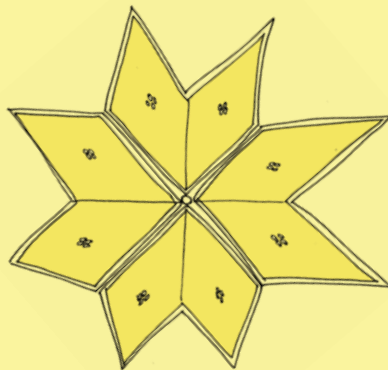
[www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index.php3?number=1027895](http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index.php3?number=1027895)

Telephone: (902) 368-4650

## New Brunswick

General Educational Development (GED)

[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary\\_education\\_training\\_and\\_labour/post-secondary\\_education.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour/post-secondary_education.html)



## APPENDIX B: Provincial/Territorial Student Assistance Programs

### National

Canada Student Grants Program -  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada\\_student\\_loan/cgsp.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/cgsp.shtml)

### British Columbia

Student Aid British Columbia -  
[www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc)

### Alberta

Alberta Student Finance -  
<http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/fo/studentsfinance/students-finance.html>

### Saskatchewan

Student Financial Assistance Program -  
[www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/student-loans](http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/student-loans)

### Manitoba

Manitoba Student Aid -  
[www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/sfaFrontDoor\\_en.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/educate/sfa/pages/sfaFrontDoor_en.html)

### Ontario

Ontario Student Assistance Program -  
<https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal>

### Quebec

Aides Financières aux Études -  
[www.afe.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.asp](http://www.afe.gouv.qc.ca/en/index.asp)



## New Brunswick

New Brunswick Student Financial Assistance -  
[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary\\_education\\_training\\_and\\_labour/post-secondary\\_education/content/funding\\_and\\_financialinformation/student\\_financialservices.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour/post-secondary_education/content/funding_and_financialinformation/student_financialservices.html)

## Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia Student Assistance -  
<http://studentloans.ednet.ns.ca>

## Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island Student Loans Program -  
[www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index.php3?number=1000717](http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index.php3?number=1000717)

## Newfoundland & Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador Student Financial Assistance -  
[www.ed.gov.nl.ca/studentaid](http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/studentaid)

## Nunavut

Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students -  
[www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=4a](http://www.edu.gov.nu.ca/apps/authoring/dspPage.aspx?page=4a)

## N.W.T.

NWT Student Financial Assistance -  
[www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca](http://www.nwtsfa.gov.nt.ca)

## Yukon

Student Financial Assistance -  
[www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/sfa](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/advanceded/sfa)

## APPENDIX C: Planning Worksheets

### Getting Started:

It's normal to feel a certain amount of anxiety when deciding to go back to school. How you manage your stress can actually help push you forward in a positive way. Change can be scary but with persistence, understanding the fears you hold and getting the supports you need, can ease the burden and get you to where you want to go.

Visualize your goals and where you want to be and then take the necessary steps to accomplish them. You may begin by asking yourself some questions.



- Am I being creative by “doing” or just dreaming of doing?
- Am I ready, willing, and able to be successful in school?
- Is my attitude blocking my abilities to dream by believing I have already failed?
- Have I considered the challenges that I may face?
- Am I prepared to seek help from others when needed?

Date to be completed	Taking Steps to Get Ready	Things to Do	Done ✓
_____	<p>If you have a criminal record, take the steps required to learn about the school's requirements and then obtain a pardon.</p> <p>Start this process at least a year in advance of starting your program or as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Example</p> <p>Optional: Make an appointment with the Associate Dean/Campus Dean prior to applying for school admission. Contact the Pardons Info Line at 1-800-874-2652. Get a copy of the <i>Pardon Application Guide, Form &amp; Factsheet</i> at <a href="http://www.npb-snlc.gc.ca">www.npb-snlc.gc.ca</a> After your pardon, get a Police record check for vulnerable sectors screening.</p>	_____
_____	<p>What different types of PSW programs are there?</p> <p>What schools have cultural supports available to Aboriginal students?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>What schools may best suit my needs? Visit the websites available in this guidebook Get a copy of the school calendar Get a copy of the application forms</p>	_____
_____	<p>Choose the schools you want to apply to and fill out the applications.</p> <p>Note the phone number to call if you need help with the application process.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Review the PSW Program admission requirements. Do I meet the requirements? If not, make an appointment with the school counsellor. If you do meet the requirements, contact the Registrar's office and ask how to register for the Program (on-line or paper copy).</p>	_____
_____	<p>Prepare all necessary documentation that must be included with applications.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Prepare documentation like status card or equivalent, high school transcripts or G.E.D. Make copies and file all documentation</p>	_____
_____	<p>Creating a Budget for school – how much do I need to cover school and living costs?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>How much are tuition costs? Visit the school websites or call the registrar's office How much is housing and child care costs? Make an appointment with a school counsellor who can provide additional information re: costs. Ask for help to set up a budget plan if you need it.</p>	_____
_____	<p>Funding Opportunities – where are you going to get the money to go to school?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Call the band office to ask for an application. Make an appointment with the financial aid office for more information about provincial school loans. For example, the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Visit the funding websites available in this guide. Find out through school websites what bursaries or grants are available. What money can I earn while going to school? What jobs are available on and off-campus?</p>	_____
_____	<p>Fill out applications for student funding like OSAP or any grants, bursaries. Ask the school counsellor for assistance on how to apply.</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Fill out the OSAP form on-line (or equivalent). See website: <a href="https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/index.htm">https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/index.htm</a> Apply for provincial funding as early as possible to ensure your funding comes in on time. Be aware of application deadlines for bursaries and scholarships.</p>	_____
_____	<p>What other supports might you need to be successful at school?</p>	<p>Example:</p> <p>Does the school have a daycare program? What are the costs? What child care subsidies are available through the province? Find out if the school has cultural supports for Aboriginal students. What kind of counselling or emotional support services are available? Be proactive: contact student services to find out what workshops are available such as study skill workshops, stress management, writing workshops etc. (before you need the service).</p>	_____
_____	<p>Consider other tasks required before starting school.</p>	<p>Start mapping out a plan using the sheets and calendar provided.</p>	_____

Date to be completed	Taking Steps to Get Ready	Things to Do	Done ✓
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____
_____			_____

# DAILY SCHEDULER

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							



# DAILY SCHEDULER

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							

## STUDENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	MONTHLY BUDGET	MONTHLY ACTUAL
INCOME:		
From Jobs		
From Parents		
From Student Loans		
From Scholarships		
From Financial Aid		
Child Tax Benefit		
Child Support		
Band Living Allowance		
Band Book Allowance		
Band covers Tuition		
Miscellaneous Income		
INCOME SUBTOTAL		
FIXED EXPENSES:		
University Registration Fees		
Tuition & Student Fees		
School Books & Supplies		
Rent or Room & Board		
Health Insurance		
Auto Insurance		
Computer Expense		
Daycare		
Pardon Costs		
CPR & First Aid Training		
Police Check (VSS)		
Immunization - Hepatitis		
FLEXIBLE EXPENSES*		
Utilities		
Telephone		
Groceries		
Gas & Car Maintenance		
Parking		
Public Transportation		
Toiletries		
Eating Out/Vending		
Entertainment		
Uniforms & Shoes		
Daycare Costs		
Bottles, diapers, etc.		
Children's clothes/shoes		
Miscellaneous Expense		
EXPENSES SUBTOTAL		
NET INCOME (INCOME LESS EXPENSES)		

\*Your Personal choices affect these expenses.

## STUDENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

CATEGORY	8 MONTH BUDGET	ACTUAL BUDGET
INCOME:		
From Jobs		
From Parents		
From Student Loans		
From Scholarships		
From Financial Aid		
Child Tax Benefit		
Child Support		
Band Living Allowance		
Band Book Allowance		
Band covers Tuition		
Miscellaneous Income		
INCOME SUBTOTAL		
FIXED EXPENSES:		
University Registration Fees		
Tuition & Student Fees		
School Books & Supplies		
Rent or Room & Board		
Health Insurance		
Auto Insurance		
Computer Expense		
Daycare		
Pardon Costs		
CPR & First Aid Training		
Police Check (VSS)		
Immunization - Hepatitis		
FLEXIBLE EXPENSES*		
Utilities		
Telephone		
Groceries		
Gas & Car Maintenance		
Parking		
Public Transportation		
Toiletries		
Eating Out/Vending		
Entertainment		
Uniforms & Shoes		
Daycare Costs		
Bottles, diapers, etc.		
Children's clothes/shoes		
Miscellaneous Expense		
EXPENSES SUBTOTAL		
NET INCOME (INCOME LESS EXPENSES)		

\*Your Personal choices affect these expenses.

## EndNotes:

1. . . <http://www.miaaw.ca/en/wellness/first-nations.aspx>
2. . . Payscale Research Retrieved at: [http://www.payscale.com/research/CA/Job=Personal\\_Support\\_Worker\\_%28PSW%29/Salary](http://www.payscale.com/research/CA/Job=Personal_Support_Worker_%28PSW%29/Salary)
3. . . The Ontario Network for International Professionals Online (ONIP online, 2011). Retrieved at: <http://www.onip.ca/article/8/>
4. . . Randall, Patty (2011). Retrieved at: [http://www.longtermcarecanada.com/long\\_term\\_care\\_resources/care\\_years\\_pg\\_6.html](http://www.longtermcarecanada.com/long_term_care_resources/care_years_pg_6.html)
5. . . <http://www.alzheimercalgary.com/alzheimercalgary/>
6. . . <http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/aboutwhatisit.htm>
7. . . <http://www.georgebrown.ca/Marketing/FTCal/maturest.aspx>
8. . . <http://www.palliative.org/PC/GeneralPublic/PalliativeCare/WhatIsPC.html>
9. . . <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/long-term+care>
- 10 . . <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/diction.shtml>
- 11 . . <http://www.sja.ca/Ottawa/Training/AtWork/Pages/StandardFirstAidwithlevelCCPR.aspx>