

Champions of Change Fellowship 2024-2025: What Makes a Good Schedule?

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Project Overview

- PSW-led QI project to understanding what makes a good, reliable sustainable PSW work schedule.
- Schedules that prioritize what matters most to PSWs and clients have the potential to increase trust in our services, continuity of care, direct care hours for PSWs, and client satisfaction.
- Predictable and reliable PSW schedules lead to better financial stability and less absenteeism.

Project Aims

1. Identify scheduling issues impacting PSWs.
2. Understand what schedule considerations are most important to PSWs.
3. Make recommendations to VHA leaders on where to set priorities and goals that enhance scheduling satisfaction for PSWs, coordinators and clients.

Methods

Step 1: Identify Scheduling Issues

- Designed and distributed a scheduling survey to PSWs (TC, CEN, CE regions)

Step 2: Understand What Matters Most

- Facilitated virtual focus groups with PSWs using dialogic facilitation approach

Step 3: Understand the Coordination Experience

- Engaged the Director of Operations and Service Integration
- Conducted one-on-one interviews with coordinators

Step 4: Review Documents and Policies

Results

Data Collection Tool	Timeline	Total	Cent	TC	CE
Survey	Feb 2025	111 PSWs* across 4 care teams	26	9	34
Focus Groups (5)	Feb-Apr 2025	19 PSWs	4	8	7
Interviews (4)	Apr 2025	4 coordinators	2		2

Note*42 respondents did not provide demographic information

Top PSW Scheduling Priorities identified through Survey and Focus Groups

1. **Travel time** – minimizing time traveling and maximizing direct care hours
2. **Gaps in schedules** – minimize frequency of gaps more than 1.5 hours between clients
3. **Matching skills with client needs** – ensure PSWs have up-to-date training to meet client needs
4. **Communication** – timely response about schedules to both clients and PSWs
5. **Client needs vs wants** – managing client expectations by identifying time-specific vs time-flexible needs
6. **Fill-ins vs Permanent Clients** – prioritizing continuity of care and predictability



Proactive Strategies for PSWs to improve their schedules

- Becoming a trusted liaison with the office by building rapport through a client-family centered approach that allows clients to trust PSW to speak on their behalf.
- Rescheduling with client’s consent – negotiating adjustments and relaying changes to coordinators)
- Reorganizing clients based on location and travel to make commuting more efficient, cost effective, and reducing our carbon footprint.



Scheduling Coordinator Insights

- Coordinators’ time is divided between phone calls, emails, and forward scheduling, leaving little time for focused support.
- They manage many responsibilities:
 - matching clients with skilled PSWs, handling new client assignments, rescheduling, managing calls and emails, conflicts and billing.
- New projects and program types add complexity to their workload.
- Despite prioritizing PSW needs, these efforts haven’t always led to improved outcomes for PSWs.
- Creating strong, lasting client-PSW connections remains a challenge given the multiple competing demands.

Recommendations

1. **Address the Core Concerns**
 - Address permanent client/PSW assignments, reduce gaps, refine cluster sites, clarify visit needs, and reassess care plans regularly.
2. **Additional Training Required**
 - Offer self-advocacy and communication skills training, VHA system training (e.g., GoldCare and Outlook), and refreshers on policy and procedural changes.
3. **Full Care Team Approach**
 - Enhance team cohesion through huddles, evaluate PSW schedules, and support coordinators with incoming calls.
4. **Review our Processes**
 - Update policies to address common non-travel related delays and safety issues.
 - Leverage technology (real-time maps, potential AI support) to manage client visits.
5. **Advocacy**
 - Collaborate with Ontario Health atHome to improve client expectations and communication.
 - Work with municipalities on transit and parking solutions geared to home healthcare staff.

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