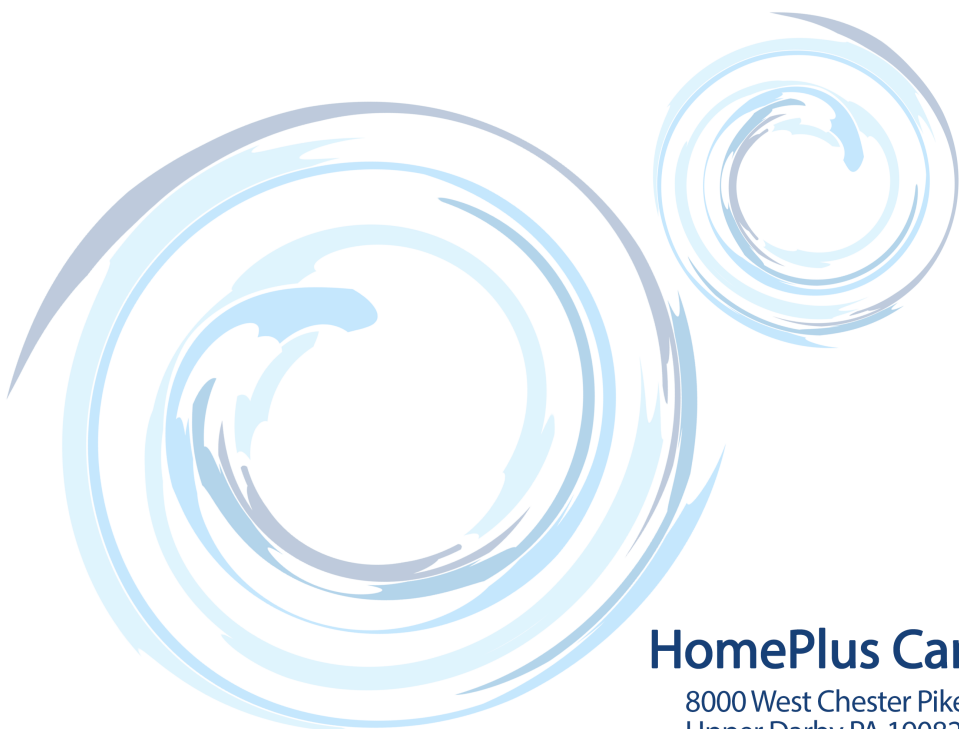




HomePlus Care
Better at Home, Best in Our Care

Direct Care Worker



HomePlus Care

8000 West Chester Pike
Upper Darby PA 19082

Agency Information

Business Hours

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

**Weekends & 6 Major Holidays: CLOSED*

Service Location Address

8000 West Chester Pike| Upper Darby| PA 19082

Contact Information

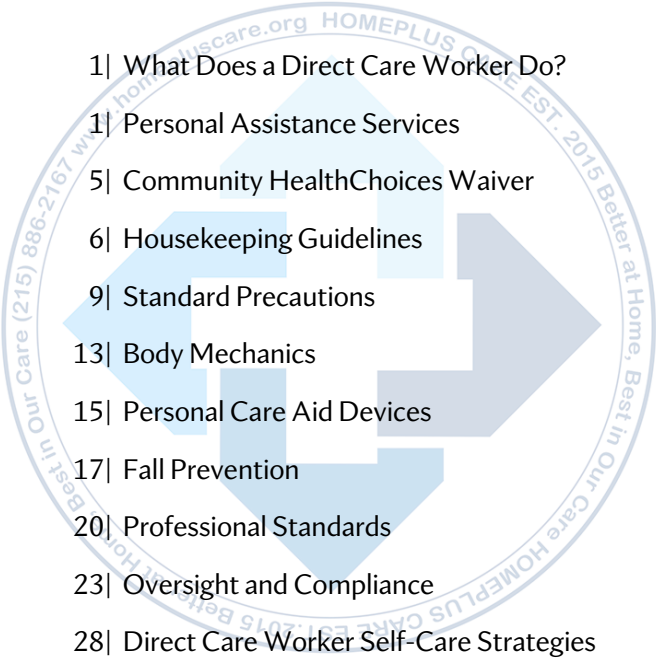
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Contents

- 
- 1| What Does a Direct Care Worker Do?
 - 1| Personal Assistance Services
 - 5| Community HealthChoices Waiver
 - 6| Housekeeping Guidelines
 - 9| Standard Precautions
 - 13| Body Mechanics
 - 15| Personal Care Aid Devices
 - 17| Fall Prevention
 - 20| Professional Standards
 - 23| Oversight and Compliance
 - 28| Direct Care Worker Self-Care Strategies

What Does a Direct Care Worker Do?

Under the Pennsylvania **Community HealthChoices (CHC) Waiver** Program, a Direct Care Worker (DCW) is an individual who provides essential **Personal Assistance Services**, including support with **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)** and **Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)**. These services are typically delivered as part of long-term support through CHC and other Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) programs.

*ADLs (Activities of Daily Living)

Basic personal everyday activities that include bathing, dressing, transferring, toileting, mobility and eating.

*IADLs (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living)

Activities related to independent living, including preparing meals, managing money (if approved), shopping for groceries, performing housework.

A. Personal Assistance Services

1. Personal Hygiene & Appearance Care

- **Bathing Assistance:** Includes assistance with bed baths, sponge baths, tub baths, or showers.
- **Hair Care Assistance:** Includes assistance with brushing, combing, washing, and drying; nail care; and shaving.
- **Oral Care Assistance:** Includes assistance with brushing teeth, denture care, and other oral care.
- **Skin Care Assistance:** Includes assistance with applying lotions and creams to keep skin healthy and protected.
- **Clothing Assistance:** Includes assistance with putting on or removing clothing and accessories.

- **Toileting Assistance:** Includes help with transfers, hygiene after toileting, and changing of incontinence products.

2. Homemaking

- **Light Housekeeping:** Dusting, sweeping, mopping, and vacuuming common areas and the bedroom.
- **Kitchen Cleaning:** Wiping countertops, cleaning sinks, and washing dishes.
- **Bathroom Cleaning:** Sanitizing surfaces, cleaning toilets, showers, tubs, and sinks.
- **Laundry Assistance:** Washing, drying, folding, and putting away clothing and linens.
- **Changing Linens:** Bed-making and changing sheets and pillowcases.
- **Trash Removal:** Collecting and disposing of trash in a sanitary manner.
- **Meal Preparation:** Preparing simple meals or snacks, ensuring nutritional needs are met.
- **Grocery Shopping and Errands:** If approved, assisting with picking up groceries and necessary supplies.
- **Organizing Living Spaces:** Helping maintain an orderly environment for easy navigation and safety.
- **Pet Care:** Assisting with basic pet care tasks, such as providing water and feeding.

3. Transferring

- **Bed-to-Wheelchair Transfers:** Assistance with moving from a bed to a wheelchair or vice versa.

- **Chair-to-Bed Transfers:** Support in transferring between a chair and a bed.
- **Toilet Transfers:** Assistance with safely moving to and from the toilet.
- **Shower or Bathtub Transfers:** Support for getting in and out of a shower or bathtub safely.
- **Vehicle Transfers:** Help with getting in and out of a car or other transport vehicle.
- **Floor Recovery Assistance:** Support in safely returning to a seated or standing position after a fall, if feasible.
- **Repositioning Support:** Assistance with moving or adjusting position in bed, chair, or other surfaces to prevent discomfort or pressure sores.
- **Use of Transfer Equipment:** Support with transfer aids such as slide boards, lifts, or gait belts as needed for safe transitions.

B. Companionship

- **Social Interaction:** Engaging in conversations and activities to promote socialization and emotional well-being.
- **Recreational Activities:** Participating in games, hobbies, or arts and crafts to foster enjoyment and creativity.
- **Accompaniment:** Accompanying the client on outings, such as walks in the community or visits to local attractions.
- **Meal Sharing:** Having meals together to provide companionship during dining and to promote healthy eating habits.
- **Reading and Storytelling:** Reading books or sharing stories to encourage cognitive engagement and entertainment.
- **Listening and Emotional Support:** Offering a listening ear and emotional support for personal issues or concerns.

- **Engagement in Daily Activities:** Assisting with or participating in daily routines, such as gardening, cooking, or household tasks.
- **Promoting Cognitive Activities:** Engaging in activities that stimulate the mind, such as puzzles and trivia games.
- **Assistance with Technology:** Helping the client with using phones, tablets, or computers for communication and entertainment.
- **Transportation for Social Activities:** Providing transportation to social events, family gatherings, or community activities.

C. Supervision

- **General Safety Monitoring:** Observing the client to ensure their physical safety and to prevent accidents or falls.
- **Medication Supervision:** Ensuring that medications are taken on time and observing for any adverse reactions.
- **Behavioral Supervision:** Monitoring for and managing behaviors that could be harmful to the client or others.
- **Cognitive Support and Reminders:** Offering reminders for daily tasks, such as eating, drinking, or completing hygiene routines.
- **Wandering Prevention:** Supervising the client prone to wandering to prevent them from leaving the houses unsafely.
- **Emergency Response Preparedness:** Being ready to respond quickly to emergencies and summon additional help if necessary.
- **Meal and Hydration Reminders:** Reminding the client to eat and drink at regular intervals to maintain health.
- **Assistance with Daily Routines:** Ensuring adherence to daily schedules and routines to provide familiarity.

- **Social and Emotional Support:** Offering companionship and support to prevent isolation and promote mental well-being.
- **Environmental Safety Checks:** Checking the environment for any potential hazards, such as tripping risks or other safety concerns.

D . Respite Care

In-home care to provide relief for an uncompensated primary caregiver.

- **In-Home Respite Services:** Temporary care in the client's home, assisting with **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)** and **Instrumental Activities of Daily Living**, and **Supervision**.

PA Community HealthChoices Waiver

PA Community HealthChoices Waiver (CHC) is Pennsylvania's implementation of the combined Section 1915(b) Managed Care Waiver and Section 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Services Waiver. Under this CHC Waiver program, the state contracts with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) with the goal of improving the delivery and management of Medicaid services for individuals who require long-term services and supports, while promoting access to care in home and community-based settings.

***Direct Care Workers** play an integral role in supporting older adults and individuals with disabilities, enhancing their quality of life, and promoting independence in the community.*

Housekeeping Guidelines

Maintaining a clean and safe environment is essential to supporting the health and comfort of clients receiving home- and community-based services. This guide outlines standard housekeeping responsibilities and sanitation & safety protocols Direct Care Workers should follow during home visits.

Direct Care Worker Responsibilities

1. Sanitation

Maintain clean living spaces and bathrooms as outlined in the care plan.

2. Safety

Identify and reduce fall hazards, use safe cleaning practices.

3. Infection Control

Disinfect surfaces and use personal protective equipment (PPE) properly.

4. Respect for Client Preferences

Always seek consent and follow household norms and routines.

Only perform housekeeping duties listed in the client's Person-Centered Service Plan (PCSP).

Infection Control Procedures

- Wash hands before and after all cleaning or personal care tasks.
- Wear gloves for any sanitation involving bodily fluids or waste.
- Disinfect tools or use disposable cleaning cloths.
- Use color-coded supplies for different areas (e.g., bathroom vs. kitchen).

Home Safety Guidelines

1. Electrical & General Safety

- Avoid overloading outlets or using damaged cords.
- Keep floors dry and clear of hazards.
- Never leave cleaning supplies unattended or in reach of clients with cognitive impairments.

2. Chemical Safety

- Do not mix cleaning products (especially bleach and ammonia).
- Use only approved household cleaners provided or permitted by the client.
- Store chemicals in safe, labeled containers.

3. Waste Disposal

- Regular Trash: Bag securely and dispose daily or as needed.
- Incontinence Products: Use gloves; double-bag before disposal.
- Laundry: Separate clean and soiled items; follow client's instructions for washing.
- Medical Waste: Follow agency or facility policy for safe disposal.

Cleaning Schedule Guidelines

1. Daily Cleaning Tasks

- Wipe kitchen counters and eating areas after use.
- Disinfect doorknobs, remotes, light switches.
- Take out trash and reline bins.
- Clean bathroom toilet, sink, and faucet handles.
- Tidy up mobility paths and common areas.

2. Weekly Cleaning Tasks (if authorized)

- Sweep and mop floors.
- Dust accessible furniture and fixtures.
- Change and wash linens and towels.
- Wipe down appliances (microwave, refrigerator, stove handles).

3. Monthly or Seasonal Tasks (if authorized)

- Clean vents, fans, or filters (if instructed).
- Organize clutter or storage areas.
- Deep-clean bathroom tiles or kitchen backsplashes.

What to Do in Emergency Cleaning Situations

1. Biohazard Clean-Up (e.g., blood, vomit, feces):

- Use gloves and disinfectant.
- Report incident to supervisor.

2. Broken Items or Unsafe Conditions:

- Document.
- Notify your agency or client's representative.

3. Unusual Odors, Pest Activity, or Mold:

- Note details.
- Report immediately per agency guidelines.

Documentation & Communication

1. Log completed tasks in daily care notes if required.
2. Record any cleaning refusal or limitation due to client preference.
3. Report any signs of unsafe living conditions (e.g., broken stairs, hoarding).

Standard Precautions

Direct Care Workers help clients with daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, and meal preparation. Even though they don't provide medical care, they can still be exposed to germs and infections. Standard Precautions are safety steps that all Direct Care Workers should follow to protect themselves and their clients from infections. These precautions apply to blood, body fluids (except sweat), broken skin, and mucous membranes (eyes, nose, and mouth).

1. Hand Hygiene

Why: Germs spread mostly through hands.

When to Wash Hands:

- Before and after helping a client with personal care.
- Before preparing food or handling clean items.
- After touching body fluids, used tissues, or dirty surfaces.
- After removing gloves.

How to Clean Hands:

- Use soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, if hands are visibly dirty.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

2. Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Safely

Why: PPE (like gloves, masks, and gowns) protects DCWs from germs and body fluids.

When to Wear It

- When touching blood, body fluids, or open wounds.

- If there's a risk of getting splashed with body fluids.
- When body fluids might spray into the face (e.g., helping with wound care). If the client has an airborne infection (e.g., tuberculosis).

How to Remove PPE Properly:

- Take off gloves first, turning them inside out.
- Remove gown by pulling it away from the body.
- Take off mask and eye protection last, handling by the straps.
- Wash hands after removing PPE.

3. Covering Coughs and Preventing Germ Spread

Why: Coughing and sneezing can spread illnesses like the flu or COVID-19.

What to Do:

- Encourage clients to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow.
- Provide tissues and hand sanitizer if available.
- Wear a mask if the client is coughing a lot.
- Keep some distance if the client is sick, when possible.

4. Keeping Surfaces and Equipment Clean

Why? Germs can stay on surfaces and spread to people who touch them.

What to Clean and Disinfect:

- Frequently touched items (doorknobs, bed rails, remote controls, countertops).
- Shared care items (thermometers, blood pressure cuffs).
- Any soiled or contaminated surfaces right away.

How to Clean Safely:

- Use disinfectant wipes or sprays approved for killing germs.
- Follow instructions on disinfectant labels for proper use.
- Use disinfectant wipes or sprays approved for killing germs.
- Follow instructions on disinfectant labels for proper use.

5. Handling Laundry and Waste Safely

Why: Dirty laundry and trash can spread infections if not handled properly.

How to Handle Soiled Laundry:

- Wear gloves when handling dirty clothes, bedding, or towels.
- Place items directly into a laundry bag without shaking them.
- Wash hands after handling laundry.

How to Handle Waste:

- Dispose of used tissues, dressings, or contaminated materials in a plastic bag.
- Use biohazard bags if required by your employer.

6. Handling Sharps (Even If You Don't Use Them)

Why: Some clients use needles for medications (like insulin). Direct Care Workers should know how to avoid accidental needle sticks.

What to Do:

- Never touch or recap used needles.
- Remind clients to dispose of sharps in a proper sharps container.
- If a used needle is left out, ask the client to dispose of it safely.
- If stuck by a needle, wash the area immediately and report it.

7. Safe Injection Practices (Even If You Don't Give Injections)

Why: Some clients self-inject medications, and improper use can spread infections.

What to Do:

- Remind clients to use a new, sterile needle each time and never share syringes.
- Ensure used needles go directly into a sharps disposal container.
- Never handle or dispose of syringes unless trained and required to do so.
- If exposed to a needle, wash the area and report it immediately.

8. What to Do If Exposed to Blood or Body Fluids

IMMEDIATE STEPS

1. Clean Immediately

- Wash skin with soap and water.
- Flush eyes with clean water or saline.
- For cuts or needle sticks, let it bleed, then clean.

2. Report It

- Tell your supervisor right away.
- Complete an incident report.

3. Get Medical Help

- See a healthcare provider for testing or treatment.

Use Standard Precautions

*Always wear gloves and other protective gear when handling bodily fluids.
Treat all blood and bodily fluids as potentially infectious.*

Body Mechanics

Body mechanics are important skills for Direct Care Workers. These techniques help prevent injuries for both workers and the individuals they care for.

1. Keeping Good Posture

Why It's Important: It helps prevent back injuries and reduces strain on your muscles and joints.

How to Do It:

- Keep your back straight and avoid hunching when helping clients.
- Sit up straight and don't bend forward unless necessary.

2. Using Your Legs, Not Your Back

Why It's Important: Your legs are stronger than your back, so using them protects your spine.

How to Do It:

- Bend your knees when lifting or lowering something, instead of bending at your waist.
- Keep your feet shoulder-width apart to stay balanced.

3. Holding Things Close

Why It's Important: It keeps you stable and puts less pressure on your back.

How to Do It:

- Hold objects close to your body.
- Stay close to clients to support their weight when helping them.

4. Turning Instead of Twisting

Why It's Important: Twisting your body can hurt your back.

How to Do It:

- Move your feet to turn your whole body instead of twisting your waist.

5. Using Equipment to Help

Why It's Important: Tools like lifts or belts make the job safer for you and your client.

How to Do It:

- Use things like gait belts, transfer boards, or mechanical lifts when needed.
- Follow the instructions for using these tools safely.

6. Checking the Environment

Why It's Important: A safe space prevents accidents.

How to Do It:

- Look out for hazards like slippery floors or things in the way.
- Set up the area so you don't have to bend or reach too much.

7. Communicating Clearly

Why It's Important: Good communication helps everyone work together and prevents mistakes.

How to Do It:

- Explain what you're going to do to the client and any helpers.
- Use clear instructions and signals to work together.

8. Avoiding Overdoing It

Why It's Important: Overexertion leads to fatigue and increases the risk of injury.

How to Do It:

- Take breaks when you're tired.
- Ask for help if the task is too much for you to handle alone.

Common Tasks Where Body Mechanics Are Used:

- Helping clients move from a bed to a wheelchair.
- Assisting with bathing, dressing, or personal care.
- Changing a client's position in bed to avoid pressure sores.
- Helping clients walk or do gentle exercises.

Personal Care Aid Devices

Why Direct Care Workers Should Know Personal Care Aid Devices?

1. Knowing the Tools Builds Confidence

- Feel more confident in your work; When you know how to use care devices, you can give better, safer support.
- Be someone clients trust; Whether it's a raised toilet seat or a transfer board, knowing what tool to use helps you meet each person's needs.

2. Safety for You and the Client

- The right device can stop a fall; Even simple tools like grab bars and gait belts can make a big difference.
- Protect yourself, too; Using equipment like slide boards or transfer belts can prevent injuries while helping clients.

3. Support Dignity and Independence

- Little things matter; Tools like bedpans and long-handled wipers help clients stay clean and feel more independent.
- Let people do more for themselves; When you know how to use the right aids, clients can do more on their own—with your support.

4. Work Smarter, Show Your Skills

- Make your job easier; Using the right equipment saves time and effort.
- Show you're a pro; Knowing how to use care tools shows you're skilled, prepared, and serious about your work.

5. Follow the Plan, Follow the Rules

- Stick to the care plan; Using the right tools is part of following instructions and giving the best care.
- Be ready for checks; Knowing how to use equipment keeps you in line with policies and ready for inspections.

Basic Elder Care Tools & Supplies

A. Hygiene & Toileting

- **Adult Diapers / Incontinence Pads** – For urinary or bowel incontinence.
- **Wet Wipes / Perineal Wipes** – Gentle cleansing without irritation.
- **Bedpan** – For toileting in bed.
- **Urinal (Male/Female)** – For urine collection while sitting or lying down.
- **Emesis Basin** – For nausea, oral care, or minor medical waste.
- **No-Rinse Shampoo / Body Wash** – For sponge bathing or limited mobility.
- **Long-Handled Sponges or Brushes** – For easier bathing and hygiene.

B. Mobility & Safety Aids

- **Walker / Rollator** – For stable walking support.
- **Cane** – Lightweight support for mild balance issues.
- **Wheelchair / Transport Chair**
For longer-distance or full-time mobility support.
- **Grab Bars** – Installed in bathrooms or hallways to prevent falls.
- **Raised Toilet Seat / Toilet Safety Frame**
To reduce fall risk during toileting.

C. Bedside & Daily Living Aids

- **Bed Assist Rail** – Helps with getting in and out of bed.
- **Overbed Table** – For eating, reading, or activities in bed.
- **Transfer Board / Slide Sheet** – For moving between surfaces.
- **Non-Slip Socks / Slippers** – For safe walking indoors.
- **Lap Tray** – For meals, writing, or crafts in a chair or bed.

Fall Prevention

Falls are a major concern, impacting 36 million older adults in the U.S. each year and resulting in 3 million emergency room visits and over 32,000 deaths.

Prevention through exercise, home safety updates, and regular health check-ups is crucial. Direct Care Workers play a key role in reducing fall risks by supporting safe environments, assisting with mobility, and monitoring changes in health or behavior.

Key Causes and Strategies

1. Environmental Risks

Home Safety Checks:

- Remove clutter, secure loose rugs, and ensure cords are out of pathways.
- Place frequently used items (remote controls, phones) within easy reach to avoid unnecessary bending or climbing.

Lighting:

- Ensure all areas are well-lit, especially hallways, stairs, and bathrooms.
- Provide nightlights for bedrooms and hallways.

Bathroom Safety:

- Install and encourage the use of grab bars near toilets and showers.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on bathroom floors.

Assistive Equipment:

- Ensure walkers, canes, or wheelchairs are in good working condition and within reach.

2. Physical or Medical Risks

Monitor Mobility:

- Assist clients during transfers (e.g., from bed to chair) using proper lifting techniques.
- Encourage regular use of mobility aids and ensure they are adjusted correctly.

Supervised Activities:

- Stay close by when clients perform tasks requiring movement, such as cooking or using stairs.

Report Health Changes:

- Document and communicate changes in strength, balance, or coordination to family members or healthcare providers.

Encourage Exercises:

- Promote simple balance or strength-building activities (e.g., seated leg lifts, stretching), as recommended by therapists.

3. Behavioural Risks

Encourage Safe Practices:

- Remind clients to wear supportive, non-slip footwear.

Ensure clients use grab bars, railings, or their walker when moving around.

Avoid Rushing:

- Allow extra time for activities like getting up or walking.
- Encourage clients to sit when feeling tired or dizzy instead of pushing through discomfort.

Assist with Daily Tasks:

- Carry heavy or awkward items for clients.
- Help with reaching high shelves or bending down to pick things up.

4. Cognitive or Psychological Risks

Assist with Orientation:

- Label areas in the home (e.g., "Bedroom," "Bathroom") if the client has memory issues.

- Provide verbal cues or reminders about safe navigation and routines.

Reduce Fear of Falling:

- Offer reassurance and build confidence by supervising movements.
- Use a gait belt if the client is anxious about losing balance during transfers.

Monitor Mental Health:

- Watch for signs of depression, anxiety, or confusion, and report them to healthcare providers.

5. Social or Situational Risks

Address Isolation:

- Maintain regular conversations to encourage alertness and connection.
- Assist with arranging social visits or activities to reduce loneliness.

Plan Safe Routes:

- Accompany clients to public spaces, ensuring they avoid uneven surfaces or crowded areas.

Prepare the Environment:

- Before leaving the client alone, ensure the home is tidy and safe, with assistive devices within reach.

***Postural hypotension**

Postural hypotension occurs when a person's blood pressure drops significantly upon standing from a sitting or lying position. This sudden drop can lead to dizziness, lightheadedness, or even fainting, making it particularly common among older adults. For Direct Care Workers supporting seniors, it's crucial to recognize the signs of postural hypotension, as it increases the risk of falls and injury. **To help manage the condition, Direct Care Workers should assist clients in rising slowly, encourage proper hydration, and closely monitor any changes in their blood pressure.** These proactive steps can help minimize the risks associated with postural hypotension.

Professional Standards

Direct Care Workers in PA Community HealthChoices Waiver program must adhere to specific professional ethics, protocols, and guidelines established by various oversight bodies to ensure the highest standards of care, professionalism, and client safety.

1. Adherence to the Code of Conduct and Professionalism

- **Respect and Dignity:** Direct Care Workers must treat all clients with respect, maintain their dignity, and support their autonomy.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Care must be provided with an understanding of the client's background, culture, language, and preferences.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Direct Care Workers must offer services without bias regarding race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

2. Client Privacy and Confidentiality (HIPAA Compliance)

- **Confidentiality:** Direct Care Workers must protect clients' personal and medical information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and state privacy laws.
- **Information Sharing:** Information should only be shared with authorized personnel or family members directly involved in the client's care and should be documented as required.

3. Reporting and Documentation Protocols

- **Accurate Documentation:** Direct Care Workers are required to observe and keep records of any changes in the client's condition.
- **Incident Reporting:** Any incidents, accidents, or health-related concerns must be reported to supervisors immediately and documented.

- **Timely Entry of Clock-In/Clock-Out Times:** Direct Care Workers must accurately record and submit Clock-In/Clock-Out times as required by PA CHC EVV registration guidelines.

4. Health and Safety Standards

- **Infection Control and Hygiene:** Direct Care Workers must follow protocols for hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) use, and other infection control measures to reduce risks to clients and themselves.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Familiarity with emergency procedures, such as first aid and CPR, is often required. Direct Care Workers must know how to respond to emergencies, call for help when needed, and inform supervisors of serious incidents.
- **Risk Assessment:** Regularly assess the home environment for safety hazards (e.g., fall risks) and take corrective actions to secure the safety of both the client and the worker.

5. Ethical Boundaries and Client Rights

- **Professional Boundaries:** Direct Care Workers should maintain clear, professional boundaries with clients and avoid any personal, financial, or business relationships outside their caregiving role.
- **Client Choice and Empowerment:** It is essential to honor clients' preferences in decisions about their care and daily activities. Direct Care Workers should encourage clients to exercise choice and participate in their care planning.
- **Avoidance of Exploitation:** Direct Care Workers must not use their position for personal gain and must report any suspected exploitation of clients to the appropriate authorities.

6. Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting

- **Abuse and Neglect Recognition:** Direct Care Workers are trained to recognize signs of potential abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including physical, emotional, or financial harm.

- **Mandated Reporting Obligations:** Under Pennsylvania law, Direct Care Workers are mandated reporters who must report any suspected abuse or neglect to supervisors and relevant state authorities, such as the Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) or Adult Protective Services.

PA Office of Long-Term Living Participant Helpline:
1-800-757-5042

7. Continuing Education and Training Requirements

- **Skill Development:** Direct Care Workers are often required to participate in ongoing training sessions to improve their caregiving skills, understand regulatory updates, and stay updated on best practices.
- **Annual Compliance Training:** To continue providing high-quality care under the CHC Waiver program, Direct Care Workers may need to complete annual training modules on topics such as infection control, client rights, safety protocols, state policies, and new technologies or procedures introduced within the CHC Waiver framework.

8. Non-Delegation of Specific Medical or Skilled Tasks

- **Scope of Practice:** Direct Care Workers must work within the limitations of their role. Tasks requiring licensed medical knowledge are typically restricted to licensed professionals.
- **Referral to Supervisors for Complex Care Needs :** When clients require skilled care outside the Direct Care Worker's scope, the Direct Care Worker should inform their supervisor or care manager immediately.

Oversight and Compliance

In Commuty HealthChoices Waiver program, Direct Care Workers are typically required to participate in Annual Compliance Training to reinforce their skills, stay current with regulatory standards, and ensure the highest levels of safety and care quality.

1. Infection Control

Purpose: Infection control training aims to equip Direct Care Workers with the knowledge to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Topics:

- **Hand Hygiene:** Emphasis on effective hand-washing techniques, use of hand sanitizers, and gloves to reduce infection risks.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Proper usage and disposal of masks, gloves, gowns, and other PPE, especially in cases of infectious outbreaks (e.g., flu or COVID-19).
- **Cleaning and Disinfection:** Protocols for disinfecting surfaces and personal care equipment (e.g., commode chairs, bedpans and urinals) to maintain a clean environment.
- **Standards and Updates:** Training on evolving guidelines from health authorities, such as CDC, regarding infection prevention measures.

2. Client Rights and Advocacy

Purpose: This component ensures that Direct Care Workers understand and respect the fundamental rights of clients under their care, fostering a culture of respect and empowerment.

Topics:

- **Client Autonomy and Choice:** Helping clients engage in making decisions about their care and daily activities and respecting their preferences.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Reviewing client rights to privacy, including adherence to HIPAA and other confidentiality standards.
- **Complaint and Grievance Procedures:** Informing Direct Care Workers of clients' rights to voice complaints and how they can support clients in reporting issues.
- **Practical Applications:** Real-life scenarios are often used to help Direct Care Workers understand how to advocate for clients' rights in daily events.

3. Safety Protocols

Purpose: Safety training ensures Direct Care Workers can identify and minimize hazards, and respond effectively in emergencies.

Topics:

- **Fall Prevention:** Techniques for safely assisting with mobility and positioning, use of assistive devices, and identifying fall hazards.
- **Safe Transfers and Lifting:** Training on ergonomics and safe lifting practices to prevent injuries during transfers, especially for clients with limited mobility.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Guidelines for handling medical emergencies, including when to call for emergency services, CPR basics, and first aid essentials.
- **Risk Assessment and Mitigation:** Direct Care Workers are trained to assess home environments for fall risks (e.g., poor lighting, loose rugs) and make necessary adjustments.

4. Abuse and Neglect Recognition and Reporting

Purpose: Training on abuse and neglect is crucial for Direct Care Workers to understand the signs and protocols for reporting suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Topics:

- **Types of Abuse:** Identifying physical, emotional, financial, and verbal abuse.
- **Signs and Symptoms:** Recognizing signs of neglect or abuse, such as bruises, sudden behavioral changes, or malnutrition.
- **Mandated Reporting Obligations:** Legal responsibilities as mandated reporters in Pennsylvania.

Adult Protective Services of PA Department of Aging
24 Hour Helpline: 1-800-490-8505

5. Ethical Boundaries and Professional Conduct

Purpose: This module reinforces ethical standards and helps Direct Care Workers understand appropriate professional boundaries to protect both the client and the worker.

Topics:

- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries :** Understanding and respecting the line between professional care and personal involvement.
- **Avoiding Conflicts of Interest :** Protocols for handling situations where personal interests could interfere with client care.
- **Respect for Client Property:** Guidelines for ethical conduct, especially when handling client property or finances (if this is part of the DCW's role).

6. Medication Reminders and Non-Medical Support

Purpose: This training equips Direct Care Workers with guidance to support clients' medication routines *while staying within their professional scope*.

Topics:

- **Medication Reminders:** How to remind clients to take medications as prescribed.
- **Identifying Side Effects:** Recognizing possible side effects of medications and reporting them to a supervisor and/or medical professional.
- **Protocols for Refusal of Medication:** Steps to take if a client refuses to take their medication, including notifying family members or medical personnel as appropriate.

7. Electronic Visit Verification Registration and Tracking

Purpose: The EVV system is mandated by the federal government to enforce that Medicaid-funded personal care services are documented accurately, helping to prevent fraud and ensuring clients receive the services they need.

Topics:

- **Clocking In and Out:** Direct Care Workers must record their arrival and departure times through an electronic device or mobile application. The EVV captures the exact time and location to verify that services were provided as scheduled.
- **Service Verification:** Direct Care Workers must confirm the type of service they performed for each visit, and EVV must capture all six federally required data elements (provider, recipient, date, location, start/end time, service type)
- **Real-Time Updates:** The visit must be entered and automatically verified (via GPS-enabled app or landline) in real time before leaving the client's home. Manual entries or edits don't count toward compliance and could reduce your agency's EVV compliance rate

- **Troubleshooting and Compliance:** DCWs must resolve issues with the EVV device/app—such as syncing failures or GPS errors—right away. If problems persist, they should escalate to technical support or a supervisor promptly to avoid exceptions during claim validation

8. Incident Reporting and Management

Purpose: Incident reporting is essential to identify, document, and respond to events that impact the client's safety, health, or well-being.

Topics:

- **Immediate Reporting:** If an incident occurs (e.g., a fall, injury, or emergency), Direct Care Workers must report it immediately to their supervisor.
- **Detailed Incident Documentation :** Direct Care Workers must document the incident thoroughly, including the time, location, description of what occurred, and any actions taken (e.g., calling emergency services).
- **Follow-Up Procedures:** Direct Care Workers may be required to complete follow-up documentation or reports.

9. Updates on Policy Changes and New Procedures

Purpose: To stay informed on any changes in state and agency policies, new technologies, or procedures introduced within the Community HealthChoices Waiver framework.

Topics:

- **Policy Updates:** Any new regulatory changes from the PA Department of Human Services or the Office of Long-Term Living impacting Direct Care Workers.
- **Technology and Record-Keeping Systems :** Training on any new digital tools for client records or reporting used by the program.

Direct Care Worker Self-Care Strategies

Direct Care Workers face daily tasks that require both emotional steadiness and physical stamina. Providing consistent, high-quality support is only possible when their own health and well-being are maintained through adequate rest, a balanced diet, regular exercise, and effective stress management.

1. Mindfulness and Stress Management

Deep Breathing Exercises: Practice deep, slow breathing to reduce stress and refocus. For example, try the "4-7-8" technique: inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds.

Mindfulness Meditation: Spend a few minutes daily focusing on your breath or repeating calming phrases.

Grounding Techniques: To manage feelings of overwhelm, focus on the present moment by noticing five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste.

Other Grounding Techniques

(to help manage feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, or dissociation by reconnecting with the present moment):

Physical Grounding Techniques

These use your body and senses to anchor you in the now:

Body Scan: Mentally scan your body from head to toe, noticing tension and releasing it.

Stretching or Movement: Gently stretch or walk around; notice how your feet feel on the ground.

Hold an Object: Focus on the texture, weight, and temperature of something in your hand.

Splash Cold Water on Your Face or hold an ice cube — this stimulates the vagus nerve and can quickly reset your nervous system.

Mental Grounding Techniques

These involve cognitive focus to distract and redirect your attention:

Name Categories: Pick a category (e.g., animals, cities, green foods) and name as many as you can.

Do Math: Count backward from 100 by 7s or recite the multiplication table.

Describe Your Surroundings: Out loud or in your head, describe your environment in detail (colors, textures, shapes).

Spell Words Backward: Choose common words and spell them in reverse.

Visualize a Safe Place: Imagine a calming, peaceful place with vivid details—sights, sounds, smells.

Soothing Grounding Techniques

These help calm emotions through comfort and self-compassion:

Positive Affirmations: Repeat calming statements like "I am enough" or "This feeling will pass."

Listen to Music: Focus on the lyrics, instruments, or rhythm.

Savor a Scent: Smell something comforting like lavender, coffee, or citrus.

Drink or Eat Something Mindfully: Slowly sip a drink or chew something while focusing on its flavor, texture, and temperature.

Hug a Pet or Yourself: Gentle physical contact can reassure the body and mind.

2. Time Management and Prioritization

- **Set Boundaries:** Define work hours and tasks. Avoid taking on more than you can handle and communicate your limits with supervisors.
- **Break Tasks into Steps:** For overwhelming tasks, divide them into smaller, manageable steps and focus on completing one at a time.

3. Physical Self-Care

- **Take Short Breaks:** Even brief breaks can prevent burnout. Try to step away, stretch, or go for a short walk every 1–2 hours if possible.
- **Exercise:** Physical activity relieves stress and boosts energy. Even 10 minutes of stretching, yoga, or a brisk walk can help.
- **Hydration and Nutrition:** Keep a water bottle nearby, and try to eat balanced meals, even if it means preparing meals ahead of time.

4. Emotional Support and Connection

Peer Support Groups: Joining a support group for caregivers can provide a sense of community and shared understanding.

5. Professional Development and Skill Building

Online Training: Many platforms offer free or low-cost training on managing difficult behaviors, communication, and stress relief for caregivers.

6. Celebrate Small Wins

Acknowledge Accomplishments: Reflect on your daily achievements, even small ones, to maintain a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

7. Maintain Work-Life Balance

Hobbies and Interests: Dedicate time to activities you enjoy outside of work, whether it's reading, gardening, crafting, or any other relaxing pastime.

Contact Information

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/CAO-Contact.aspx>

County Assistance Offices

County	County Address	Telephone/Fax
Bucks Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Bucks County Assistance Office 1214 Veterans Highway Bristol, PA 19007	Toll-Free: 1-800-362-1291 Phone: 215-781-3300 LIHEAP 215-781-3393 or 1-800-616-6481 FAX: 215-781-3438
Chester Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Chester County Assistance Office 100 James Buchanan Drive, Thorndale, PA 19372	Toll-Free: 1-888-814-4698 Phone: 610-466-1000 LIHEAP 610-466-1042 FAX: 610-466-1130
Delaware Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Headquarters 701 Crosby Street, Suite A, Chester, PA 19013	Phone: 610-447-5500 LIHEAP 610-447-3099 FAX: 610-447-5399
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Crosby District 701 Crosby Street, Suite A, Chester, PA 19013	Phone: 610-447-5500 LIHEAP: 610-447-3099 FAX: 610-447-5399
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Darby District 845 Main Street Darby, PA 19023	Phone: 610-461-3800 FAX: 610-461-3900
Montgomery Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Norristown District 1931 New Hope Street Norristown, PA 19401	Toll-Free: 1-877-398-5571 Phone: 610-270-3500 LIHEAP: 610-272-1752 FAX: 610-270-1678
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Pottstown District 24 Robinson Street Pottstown, PA 19464	Toll-Free: 1-800-641-3940 Phone: 610-327-4280 LIHEAP 610-272-1752 FAX: 610-327-4350

Philadelphia Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m	Headquarters 801 Market Street Philadelphia, PA 19107	Phone: 215-560-7226 LIHEAP: 215-560-1583 FAX: 215-560-3214
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m	LIHEAP 1163 S. Broad Street Philadelphia, PA 19147	LIHEAP: 215-560-1583 LIHEAP Fax: 215-560-2260
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m	Boulevard District 4109 Frankford Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19124	Phone: 215-560-6500 FAX: 215-560-2087
Office Hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m	Cheltenham District 301 East Cheltenham Ave. 1st Fl. Philadelphia, PA 19144	Phone: 215-560-5200 FAX: 215-560-5251

Area Agencies on Aging

Bucks County AAA	267-880-5700
Chester County AAA	610-344-6350
Delaware County AAA	610-490-1300
Montgomery County AAA	610-278-3601
Philadelphia County AAA	215-765-9000

Aging and Disability Resources 1-800-753-8827

Protective Services Information 717-783-1550

Office of Long-Term Living Participant Helpline 1-800-757-5042

PA Independent Enrollment Broker

6385 Flank Drive, Suite 400, Harrisburg, PA 17112-4603

Toll-free helpline: 1-877-550-4227

Fax number: (717) 540-6201

Toll-free TTY line: 1-877-824-9346

Website: www.PAIEB.com

HomePlus Care

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Upper Darby, PA 19082