



Hiring & Supervising

Your Home Care Worker

How to Hire and Supervise Your Home Care Worker

Managing the day-to-day details of your in-home services can be challenging. We offer this information to help you with finding and keeping good home care workers.

This guide is separated into three sections:

1. How to Find and Hire a Home Care Worker

Designed to help you find and hire reliable persons to provide assistance with your daily activities.

2. Supervision of Your Home Care Worker

Offers suggestions about managing day to day activities between you and your home care worker.

3. Communication Techniques

Ideas and tips for positive communication and recognizing your worker.

Hiring and Supervising Your Home Care Worker is intended as a guide only and does not create an entitlement to services. Please contact the appropriate resources for eligibility criteria and costs.

MEDICAID and LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

is a booklet that explains the process for applying and receiving Medicaid and long-term care services in Washington State and explores the options for getting help with your care. Contact your local Senior Information and Assistance office to request your copy.

Definitions

Consumer/Employers

People who employ home care workers for in-home services are sometimes called consumers or clients. The term “consumer” or consumer/employer” is used throughout this guide because it recognizes hiring, training and supervision responsibilities.

Home Care Workers

People who provide in-home care services are sometimes called personal assistants, individual providers, home care aides, caregivers or workers. In this guide, we use the term home care worker or worker because it transcends the different Medicaid programs and personal services for which these people are hired. NOTE: The terms *personal assistant, aide, caregiver, worker* or *individual provider* are also used when referring to home care workers.

Home Care Referral Registry

The Home Care Referral Registry (HCRR) is a resource available to eligible consumers searching for home care workers/individual providers. The HCRR uses a combination of web-based matching logic and localized support staff (Registry Coordinators) to assist consumers with finding and hiring an individual provider. You as the employer, retain the right to hire, fire and supervise the work of any individual providers referred by the HCRR. Use of the Registry does not imply a guarantee the person(s) referred will satisfactorily match or meet all of your specified needs.

➔ Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to search for workers in your area. Call **1-800-970-5456** or visit **www.HCRR.wa.gov**.

SECTION 1. How to Find and Hire Your Home Care Worker

Using Your Service Plan as a Tool

When you are preparing to hire a home care worker, your Service Plan can be a helpful tool in determining job duties.

After you and your case manager have completed an assessment and developed a Service Plan, you will also need to discuss how tasks will be done, and how often. Specifically your Service Plan includes:

- A list of services the home care worker will do.
- A description of what, when and how often the services are to be done.
- The name of an emergency contact person.

By talking over your Service Plan as soon as you hire someone, you and your home care worker will:

- Know what is expected.
- Understand the limits of the work.
- Avoid misunderstandings.
- Feel like part of the same team.

Remember, only the case manager can change your Service Plan. If you and your home care worker are in disagreement about the Service Plan, you should contact the case manager for clarification.

What Tasks are Authorized on Your Service Plan?

Your Service Plan will give you a very clear understanding of the kinds of duties your home care worker will do for you. Duties could include activities of daily living such as bathing, grooming, dressing and more. Depending on the care you need, you may choose to hire more than one worker. If you have several workers, you may want each of them to do a little of every task, or you may want to divide up responsibilities among workers.

One of the most important things you, as an employer, must know is that you should not ask or expect your home care worker(s) to do things that are not listed in your service plan.

What Kind of Person Do You Need?

Spend a few moments thinking about what you might expect from someone working for you. Below is a short list of qualities you might want to consider when hiring home care workers:

- **Punctual** – being on time
- **Dependable** – being on time consistently for scheduled work; being available when needed
- **Helpful** – willing to do things you request within the scope of the Service Plan
- **Goal oriented** – wanting to get things done
- **Honest** – someone you can trust
- **Clean and neat** – keeps things picked up and sanitary
- **Takes direction** – not argumentative; open to your way of doing things
- **Communicative** – easy to talk with
- **Flexible** – can respond to realistic circumstances and changes
- **Patient** – doesn't get bothered if things take longer than expected

While different qualities are important to different people, it is important that you decide which ones are most important to *you*. It may be difficult to find a person who possesses all of these qualities, so you may want to consider prioritizing the qualities you most desire from your worker.

It is your responsibility to clearly express your needs and preferences. Your home care worker works for you. Your worker should provide services in a way that respects your preferences.

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You also have the right to not hire a home care worker if you are uncomfortable with him/her regardless of the reason. The person you hire will be doing very personal tasks for you in the most private aspects of your life. It is extremely important that you are comfortable with the person you hire.

Now that you have a good idea of the kind of person you are looking for, you are ready to write a job description that describes what kind of work you'd like that person to do.

Job Descriptions

When home care workers are asked what they dislike about in-home services, lack of a specific job description is among the most common of complaints.

Similar complaints might be:

- Not having a clear understanding of the duties involved *before* they are hired;
- The consumer's tendency to minimize the time and effort involved in the tasks before the worker is hired; and
- Adding on duties the home care worker did not feel they had agreed to do.

Without knowing your expectations, it is hard for a home care worker to know if they are doing the job they were hired to do.

A good job description should follow your Service Plan and serves several purposes:

1. It helps people you are hiring determine if they can do the job. Most people have never considered the wide variety of tasks that are involved in daily living.
2. It gives you an accurate assessment of the amount and kind of help you need. It is easy to overlook many of the minor jobs and details

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that are a part of your home care worker's duties, and you may be surprised by the amount of work involved.

3. When interviewing, a job description will give your potential home care worker a clear picture of the duties involved in the job.
4. It helps you avoid the natural tendency to understate and minimize the time and effort involved in the job in order to make it seem more attractive. You DO have to hire someone and it is hard to avoid feeling pressured about all the tasks you expect completed.
5. When it is time to review performance or renegotiate the agreement, the job description helps you do a thorough job. Any changes you agree to make should be noted immediately.

What Kinds of Qualities Are Necessary?

As you begin the process of hiring a home care worker, think about what it is you are looking for in your worker. Experience, training and good references are obvious. Personality, dependability, attitude and stability are equally important. Think about people who have helped you in the past and what you liked or disliked about them.

Finding Potential Home Care Workers

There are a number of ways to find a home care worker. Probably the most effective way is to use the Home Care Referral Registry. The Referral Registry is a database of pre-screened and available home care workers in Washington State.

Registry staff will collect details from you and your case manager about your service needs and schedule preferences. Once information is collected, a list of the most suitable workers from your local area is created and provided to you.

- ➔ Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to search for workers in your area. Call **1-800-970-5456** or visit **www.HCRR.wa.gov**.

Pre-Screening Applicants

The purpose of prescreening applicants is to avoid interviewing people who obviously will not qualify for the job. If you elect to use the Home Care Referral Registry to find workers, their staff will help with some of the pre-screening process including, running background checks, confirming worker availability and their ability to do certain tasks. Some referred workers may not be able to carry out all of the services you have requested or may not be available during specific times. You may find that hiring more than one provider or engaging other support services will address your needs.

Once you have some names to call, consider the steps below to help you prescreen applicants:

1. Call the person and introduce yourself, explain that you are looking for a home care worker.
2. If you have to leave a message, explain why you are calling, leave your name and your phone number.
3. During your call give a brief description of your requested duties and the hours you would like your worker to be available.
4. Ask if they are available to work during the hours you need.
5. Set up a specific time for an interview.
6. Remind the applicant to bring contact information for at least three personal or professional references.
7. Keep in mind that you do not owe anyone an interview. If you are not comfortable about the applicant coming to your home—for any reason whatsoever—do not allow it to happen. You can always inform the applicant that you are not interested.

8. Protect yourself. Meet in a public place if at all possible. If it is difficult for you to leave your home, arrange for another person to be with you while conducting an interview.

Interviewing Applicants

Your approach to the interview is important. You are offering a job to someone who is looking for work. The person you interview may be nervous. Put them at ease, call them by their first name, maintain eye contact and tell them a little about yourself.

This would be an ideal time for them to review the job description you've prepared. Pay special attention to the following areas on their application and feel free to ask questions about:

- Length of time at previous jobs
- Gaps in employment
- Reasons for leaving each job
- Attitude about previous jobs (what did they like/dislike?)
- Phone number for each consumer (Can they contact other consumers? Wouldn't this be a HIPPA violation if the consumer were a Medicaid client?)

After you are satisfied with the application, go through the job description with the applicant, making sure they understand what the job involves.

What to Look for During an Interview:

- **Appearance:** Is the applicant dressed appropriately? Are they neat, well-groomed and wearing clean clothes?
- **Punctuality:** If the applicant is late, you deserve a good explanation, preferably one you can check.
- **Attitude:** Does the applicant seem interested? Do they ask questions and make comments about the job? Do they seem open and flexible? Does the job fit with what they state are their goals and lifestyle?

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It is important to have a written list of questions so that all applicants are asked the same questions and you don't miss anything important. What you ask will depend on your own needs and desires.

To start making your own list, it may be helpful to again think about people who have helped you in the past:

- What did you like about their performance?
- What did you like about their personality?
- What did you not like?
- What would have made you more satisfied?

General Questions to Ask in an Interview

The following are examples of common interview questions. You may choose to ask only a few, or all of them! When asking these questions, if you want more information from the Individual Provider, you could try follow ups such as:

- Can you give me more details?
- Can you please explain further... or
- That's very interesting, I would like to hear more about your experience.

Experiential questions *ask job candidates to describe scenarios related to their past work performance. Also known as behavioral interviewing, experiential questions are helpful for gaining insight into how a prospective provider might act on the job. Examples of experiential questions:*

- Tell me about yourself. Why do you think you would like this job? Do you have any questions about the job? What did you do in a typical day at your last job?
- What experiences have you had that prepare you for this job? What part of this job do you think would be the most difficult? What would you do if you had a disagreement about a job responsibility?
- What would you do if...(make up an example that she or he would have to talk about). For example, what would you do if you were

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- trying to help me transfer from my wheelchair to my recliner and my dog kept getting in between me and the chair?
- If the Individual Provider has done this type of work you may want to try these: Describe a typical day in your most recent job working with a person with a disability. What was your favorite thing to do? What was your least favorite?
 - Tell me about the most difficult situation you have ever encountered. How did you deal with it?
 - Describe your skills and experience in providing assistance and support with personal care and household chores.

Additional Questions:

You are interviewing a worker that will be spending time in your home. You may need to get more personal information about habits, preferences, likes and dislikes so that you can determine if you and the applicant will be a good fit. The following are some areas you might consider asking about:

Food and Eating Arrangements

- *Do you have experience cooking?*
- *How do you feel about taking cooking instructions from me?*
- *Are you willing to accommodate special diets?*

Transportation

- *Can you drive?*
- *Do you have a valid driver's license? (Ask to see it.)*
- *Do you have valid insurance? (Ask to see proof of insurance.)*
- *How do you feel about accompanying me for Medical Appointments and/or Grocery shopping?*

Housekeeping

- *Have you had experience with housekeeping and laundry?*
- *Do you like things very neat, or are you not particular?*
- *How do you feel about taking cleaning instructions from me?*
- *Do you like a definite schedule for cleaning and laundry (example: vacuum on Monday, scrub floors on Tuesday), or do you prefer to be more flexible?*

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Personal Care

- *do you think it would bother you to help me with toileting, catheter irrigations or suppositories? (if necessary)*
- *Will you be able to bathe me? (if necessary)*
- *Is there any part of my care that makes you uncomfortable?*
Avoid any questions about age, disability, marital status, religion, race, or ethnicity.

Once you have completed the interview and you are prioritizing your applicants, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Will this applicant be able to meet my daily living needs?
- Can I live with this person? (if applicable)
- Can I depend on this person?
- Can I trust this person?
- Can I see any conflicting areas with this person?

Words of Advice from a Fellow Consumer

Obviously your employee needs to be reliable, on time, honest, and willing to do what you need. Since they perform personal tasks for you in your private space and you will spend many hours with him/her, you need someone with a flexible attitude who views you as the supervisor. Few people with disabilities have workers with whom they do not form some type of relationship other than consumer/employee. It is natural to share your life with the person who is assisting you to some degree. Therefore, his/her attitude toward you, your family and the assigned tasks is extremely important.

You need people who will respect and honor your preferences. You need people who clearly understand that you make the decisions about what is done for you and how. Some employees may think that you are not capable of making your own decisions and that he/she should intervene to decide things for you. You do not need the stress of dealing with such attitudes day in and day out. Therefore, when hiring someone, his/her attitude is a crucial qualification.

Checking Employment History

Many previous consumer/employers are reluctant to do more than confirm that a person was an employee because of the possibility of a lawsuit. When possible, talk to the former supervisor and assure them you have a signed release (see the *Reference Check Release Form and Employment Reference Checklist* examples at the end of this guide).

If the consumer/employer is reluctant to give anything but the most basic details, the following questions can help you verify employment history:

- How long did he/she work for you?
- Why did he/she leave?
- Was he/she recommended for raises or promotions?
(If applicable)
- How was his/her attendance, punctuality, and attitude?

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- Would you hire him/her again? This is the key question and should always be asked. Most consumer/employers will answer this one honestly, even if they won't answer anything else.

Making Your Choice

Once you have interviewed applicants and have decided which person you will hire, it is important that you give the name of the person you choose to your case manager.

If any significant revisions or changes come up later, you will need to revise the employment agreement.

Case Manager Authorization

Your home care worker cannot be paid until services are authorized by your case manager. Contact your case manager to initiate this process.

SECTION 2. Supervising Your Worker

Managing Your Own Care

Once you have your home care worker in place, the next step is to be very clear about your needs and preferences. This involves good communication and taking an active role in your own care. This way you and your home care worker can develop a strong working relationship where both your needs are met.

Actively managing your own care demonstrates that you are in charge. You direct your employees and are clear about how you expect care and services to be done. Some differences between being dependent on your home care worker and actively managing your own care are indicated below.

When **dependent** on a home care worker:

- Your home care worker performs tasks in a certain way with little or no input from you.
- You are the one who is told when and how to do things, such as when to get up, when to take medications, or when to shower.
- You make few decisions on your own and have little control over your own life.

When **actively managing** your care:

- Your home care worker performs tasks according to directions from you.
- You decide when to get up, when to go to bed or when to shower, and take responsibility for the administration of your own medications.
- You control your own life through decisions you make.

Training Requirements

Most home care workers are required to take several courses in order to continue getting paid, and in some cases, keep their job.

It is the responsibility of your home care worker to schedule and complete training in a timely fashion.

Training, Specific to Your Needs

You are, however, responsible for much of the *hands-on* training of your home care worker. In order to meet your specific needs, you will help your worker understand how you want tasks to be completed.

This means you will sometimes show an employee, but many times it means you will be giving verbal direction. There are times you will be correcting your worker to ensure tasks are completed in the way that you prefer.

Submitting Timesheets

Individual ProviderOne (IPOne) is the online, electronic payment system that allows your worker (Individual Provider) to submit timesheets, receive pay for hours worked, and allows providers to manage your Medicaid claims.

Individual Providers can submit timesheets in different ways. In addition to the online service (www.ipone.org) they can use a mobile application or fax or mail a paper timesheet to the payroll vendor. This information will be provided in detail to new providers upon their initial authorization to work.

Payments and Benefits for Home Care Workers

Payment is made to your worker through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Payment is twice per month. DSHS pays Social

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Security and unemployment taxes. Contact your case manager if you have questions regarding payment and invoicing.

SEIU Healthcare 775NW is the representative bargaining unit for home care workers serving DSHS clients.

Individual ProviderOne (IPOne) is the online, electronic payment system that allows Individual Providers to submit timesheets, receive pay for hours worked for in-home clients, and allows providers to manage your Medicaid claims. Information about submitting timesheets, payments and related information is available to Individual Providers at: <http://www.ipone.org>

Planning Ahead: Worker Emergencies, Vacations or Illnesses

There will be times when your home care worker will need to change plans, sometimes at the last minute. Additionally, your home care worker may be a student, have a family or have other jobs. Negotiating emergencies, vacation and what to do if your home care worker is sick can be challenging.

It is suggested that you keep a list of back-up workers in the event your home care worker can't make it to work. Be clear with your worker that you need adequate notice when he/she will be unavailable. When you offer the job, ask if he/she knows of times that they will be unavailable, no matter how far in the future. This shows that you are willing to accommodate his/her needs if possible.

Whatever your preference in regard to emergencies, vacations and illnesses, be very clear about what you expect from your home care worker.

Replacement Workers

Home care workers are required to give at least two weeks' notice prior to any vacation. Some consumers ask their home care worker to help locate a replacement in emergencies or event of illness. Be sure that replacement workers are also in contact with your case manager before they start working for you.

You're Emergency Action Plan

Preparation is the best tool you can have for unexpected emergencies. Help your home care worker to be well prepared to quickly and efficiently respond to a health related emergency. If an emergency does occur, they may be the only person in the home to provide assistance. Talk about what to do and who to contact and when to contact them. Use the topics below and the Emergency Contact List in the Resource Section to guide your discussion.

Calling for Help

Your worker needs to know:

- **When** to call for help
- **Who** to call for help
- **What** to tell emergency responders

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Your worker is trained to call for help in any situation he/she thinks might be an emergency. For example, if you:

- Have serious trouble breathing.
- Pass out and cannot be easily awakened.
- Have fallen and cannot get up on your own.
- Accidentally take a poison.
- Have any serious change in your health.

Examples of Safety Emergencies

- Fires that cannot be put out quickly and easily.
- Any threat that puts you or your worker in danger.

Workplace Safety

All home care workers in Washington State are covered by workers compensation. Workers compensation is a program that pays for medical expenses and lost wages for workers who have been injured on the job.

All home care workers have to complete a safety training class. In this class, they learn how to protect themselves from injuries and illnesses. They learn to lift people and objects safely, what to do in the event of an emergency, how to reduce the risk of tripping or falling, and other topics.

You, as a consumer, play an important role in keeping your worker safe. Your home is also a workplace and you are considered the direct manager of your home care worker(s). This means that you should take measures to help keep your worker(s) safe. If your employee becomes injured, this will ultimately affect your own quality of life as you may need to find a replacement.

Loose carpets, clutter and rickety stairs all are examples of potential safety hazards that could cause injury to your employees.

If you experience abuse, neglect or exploitation
call 1-866-END-HARM
(1-866-363-4276).
If it's an emergency and you are in immediate danger, call the police.



The logo features a red octagonal shape with a white border. Inside the octagon, the text '1-866-END-HARM' is written in white. To the right of the octagon, the text 'DSHS Toll-free' is written in small black letters, and '1-866-363-4276' is written in larger black letters below it.

Termination and Resignation

Sometimes the most difficult part of being a consumer is terminating employment of a home care worker. Some employees do well when they start a new job, but as they become comfortable with your relationship they may begin to take advantage of your willingness to be flexible. Other issues can arise, such as safety or honesty that make it imperative that you terminate an employee.

When you must confront an employee, be sure to take appropriate steps to ensure your own safety. If necessary, arrange for someone else to be with you during the discussion. Refer to any documentation you have kept that shows work patterns, past evaluations, or records of attendance or punctuality.

You, as the consumer, have the right to terminate an employee at any time. You should always be comfortable with your employee and satisfied with his/her work. Otherwise, you should replace him/her if the issue in question hasn't improved after counseling.

When addressing your home care worker:

- State your reasons clearly without attacking him/her personally.
- Give a period of notice, usually two weeks. This allows him/her time to find a new job or place to live; it also allows you time to find a different home care worker.
- Be sure to terminate the employment agreement and carefully document reason(s), discussions and outcome.

Tip: *When to Make a Decision:*

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, things just will not work out. It may be time to re-evaluate your working relationship and decide if it is time to make a change. Contact your Case Manager regarding your plans.

Resignation

If your home care worker resigns they are required by contract to give you a two-week written notice and notify your case manager so that you will have time to find a new worker.

Rights and Responsibilities

The following are my responsibilities as an employer:

- Supervising the daily work and activities of my Individual Provider.
- Arranging work schedules, locating a back-up IP as needed, and replacing an IP who resigns.
- Contacting my case manager if:
 - I have any concerns about my individual service plan or about the quality of the care that I am receiving from my Individual Provider.
 - I am not receiving the services for which my IP is billing.
 - I am not receiving the services authorized in my service plan.
 - I choose to change or add a provider.

Your case manager will review your rights and responsibilities with you when you receive services.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Since your home care worker will be assisting you with personal tasks, they will come to know a lot of personal information about you, your family, your home, and how you function.

If your home care worker is learning for the first time how you live, it can be tempting for them to tell their friends, spouse and/or family. This may be from excitement about the job and could even be complimentary of you, but nevertheless, it is a clear violation of your right to privacy. This is serious enough that it could be cause for termination.

Other instances of privacy invasion include times when your home care worker develops a relationship with one or more of your family members and the family member shares information about you without your permission. This is not acceptable. Remember the home care worker works for you and only you.

Of course, privacy and confidentiality works both ways. Since you have a relationship with your home care worker, you will probably learn things about them that are private. You may have multiple workers that never have the opportunity to meet. Although it may be tempting for you to share information about one worker with the others, resist this temptation.

Privacy and Confidentiality and Case Managers:

Your home care workers can share information about you or your condition *only with the case manager. In the following instances your home care worker may contact your case manager if they:*

- See that you develop any new problems or have personal care needs that are not being met;
- Have worries or questions about changes in your physical condition including any falls or not eating;
- Have concerns about changes in your mental condition, including talk of suicide or other patterns of serious mental illness or confusion;
- Have suggestions or know of additional resources (for example, durable medical equipment to help with daily living tasks) that would add to your quality of care or independence;
- Have suspicions, questions, or concerns about abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
- Have questions about changes made to the assigned schedule (days and time of work schedule);
- Plan on taking a vacation;
- Change their name, telephone, or address;
- Have questions about the number of hours they are approved to work or which tasks they are authorized to do;
- They are unable or uncomfortable performing the tasks outlined in the service plan;

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- They are asked to perform tasks not outlined in the Service Plan or for other people living in the household;
- Decide to stop working for you.

They must also contact the case manager if you enter a hospital or move into a residential setting.

The case manager or social worker relies on both you and your employee to keep them aware of any concerns or changes in your mental or physical health.

SECTION 3. Communication and Recognition

Communicating with Your Worker

Knowing how to communicate with simple, clear statements will lead to more positive interactions with your employees. Developing good listening skills to better understand what your employees are telling you will increase your effectiveness as an employer.

Being assertive involves speaking up for your personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways. It is also important to communicate in a manner that does not violate another person's rights.

Respect also includes respect for yourself (expressing your needs and defending your rights), as well as respect for another person's needs and rights.

Giving Verbal Directions

- Make sure you have the person's attention before you give the direction.
- Begin by making a statement about what the directions are supposed to accomplish.
- Minimize the number of directions given.
- Individualize the way directions are given. Some people may respond well to verbal direction, while others may need a demonstration or prompts.
- Give clear directions and avoid directions that are vague, such as "be careful" or "get me a jacket." These directions could be substituted with "hold on to the railing" or "please get me my yellow rain jacket." Maintain a positive rather than negative tone when you give directions.
- Give the person the opportunity to respond to a direction. Avoid giving multiple directions at one time without giving the person a chance to respond.
- Present steps in the order to be followed.

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- When appropriate, give choices and options for following directions. For example, say “while waiting for the dryer to finish, would you prefer to vacuum the living room or start preparing lunch?”
- Follow through with positive acknowledgment when needed to convey that the person is following the directions.

Giving Feedback

Feedback is also an important communication tool. Feedback is the process of giving information, instruction, support and guidance to another person based on their actions. Feedback therefore requires good communication skills.

Here are some guidelines about giving feedback:

- Feedback should describe behavior, not pass judgment on it.
- Feedback should be specific rather than vague.
- Feedback should describe what you observed, rather than what you assume to be the reason it happened.
- Feedback should focus on behavior rather than the person.

Creating a Positive Work Environment

Engaging good communication skills is a definite step toward creating a positive working environment. A working environment that is positive and open is one of the most important factors in keeping a great worker. Below are some suggestions and examples for creating a positive environment.

- Express appreciation to your employees for the work they are doing. Most everyone wants to feel needed, appreciated and important.
- When you must correct something your home care worker has or has not done, it is important to be open and honest and to criticize the action, not the person.

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- Don't let small irritations build up. If you feel irritated about something that is happening, talk about it as soon as possible.
- Respect your worker. They are human beings and should be treated accordingly. Use the Golden Rule, and treat your employee as you would like to be treated. Be honest, fair, kind, respectful and patient.
- Home care workers have their own lives, too. Flexibility and compromise are important qualities for both of you.
- Ask your home care worker how he/she feels about their work and about you as a consumer. Set a regular time to share feelings about your relationship. Be open to making changes in the routine if necessary, or in attitude, or anything else that can help you to correct a problem. Negotiate a plan that will work for both of you.

Recognizing a Job Well Done

There are times you may want to recognize your worker(s) performance. How you do that is up to you, but make it meaningful to people who work for you.

The following are suggestions for no-cost and low-cost ways to recognize home care workers:

- Give routine verbal thanks and encouragement.
- Mention their good work to others in their presence.
- Nominate someone for a special award.
- Say positive things about workers in front of their peers.
- Give recognition for birthdays and important life events.
- Send a note of thanks to the worker's home.

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- Post recognition cards on a bulletin board, refrigerator, or other work space.
- Submit articles or letters to the editor to the local newspaper about the value of care giving and recognizing worker(s).

Problem Solving and Stress

Being an employer can be stressful. Managing multiple employees, juggling their time and needs with yours, and managing their behavior can be emotionally stressful. Having to find replacements at the last minute and worrying about being stranded can be a regular stressor.

How do you deal with stress? Finding ways to rest and rejuvenate is essential, doing something you enjoy doing can be relaxing.

One way many people deal with stress is by putting off a necessary confrontation. Putting it off will add to your stress by imagining what will happen when you do confront your employee. Many times what you imagine is worse than the reality. The sooner you confront your home care worker about an issue the less stressful it will be.

Find a support system made up of people with whom you trust. These are people who will listen to you and give you suggestions on how to deal with your issues.

- ➔ Contact the Home Care Referral Registry to search for workers in your area. Call **1-800-970-5456** or visit **www.HCRR.wa.gov**.

How to Hire and Supervise Your Home Care Worker

Reference Check Release Form:

To be completed along with Application.

See Section One: *Conducting Reference Checks*

TO: _____
(Name of Reference)

I, _____,
(Name of Applicant)

have applied for a position as an home care worker for

(Name of Potential Consumer)

and have given your name as a reference. I would appreciate it if you would supply him/her or his/her designee with information regarding my character, dependability and/or performance.

Thank you,

Signature of Applicant

Date

How to Hire and Supervise Your Home Care Worker

Employment Reference Checklist:

Use to track responses from applicants prior employers.

See Section One: *Checking Employment History*

Date: _____

Name of Reference: _____

Reference Phone Number: _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Dates of Employment: _____

Job Title: _____

Duties: _____

Reason for Termination: _____

Attendance: _____ Punctuality: _____

Relationships with supervisor and co-workers: _____

Dependability: _____

Job performance: _____

Ability to learn new tasks: _____

Ability to follow directions: _____

Honesty: _____

Responsibility: _____

Would You Hire Again?: _____

Other Comments: _____