

# CONSISTENT ASSIGNMENT

This poster outlines the key steps in your consistent assignment Quality Improvement plan. The poster is designed as a flexible worksheet that can support the needs of your long-term care home. Key measures and ideas that have been proven effective in many LTC settings have been included; they may be used directly or adapted to suit your LTC home needs. Indicate which measures/ideas you have chosen by checking the appropriate boxes and add other relevant items in the spaces provided.

**TEAM**

Quality improvement is a team effort.  
 Assemble a team that includes members from nursing and allied health along with a Personal Support Worker and a manager. Include a resident or family member if appropriate. Include someone with training in quality improvement facilitation, so they can support you on your journey.  
 Your team will:

- ❖ Gather baseline measures;
- ❖ Conduct small-scale tests of change using PDSA – “Think BIG, test SMALL”;
- ❖ Study outcomes of changes before planning next action steps;
- ❖ Help successful changes become standard practices and lessons learned.

**AIM**

It is important to be very clear about the aim you are trying to achieve.  
 Consider your current circumstances, and how you would like to improve them. Specify a level of improvement that will add value to residents. Commit to achieving this improvement within a timeframe that will stretch your capability.

**Your aim pinpoints your destination and establishes a schedule for getting there.**  
 Example: The AIM of the *(your LTC home)* is to improve consistency of PSW assignment by 50% towards a target of 8 PSWs per resident (from a baseline of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ per month) by *(date)*.

**MEASURES**

Improvements must be measured: the changes that are occurring in your home must be tracked, and their impact on quality improvement must be assessed.  
 Your measures are your signposts. Measure actual outcomes, or results. Also, measure the processes that have been put in place to achieve these results, and any steps that have been taken to balance or mitigate the impact of changes.  
 The most relevant outcome, process and balancing measures are outlined below. Choose the measures you will use or adapt and add other relevant measures.

**Outcome Measures**

Average number of primary PSWs per resident who provide care over a one-month period

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *your measures*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Process Measures**

Percentage of staff turnover

Percentage of agency PSW hours each month

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *your measures*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Balancing Measures**

Percentage of total PSW paid hours that are paid sick hours each month

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *your measures*

\_\_\_\_\_

## Organizational Practice Change Concepts

Additional change ideas can be developed for your long-term care home by considering the following Organizational Practice Change Concepts. Each represents a particular way of looking at your organization to identify opportunities for change. Think of the Change Concepts listed below as “idea starters” that help you think about how the current situation can be improved. Some examples of ideas from successful long-term care homes have also been included on the far right of the table below; write your own in the space provided.

Change Concept	Definition	Your Change Ideas
<b>Recognition and Assessment</b>	Identify potential for improvement in PSW assignment.	Example: ❖ Determine areas for improvement and change ideas in current processes and practices related to consistent assignment. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____
<b>Education and Engagement</b>	Educate residents and families about consistent assignment. Provide staff training and education as required to support required changes.	Example: ❖ Consider family input into staffing model. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____
<b>Care Planning and Documentation</b>	Develop an action plan for achieving consistent assignment.	Example: ❖ Consider a staffing model that responds to resident needs, yet meets operational requirements. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____
<b>Improve Work Flow</b>	Workflow is about the movement of a service or product within the system from the beginning to the resident. If you have a good workflow, jobs get done quickly, and move seamlessly from person to person as each stage is completed.	Example: ❖ Ensure nurse leaders are fair and equitable in the planning of consistent assignment. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____
<b>Develop Routine Practices</b>	Developing work routines is about finding the most effective, repeatable and safest way to complete a task in order to achieve the results desired by the patient or resident.	Example: ❖ Test huddles with the interdisciplinary team to identify any required changes to the assignment that may improve continuity of care. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____
<b>Design Systems to Avoid Mistakes</b>	Designing systems to avoid mistakes, which can also be called ‘errorproofing’, is about designing your system so it is either impossible to commit an error, or any error that is made is obvious and can be fixed.	Example: ❖ Establish a forum to review feedback. _____ _____ <i>your ideas here</i> _____

## High Leverage Best-Practice Change Ideas

The following change ideas represent a selection of clinical best practices with demonstrated widespread success in long-term care homes. Be sure to consult the Clinical and Organizational Change Concepts and Ideas summary chart and [www.residentsfirst.ca](http://www.residentsfirst.ca) for a more thorough listing of clinical best practices that may be relevant to your home. Choose the ones that are most appropriate in your situation.

- Communicate action plan to staff, residents and families for feedback.
- Consider a mutual commitment to consistent assignment with collective bargaining units.
- Develop or review policy in your LTC home to ensure it reflects changes related to consistent assignment.
- Ensure nurse leaders are fair and equitable in the planning of consistent assignment based on relative needs to care for each resident.
- Identify trends and patterns that influence staffing (resident population, resident home areas, shifts, holidays etc.)

Think about *how* these change ideas become established as activities that are applied consistently. Identify which organizational changes (see Organizational Practice Change Concepts) might need to be introduced to support the clinical processes you choose to implement.