

What does it mean to be an independent support worker?

An Independent Support Worker (ISW) is someone who works for themselves, not an agency. ISWs may bring a variety of skills to the table, helping to create safe spaces while supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing. They might help with daily tasks, provide encouragement, or simply be a steady source of support. At the heart of their role, ISWs can empower people to live life their own way by providing support that is compassionate, respectful, and professional.

Liability & Insurance

As an independent support worker, it's important to consider protecting yourself with the right insurance coverage. Having adequate coverage can give you peace of mind and help safeguard your work. Whether you're providing respite care, personal support, or specialized services, insurance can help cover potential liabilities.

By securing the appropriate insurance, you not only protect yourself but also offer your clients added assurance of your professionalism and commitment to safety.

Always review policy details carefully, and consider consulting with an insurance advisor to tailor coverage to your specific needs.

Contracts

Establishing clear communication from the start is vital to prevent misunderstandings. Document all agreements, including scope, payment terms, and relevant details for future reference. Regular check-ins with the caregiver can help review and adjust the arrangement. A respectful, professional relationship fosters a successful working environment.

How to get connected



Download the Respite Now app on your preferred device



Register as a worker



Review and sign the Annual Declaration if you are in agreement



Complete your profile and upload the required documents:

- clean and up-to-date Vulnerable Sector Police Reference Check
- Canadian Photo Identification



Visit us on



Our objective is to equip independent support workers with essential knowledge pertaining to insurance coverage, professional conduct, and effective client engagement.

Respite Now is not responsible for any choices made based on the information provided.

RESPIRE NOW Worker Tip Sheet



WWW.RESPIRE-NOW.COM



Respite Now

Activity ideas for all ages & abilities



Wellness & Relaxation

- Guided nature walks or wheelchair-accessible strolls
- Gentle yoga or chair yoga stretches
- Breathing exercises with calming music
- Sensory play (textured objects, aromatherapy, weighted blankets)



Creative Expression

- Crafts, painting, clay, collages, colouring
- Music: singing, drumming, karaoke, or playlists
- Photography walk
- Storytelling, creative writing, journaling



Food & Cooking

- Bake cookies or simple snacks together
- Prepare a family recipe or try a new dish
- Decorate cupcakes or create a smoothie bar
- Explore cultural foods with taste testing and fun facts



Games & Learning

- Board games, puzzles, card games
- Brain teasers, trivia, word searches
- Video games, interactive apps
- Reading aloud, listening to audiobooks



Outdoor & Active

- Gardening in a backyard or community garden
- Play catch, frisbee, or balloon toss
- Swimming or adapted aquatics
- Relaxing at a local park or playground



Skill Building & Independence

- Practice life skills (budgeting, cooking, meal planning)
- Learn a new hobby (knitting, building, photography)
- Role-play social or job skills
- Explore tech skills: online learning

Services may include



Provide Care & Support

This can include assistance with bathing, dressing, eating, mobility, and other personal care needs, always delivered with dignity, respect, and compassion.



Companionship

Independent Support Workers offer friendly conversation, social interaction, and meaningful activities to help reduce loneliness and encourage a sense of belonging.



Emotional Support

They provide encouragement, reassurance, and a listening ear, helping individuals build confidence, cope with challenges, and feel supported every step of the way.



Help With Meal Preparation and Feeding

Support may include grocery shopping, preparing balanced meals, assisting with feeding, and managing dietary needs, ensuring clients enjoy safe, healthy, and enjoyable meals.



Transportation

Providing transportation to and from medical appointments, job or volunteer positions, specialized programs or day camps.



Community Participation

Supporting the person to become an active and valued member of their community and build meaningful relationships by encouraging social connections through volunteering, employment, and recreation.

Becoming the kind of independent support worker who makes a difference

Being a good ISW means combining professionalism with compassion, and always keeping the supported person at the center of everything you do.



Personal Qualities

- Shows empathy and compassion
- Practices patience in all situations
- Respects individuality and dignity
- Flexible and adaptive to change
- Dependable and reliable



Interpersonal Skills

- Communicates clearly and listens actively
- Builds trust and positive relationships
- Works well with families, caregivers, and professionals



Practical Skills

- Problem-solves calmly and effectively
- Stays organized and manages time well
- Supports daily living tasks when needed
- Adapts support to different ages and abilities



Professional Qualities

- Maintains confidentiality
- Committed to continuous learning and training
- Demonstrates cultural awareness and inclusivity
- Understands and respects professional boundaries