

Building and Keeping Good Relationships

Providing In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is important work. IHSS allows consumers to remain safely at home and prevent premature admission to an institution. Your job as a caregiver will go more smoothly if you and the consumer know and respect each other's roles and responsibilities. The following suggestions will help establish a smooth working relationship with consumers and minimize any problems that may develop.

- **Be dependable.** Arrive on time and be ready for work. Notify the consumer as soon as possible if you are going to be late.
- **Communicate changes.** Notify the consumer if your schedule is going to change or if you decide to leave the job. You are expected to give notice two weeks in advance.
- **Be reliable.** Do all the work you agreed to do and do it well. Provide the same quality of work you would expect if you were the consumer.
- **Be respectful.** Treat the consumer with dignity and respect. Never verbally, physically, or sexually harass the consumer. Do not bring anyone to the consumer's house, unless pre-approved by the consumer.
- **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not share any private or personal information about a consumer. Do not use the consumer's name or address or share information about a consumer's personal situation, family, health, or behavior.
- **Report changes.** Let the social worker know of any changes in the consumer's health, abilities, environment, or service needs.
- **Keep records.** Maintain accurate timesheets, work schedules, and other forms as required.
- **Be informed.** Know the amount of hours that have been authorized for a consumer and the tasks to be performed.
- **Be efficient.** Plan your work to make the most of the time allowed.

- **Be helpful.** Assist the consumer to maintain or increase self-sufficiency.

Adapted with permission from *A Handbook for IHSS Registry Caregivers*, Sonoma County In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority, retrieved from www.sonomacounty-ihsspa.org, October 2013.