

Final Report

COURSE: CDEV 4505

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Due Date: Wednesday, April 9th, 2025, by 11:59 pm

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Abstract

Background: Cross-cultural and racial differences between care provider and care receiver have presented challenges for Personal Support Workers (PSWs) not just in North America, but significantly in Australia and other parts of the world (Racism, Discrimination and Migrant Workers in Canada: Evidence from the Literature, n.d.). PSW's may encounter racism, microaggressions, and general misunderstandings that impact their mental wellness and overall job satisfaction, with the possibility of burnout and turnover in the workforce."Ninety-seven percent (97%) of Richview Community Cares Service's personal support workers are immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds, predominantly African and Caribbean (Mudie, L., Richview 2025). That being said, the clientele that occupies the majority of Richview are predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon (Mudie, L., Richview 2025). The purpose of this research study is to gain a deeper comprehension of the implications that microaggressions, as well as cultural and racial differences, have on the relationship between clients and Personal Support Workers at Richview Community Care Services in Toronto, Canada. This research study additionally aims to enhance the educational experience of Humber College's Community Development students.

Method: 25 Personal Support Workers from Richview Community Care services were the intended sample for the study. Eligibility requirements specified that participants be: Richview Community Care Services PSWs. An online survey was developed and was then administered by utilizing the Google Forms/surveys platform. The survey included 17 questions total, with 5 short answer questions and 12 multiple choice, 2 of which were consent and an invitation to participate in a focus group.

Conclusion: 11 participants responded to the survey, which represents only 26% of the population of interest. The results revealed unexpected findings when compared to previous

studies conducted on this subject area. This indicated the necessity for greater examination and research. As a consequence of the current study, an interest in learning more about what appears to be valuable in terms of client and staff interactions at Richview Community Care Services has emerged. It has also been understood that the study could have benefited more by modifying and using alternate terminology for the questions as well as short answers.

Acknowledgments

Without the participation of Richview Community Care Services' Personal Support Workers, this study would not have been possible. The research team was warmly received for a tour of the agency, and the employees deserve acknowledgement for their unwavering dedication in making this non-profit as successful as it is. Lisa Mudie, Richview's executive director, was the research team's Capstone Supervisor. Lisa provides a safe space for the staff and clients to share about their experiences and what they may be struggling with. Linda Hill and Christine Mckenzie were the professors for the capstone project, their frequent feedback and guidance encouraged the students to participate more thoroughly in order to learn and gain a deeper understanding while conducting a collaborative research project.

Introduction

Richview Community Care Services Corporation (RCCSC) is a supportive housing project for frail older adults and is a non-profit, charitable, community agency. What makes this organization so unique, is that their Funding is received from Ontario ministry of health therefore, Richview is client centred and not focused on economic gain, they are dedicated to client care and their mission (Mudie, L., Richview 2025). A range of home support services are offered to tenants living in the Richview Residence complex and surrounding community who meet the eligibility requirements (Richview Community Care Services, a Non-Profit, Charitable,

Community Agency in Toronto., n.d.). What the Humber Capstone Group intended to study throughout the year, in collaboration with Richview Community Care Services, is to further understand the impact that cultural and racial differences have on PSWs and their relationships with clients, and if there are impacts, what these differences may look like. Richview's motivation for working on this capstone project with the Humber students, was to gather additional feedback from their personal support workers, assess their staffs satisfaction with their work environment, as well as have Humber's Community Development students assist in identifying and examining personal feedback and anything that requires more attention in respect to the research topic. Lisa Mudie, executive director, emphasizes that Richview's goal is to always improve employee and client relations as this is the foundation to maintaining a healthy, successful work dynamic. The research findings from the capstone study demonstrated interesting and unexpected results in comparison to data that was collected from previous studies completed. Based on the literature and articles that were carefully analyzed from other studies in the annotated bibliography, it was apparent that racial discrimination and microaggressions were very prevalent within other organizations and long term care facilities in reference to personal support workers and their clients (Olasunkanmi-Alimi et al., n.d.). The data from the Humber capstone study, displays that racial discrimination and cultural differences did not play a key role in impacting the client and caregiver relationship, which further indicates that more research needs to be conducted. As a result of this data, it would be useful to research further how the cultural environment, policies and procedures of Richview Community Care Services seem to have positively impacted these working relationships, potentially making Richview a more equitable, safe and enjoyable work environment for both the client and personal support worker. It is also important to note that the data collected from the capstone study did not represent the

majority of the intended population, and the language used in the survey questions may have unintentionally influenced the participants' answers by them not feeling open enough to share. It would be beneficial to further understand how the different policies and procedures between existing organizations impact the dynamic of the relationship between the client and personal support worker. This valuable information could then be utilized to strengthen policies, ethics and procedures in the healthcare system and field of personal support care.

Methods

Epistemology

This study investigates whether cultural and racial tensions exist between the PSWs of Richview and their clients, and if so, what impact this has on the client/caregiver relationship and how PSWs manage these tensions. This will be determined using the constructivist perspective which is concerned with how individuals socially construct their own reality through their interactions with the world and each other (Hurst, 2023). It acknowledges that personal realities are shaped by interactions with others and requires a defined context for understanding individual experiences (Hurst, 2023; Pretorius, 2024). The context for this study is the interaction between Richview PSWs and their clients in a caregiver/care recipient relationship. The constructivist perspective is relevant here because this study investigates social interactions potentially influenced by race, and recognizes that the development of the participants' perspectives will impact future interactions (Pretorius, 2024). Therefore, the research requires data collection methods that allow participants to express how race relates to their social interactions. It was determined that a survey would be the appropriate method to collect the data.

Participants

The population of interest consists of 25 PSWs working at Richview. Immigrants make up 97% of this population and have diverse backgrounds that include the Caribbean, African, and Asian cultures. These are a racialized populations that are vulnerable to discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. This is because, due to the busy nature of their work, it could not determine which PSWs would be available to answer the survey. Therefore, the researchers could not use a probability-based sampling method (Bickman & Rog, 2009). Each PSW at Richview, however, would be a valid participant for the study. Investigating the presence of racial tensions between the caregivers and clients of Richview, it is often racialized groups that are more vulnerable to discrimination (Cornelissen, 2021), the perspectives of non-racialized groups would also be valid in order to determine if tensions are there. Survey completion was voluntary, and the population of interest was small enough that surveys were sent to all of the PSWs through the community partner.

Tools

Google Forms was used to create and distribute the online survey. Questions were developed independently using both open and closed styles. The closed-type questions included multiple choice and Likert scales. Questions and options were kept short and simple to account for the possibility of language barriers.

Procedure

The survey was left open for 3 weeks. Questions were developed to draw out the following information: PSW racial origin, presence of racial tensions between themselves and their clients, coping mechanisms for racial tensions, and desire for resources to manage racial tensions.

Data Analysis

Google Forms was the primary tool for response analysis because of its automatic graphing capability which saved time when analyzing the multiple choice questions and Likert scales. Open responses were coded to find prominent themes. Sentiment analysis is being used on the close-ended questions to provide a general description of the dominant feelings and experiences of the PSWs. The responses of close-ended questions are easily displayed using graphs. Using graphs like pie charts and bar graphs, it is easy to visualize the prevailing sentiments of the PSWs. Thematic analysis allows pattern identification in the open-ended questions. Coding for themes could be done manually because of the few short responses received. Keywords that were similar or identical were highlighted in the same colour. The groups of colours each reveal a theme in the responses.

Ethical Considerations

Consent was obtained from every respondent by attaching the consent form to the survey as the first question. The community partner advised emphasizing that responses would be kept confidential and anonymous and that respondents were assured that their participation would not affect their relationship with their employer. As a result, the responses and data reporting in this paper omit the identities of the participants.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Survey respondents answered 16 main questions, 1 question confirming consent, and 1 invitation for a focus group. By the end of the surveying period, 11 responses were received. This accounts for 26% of the PSW population at Richview. The proportion of respondents working at Richview for more than 10 years was reported to be 36.4% matching another 36.4%

who have been working there for less than 1 year. The next largest group are 18.2% of respondents who have been working at Richview for 1-3 years followed by the 9.1% of respondents who have been working for 4-10 years (See Figure 1). Demographic information is as follows for the respondents: 72% black, 18% Asian, and 9% other (See Table 1).

Figure 1

Respondent Time Employed by Richview Community Care Services

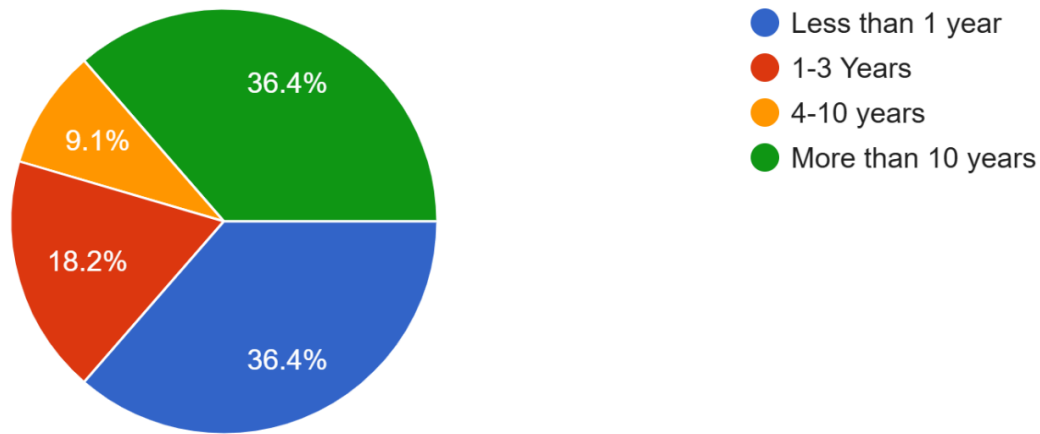
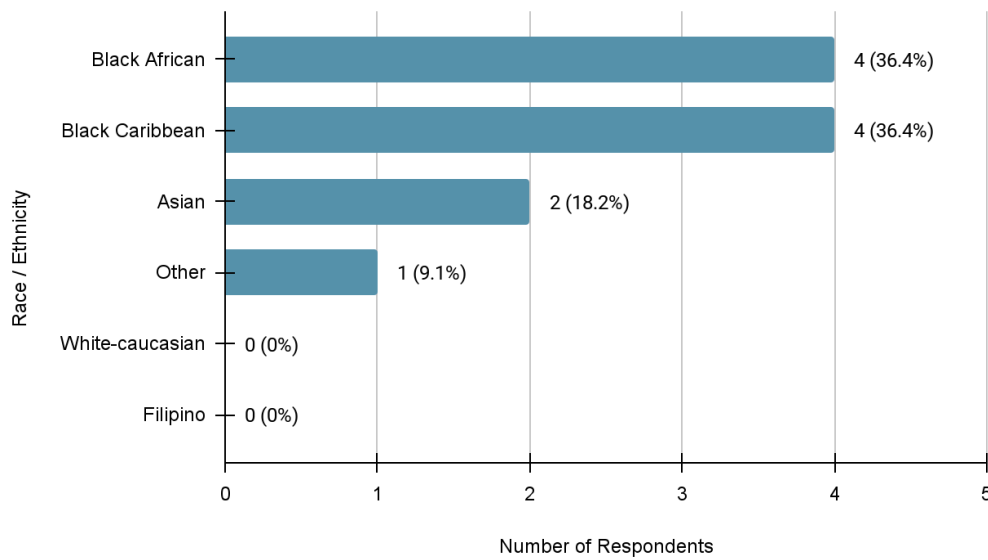


Figure 2
Respondent Race / Ethnicity



Key Findings

Overall, the relationship with clients is positive according to 90.9% of respondents with only 9.1% experiencing the negative effect of racial tensions on job performance (See Figure 3). A higher negative effect of racial tension on job satisfaction was reported by 18.2% of respondents (See Figure 4).

Figure 3
Percentage of Respondents Experiencing Racial Tensions with Clients

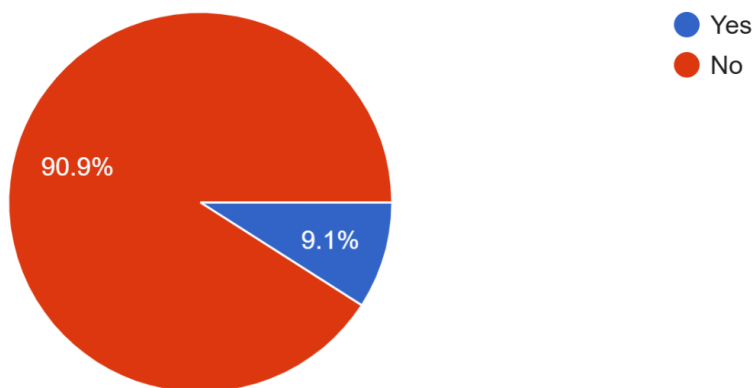
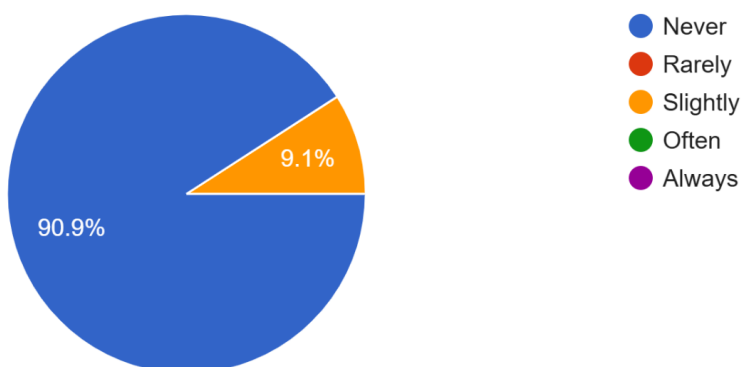


Figure 4
Impact of Cultural/Racial Tensions on Care Quality



Manual thematic analysis identified prominent mechanisms for managing racial tensions within the population of interest. It's important to note, however, that only a few brief responses were received for the open-ended questions. Color coding was used to identify similar or identical keywords which were then grouped to reveal themes in the survey responses. The analysis of open-ended and multiple-choice questions revealed three prominent themes: Communication (highlighted in yellow), Professionalism (highlighted in green), and Cultural Awareness (highlighted in purple). These themes, within the context of the research question, reflect PSWs' perspectives on effective strategies for managing racial tensions with their clients.

Table 1
Thematic Analysis Coding Example

Respondent	Response
Respondent 1	Talk about other cultures, and their differences.
Respondent 3	Remaining professional in my role and being confident in my work.
Respondent 4	To be humble
Respondent 5	I treat the client fair with respect

Respondent 6

By communicating

Note: Coding example for question 15. This question was open-ended and asked participants what strategies they found useful when most helpful in managing cultural or racial differences with clients. Keywords were color coded and revealed the following themes: communication (yellow), professionalism (green), cultural awareness (purple).

Discussion

The study found that although respondents indicated in the short answer questions that they are generally satisfied with their job experience, there are underlying feelings of stress. Despite the acknowledged effectiveness of the survey, there is an obvious need for a greater number of individuals to participate. This implies that there has to be a balance between participatory learning and information dissemination. This data suggests that the survey experience is highly impacted by emotional responses. Engagement is crucial for effective outcomes. Continuous reflection is essential to make surveys more proficient in the future. The research team was somewhat surprised when the data was examined given that almost all of the PSWs initially indicated that they did not encounter cultural conflict or discrimination with their clients. This gave a far deeper understanding and insight in identifying the possibility that the survey's terminology may have affected the participants' responses. One illustration of this may be the severity of the term "racism."

Lisa Mudie, the executive director, stated that the PSWs at Richview Community Care Services have a strong connection with their clients and that the majority of them have worked with the same clients for over a decade. With this vital information, the researchers gained a more thorough comprehension as to why the PSWs indicated in the survey that they do not encounter discrimination based on race or ethnicity from their clients. Given the PSWs' close

connection with their clients, cultural differences may not be relevant at the present moment in their experience at Richview Community Care Services.

Richview's supportive housing model stands out significantly from traditional home (PSW) models. This distinction is crucial in understanding the effectiveness and outcomes of care provided to clients. Some of the key differences are employment structure, caseload management, holistic approach, and traditional Models. Richview's PSWs are salaried employees, ensuring consistent care and stability. Traditional Models Often rely on hourly wages, leading to high turnover rates and inconsistent care. The PSWs manage a consistent caseload, allowing them to build long-term relationships with clients. While in traditional Models, PSWs may have fluctuating caseloads, which can hinder relationship development. Richview Focuses on a holistic model that integrates social, emotional, and physical support. Traditional models typically emphasize task-oriented care, which may overlook emotional and social needs. The findings from Richview's model highlights the significance of stable relationships in home care. Research literature supports this notion "Long-term relationships between caregivers and clients lead to improved health outcomes and client satisfaction" (Smith et al., 2021).

Juxtaposition with Traditional Models

The differences in employment and care delivery models can account for the unique findings observed in Richview's approach compared to traditional home care literature.

Employment Type	Salaried PSWs	Hourly PSWs
Caseload Consistency	High	Variable
Relationship Duration	Long-term	Short-term
Care Approach	Holistic	Task-oriented

1. High Turnover Rates:

Traditional home care models frequently experience high turnover among PSWs, leading to fragmented care and inconsistent client experiences.

2. Limited Time with Clients:

Many traditional models allocate short visit times, which can hinder the development of meaningful relationships and comprehensive care.

3. Focus on Task-Oriented Care:

Traditional home care often emphasizes task completion over relationship-building, which can negatively impact client satisfaction and emotional health.

Trust and communication: Consistent PSWs foster trust, which enhances communication and encourages clients to express their needs. Familiarity with clients allows PSWs to tailor care plans effectively, addressing individual preferences and health conditions. Clients are educated and informed about maintaining an atmosphere of dignity and treating everyone with respect prior to and during interacting with their PSW and other staff, they must fill out a paper outlining their rights and responsibilities. Care managers speak with clients on a regular basis to assess these standards.

Richview Community Care services include unique qualities, policies, and procedures that operate as buffers against racial discrimination in the workplace. This organization is particularly proud of its standards and policies, which are upheld by CARF--the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities(Mudie, L., Richview 2025) . Richview Community Services has been accredited for many years with CARF and continually evaluates the requirements that need to be met. “Through responsiveness to a dynamic and diverse

environment, CARF serves as a catalyst for providing access to services and improving the quality of life for persons served (About CARF, 2023).”

Limitations

Considering limitations and obstacles that may have impacted the results are to be examined further. Acquiring PSWs to complete the survey proved to be more difficult than anticipated. In order to determine whether more PSWs would engage, the research team and community partner had to extend the time frame to 3 weeks. A hurdle to obtaining participants for the survey may have been overcome if the research team had a greater amount of in person interactions with the PSWs. Lisa Mudie suggested that future participation in a research study such as this one, would benefit immensely from the research team physically coming into the agency more often to meet with the staff members. This might have led to more trusting partnerships with the PSWs and potentially would have enhanced the participation in the research study. 11 PSWs responded to the survey, which does not represent the majority of the PSW's at Richview Community Care Services. By analyzing the survey, the research team was able to identify factors that may have impacted the results, by using language and terms that unintentionally may have emotionally influenced the participants. It would be beneficial to use diversified terminology and ask questions that vary in terms of organization, structure, and language. One of the main limitations this research study faced was the inability to execute a focus group. The research team had developed a set of 10 -12 focus group questions for the PSWs at Richview. Due to unforeseen circumstances, such as weather conditions and lack of responses for participation, unfortunately this second step of research did not take place. Having a focus group for this type of research allows for qualitative data that would enhance a deeper understanding through the personal experiences of the PSWs.

Future Recommendations:

According to the survey, the majority of PSWs said they are either extremely confident or confident in their capacity to handle ethnic or cultural differences with their clients. This data is useful because it demonstrates that, generally speaking, PSWs' perceptions of managing racial tensions are favorable, which supports the research question and runs counter to the troubling emotions and experiences noted throughout the literature review. But by itself, the data only conveys a broad sentiment and leaves out information that may have been revealed if the participants had responded to the questions in their own words, particularly if the question had been altered to include the word "why?"

Conducting focus groups and having additional data to examine would have helped this study gain a deeper understanding of the research question. For future reference, conducting a focus group at the grassroots level would be ideal in a research study such as this one. By including the personal support workers from Richview Community Care Services in the facilitation and drafting of questions for the focus group, the researchers should establish a level of trust and relationships with the participants, creating a safe environment to share openly. This approach aligns with the principles of PAR (participatory action research), which emphasizes the importance of involving those directly affected by a program or service in the research process, as they often possess valuable knowledge about the issues at hand. Collaborating with PSWs to develop focus group questions that reflect their perspectives and the needs of the communities they serve will ensure that the research is grounded in real-world experiences. This partnership can enhance trust and communication between researchers and participants, leading to richer data collection.

Richview is taking a comprehensive approach to minimizing workplace racial discrimination by implementing strategies such as regular diversity training, inclusive recruiting, and cultural awareness workshops. Richview provides a safe environment for staff to confidentially share their feelings and work experiences. The organization addresses unconscious biases with complaint resolution, performance reviews, and mentorship. Employee engagement, participation, minimal absenteeism, enhances Richview's competitive edge by maintaining a welcoming work environment for potential job applicants. Richview's approach reflects its diversity and inclusivity, which supports the agency in creating a respectful work environment. Even if cultural conflict arises over time, it appears based on the survey, that PSW's have developed different techniques to cope and manage with cultural conflict through mutual respect between the client and caregiver.

Conclusion

To conclude this report, it is necessary to acknowledge once again to the individuals and organizations who made this research study possible. The participation of Richview Community Care Services PSWs played a key role in the success of this initiative, and the vulnerability they were willing to share was appreciated. The staff deserve recognition for their unwavering effort to make this non-profit as effective as it is. Lisa Mudie dedicated her efforts to supporting this research study, along with the support of Humber Colleges Community Development professors Christine and Linda. The purpose of this study was to better understand how microaggressions, cultural and racial differences affect the interaction between clients and Personal Support Workers at Richview Community Care Services. However, Richview Community Care Services' distinctive traits, policies, and procedures serve as safeguards against racial discrimination in the workplace. The data from the capstone research study has now revealed different but useful data

to build from. It is important to note that the culture and environment in which Richview operates cultivates a foundation for long-lasting client and caregiver relationships.

Moving forward, it is now with great understanding that focus groups from a grassroots level would increase the amount of useful qualitative data for future studies. Although the results from the capstone study did not reveal anticipated results, it instead provided the researchers as well as Richview Community Care services more valuable information that can be utilized to further strengthen and reinforce policies and procedures that appear to be successful for the organization and its personal support workers.

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