



New Jersey Workforce Development Insider

Mark Your Calendars! DSP Recognition Week Starts Sept. 9th

National Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week will take place the week of September 9 – 15, 2012. This is a time where we acknowledge the important work DSPs do each and every day to provide quality life-enhancing services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

More than 30,000 people across New Jersey are employed as direct support professionals (DSP), supporting people with disabilities in daily activities ranging from personal care to developing relationships in the community. DSPs statewide are dedicated to supporting and empowering people with disabilities to live meaningful lives in their communities. The New Jersey Partnership for Direct Support Professionals acknowledges the critical role these employees play in the lives of people with disabilities through recognition and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of this workforce. Through projects like the College of Direct Support, the NJ DSP Career Path, recognition events, and other activities focused on DSP workforce development, New Jersey continues to make progress in combating the impending workforce crisis, enhancing the quality of services, and retaining and commending those who have dedicated their careers to providing direct support.

Everyone is encouraged to take this week to recognize the hard work and dedication of today's Direct Support Professionals. Recognition doesn't have to stop then – THANK A DSP TODAY!



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The NJ Partnership for DSP Workforce Development

- *It's about the Quality...of supports that a well-trained workforce provides.*
- *It's about the Value...of professionalism gained through the College of Direct Support state-of-the-art training.*
- *It's about the Future...of Direct Support Professionals and the lives of people with developmental disabilities.*

New Jersey's Direct Support Professionals are ...



Course Corner: Community Inclusion

This College of Direct Support course gives an overview of community inclusion and natural supports. The course defines integration, inclusion, and natural supports. It helps DSPs understand their roles in supporting the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the communities in which they live and work. The course gives strategies for enhancing inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities and emphasizes the value of inclusive communities. There is also a focus on helping people find and stay connected to natural supports.

The following lessons are included in this course:

Lesson #1: The DSP Role in Community Inclusion

Lesson #2: Matching Community Resources with Individual Interests

Lesson #3: Community Bridge Building and Networking

Lesson #4: Natural Supports

New Jersey's First Credentialed Direct Support Professional: Brenda Hoagland

"Once a DSP, always a DSP," are the words enthusiastically spoken by Brenda Hoagland, New Jersey's first nationally credentialed Direct Support Professional. This is a statement that describes her and so many people working in the field of developmental disabilities statewide.

At Matheny Medical and Educational Center, Brenda's official title is Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Trainer, but much of her job still involves a great deal of direct support. It is this part of the job that has held her heart for thirty-five years and led her to an opportunity where she can share her expertise, knowledge, and passion with her colleagues. Brenda's work doesn't stop when she leaves Matheny; she also provides support to her brother with Cerebral Palsy who lives in his own apartment. She notes how her experience with the Career Path and the College of Direct Support has helped her know all that is possible for his life and the lives of all the people she supports. As a result, she's done a great deal to advocate for her brother to have the supports needed to live life to the fullest. Brenda's passion for learning and dedication to quality support has helped her assist her brother to move out of a nursing home, ensure that the activities he participates in are engaging and person-centered, and has refocused his team to look at all the possibilities for home life and potential employment.



Brenda Hoagland at Matheny

The New Jersey Direct Support Professional Career Path is designed to align with the credentialing requirements of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). DSPs completing the NJ Career Path have the option to pursue this national credential by submitting their 8 best portfolio work samples and summary statements, College of Direct Support transcripts, resume, support letters, and commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics. Brenda's submission was evaluated by a NADSP review team and was approved for the credential. Ms. Hoagland was commended by the review team for her efforts through comments that included: "Ms. Hoagland has shown she has a very strong knowledge base and broad and deep understanding of the competency areas she described in her portfolio." In comments related to Brenda's involvement and support of staff development activities at Matheny, they stated, "Ms. Hoagland exhibited extraordinary work with regard to her fellow staff. She has gone above and beyond expectations and is to be commended." This statement is the one that describes Brenda inside and out. She understands not simply how important it is for people with disabilities to have someone there to support them, but how critical it is for that direct support professional to be skilled, knowledgeable, and dedicated.

Ever the student, Brenda puts great emphasis on the importance of always learning more. She says, "When I started in the field, there was nothing. We didn't have the same training. We didn't have the information." Now Brenda actively searches out ways to educate herself and her colleagues from finding seminars to coordinating the NJ Career Path at Matheny in effort to ensure that the supports provided to people are of high quality. Brenda said it best, "I'm still learning. I love to learn new things." This statement rings true for many and it's great to have a pioneer like Brenda leading the way for other DSPs to continue their learning. Congratulations, Brenda!

North Jersey Developmental Center and the CDS

By: Sue Pickett Director of Staff Development, North Jersey Developmental Center

At the North Jersey Developmental Center many staff have expressed interest in the College of Direct Support. Staff participation in the CDS is voluntary at the developmental centers. Employees that are interested in taking additional online training are assigned lessons through the system. They take the trainings during their own time and at their own pace, and those that do enthusiastically share their appreciation for the experience.

Getting the word out about the availability of continuing education opportunities is important for any organization. We initially advertised the CDS in our monthly newsletter; followed by a brief presentation to our Executive staff; then we had a storyboard at our Oktoberfest dates (every Thursday in October) that outlined what CDS is, benefits of CDS, and registration information and many staff registered at that time.

In January 2012, we began our "introductory" meetings in which staff attended to learn about the CDS, how to navigate the website, and to get the courses people are interested in so they can be assigned them. During the introduction meeting staff asked many questions. Monthly meetings were also scheduled to discuss issues, concerns, good experiences, etc. The monthly meetings are held the same day/time each month for consistency.

To further promote the online training available through the CDS, email reminders are sent out monthly and it is discussed at our Executive Team Meetings often to be sure everyone knows about it. We are really excited to have additional training available to staff!

We've structured use of the College of Direct Support to best meet the needs of our employees. They are given the option to select three courses they are interested in exploring. To start off, they are assigned two lessons from the first module and given 30 days to complete it. This helps ease staff into the new process without overwhelming them. We learned that 30 days works well, a longer deadline sometimes results in staff losing momentum because of the long delay between new trainings. Once the two lessons are complete, the staff have the option of how much/little they want assigned at a time. They are essentially in charge after the first two lessons.

All of the staff participating in the CDS has had great things to say about the training and using the system:

"The CDS is truly a fulfilling experience for me! I can't begin to explain how much I thought I knew. I can't wait to get home to my computer. I'm excited and grateful."

"I would recommend this to my co-workers for sure, it was a great experience."

"I was interested in the College Of Direct Support for a number of reasons. I want to enhance my skills at work, broaden my education and provide better services."

"My experience with the CDS system was great! I went at a pace that was good for me and I was able to navigate through the system with ease. I recommend that others should at least try it. Thank you for the great opportunity!"

At North Jersey Developmental Center we are looking forward to increasing participation in the College of Direct Support and allowing staff the opportunity to broaden their knowledge in many different areas!



DISC Program: Individualized Lessons

Family Perspective

Over the past few months, The Boggs Center has been working with medical students in the Distinction In Service to the Community (DISC) Program at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. This prestigious and rigorous program is intended for medical students who are committed to volunteering in the community and working with underserved populations. This community service-learning project has led to collaborative efforts with two students (Aman Shah and Catherine Tomasulo), and a family using Self-Directed Services (Jeffrey Prendergast and his mother and step-father, Tom and Kathy LoPresti). Together, they have been working to develop an individualized lesson aimed at training direct support professionals about the person using supports and their role in providing assistance.



Jeffrey and his mother and step-father at their home.

Jeffrey is really excited about having the opportunity to develop a lesson about himself. His mother and step-father are enthusiastic about having alternative training opportunities for new Direct Support Professionals working with their son. The family looks forward to using the lesson to train new staff that will be working with Jeffrey, making the transition between staff as smooth as possible.

Jeffrey, Aman, Catherine, and Mr. and Mrs. LoPresti all worked for several months deciding on what information they would like to include in the lesson and then how they would want it to look. The information found in Jeffrey's Essential Lifestyle Plan (ELP) served as the base for the information that would be included in the lesson. The medical students also got a chance learn a lot about Jeffrey (who loves to take pictures) by looking through many photo albums and scrapbooks he has created over the years with his staff. Videos, music, and pictures were then added, with Jeffrey and his family selecting how much information to be included. The students met

with Jeffrey on a couple different occasions to video him doing different activities and got to know more about his hopes, dreams, and ways he wanted to be supported by staff. Jeffrey enjoyed spending time with the students and telling them about all of the different things he likes to do. His favorite part of the process was having the students record him on video playing his guitar and singing a song he wrote. When asked what he appreciated the most about the experience, Jeffrey said he "respected the students because they respect me and my wishes."

Jeff's parents admitted that they were hesitant at first to participate in the project with the medical students. Mrs. LoPresti talked about her initial "fear that these 'strangers' may not understand what (Jeff) really needs." After meeting with the students at their home and communicating over the phone and via email, the family felt that the students really got to know Jeffrey and understood how he wanted to be supported by people around him.

The entire family talked fondly about working with the medical students. Mrs. LoPresti noted that the students were "personable and really listened" and that the family "looked forward to each visit." Mr. LoPresti felt that the students were able to learn from a "personal point of view" of how to support Jeffrey. While working with the medical students to develop the lesson Mrs. LoPresti admits that this process has "helped me to learn that some of my staff may not be appropriate to work with my son and it gave me time to reflect on how Jeff's program was working and not working for him."

This process also had a great impact on the medical students. When asked to reflect on their experience during the process, they both echoed that "it was great working with the family" and that they "feel a little more comfortable working with patients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities now that (they) realize the people that are involved and their role in the person's life."

Mr. and Mrs. LoPresti added that, working with the medical students was a "fabulous experience" and that other parents should consider the same opportunity if possible because "it would only benefit them." The family hopes that this information will give everyone in Jeffrey's life a better idea of how he would like to be supported. His parents are shared how before they were the only one's who held the information about how to support Jeff. They expressed satisfaction in knowing that now they have the information recorded in a way that is available for others to use, easing their minds about the future.

CDS Administrator Tips: Lesson Follow-up

As a CDS Administrator, you are able to assign online training through the College of Direct Support. To monitor staff progress with the online training they have been assigned, you can review their transcript, their “E-Learning Detail,” or run reports. To run reports follow these instructions:

Running Reports—Online Training

- Reports, Online Learning
- Go to the middle of the page then select your facility
- Click on department Reports
- Enter the time period you want to run the report for
- Click on “Show all Learners”
- Choose your department
- Select the type of report you would like to run (department detail report, department summary report, lessons past due report, or lessons due by report)
- When the report appears you can click on any of the underlined/blue numbers to drill down for more detailed information about a particular learner.



Career Path: Level 3 Concentration in Mental Health Supports

Direct Support Professionals who have completed Levels 1 and 2 of the NJ DSP Career Path now have an added option to continue their studies in effort to develop further skills and earn certificates in the field of developmental disabilities. The Career Path – Level 3 Concentration in Mental Health Supports was released this Spring.

The ability of DSP to be competent in targeted support areas is important to meeting the individual support needs of people with disabilities. Many individual training opportunities exist across the state on the topic of mental health support and now there is a way for NJ DSPs to combine their educational experiences and earn a certificate in a this concentration area.

Stemming from the importance of the topic driven by the NJ Dual Diagnosis Task Force and outcomes of the Fall Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series Afternoon Forum with Anne Hurley, Ph.D., development on this important concentration began. Representatives from the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Trinitas, the Dual Diagnosis Task Force (parent co-chair), the Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities, The Arc of Monmouth County, UCP of Hudson County, and The Boggs Center participated in development. The result is a concentration that combines coursework options, mentoring, and portfolio development leading to a Level 3 certificate.

In order to complete this level, DSPs must complete an online refresher course using the College of Direct Support and 40 additional hours of continuing education. The continuing education is self-guided and may include: online courses, college course, seminars and training offered throughout the state, or self-study of scholarly books or articles. Also included is a mentoring component which requires that the DSP discuss the what they’ve learned through course work with an person experienced in the arena of mental health. The portfolio is designed to capture the competency gained and used from these learning experiences and includes self-guided demonstration of work as well as responding to questions focused around a selection of vignettes.

Guidelines for Completion of the NJ Career Path – Concentration in Mental Health Supports may be found by going to: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/documents/Guidelines%20for%20Level%203%20MH%20Supports%20FINAL.pdf>



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Sept. 9 – 15, 2012

*Direct Support Professionals across New Jersey are
dedicated to supporting and empowering people
with disabilities to live meaningful lives.
Take this time to...*

Thank your DSPs!

Information on training related to the College of Direct Support can be found at:
<http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/training/CDSAdministratorTraining.html>

Current Training Topics include:

CDS Administrator Training

Making the College of Direct Support Work for Your Agency



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Information about New Jersey's DSP
Workforce Development Initiatives
can be found on the NJ Division of
Developmental Disabilities website:
www.nj.gov/ddd/DSPWD



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THE INFORMATION YOU NEED ABOUT NEW JERSEY'S DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES