

## Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)

### Core Competencies Video

### Trainers Manual 7/14/2014

**Audience:** DSPs, Front Line Supervisors, Clinicians, Administrators

**Time needed to complete training:** Between 2-3 hours depending on the discussion elicited from participants.

**Materials Needed:**

- DSPs Core Competencies Video (available on-line at OPWDD website in the competencies section.)
- DSPs Core Competencies which includes the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Code of Ethics ((available on-line at OPWDD website in the competencies section.)
- Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) Personal Outcome Measures
- Survey Questionnaire
- Participants Manual
- Empowerment Strategies
- Empowerment Strategies Checklist

**Trainer's Instructions:** There are **questions** in each segment that you are asking the participants. They have a **black dot** in front of them. Under each question, is an indented **white dot** with a **suggested answer** that you can provide after a group discussion.

This segment is a discussion before you start using the video:

What skills do you need to do be a DSP?

- ❖ Besides having a good heart – that’s a characteristic, not a skill
- ❖ You need skills to do the job. What skills?

There are 90,000 Direct Support Professionals in NYS

We are working to transform the workforce from “Direct Care” to “Direct Support Professionals” – going from a Care Giver Model to a Support Professional Model

What’s the difference?

- ❖ Give an example i.e. supermarket example – How many of you have taken individuals out to a supermarket to go shopping? How would a caregiver do this?
  - Individual holding basket/pushing cart. Staff holds the list. Staff direct the individual to the aisle needed. Staff pick out or point out what is needed.

How would a direct support professional do this?

  - Individual holds the basket/pushes the cart. Individual holds the list. Individual decides what aisle to go to. Individual asks for assistance. Individual looks for the items in aisle. Individual picks out item and puts it in the basket/cart (w/or w/o assistance from staff
- ❖ The fault is not the DSPs if they have not been properly trained. We ask them to complete tasks, not emphasizing how tasks should be completed.
- ❖ We’re in a “Care Giver’ Model right now.
- ❖ We can do better
- ❖ The Competencies are what DSPs should be doing. Today we are going to review the competencies but also examine how DSPs should do the job.
- ❖ It’s about the work, the real work
- ❖ It’s about what happens every day
- ❖ It’s about the impact on the individual

- ❖ **Bottom line – it helps the people with disabilities feel better about themselves.**
- ❖ **What’s more important than that?**

**Introduction to Participants:**

**Ask:** Who are the most important staff in the field of developmental disabilities?

**Answer:** The Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)

**Ask:** Why?

**Answer:** They work directly with the individuals and therefore have the greatest impact.

**Ask:** If you were a family member of an individual receiving support and services, what would be some of your biggest concerns regarding staff?

**Answer:** How competent is the DSP(s) who is working directly with my family member?

**Have participants open to page 2 in their manual – “What Does it Mean to be Competent”**

**Say:** Being **competent means having knowledge and skills as well as being ethical.** How do we as a field determine if DSPs are competent in their position? Who defines competency? Stakeholders across the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) system have developed a set of core competencies for DSP’s which were reviewed by DSPs before implementation. **These competencies transform the role of a DSP from a caregiver to a support professional.**

**Have participants open to page 3 in their manual – “Empowerment Strategies”**

**\*This page is the key**

**(After each is read, talk about examples of each)**

Ask a participant to read each one out loud to group, starting by saying, “A Support Professional empowers individuals to...”

1. Live a life that is valued by the person as defined by their Personal Outcome Measures (POMs) and not the personal values of the staff.

- ❖ *Do we ever lay/impose our values on them? What are some examples of how we impose our values on the individuals? Examples include food choices, where to eat, when to shower, clothing, relationships etc.*
2. Have more opportunities for desired community involvement
- ❖ *What are the key words? "Opportunities" and "Desired"*
  - ❖ *If you don't know what's out there, how can you desire it?*
  - ❖ *They may not know what is out there. We need to expose them to various things to do in the community and then support them in choosing what they like.*
  - ❖ *Example, A staff person once took a group of individuals to the race track. Do you think that is an OK thing to do? Why or why not? If they wanted to bet, would that be OK?*
  - ❖ *What are examples of things in the community that they may have never experienced?*
3. Think and problem solve, helping them to figure out what they want to do
- ❖ *We're being their brain, we often think and problem solve for them. Sometimes we try to get them to do what we would do.*
  - ❖ *Where possible, don't tell them. Ask questions. Let them use their brain.*
  - ❖ *Teach them to evaluate for themselves. We are all too often hovering around them, providing praise before they have had a chance to self-evaluate. Obviously, this depends upon the capability levels of each individual.*
  - ❖ *After they do something, what do they do? Look to staff for approval. "Good job". Rather, ask them how they thought they did. Have them self-evaluate by asking' "How do you know if you did a good job cleaning the bathroom?"*
4. Learn new skills that increases their independence and decrease dependency on staff
- ❖ *Sometimes we overuse the word independence. Many of the individuals will never be fully independent. They do need to learn independent skills. It starts with asking ourselves, :How do we decrease their dependency on us?"*
  - ❖ *What are we doing for them currently that they can learn to do part of or all of for themselves?*
  - ❖ *An example might be doing laundry. What examples do you have in your programs where we can lesson their dependence on us?*
  - ❖ *Think of one person you work with now. What is one thing that he/she can learn to do more? How can you lesson his/her dependence on you.*

5. Have increased self-esteem through positive interactions focusing on their abilities and not their disabilities

- ❖ Think about an example of a person whose self-esteem has increased because he/she has learned to do more.
- ❖ We tend to focus on what they can't do rather than on what they can do?
- ❖ ISP Meetings – we talk about what they can't do rather than start with what are their capabilities.
- ❖ Instead, focus on what they like to do? Don't start with what they can't do, start with what they can. Use that to build a more meaningful life.
  
- ❖ Why should we become support professionals rather than caregivers? We want to empower the individuals. to live a life that they value..
- ❖ This page is key – keep it in a place where it is constantly being looked at.
- ❖ This should be the language of the program
- ❖ How you do the work
- ❖ It's not the task, it's how you do the task
- ❖ On a scale of 1-10, how important is this?

**Have participants open to page 4 in their manual – Competence + Interactions = Empowerment**

Competence (knowledge, skills and ethics) should be demonstrated in **every interaction** between the DSPs and individuals. The DSPs should be **empowering** the individual at all times. By watching this video and participating in the discussion, DSPs and other staff will begin to learn what the competencies are and some important tips for helping the individuals live an

enriched life. We are trying to demonstrate areas where DSPs can improve their skills and by doing so, assist in improving the lives of the individuals they support. We understand that the vast majority of DSPs have good intentions and do good work every day. Still, everyone can do better.

**For Experienced Staff Only** - You are provided with a DSP Competencies Video Survey where you will make an educated guess as to the percentage of DSPs that you work with who would handle the situation correctly as shown in each of the 8 scenes that encompass the Code of Ethics and the 7 Goals of the Core Competencies. Please be as accurate as possible in your responses. The sheets will not be collected and no judgments will be made.

## Code of Ethics

**Start video** – run the video until the segment on the **Code of Ethics** begins. **(2:50)**

**Stop the video** and **say** the following: “All professions have a code of ethics, including DSPs. OPWDD has adopted the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Code of Ethics for all supports and services and included them in the DSP Competencies. Let’s review them now. (Have volunteers read one of the Codes of Ethics at a time.)”

Making ethical decisions can be challenging and you are about to see one example that often happens. In this scene, an individual is eating a brownie and a staff member reminds him of his goal to eat a healthy diet. Let’s see if the staff member is acting in an ethical manner according to the NADSP Code of Ethics. (Not your values)

**Start video** and show the entire scene.

**Stop the video** at the end of the scene before the voice over begins. **(3:25)**

**Have participants open to page 5 in their manual – “National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics”**

- ❖ **Always look at this document when discussing a situation that involves ethics, not what you perceive as ethics. How can you justify your position? By looking at this document.**

**Ask**

- Based upon the NADSP Code of Ethics and assuming that there are no immediate health and safety issues for this individual, do you think the staff acted in an ethical manner? Why or why not?
  - Suggested answers –In accordance with the Code of Ethics, the DSP used a respectful tone, adhered to self-determination, tried to foster a spirit of partnership and tried to promote physical well-being. She appeared to be acting ethically.
    - **What could she have done that would have been the opposite of her acting ethically?**
- If the person had a health related condition that required limited sugar in his diet, would that matter? Why or why not?
  - This would matter a great deal because if the person has a health related condition it might be in his plan for staff to discuss what he is eating. To be truly ethical, the individual should have the strongest say in agreeing to have staff support (self-directed lives).

- ❖ **What if he was less able to understand the ramifications of his actions? Is there a difference? (If there was a significant medical condition, we might have to “control” his diet)**
- If his family wanted him to eat healthier and the person didn’t want to, how should staff act?
  - The first allegiance of the DSP is to the person. It is the person’s choice. However, if the person is unable to understand the consequences of his decision, then the family would have a stronger say. DSPs can serve as effective advocates for healthy eating mostly by being a role model for the person.
- If you wanted to eat a brownie and a friend of yours interrupted you and reminded you that you wanted to eat healthy, how would you feel?
  - **I don’t think you would say, “Thank you for driving me crazy and nagging me”.**
  - **Look at his face? Did he agree that the person could come in and bother him?**
  - **Did he agree on when she would remind him to eat healthy?**
- Could the staff person have handled the situation in a better way?
  - Being ethical also means promoting the emotional well-being of the person. Most of us would feel uncomfortable with a friend interrupting us while we are eating to point out that we are not eating healthy. It would be better if such a discussion would happen before we sat down to eat if you requested such help. The individual would feel more **empowered** if the DSP adhered to his wishes for when and how the support would be given.
- Why is it important to adopt the values/ethics of the profession as opposed to using your own personal values in decision making?
  - All of us have our own personal values and ethics. However, the Code of Ethics requires that we provide person-centered support and assist them in leading a self-directed life. We are trying to foster self-determination, not impose our personal values/ethics on others.
- (For experienced staff only) DSPs are confronted with ethical issues everyday on their jobs. Can you name some? Can you recall an experience when you were confronted with an ethical issue and how did you handle it?

**Say** –In summary, it seems that the staff person was trying to be respectful, and **empowering the individual** as long as the person agreed to when and how the reminders would be given.

- ❖ **Could the staff have handled it better? i.e. prior to eating or later on, you could mention “I thought that you were going to eat healthier”. The individual should have the option of selecting a time when he/she would like to be reminded.**

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) – Please check off on the Survey what percentage of DSPs would handle this scenario in an ethical way.

**Start the video** and **stop** when goal #1 appears on the screen. **(4:12)**

### **Goal #1 - Putting People First**

**Say** You are about to see a staff person support an individual who is shopping for deodorant in a drug store. Let's see if the staff person is acting competently.

❖ **Is the staff acting like a care giver or a support professional?**

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene. **(4:54)**

**Have participants open to Page 6 in their manual - "Goal 1: Putting People First" and take out the one page documents titled the "Empowerment Strategies Checklist".**

#### **Ask**

- Using the Checklist,, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individual? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - Overall yes. #s 1,2,4,5 were demonstrated, #3 was not.
  - **As you go over each, ask what would be the "care giver" way?**
  - **For someone who needs more support, what could staff do?**
    - **Could they reach for the item?**
    - **Give the money to the cashier? Hold the money?**
    - **#5 Self-Esteem – what do you notice in the picture? Her head is lifted up. Positive interaction based on ability rather than disability.**
    - **If her head was down or she was rocking, what does that mean? Insecurity. Don't know what to do.**
- In regard to #3, what do you think the staff person could have done differently?
  - The staff person told the individual to go for help rather than asking what could she do if she didn't find the item she wanted. **(Is this a common mistake? She's a good staff) Empowerment** means helping people to learn to think for themselves, not to be their brain. This creates an **unneeded dependency and could hurt their self-esteem**. Obviously, the staff need to take into account the specific individuals unique capability level when "asking". Still, we need to be careful not to **underestimate their potential to think and problem solve**.

- For someone who needs more support, what could staff do?
- Hold the item. Point to the item
- When she was looking at the 2 different deodorants, who made the 1<sup>st</sup> observation? The staff. What should she have said? “Do they match?”
- Point out where staff should stand –
  - Stand next to the individual
  - Stand behind the individual – support position – can whisper in her ear
- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) – Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #2 – Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships

**Say** – You will see a short scene of a DSP supporting a group of individuals who decided to go shopping together at a local food store. Let’s see if she is acting competently.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene (5:30)

**Have participants open to Page 7 in their manual - “Goal 2: Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships”**

### Ask

- Using the Empowerment Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was helping to build and/or maintain positive relationships, **empowering** the individuals? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - #'s 1,2,4,5 seem to be demonstrated. #3 is not evident in this scene.
  - **#1 – Shopping on their own. How could you make it work with a group?**
  - **#2 – You would assume that they wanted to go shopping**
  - **#4 – Eye contact – agree on what they’re buying, socializing with the cashier, staff standing to the side, individual had the money**
  - **#5 – They seemed happy**
- What positive relationships was the DSP trying to build at the store?
  - The individuals’ relationship with each other and with the clerk
- Why are building positive relationships as important as teaching skills while shopping and completing the chore or task?
  - Many of the individuals we support have challenges in forming relationships such as knowing personal boundaries, how to communicate with each other, and many other relationship skills.
- What opportunities could there be in this scene to enhance problem solving and thinking skills while building and maintaining relationships?
  - Examples could include: How to figure out the responsibilities of each person when shopping together; discussing the appropriateness of sharing personal information with the store clerk.
- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** – It can be challenging for staff to remember that while supporting individuals to complete a chore such as shopping, there is also an opportunity to build positive relationships with community members, as well as among the individuals.

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) - Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #3 – Demonstrating Professionalism

**Say** – Being competent includes being a professional, which is described in the DSP Competencies. In this segment, we will look more closely at what it means to be a professional. You will see two staff who are working together and one staff leaves to make a phone call, upsetting the other staff. Let’s see how they handled this conflict.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene (6:16)

**Have participants open to Page 8 in their manual - “Goal 3: Demonstrating Professionalism”**

### Ask

- How do you think they handled the disagreement?
  - They seemed to handle the disagreement in a professional manner by finding a private time to discuss the issue, maintaining a professional tone and language, and problem solving together for a solution.
- What might have been the impact of the disagreement on the staff and the individuals if it wasn’t resolved?
  - If the two staff remained angry and continued working together, their animosity might have interfered with the productivity of their job. Also, the individuals might have noticed and become more anxious.
- What if they couldn’t or wouldn’t resolve the conflict with each other, what else could they have done?
  - They could have gone together to their supervisor to get assistance in resolving the issue.
    - ❖ **Shouldn’t argue in front of individuals except when you’re modeling on how to handle a disagreement.**
    - ❖ **As long as we’re not making them uncomfortable**
    - ❖ **Learning experience for them to be able to resolve conflict. Ask them what they learned watching staff correctly resolve a conflict**
- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** –One example of professionalism is the ability to resolve conflict in a way that maintains the self respect of all concerned parties. Being a professional takes into account how your actions affect the individuals you support and your co-workers.

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) – Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scene in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #4 – Supporting Good Health

**Say** – In this segment you will see a staff person supporting good health.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene. (7:39)

**Have participants open to Page 9 in their manual - “Goal 4: Supporting Good Health”**

**Ask**

- Using the Empowerment Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individuals? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - #1, 3, 4, 5 seem to be demonstrated. #2 could occur if they were eating in a restaurant or shopping for the food items and plates.
    - **#1 if they’re interested? They look interested. “Portion Control” Do they know what that means?**
    - 
    - **#2 –What would make it an experience in the community– Could happen in a restaurant, who bought the food**
    - **#3- Yes – only concern, they will “yes” you if they don’t understand**
      - **How could you make it visual? They may not see the difference. Put food on same size plate to show that the portions are really the same instead of telling them.**
      - **It is not clear what they understand. Ask questions. Slow down the process down.**
    - **#4 Learning new skills –If done correctly, they will learn.**
    - **#5- Looks like they’re looking at the plate. Trying to understand. How do you think they feel about the lesson?**
  - What other opportunities arise each day where DSPs can support good health?
    - There are so many examples, the list is endless. Discuss a few from the class.
  - What is the role of DSPs in identifying potential signs and symptoms of illness, especially when supporting people with more limited communication capabilities?
    - In these situations, the DSPs have a critical role in working closest with the individuals, noticing subtle changes in behavior that may signify a significant health issue. They are then responsible for communicating their observations consistent with agency policy.

- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** –Supporting optimal health and wellness is a key responsibility of a DSP. Individuals learning how to maintain their good health is a form of empowerment.

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) - Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #5 – Supporting Safety

**Say** – You will see DSP’s conducting a fire drill with people who have significant cognitive and/or physical challenges. Notice how the staff works with each individual.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene. **(8:06)**

**Have participants open to Page 10 in their manual - “Goal 5: Supporting Safety”**

**Ask -**

- Using the Empowerment Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individuals? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - # 3, 4, 5 seems to be demonstrated. # 1 and 2 may not apply in this situation.
- What kinds of supports did the staff provide each of the individuals?
- **It appears that the individuals would not understand with just the alarm, the staff needed to say “Fire!”**
  - The staff were showing competency by being person centered, focusing on the strengths and needs of each individual. These supports included physically assisting the man who had trouble ambulating, guiding one of the women outside and only providing a verbal cue for the other woman.
  - **Staff didn’t over prompt**
- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** – Staff are required to follow a fire safety evacuation plan and know the type of support each individual requires. Also, staff are assigned specific responsibilities during a drill that are based upon the number of staff on site at a given time. Fire safety is but one of many safety related concerns that DSP’s are responsible for. The DSP’s are responsible for teaching individuals how to protect themselves as best as possible.

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) – Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #6 – Having a Home

**Say** – You will see a DSP supporting an individual preparing a fruit salad in the home where the individual lives. Pay special attention to the interactions between the two of them.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene. **(8:38)**

**Have participants open to Page 11 in their manual - “Goal 6: Having a Home”**

### Ask

- Using the DSPs Empowering Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individual? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
- **Look at his face! You can answer the question. Look at the list – was staff being a support professional? These are the moments we look for in our work!**
- **We have become too task focused! How often do you think “I don’t have time for this”? How long did that take? Minutes? Seconds?**
- **We focus on completing the task. “What do I have to do today? We should be focusing on “how do we do it”**
- **What’s the job? Complete the meal or be a support professional?**
- **How can we do tasks and be a support professional?**
- **Care giving is not being a support professional**
  - # 1, 3, 4, 5 seem to be demonstrated.
- How could this DSP create more opportunities for community involvement?
  - Examples include: sharing the fruit salad at a neighborhood gathering, inviting a friend from the community over for dinner, purchasing fresh fruit at a neighborhood store.
- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** – While it is a job for the DSP, it is the home of the individual; staff must be respectful of working in someone’s home and community.

**Exercise** (for experienced staff only) - Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Goal #7 – Being Active and Productive in Society

**Say** – You will see the final scene of the competencies video. There are two parts to this segment: 1) Watching an individual with autism volunteering as a dog walker, and 2) Seeing an individual employed at a restaurant. Watch how the DSP in each segment supports the individual.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the scene. **(9:04)**

**Have participants open to Page 12 in their manual - “Goal 7: Being Active and Productive in Society”**

### Ask

- In the dog-walking scene, using the Empowerment Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individual? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 seem to be demonstrated.
    - **#1 – Pointing at the button. The staff stepped back and the individual pushed the button. Was he being a “Support Professional?”**
    - **#2- Yes – Looks like he likes animals**
    - **#3- There will be opportunities for crossing the street**
    - **#4- Learning to walk a dog, street safety**
    - **#5 – Self Esteem – seems to be doing something he likes**
- Why is it so important that the DSP prompted the individual to push the buzzer to the apartment rather than doing this for him?
  - The individual is learning new skills, problem solving and becoming more independent.
- In the restaurant scene, using the Empowerment Strategies Checklist, do you think the staff person was acting competently, **empowering** the individual? Why or why not based on each of the 5 checklist items (review each item one at a time)?
  - # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 seem to be demonstrated.
- As a DSP, what do you think your role is in supporting an individual to find either a volunteer or competitive job?
  - As a DSP, your first allegiance is to the person and the things in life they value. A DSPs role is to recognize what each individual values and be a support in their journey towards achievement. This could include helping someone find a job.

- (For experienced staff only) – Can you recall an experience when you used one of the skills identified in this goal?

**Say** – It was long thought that most people with developmental disabilities could not be productive members of society. Efforts are still needed to support individuals in finding volunteer or competitive work, and the role of a DSP is vital.

**Start the video** and **stop** at the end of the film. **(9:46)**

**Exercise** - Please check off on the Survey what percentage of your fellow DSPs would handle this scenario in a similar way.

**Read by themselves:** Ask each participant to quietly read all the competencies, skills and tasks in this goal. Allow a short time for any questions or comments.

## Closing Exercise

Have participants open to Page 13 in their manual - "Closing Exercise"

### Ask:

- What did you learn today that will empower you in your role as a DSP?
- List one way you can utilize the 5 components outlined in the Empowerment Checklist to be a more effective DSP with the people you support.

**Pick one person you support. Think of one thing that you are doing for them that they can learn to do or part of it for themselves.**

**Is it better for the individuals?**

**Don't you want to do what's better for the individuals?**