

Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)

Core Competencies Video

Trainers Manual 1/27/2014

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
- DSP Empowering Individuals' 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.

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 – “DSP Empowering Individuals’ Checklist”

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.
2. Have more opportunities for desired community involvement
3. Think and problem solve, helping them to figure out what they want to do
4. Learn new skills that increases their independence and decrease dependency on staff
5. Have increased self-esteem through positive interactions focusing on their abilities and not their disabilities

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.

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 Code 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.

Start video and show the entire scene.

Stop the video at the end of the scene before the voice over begins.

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

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.
- 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).
- 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? 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.

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.

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.

Start the video and **stop** at the end of the scene.

Have participants open to Page 6 in their manual - "Goal 1: Putting People First" and take out the two one page documents titled "DSP Empowering Individuals' Checklist, and the DSP Empowering Individuals' Grid

Ask

- Using the DSPs Empowering Individuals' Grid, 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.
- 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. **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 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

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

Ask

- Using the DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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.
- 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

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.
- (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.

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

Ask

- Using the DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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.
- 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.

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

Ask -

- Using the DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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?
 - 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.
- (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.

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

Ask

- Using the DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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, 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.

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 DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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.
- 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 DSPs Empowering Individuals’ Grid, 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.

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 DSP Empowerment Checklist to be a more effective DSP with the people you support.