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U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services Washington, D.C. 20210	Distribution: A-541 Headquarters A-544 All Field Tech A-547 SD+RD+SAC+; Lab.Com	Subject: New Apprenticeable Occupation Direct Support Specialist Code: 200
Symbols: DSNIP/DMc		Action: Immediate

PURPOSE: To inform the Office of Apprenticeship Training, Employer and Labor Services (OATELS), Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT) Staff of a new apprenticeable occupation:

> Direct Support Specialist
> AIMS Code: 1040
> O*NET Code: 21-1093.00
> Training Term: 3000
> Type of Training: Competency - based

BACKGROUND: The Direct Support Specialist (DSS) is an occupation that provides support to individuals with disabilities and others who need assistance with basic services and information to lead self-directed lives, contribute to their society, and support behaviors that enhance inclusion in their communities.

A copy of the Work Process and Related Instruction outlines are attached for your review.

If you have any questions, please contact the subject matter expert at (314) 539-2522.

ACTION: BAT staff should familiarize themselves with the attached.

Attachment

Direct Support Professional

DESCRIPTION: The Direct Support Professional (DSP) supports individuals with disabilities and others who need assistance to lead self-directed lives and contribute to their communities; and supports behaviors that enhance inclusion in their communities. Key work duties are drawn from a nationally validated occupational analysis and include the following: **Participant Empowerment** — Empowers participants, (their families or guardians where appropriate) by providing the support and information necessary to make informed choices and decisions and helps build the self-esteem and assertiveness necessary to lead a self-determining life; **Communication** — Uses a range of communication skills and strategies to establish a collaborative relationship with the participant, co-workers, and people who are important to the participant; **Assessment** — Uses formal and informal methods to learn about the needs, desires and interests of the participant; **Community and Service Networking** — Assists the participant to identify and use the formal and informal supports available in his or her community, family and social network and works with the participant to develop and sustain relationships with friends, family and community members; **Facilitation of Services** — Collaborates with the participant and others to plan and implement individualized supports in an ethical, holistic and professional manner that builds upon individual strengths, choices and capabilities; **Community Living Skills and Supports** — Assists the participant to manage every day aspects of life by teaching and providing supports in a manner that builds on individual strengths and capabilities and maximizes choices; **Education, Training and Self-Development** — Pursues opportunities for professional growth and shares knowledge and resources with others. **Advocacy** — Knows the challenges participants' face in leading self-directed lives (e.g. exercising human and civil rights, obtaining access and accommodations as desired, meeting financial obligations and obtaining entitlements and supports) and assists the participant to overcome challenges through effective advocacy and the facilitation of self-advocacy; **Vocational, Educational and Career Support** — Mobilizes resources and provides the support necessary to engage in satisfying work, education or daily activity; **Crisis Prevention and Intervention** — Uses appropriate and safe strategies for crisis prevention, intervention and follow-up; **Organizational (employer) Participation** — Actively contributes to advancing the mission, goals and organizational life of his or her work organization and/or or the goals of the individual s/he supports; and **Documentation** — Completes necessary documentation in an efficient and timely manner.

Apprentices will receive training in the various work experiences listed below. The order in which the apprentice learns will be determined by the flow of work in the job, and will not necessarily be in the order listed. Times allotted to these various processes are estimated for the average Apprentice to learn each phase of the occupation and demonstrate competency. In situations where a direct support professional is self-employed or employed directly by a consumer, his or her "skills mentor" will be responsible for supervision of work-based learning activities. To accommodate both of these possibilities, the term employer is used to refer to either an organization or to an individual who has contracted for the services of the direct support professional. Given the broad diversity in support settings and populations served, work-based learning requirements may be appropriately modified and customized to meet the unique requirements of support environments.

Work Experience Competencies	Approximate Hours (Min/Max)

I. <u>Introduction to the Direct Support Role and Orientation to the Work Environment</u>

  a) Orientation to the role of the Direct Support Professional   400 – 600
- 1.) Job description and requirements;
- 2.) Expectations and needs of individual(s) receiving support;
- 3.) Overview & fulfillment of employer's philosophy of support service;
- 4.) Employer history;
- 5.) Employer Policy and Procedures;
- 6.) Co-worker, mentor and supervisory relationships / working with employer's networks (for DSPs directly employed by service participant);
- 7.) Access to mentors, supervisors, employee assistance programs and other support structures; and
- 8.) Overview of upcoming regular and specialized social and other employer events.

  b) Overview of specialized and technical knowledge unique to the work environment
- 1.) Characteristics of the individual(s) served consideration of diagnostic issues, .e.g., overview of developmental disabilities, behavioral health, child development /welfare, fragile elders, substance abuse, traumatic brain injury, at-risk youth, rehabilitative health);
- 2.) Terminology necessary for the work environment;
- 3.) Operation and maintenance of any specialized equipment (adaptive technology, communication devices, breathing or nutritional support equipment, etc.);
- 4.) Health and medical concerns unique to the work environment including the support of medication administration, awareness and management of health concerns of people receiving support; and
- 5.) Introduction to roles of specialists/ consultants supporting service participant(s) in the work environment.

  c) Employee and service participant safety in the support environment
- 1.) Blood borne pathogens/ universal precautions/ infection control;
- 2.) Safety in lifting, transferring and positioning customized to service participant(s);
- 3.) Crisis prevention and intervention customized to service participant(s);
- 4.) Recognizing and correcting hazards in the workplace;
- 5.) Individualized risk assessment of service participant(s);
- 6.) Responding to emergencies; and
- 7.) Reasonable risk and common sense.

  d) Ethical and professional practice
- 1.) Putting DSP ethics into practice;
- 2.) Career and educational paths associated with the work environment;
- 3.) Becoming a culturally competent practitioner;
- 4.) Identifying and mastering team work and collaboration skills;
- 5.) Self assessment, performance appraisal and use of supervision;

6.) Communicating effectively with others;
7.) Confidentiality;
8.) Creative problem solving; and
9.) Understanding and fulfilling the employer's mission.

II. **Contemporary Best Practices in Community Support(customized for unique support environment/special population)** **200 – 400**
    (a) Individualized planning strategies;
    (b) Community centered supports;
    (c) Focus on participant-defined life outcomes;
    (d) Integrating formal and informal supports;
    (e) Eliciting, respecting and actively supporting participant choices and preferences;
    (f) Welcoming individuals chosen by the participant into the circle of support;
    (g) Facilitating inclusion and engagement in community and neighborhood life;
    (h) Promoting appropriate social roles sought by the service participant such as student, church member, friend, home owner, career professional, income enhancement, quality health care, etc.; and
    (i) Promoting typical life patterns and conditions that enhance quality of life including income enhancement, a comfortable home, quality health care, relaxation and recreation, career and educational advancement and connection to social and family (where appropriate) networks.

III. **Advocacy, Supporting Empowerment and Recognition, Prevention and Reporting of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation** **200 – 400**
    a. Promotion of empowerment and self-confidence of service participants to speak out for themselves and others;
    b. Defining common forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
    c. Mastery of abuse prevention strategies;
    d. Review of state and employer requirements and protocols regarding mandated or other reporting of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
    e. Recognizing signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
    f. Common challenges facing victims of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
    g. Common challenges to human, civil and legal rights for this (special population);
    h. Education of service participants regarding abuse, neglect and exploitation and strategies for prevention; and
    i. Theory and application of direct support ethical code to every day experience.

Wellness Issues (Customized to Work Setting or Special Population)   **400 – 600**

    a. CPR;

    b. First Aid;

    c. Medication Administration and supporting self-administration where appropriate;

    d. Nutrition, food handling and meal preparation;

    e. Preventive health and dentistry;

    f. Characteristics of a healthy lifestyle;

    g. Responding to common health concerns;

    h. Responding to individual health needs (issues pertinent to special population, people receiving support etc.);

    i. Childhood disease, etc);

    j. Monitoring for medication side-effects specific to medications people in the support environment are using ;

    k. Lifting, transferring, and body positioning (or other specialized support based on workplace or special population);

    l. use of adaptive equipment;

    m. Safety (environmental, personal, and driving);

    n. Identifying health resources, judging quality and coordinating/communicating with health care practitioners; and

    o. Supporting service participants in understanding and participating in routine and special health care screening and treatment.

IV. Communication   **400 – 600**

    a. Effective and appropriate communication skills;

    b. Basic counseling skills;

    c. Basic team communication skills and facilitation structures;

    d. Effective, efficient and timely documentation;

    e. Using alternative communication devices; and

    f. Obtaining interpreters when needed.

V. Teaching and Supporting Others   **800 – 1000**

    a. Methods of learning preferences, choices, and goals of people receiving support;

    b. Teaching strategies, principles of reinforcement, relationships, task analysis and prompting, positive feedback and natural times to teach;

    c. Teaching skills customized to the individuals in the support environment (e.g., teaching daily living skills, self care, teaching work skills, working with children and youth, leisure and recreation skills, etc.); and

    d. Recognition of the unacceptability of the use of punishment procedures in teaching.

VI. Crisis Management   **600 – 800**

    a. Awareness of the individual needs of service participants;

    b. Familiarity with crises typical or common to the support environment and the service participants and prevention and intervention strategies specific to individuals and circumstances;

    c. Familiarity with procedures for prevention and intervention in atypical crises including securing the safety of all involved, and the means of obtaining emergency assistance;

    d. Standard operating procedures following a crisis including communication with parties involved to better understand the situation; documentation in accordance with standard operating procedures and review and refinement of prevention procedures where necessary; and

    e. Familiarity with statutes and regulations regarding the use of potentially aversive management practices including physical restraints and time out;

VI. <u>Crisis Management (cont)</u>

    a. Fulfillment of all statutory or regulatory skill certifications in crisis prevention and management. (e.g., Mandt, CPI or other program that may be agency or state specific;

    b. Familiarity with principles of positive behavior support; and

    c. Conflict Resolution.

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*Estimated hours to complete competencies   **3,000 to 4,400**

*The employer and skill mentor (where appropriate) shall review all of the above work processes and adapt the appropriate competencies, which are appropriate for the Agency's specific needs/requirements and to ensure the Apprentice is properly trained in all aspects of the occupation. Many of the above work processes have been developed through the use of the Community Support Skill Standards.   The Community Support Skill Standards should be used as one method to measure Apprentice Competency.

Related instruction outcomes as well as on-the-job learning outcomes must be based on validated-occupational analyses and skill/educational standards such as the Community Support Skill Standards, the Minnesota Frontline Supervisor Competencies or other validated standards relevant to the direct support role developed and validated using recognized occupational analysis methods. The following related training outline identifies subject matter that must be mastered by the Apprentice (although not necessarily in the order listed) in order to successfully complete the program.

Related Instruction Outline	Approximate Hours

Course 1: Introduction to (Name of the Special Population is inserted, .e.g., Developmental Disabilities, Psycho-Social Rehabilitation, At-Risk Youth; Gerontology, etc).   **30**

1. Historical perspectives on human services (special population);
2. Introduction to human and community needs;
3. Concepts of a helping profession;
4. Contemporary principles of service delivery;
5. Basic terminology and acronyms of human services and (special population);
6. Defining the (special population); and
7. Common causes and issues associated with (special population).

Course 2: Supporting people's well-being at home, work and in recreational activities (may be customized for specific population)   **30**

1. Risk, choice and common sense;
2. Safety at home (fire safety, accessibility, home hazards);
3. First aid;
4. Universal precautions and infection control;
5. Responding to emergencies;
6. Crisis prevention, intervention and follow-up;
7. Safety in community settings; and
8. Recognizing, preventing and reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Course 3: **Supporting healthy lifestyles**   **30**

1. Supporting healthy lives: nutrition, exercise, and recreation;
2. Preventive health and dental care;
3. Signs and symptoms of illnesses;
4. Medical abbreviations and terms;
5. Medication support, administration and self-administration;
6. Recognizing side effects of medication;
7. Finding and communicating with quality health care providers;
8. Quality health care expectations;
9. Caring for common health conditions;
10. Use of psychotropic medications; and
11. Sexuality and responsibility.

Course 4: **Planning and Facilitating Support**   30
1. The role of the DSP in planning and delivering support;
2. Learning what people need and want;
3. Concepts of strengths based/ person-centered planning;
4. Community and service networking;
5. Documentation;
6. Teamwork and Communication;
7. Confidentiality; and
8. Partnering with service participant, families (where appropriate) and others important to the service recipient.

Course 5: **Empowerment, and Citizenship**   36
1. Human, legal and civil rights and their protections;
2. Privacy, and confidentiality;
3. Empowerment and control in helping relationships;
4. Participant choice, control and decision making;
5. Advocacy and supporting self-advocacy; and
6. Common barriers people with (special population) face.

Course 6: Ethical and Professional Practice   30
1. Ethics of support relationships;
2. Translating ethics into practice;
3. Becoming a culturally competent DSP;
4. Communication and teamwork;
5. Self assessment, self-direction and supervision in professional development;
6. Co-worker relationships; and
7. Sharing information and knowledge.

Course 7: **Special Topics (The content of this course should be customized to meet the needs of a particular apprenticeship program***).*   30
  a. *For example, programs preparing people to work in home settings may choose to address topics relevant to home life including:*
      (1.) Budgeting and income management;
      (2.) Accessing entitlements;
      (3.) Finding accessible and low cost housing including ;
      (4.) First time home buyers;
      (5.) Managing home maintenance; and
      (6.) Identifying community resources.

  b. *Programs preparing people to support others in finding and maintaining employment may choose to address:*
      (1.) Assessing vocational interests;
      (2.) Examining job content and opportunities;
      (3.) Identifying candidate job skills;
      (4.) Teaching basic work readiness skills; and
      (5.) Developing supports on the job.

c. *Programs preparing people to work with troubled youth may offer:*
> (1.) Youth development and adolescent psychology;
> (2.) Counseling skills;
> (3.) Strategies for outreach;
> (4.) Organizing youth recreation; and
> (5.) Working with gang members.

d. *Programs preparing Head Start personnel may offer:*
> (1.) Managing the Early childhood Classroom;
> (2.) Child development;
> (3.) Supporting and communicating with families;
> (4.) The purpose of play; and
> (5.) Promoting health social skills.

TOTAL HOURS   **216**