

Set of Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce

1. Competency Area: Communication (3)

The DSW builds trust and productive relationships with people s/he supports, co-workers and others through respectful and clear verbal and written communication.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. *Uses positive and respectful verbal, non-verbal and written communication a way that can be understood by the individual, and actively listens and responds to him or her in a respectful, caring manner.*
- b. *Explains services and service terms to the individual being supported and his or her family members.*
- c. *Communicates with the individual and his or her family in a respectful and culturally appropriate way.*

2. Competency Area: Person-Centered Practices (7)

The DSW uses person-centered practices, assisting individuals to make choices and plan goals, and provides services to help individuals achieve their goals.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. *Helps design services or support plans based on the choices and goals of the individual supported, and involves the individual in the process.*
- b. *Builds collaborative, professional relationships with the individual and others on the support team.*
- c. *Provides supports and services that help the individual achieve his or her goals.*
- d. *Participates as an active member of service or support team.*
- e. *Works in partnership with the individual to track progress toward goals and adjust services as needed and desired by individual.*
- f. *Gathers and reviews information about an individual to provide quality services.*
- g. *Completes and submits documentation of services on time.*

3. Competency Area: Evaluation and Observation (4)

The DSW closely monitors an individual's physical and emotional health, gathers information about the individual, and communicates observations to guide services.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. *Helps with the assessment process by gathering information from many sources.*
- b. *Uses the results of assessments to discuss options with the individual and with team members to guide support work.*
- c. *Collects data about individual goals and satisfaction with services.*
- d. *Observes the health and behavior of the individual within his or her cultural context.*

4. Competency Area: Crisis Prevention and Intervention (7)

The DSW identifies risk and behaviors that that can lead to a crisis, and uses effective strategies to prevent or intervene in the crisis in collaboration with others.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. *Recognizes risk and works to prevent an individual's crisis in a way that meets the individual's need.*
- b. *Uses positive behavior supports to prevent crisis and promote health and safety.*
- c. *Uses appropriate and approved intervention approaches to resolve a crisis.*
- d. *Seeks help from other staff or services when needed during a crisis.*
- e. *Monitors situations and communicates with the individual and his or her family and support team to reduce risk.*
- f. *Reports incidents according to rules.*

g. Sees own potential role within a conflict or crisis and changes behavior to minimize conflict.

5. Competency Area: Safety (5)

The DSW is attentive to signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation and follows procedures to protect an individual from such harm. S/he helps people to avoid unsafe situations and uses appropriate procedures to assure safety during emergency situations.

Skill Statements

Abuse and Neglect

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Demonstrates the ability to identify, prevent, and report situations of abuse, exploitation, and neglect according to laws and agency rules.*
- b. Recognizes signs of abuse and neglect, including the inappropriate use of restraints, and works to prevent them.*

Emergency Preparedness

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Maintains the safety of an individual in the case of an emergency.*
- b. Helps individuals to be safe and learn to be safe in the community.*
- c. Uses universal precautions and gives first aid as needed in an emergency.*

6. Competency Area: Professionalism and Ethics (6)

The DSW works in a professional and ethical manner, maintaining confidentiality and respecting individual and family rights.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Follows relevant laws, regulations and is guided by ethical standards when doing work tasks.*
- b. Supports individual in a collaborative manner and maintains professional boundaries.*
- c. Shows professionalism by being on time, dressing appropriately for the job, and being responsible in all work tasks.*
- d. Seeks to reduce personal stress and increase wellness.*
- e. Respects the individual and his or her families right to privacy, respect, and dignity.*
- f. Maintains confidentiality in all spoken and written communication, and follows in the rules in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).*

7. Competency Area: Empowerment & Advocacy (5)

The DSW provides advocacy, and empowers and assists individuals to advocate for what they need.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Helps the individual set goals, make informed choices, and follow-through on responsibilities.*
- b. Supports the individual to advocate for him or herself by encouraging the individual to speak for his or her self.*
- c. Supports the individual to get needed services, support and resources.*
- d. Assists the individual get past barriers to get needed services.*
- e. Tells the individual and his or her family their rights and how they are protected.*

8. Competency Area: Health and Wellness (7)

The DSW plays a vital role in helping individuals' to achieve and maintain good physical and emotional health essential to their well-being.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Supports the spiritual, emotional, and social wellbeing of the individual.*
- b. Gives medications or assists the individual to take medication while following all laws and safety rules.*
- c. Assists the individual to learn disease prevention and maintain good health.*
- d. Assists the individual to use infection control procedures and prevent illness.*

- e. Helps the individual make and keep regular health and dental care appointments.*
- f. Helps the individual follow health care plans and use medical equipment as needed.*
- g. Helps the individual to learn the signs of common health problems and take actions to improve health.*

9. Competency Area: Community Living Skills and Supports (4)

The DSW helps individuals to manage the personal, financial and household tasks that are necessary on a day-to-day basis to pursue an independent, community-based lifestyle.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Assists the individual meet his or her physical and personal care needs (i.e. toileting, bathing, grooming) and provides training in these areas when needed.*
- b. Teaches and assists the individual with household tasks such as laundry and cleaning.*
- c. Assists the individual to learn about meal planning and shopping, and safe food preparation.*
- d. Provides person centered support and helps the individual to build on his or her strengths in life activities.*

10. Competency Area: Community Inclusion and Networking (4)

The DSW helps individuals to be a part of the community through valued roles and relationships, and assists individuals with major transitions that occur in community life.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Encourages and assists individuals in connecting with others and developing social and valued social and/or work roles based on his or her choices.*
- b. Supports the individual to connect with friends and to live and be included in the community of his or her choice.*
- c. Helps the individual transition between services and adapt to life changes, including moving into home and community based settings.*
- d. Respects the role of family members in planning and providing services.*

11. Competency Area: Cultural Competency (5)

The DSW respects cultural differences, and provides services and supports that fit with an individual's preferences.

Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Provides or accesses services that fit with the individuals' culture or preferences.*
- b. Seeks to learn about different cultures to provide better support and services.*
- c. Recognizes own biases and doesn't let them interfere in work relationships.*
- d. Respects the cultural needs and preferences of each individual.*
- e. Assists the individual to find social, learning and recreational opportunities valued in his or her culture.*

12. Competency Area: Education, Training and Self-Development (3)

The DSW obtains and maintains necessary certifications, and seeks opportunities to improve their skills and work practices through further education and training.

13. Skill Statements

The Direct Service Worker:

- a. Completes training and continues to develop skills and seek certification.*
- b. Seeks feedback from many sources and uses to improve work performance and skills.*
- c. Learns and stays current with technology used for documentation, communication and other work activities.*