

College of Direct Support & College of Frontline Supervision

Below you will find descriptions of our courses and approximate training hours.

College of Direct Support (CDS)

Civil Rights and Advocacy (4 hours)

This four-lesson course will help you understand your role in supporting a person with a disability as he or she stands up for his or her rights. You will learn what it takes to be an effective advocate for those you support. You will learn how to work with each person to overcome the challenges faced in exercising his or her civil rights.

- Your Role in Effective Advocacy
- History of the Disability Rights Movement
- Disability Rights and Legislation
- Challenges and Strategies for Exercising Civil Rights

Community Inclusion (4 hours)

Learn key strategies through this course to help people with disabilities grow into active members of the communities in which they live and work. You'll also learn key strategies for enhancing inclusion.

- The DSP Role in Community Inclusion
- Matching Community Resources with Individual Interests
- Community Bridge Building and Networking
- Natural Supports

Cultural Competence (7 hours)

Get an overview of cultural competence and its importance in providing quality support to people with disabilities. You will learn about valuing diversity and recognizing your own culture and the culture of others. You will also learn skills that allow you to adjust your behavior based on the needs of a situation or individual.

- What Is Cultural Competence?
- Understanding Your Own Culture
- The Culture of Support Services
- The Cultural Competence Continuum
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Cultural Competence in Daily Support
- DSP Roles in Culturally Competent Organizations

Direct Support Professionalism (6 hours)

Over the course of six lessons, you will be introduced to the national movement to professionalize the field of direct support. Following accepted best practices and a standardized ethical code are essential concepts in this course. You will learn how the DSP can become involved in professional organizations. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is also a key part of this course.

- Becoming a Direct Support Professional
- Contemporary Best Practices
- Applying Ethics in Everyday Work
- Practicing Confidentiality
- Working with Your Strengths and Interests
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Emergency Preparedness (4 hours)

This course will help you to understand the importance of being prepared for emergencies and the many types of emergencies you could encounter. It will help you to identify actions to take and the important role you play in supporting a person with a disability during these times.

- What Is Emergency Preparedness?
- The Role of the Direct Support Professional in Emergency Preparedness
- Defining Disasters and Emergencies
- Pandemics

Employment Supports: Exploring Individual Preferences and Opportunities for Job Attainment (4 hours)

During this four-part course, you will learn to assist people with identifying skills and preferences, exploring job opportunities, completing job applications and making appropriate workplace accommodations.

- Introduction to Employment Supports
- Identifying Individual Employment Preferences, Interests, Strengths and Support Needs
- Job Opportunities and Job Searching
- Applying, Interviewing and Making Accommodations

Everyone Can Communicate (5 hours)

The goal of this course is to help you learn the importance of communication in relationship building. You will learn key strategies for interpreting verbal and nonverbal communication. You will also learn about using augmentative and alternative communication strategies.

- What Is Communication and Why Is It Important?

- How People Communicate
- The Role of the Direct Support Professional as a Communication Partner
- Strategies to Enhance Communication
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Functional Assessment (4 hours)

This course will help you identify challenging behaviors and discover their underlying causes. You will learn how to support positive behaviors and help each person you support to improve his or her life.

- Comprehensive Assessment and the Role of the Direct Support Professional
- Strategies for Gathering and Organizing Functional Assessment Information
- Understanding Behavior and Participating in the Functional Assessment process
- Using Functional Assessments and Behavior Support Plans

Hiring Great Direct Support Professionals (1.75 hours)

This course is a toolkit with exercises and activities to help you learn some of the ins and outs of hiring, training, and keeping great direct support professionals (DSPs). These DSPs are often referred to by many different names, including: personal care attendants (PCAs), homemaker aides, home health aides, direct support workers, and care workers. As an employer of DSPs, this course will provide you or your family members with easy to use tips for hiring and keeping great DSPs.

- Introducing the Hiring Process
- Looking for the Right Direct Support Professional
- Where to Find Great Direct Support Professionals
- Creating Your Real Story
- The Art of Interviewing
- Teaching Direct Support Professionals the Job
- Strategies for Keeping Great Direct Support Professionals

Home and Community Living (5 hours)

This course will help you and the family members of the person you support to provide critical support so that he or she can live at home. Each course includes facts, techniques, and possible methods of support.

- Clothing Care and Laundry
- Comfortable Living
- Home Maintenance and Upkeep
- Maintaining a Clean Home
- Supporting Home Living: The DSP Role

Implementing Participant-Directed Supports (2.25 hours)

Most courses in the College of Direct Support provide training based on the roles and responsibilities of direct support professionals. However, this course provides training to individuals who receive supports. It is written in the context of a person who makes decisions about his or her own supports. It also applies to a family member or ally who may be delegated to direct supports for an individual.

- Understanding Participant-Directed Supports
- Steps to Implementing Participant-Directed Supports
- Implementing Step 1: Assessment
- Implementing Step 2: Identify Resources
- Implementing Step 3: Design the Plan
- Implement Step 4: Broker the Agreement
- Implement Step 5: Organize Supports
- Implement Step 6: Implement Supports
- Implement Step 7: Evaluate

Individual Rights and Choice (4 hours)

This course will give you critical knowledge of the legal rights of individuals with disabilities. You will be equipped to ensure those you support can balance appropriate risk and choice with the right to be protected from harm. This course can be modified to reflect local or state laws that DSPs may need to know.

- Overview of Individual Rights
- Restrictions of Individual Rights
- Overcoming a Past of Barriers, a Future of Risks, Choices, and Solutions
- Your Role in Supporting Expression of Rights and Facilitating Choice

Introduction to Developmental Disabilities (5 hours)

This recently updated course will give you the background information you need to support a person with an intellectual and other developmental disability. You will learn about appropriate vocabulary and communication strategies that will help you explain the support system to a person you support and his or her family. This course will also give you a historical perspective of people with disabilities and the supports available to them.

- A Brief History of Developmental Disabilities
- The Language and Ideas of Best Practices
- Terminology and Classification in Developmental Disabilities
- The Causes of Developmental Disabilities
- Services for People with Developmental Disabilities

Introduction to Mental Health and Mental Illnesses (6 hours)

There are millions of Americans living with mental illness today. Mental illness not only affects the person. It also affects their family, friends, and the community. Mental illness is an invisible disease. It can be hard to understand. Some people will be mildly affected. Others may be affected much more severely. This course will assist you to understand more about mental health and mental illness. It will provide an overview of systems issues in mental health support. It will provide you with strategies you can use as a DSP to provide compassionate, empowering, and respectful support to people who struggle with mental health conditions.

- Overview of Mental Health and the Role of the DSP
- Overview of Common Mental Illnesses, Treatment and Service Options
- Psychotropic Medications-Uses and Issues?
- Supporting People with Mental Health Conditions in the Community
- DSP Support Strategies
- System Issues and Solutions in Mental Health

Maltreatment Prevention and Response (4.75 hours)

Learn to identify abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and how to protect a person you support. You will learn to document and report suspected abuse. The course will also introduce you to advocacy, ombudsman services, and other agencies that deal with abuse and neglect situations.

- Overview of DSP Roles
- What is Maltreatment?
- What is Abuse?
- What is Neglect?
- What is Exploitation?
- Balancing Rights with Protection
- The Ethical Role of the DSP
- An Overview of Risks for Maltreatment
- Characteristics of Caregivers that Affect Risk
- Characteristics of Situations that Increase Risk
- Characteristics of People Supported that Affect Risk
- Reducing Caregiver Risk of Maltreating
- Engaging and Supporting Protective Factors in Individuals
- The Role of Documentation and Systems in Prevention
- Engaging and Supporting Protective Factors in Organizations and Communities
- Responding to Potential Maltreatment
- Where to Report Potential Maltreatment
- How to Report Potential Maltreatment
- Follow-Up to Potential Maltreatment Reports

Medication Support (6 hours)

This course will help you learn about medications. You will learn to monitor for problems and document any reactions. It will also help you learn about the basics of storing and administering medications. The course has been designed to help you understand the difference between regional laws and how these affect your job and those you support.

- An Overview of Direct Support Roles in Medication Support
- Medication Basics
- Working with Medications
- Administration of Medications and Treatments
- Follow-up, Communication and Documentation
- Using Medication References

Person-Centered Planning and Supports (4 hours)

Get a historical perspective on person-centered planning. This course will introduce you to five different types of person-centered planning and how to bring these plans to life. You will learn how to create solutions that solve the most common challenges to person-centered plans.

- Foundations of Person-Centered Planning
- An Overview of Person-Centered Approaches
- The Person-Centered Planning Process
- Bringing Person-Centered Plans to Life

Positive Behavior Support (7 hours)

This course is an introduction to methods of supporting people who engage in challenging behaviors. The learner is provided with definitions of challenging behavior and basic behavioral terms and principles. The course teaches learners about regulations in the use of behavioral interventions and provides practical information on how to effectively support people who present behavioral challenges.

- Understanding Behavior
- Functions and Causes of Behavior
- Understanding Positive Approaches
- Preventing Challenging Behavior
- Responding to Challenging Behavior
- Behavior Support Plans
- Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Rights

Personal Care (5 hours)

This course provides information on why grooming and hygiene is an important part of daily life. Grooming and hygiene can reflect a person's well-being and self-esteem. Poor hygiene can lead to poor health. Many direct support professionals help people with

grooming and hygiene activities. These include tasks such as helping with dressing, bathing, shaving, or using the toilet. It may also include teaching these skills to children or adults with special needs. Direct support professionals may feel uncomfortable assisting people with grooming and hygiene. Learning to support people with personal care in a sensitive and respectful manner is discussed. It is also important to respect a person's own grooming habits. These are personal and unique, and can be culturally based. Direct support professionals will learn how to find out about people's personal style and preferences. Learners will review methods for completing many grooming and hygiene tasks. This course will also help learners understand health concerns and risks related to personal care.

- Understanding Personal and Self Care
- Individualized Personal Care Support
- The Basics of Hygiene
- The Basics of Grooming and Dressing
- Oral Care

Professional Documentation Practices (2.75 hours)

Documentation is a critical part of direct support work. Good documentation lays the foundation for support services. Documentation helps direct support professionals meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in all settings. In this course you will learn what documentation is. You will learn why it is important. This is especially true in direct support work. You will learn how documentation supports a person to meet her or his needs, goals and preferences. The course covers reasons for and basic rules of documentation. You will learn the difference between subjective and objective documentation. In addition you will learn about confidentiality. You will learn how important it is to protect an individual's right to privacy. Finally, you will be introduced to five common areas where documentation is often required.

- The Purpose and Meaning of Documentation in Direct Support Work
- Reasons for Documentation
- The Basic Rules of Documentation
- Documentation and the Direct Support Professional
- Protecting Confidentiality
- Rights to Privacy
- Release of Information Forms
- Individual Support Plans, Progress and Personal Goals
- Medical and Health Related Documentation
- Staff Communication Logs
- Incident and Accident Documentation

Safety (4.75 hours)

Balancing risk, choice, and safety is a big responsibility for direct support professionals. You may already know that individuals with disabilities have the right to make choices even if these seem risky or unsafe to others. This course will help you learn to balance the risks with those you support, and to support safety. Each lesson addresses specific safety strategies for various support situations. You will learn how to promote safety in different areas of the home. You will learn about fire prevention and keeping people safe from fire danger. In addition, you will learn about being safe in the community. This includes promoting motor vehicle and community transportation safety. And when accidents or incidents do happen you will learn how to handle these, too.

- What is Risk?
- Balancing Risk with Individual Safety and Choice
- Personal Safety
- Individual Safety Plans
- Safety in the Kitchen
- Safety in the Bathroom
- Safety in the Common Area
- Safety in the Bedroom
- Safely Enjoying Outdoor Spaces at Home
- Fire Prevention
- Fire Emergency Response
- Fire Emergency Plans and Evacuation
- Individualized Fire Safety Plans and Skills
- Community Safety
- Vehicle Safety
- Community Transportation
- Role of the Direct Support Professional: Accident Prevention, Risk Assessment, and Risk Management
- Following Accident & Injury Policies and Procedures
- Reporting Incidents and Accidents

Supporting Healthy Lives (6 hours)

This course will help you show the people you support how to make healthy choices about eating and exercising. It reviews health-related issues across the life span and gives advice on working with health care providers. This course also includes a lesson on recognizing the signs and symptoms of illnesses and how to take care of someone who may be sick.

- Living a Healthy Life
- Health through the Age Span
- Individual Health Needs
- Care of Common Health Care Conditions

- Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Illness
- Working with a Health Care Provider

Supporting Jobs and Careers in the Community (4 hours)

In this important course, you will learn to support a person with a disability as he or she enters the workforce. You will learn how to match a person's specific abilities and desires with a job he or she will enjoy. You will also learn how employment and wages may affect government benefits and how to support a person to move toward independence.

- Successful Community Employment and Retention
- Employment Supports and Volunteering
- Introduction to Government Benefit Programs
- Government Benefit Programs and Their Interactions with Work

Supporting Older Adults (5 hours)

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are living longer than they once did. It is important for direct support professionals to understand changes related to aging in order to provide quality supports, as people grow older.

This course will help you recognize age-related changes. It will help you meet the changing support needs. This knowledge will also help you support a person to maintain their health and connections in the community. It will help you support him or her to live a happy and meaningful life for as long as possible.

- Lesson 1: The Aging of the U.S. Population
- Lesson 2: Age Related Physical Changes
- Lesson 3: Age Related Physical and Cognitive Changes
- Lesson 4: Later Life Planning and Support
- Lesson 5: Grieving and End-of-Life Support

Teaching People with Developmental Disabilities (4 hours)

This course will help you understand the fundamentals of teaching and learning. You will learn key strategies that help a person with an intellectual or other developmental disability absorb information. You will also learn how to organize teaching and learning for maximum effectiveness.

- Understanding Teaching
- Preparing to Teach
- Teaching Strategies
- Organizing and Applying Teaching Strategies

Understanding Transitions Across the Life Span (4 hours)

You will learn about life transitions that affect individuals with disabilities. You will learn about common life transitions. You will learn about working with families. You will also learn about services, supports, and the role of the direct support professional plays in supporting individuals experiencing life transitions.

- Lesson 1: Understanding Transitions
- Lesson 2: Understanding Family Transitions
- Lesson 3: The Role of Families & Support Professionals
- Lesson 4: Family-Centered and Person-Centered Transition Support
- Lesson 5: Holistic Support for Transitions
- Lesson 6: The Impact of Culture on Life Transitions
- Lesson 7: Formal Health Services and Supports
- Lesson 8: Formal Education Services – Preschool to Grade School
- Lesson 9: Formal Education Services – High School to Post Secondary
- Lesson 10: Types of Formal Housing Services
- Lesson 11: Social Services
- Lesson 12: Centers for Independent Living
- Lesson 13: Informal Community Supports and Services
- Lesson 14: Services and Supports: By Life Stages
- Lesson 15: Services, Supports and Quality of Life
- Lesson 16: The Role of the DSP

Universal Precautions (2.75 hours)

This course is about Universal Precautions required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). It will teach direct support professionals about universal precautions and infection control. It will review OSHA blood borne pathogens requirements. It covers information on preventing and responding to exposure incidents. It will review information about communicable diseases and what can and should be done to prevent the spread of these diseases.

- Aspects of Infectious Diseases
- Understanding the Infectious Disease Cycle
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- Infections Control and Prevention
- Universal Precautions
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Hand Washing Procedures
- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Environmental Controls
- Accidental Exposure Procedures
- Exposure Control Plans

Working with Families and Support Networks (4 hours)

This course will help you learn to develop strong working partnerships with families and other support networks.

- Understanding Support Networks
- Family Networks
- Creating Partnerships with Support Network Members
- Problem Solving within Support Networks

You've Got a Friend: Supporting Family Connections, Friends, Love and the Pursuit of Happiness (4 hours)

Discover the importance and meaning of human relationships in the lives of all people through this valuable four-part course. You will learn about the value that healthy family and community relationships bring to life. You will also learn how prejudice and stigma can get in the way of these relationships for those you support.

- The Importance of Relationships
- Barriers, Challenges and Opportunities for Friendships
- Strategies for Building and Maintaining Relationships
- Supporting Family Networks

CDS Disability Focused Courses

Autism and autism-spectrum disorders (2 hours)

Gain a new understanding of the causes, characteristics, and symptoms of autism told through personal stories. This course will also help you understand how autism and any accompanying disorders can impact a person's daily life. You will learn the most effective strategies for working with people with autism, along with a list of helpful resources.

Brain Injuries (2 hours)

This course will help you understand the short- and long-term effects of brain injuries. This is expressed through real life stories of people with brain injuries and the people who love and support them. You will also learn key strategies that will help you support people with this disability.

Cerebral Palsy (2 hours)

This course will help you learn to recognize common characteristics of cerebral palsy. You will also learn about some of the typical supports a person with cerebral palsy might need.

Depression (2 hours)

This course will help you learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of depression. You will gain some key treatment strategies, along with tools to prevent and respond to suicide concerns. This course will also dispel the common myths about depression so that you can provide more effective, meaningful support.

Diabetes (2 hours)

This course will help you learn more about diabetes and how it can affect a person's overall health. You will learn what happens when the body does not produce enough insulin to convert sugar and starches into energy. You will also learn how to support a person who has diabetes.

Epilepsy (2 hours)

This course explains the history, causes and different cultural beliefs of epilepsy. In addition, the course provides information on the impact that epilepsy has on people's lives and how Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) can care and support for a person with epilepsy.

CDS Film For Thought (Advanced Practice)

Body and Soul (2 hours)

Body and Soul: Diana & Kathy originally aired on PBS in 2009. This film tells how Kathy Conour, a woman with cerebral palsy, and Diana Braun, a woman with Down's syndrome, became two of the most remarkable advocates for people with disabilities.

Breaking Shells (2 hours)

Breaking Shells follows Art and Steve, two men with developmental disabilities, as they cross the state of South Dakota talking to self-advocates about how to take charge of their individual planning processes, thereby empowering them to take charge of the decisions that impact their lives.

College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM)

Training and Orientation (5 hours)

This course explains the value of training. It will help you learn to unlock staff members' potential and improve retention through quality training. You will gain insight that will help you select training topics, help people learn, and assess each person's performance.

- Lesson 1: Understanding Training
- Lesson 2: Choosing Training Topics
- Lesson 3: Choosing Training Methods
- Lesson 4: Understanding Employee Assessment
- Lesson 5: Orientation Practices

Fueling High Performance (5 hours)

This course will introduce you to management, training, and organizational practices you can use to reduce turnover and increase employee satisfaction, productivity, and competence.

- Lesson 1: Competency-Based Training
- Lesson 2: Employee Development
- Lesson 3: Teamwork
- Lesson 4: Coaching and Positive Discipline
- Lesson 5: Employee Participation, Motivation, and Recognition

Developing an Intervention Plan (4 hours)

This course will help you to develop a plan to reduce turnover and identify the reasons for it. You will develop a step-by-step plan for improving retention throughout your organization.

- Lesson 1: Understanding the Intervention Plan
- Lesson 2: Organizational Assessment-Part 1
- Lesson 3: Organizational Assessment-Part 2
- Lesson 4: Developing Your Intervention Plan

Recruitment and Selection (3 hours)

This course will teach you best practices for hiring the right employees. It will cover recruitment, marketing strategies, candidate screening, and selection.

- Lesson 1: Recruitment and Marketing
- Lesson 2: Realistic Job Previews
- Lesson 3: Selection and Hiring

Preparing for the Supervisor's Role in Human Services (5 hours)

This course will teach you about the fundamental duties essential to supervisory roles. You will also gain insight into the four key skills that are essential to your success to ensure you are ready for a supervisory position.

- Lesson 1: Supervisors and Their Roles
- Lesson 2: Professional Relationship Building
- Lesson 3: Understanding Leadership
- Lesson 4: Communication in a Supervisory Role
- Lesson 5: Supervising Diverse Work Teams

Your First Few Weeks and Months as a Supervisor (5 hours)

This course will give you an overview of the management skills you will need if you are a new supervisor or if you have been in this role but never had formal training. You will learn how to create an open, organized, and efficient organization that will drive better performance from your staff.

- Lesson 1: Stepping Into the Supervisory Role
- Lesson 2: Supervising and Managing Daily Operations
- Lesson 3: Planning and Organizing Meetings
- Lesson 4: Time Management, Delegation, and Organizational Skills
- Lesson 5: Conflict Management, Decision Making, and Problem-Solving