

# Direct Support Professional Quarterly

Spring Issue  
June 2023

Learn more about developments in the profession and useful skills to support people with disabilities



## HAPPY SPRING!

Welcome to The Boggs Center's Direct Support Professional (DSP) Quarterly, a periodic newsletter for New Jersey's direct support professional workforce. Through this newsletter, we will bring you content to inform, educate, and inspire. This is YOUR newsletter, so we invite feedback about what you've read and what you'd like to read. To give feedback on this issue, [click here](#) to respond to a quick survey.

Subscribe to [The Boggs Center's Mailing List](#) to receive the DSP Quarterly directly, along with other information useful to the disability community.

## Table of Contents

*Click each article to start reading*

<a href="#">DSP Competencies</a>	<a href="#">Page 2</a>
<a href="#">Community Integration</a>	<a href="#">Page 3</a>
<a href="#">DSP Spotlight: Diane Battle</a>	<a href="#">Page 4</a>
<a href="#">DSP Spotlight: April Rivers</a>	<a href="#">Page 6</a>
<a href="#">Professional Development and Training Opportunities</a>	<a href="#">Page 8</a>



# Focus On: DSP Competencies



Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that contribute to job performance and quality supports and services. Across the United States, the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals Core Competencies and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies are used to establish what DSPs need to be able to know and do.

Each issue of the DSP Quarterly features a description of a competency area that is important to the work DSPs do every day. This issue focuses in on **Community Inclusion and Networking**. The goal of this competency is to help ensure that individuals with disabilities are engaged in their communities through valued roles, relationships, and activities of their choosing. As Community Ambassadors, DSPs assist individuals with networking and becoming active members of their communities by:

- connecting individuals with friends and others, and developing social and/or work roles
- familiarizing themselves with the community in which the individual lives and supporting them in finding and participating in activities
- helping the individual transition between services, adapt to life changes, and maintain important relationships and established community connections

There are trainings that DSPs in New Jersey can participate in to learn more about how to support Community Inclusion and Networking, including:

## **Developing & Implementing Outcome-Based Support Strategies**

*The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities*

This training offers providers an overview of important changes in the service delivery system and guidance in using person-centered practices to identify effective support strategies. Participants will learn how to use information from people using supports, their families, and others who know them best, along with planning documents, to create, evaluate, and refine strategies that match what people want, need, and hope to accomplish.

To view or register for this live virtual training visit [The Boggs Center Online Registration System](#), and look under the Community Supports & Quality tab.

## **Community Inclusion**

*College of Direct Support*

This 4-lesson course helps DSPs understand their roles in supporting the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the communities in which they live and work. It provides an overview of inclusion and why it is important, and the learner is given strategies for enhancing inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.

To access this this online training, log in to the [College of Direct Support](#).

# Community Integration

The Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Final Rule requires that individuals with disabilities are integrated in the greater community by supporting them with opportunities to seek employment, work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community.



Check out this video to learn more about how this is important to people with disabilities:



For more information about the HCBS Settings Rule, visit:

- [Direct Support Professionals and The Home and Community Based Service Settings Rule \(HCBS\): What You Need to Know - NADSP](#)
- [Supporting The Right To A Community Life](#)
- [DDD Provider Guide To HCBS Settings Rule](#)



# DSP Spotlight: Diane Battle



When you meet Diane, you immediately notice her warmth and compassion, traits that have helped her build special relationships with the people she supports. She values consistent, meaningful communication and interacts with individuals in a way that they know they're respected. In addition to her natural gifts, Diane believes she also benefits from the training she receives, and she's developed additional skills that she regularly applies. She has learned new techniques to help with resolving conflicts, managing challenging behaviors, and understanding the perspectives of people with disabilities.

After a 36-year career in social services working with children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities, Diane Battle was looking for a new opportunity. Seeing a group of people with disabilities and their DSPs in the mall, she was immediately interested. She approached the man supporting them and asked how he got into that field of work. This led her to Community Access Unlimited, where she has been working since 2018.



Even though Diane has extensive experience in social services, each day as a DSP brings new challenges and triumphs for her. She focuses on the positive aspects of the job, like sharing in the success of an individual she supports taking on more responsibility, accomplishing a goal, opening up to share their feelings or even talking more. For Diane, these moments are “like opening a clam shell and finding a pearl.”

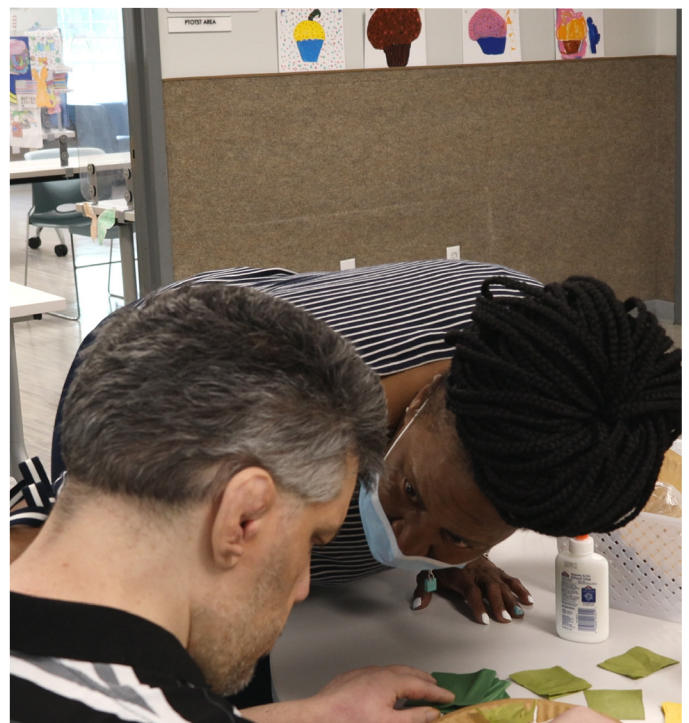


# DSP Spotlight: Diane Battle

Diane has been successful at shaping positive, sometimes lifechanging, behaviors in the people she supports, like Brian. Everyone at his day program thought that Brian couldn't communicate with words and disengaged, until Diane intervened. By consistently having engaging interactions with him and coaching him in communication skills, Brian began speaking. He no longer needs others to speak for him. With Diane's support, he now greets people, answers questions, and has the confidence to request his favorite drink: coffee.



Diane is successful because she values the people she supports as individual adults, with opinions, ideas, and desires. She is also skilled at building relationships that create trust and safety. Diane recognizes that being a DSP is not for everyone; however, she's confident that anyone who enjoys working with people and is passionate about changing lives would enjoy being a DSP and should consider the field.



# DSP Spotlight: April Rivers

The day of her job interview, April Rivers arrived during a busy shift change. She was a bit overwhelmed by the bustle of morning staff passing along information to the evening staff, and many people living in the home simultaneously making requests for assistance. Her nerves quickly turned to excitement, as she realized this was the environment that she wanted to be a part of. April recently celebrated her fifth year working at The Arc of Atlantic County, first as a DSP, and now as an Assistant Manager. Looking for a change to a more meaningful role, she left her retail position to begin supporting people with disabilities. Now, one of her favorite parts of the job is that bustle and knowing “you never know what you’re going to get into when you come to work.”



April is skilled at coaching individuals through activities, such as planning and preparing meals. She gives encouragement and guidance with kindness and respect for the individual and their personal choices. She understands the importance of careful questioning to determine an individual’s needs. She takes time to help people make their own decisions with a range of tasks we all do each day— like when they want to eat, what they want to eat, and what ingredients they should purchase together at the grocery store. Along with her step-by-step explanations, she’s teaching about kitchen and food safety, as well as choosing healthy options. The result, one particular day, is a delicious plate of chicken alfredo that the individual she supports took pride in helping prepare.

# DSP Spotlight: April Rivers



An important lesson that April has learned throughout her tenure as a DSP is that, “Ever one will have a bad day sometimes; that includes staff, residents, everybody.” Being mindful of this helps her take rough days in stride. Those days are outnumbered by good days, like those when she finds joy in helping the individuals when they want to take part in an activity they love. Whether it’s taking them to the mall, an amusement park, or planning a vacation, it’s rewarding for her to see them get excited and later reminisce about that day.

For now, April is content in her role, and sees it as a steppingstone on her career path. She encourages others to pursue the DSP profession. She describes this as a job unlike any other she’s had, especially considering the close relationships she’s built with the people she supports. April stays busy when she’s supporting people, but does her best to maintain a healthy work/life balance. When she’s not working, she can be found cosplaying with her husband at anime and gaming conventions, visiting local bars and clubs, or going to concerts.



# Professional Development and Training

## Save the Date!

It's back in person in 2023! For the first time since 2019, NADSP will host a two-day in person conference with keynotes, breakout sessions and opportunities to celebrate, connect, and learn the leading developments in the DSP workforce.

For more information, visit: [NADSP Annual Conference Returns September 2023](#)



## The Boggs Center

The Boggs Center develops and provides a variety of trainings aimed at improving the DSP workforce. Trainings focused on best practice and practical application of knowledge and skills are available year-round. Many topics are addressed, including:

- Person-Centered Community Supports
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Mental Health and Dual Diagnosis
- Employment for People with Disabilities
- Frontline Supervision

To learn more, view the training calendar, and register for The Boggs Center's trainings, [click here](#).



## College of Direct Support

The College of Direct Support (CDS) is a state-of-the-art online curriculum designed to educate DSPs and other professionals in the healthcare workforce that support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The CDS contains an abundance of educational material associated with nationally recognized, standardized core competencies and skill sets to help improve job satisfaction, promote growth in performance, and reduce turnover. Trainings mandated by the Division of Developmental Disabilities for agency staff and self-directed employees are accessed online through the College of Direct Support (CDS), administered in New Jersey by The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. You can check out the courses that are available in the CDS in the Course Catalog. If there are courses that interest you, let your supervisor know so they can support you to learn more.

- [CDS Course Catalog](#)
- [CDS Login](#)



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