

Direct Support Professional Quarterly

Spring Issue
March 2024

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



The Boggs Center's Direct Support Professional (DSP) Quarterly, is 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

[How Culturally Competent Are You?](#) [Page 2](#)

[DSP Competencies](#) [Page 4](#)

[Training and Professional Development](#) [Page 5](#)

[Home and Community Based Settings Final Rule](#) [Page 6](#)

[DSP Spotlight: Jacob Santiago](#) [Page 7](#)



How Culturally Competent Are You?

This issue focuses on cultural competence. How cultural competence is interpreted may depend on the field in which it is practiced. For those connected to the disability community, the [Administration on Disabilities](#) explains that cultural competence involves providing supports in a way that is responsive to the beliefs, interpersonal styles, attitudes, language and behaviors of those receiving services. This helps ensure that people with disabilities can fully participate in a life that honors and respects their identity.



A Framework for Cultural Competence

Reference Cultural Competence: Definition & Conceptual Framework
[National Center on Cultural Competence](#)

DSPs

- Value diversity
- Routinely conduct self-assessment
- Manage the dynamics of difference
- Acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge
- Adapt to the diversity and cultural contexts of the individuals and served



Agencies

- Have a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally
- Have the capacity to:
 1. Value diversity
 2. Conduct self-assessment
 3. Manage the dynamics of difference
 4. Acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge
 5. Adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities they serve
- Incorporate the above in all aspects of policy making, administration, practice, service delivery, and systematically involve key constituency groups who have lived experiences and the communities in which they live

How Culturally Competent Are You?



Self-reflection is important in developing cultural competence. This involves DSPs reflecting on their own attitudes, values and culture, as well as considering how they influence interactions with the people they support. Cultural competence exists on a continuum and evolves over time. There is always something new to learn.

For more detailed information about cultural competence, visit the [National Center for Cultural Competence](#).

The Diverse Voices of DSPs

DSPs, as well as people with disabilities, come from a diverse range of cultures and experiences. Customs, languages, traditions, religions, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic status shape individuals, their sense of belonging, and their worldview. In a 2022 issue of NADSP's publication [Frontline Initiative](#), you can learn first-hand from DSPs across the country about the impact of culture on their daily lives and their work with individuals with disabilities. In this particular issue, you'll hear the voices of DSPs who are Autistic, Deaf, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people of color, and immigrants. Understanding the experiences and perspectives of others can help us better understand ourselves, as well as sometimes identify our own privileges.



Focus On DSP Competencies

The goal of **Cultural Competence** is for DSPs to recognize and respect cultural differences and provide services and supports that fit with the cultural preferences of the people they support. DSPs can achieve this by:

- Respecting the cultural needs and preferences of each individual
- Providing supports that fit with the individual's culture or preferences
- Learning about different cultures to provide better supports and services
- Recognizing one's own biases and not letting them interfere with the relationships they have with the people they support, family members, and colleagues
- Assisting individuals to find social, learning, and recreational opportunities valued in their own culture

Reference – [CMS Direct Support Workforce Core Competencies](#)



Training and Professional Development

There are trainings that DSPs in New Jersey can participate in to learn more about how to support cultural competence.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities through The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities

Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series (DDLs) - Recorded Webinars

[Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Person-Centered Practice - Regina Rodriguez Sisneros](#)

This presentation centers on the importance of understanding a person's racial and cultural identities for providing person-centered support with cultural competence and humility. Key concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion will be explored and personal narratives of people with disabilities will be shared to demonstrate the alignment of cultural competence and person-centered planning and practice.

RUTGERS
Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School

THE BOGGS CENTER ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
New Jersey's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service
New Jersey's Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program

Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series

SPRING 2022 WEBINARS

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion and Person-Centered Practice

Regina Rodriguez Sisneros
Director of Equity Initiatives & Systems Innovations
The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Alexandria, VA

April 1, 2022

Visit [The Boggs Center's Cultural and Linguistic Competence Resources](#) for more information.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities through the College of Direct Support

Cultural Competence

This seven-lesson course is an overview of cultural competence and its importance in daily support to people with disabilities. The learner is helped to understand the key components of cultural competence including valuing diversity; recognizing one's own culture and the culture of others; and having the resources and ability to adjust one's behavior to meet the needs of the situation. Learners are asked to reflect on their capacities in these areas at different points during the course. The learner is given many opportunities to learn more about their own culture and reflect on the similarities and differences with other cultures.

To access this online training, discuss the opportunity with your supervisor and ask that it be assigned to you by your CDS Agency Administrator. Once assigned [log in to the College of Direct Support](#) to access.

Rights & Autonomy

The Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Final Rule requires that individuals with disabilities are able to exercise individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices, including but not limited to choices of daily schedule and activities. This includes the support they need to access culturally relevant experiences they enjoy, and opportunities that affirm their personal and cultural identities.



Here are some examples of ways DSPs can facilitate this:

- Encouraging individuals to participate in activities of their choice that align with their identities
- Assisting in planning activities based on an individual's cultural interests, hobbies and preferences
- Supporting individuals with their preferred activities, even if they don't align with your own cultural beliefs
- Giving individuals the freedom to decide who they want to spend time with and where they spend time
- Respecting that individuals have the choice to decorate their bedrooms and living spaces in ways that represent their cultural identities



DSP Spotlight: Jacob Santiago



Jacob Santiago is a direct support professional for Eiros Group. Inspired by his brothers, Jacob decided to pursue a career in direct support. Click the video below or [you can click here](#) to learn more about how he entered the field, the passion he has for the role, and what he thinks makes a good DSP.

DSP Spotlight: Jacob Santiago



Direct Support Professional Quarterly

Spring Issue
March 2024

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



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.