

# RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IN SUPPORTS FOR MINNESOTANS WITH DISABILITIES

*An assessment guide and toolkit*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The first author, Dan Baker, previously participated in creating a Recruitment and Retention Toolkit with the Oregon Rehabilitation Association. That effort was led by Karen Craven and funded by the Northwest Health Foundation. The original toolkit served as inspiration for this document, which uses key concepts and logic.

Karen gave her express permission for DHS to use this document. This version references additional material from the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) and the University of Minnesota, which are cited where appropriate.

Stacie Enders from the Minnesota Department of Human Services also participated in the development of this toolkit as a part of her and Dr. Baker's work on a cross-agency steering committee that oversees the expansion, diversification and improvement of Minnesota's direct care/support workforce. Stacie's contributions were primarily informed by her experience with successfully reducing turnover as a supervisor for a home and community-based services provider.

ARRM's Workforce Development Committee provided invaluable assistance in the revision and updating of this document, and provided leadership and additional content.



## WHY THIS TOOLKIT WAS CREATED

**M**aintaining a quality workforce of care providers for people in Minnesota who have disabilities can be a challenge, especially during times of lower unemployment. When we began writing this document, the labor shortage in Minnesota was at an extremely high rate causing not just difficulties, but often staffing crises for care provider organizations, people with disabilities and families. By the time of publication of this document, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in high unemployment, but didn't ease the staffing crises. While unemployment cycles up and down, the use of best practice strategies in finding and keeping high-quality direct support professionals will always be a benefit to Minnesotans.

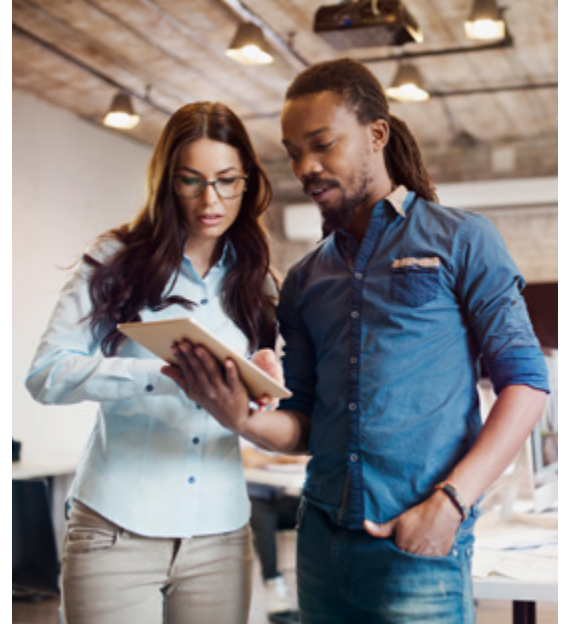
## A WORD ABOUT LANGUAGE

**T**hroughout this document, you will see the acronym "DSP" which stands for direct support professional.

In other documents, you may see direct care worker, personal care aide, personal care assistant, etc. Generally, it means someone who supports people with disabilities or seniors. Preferred terms change over time, especially in referring to people with disabilities, and the words used here are consistent with best practices at the time of writing this document. If these terms become outdated, please substitute current terms.

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## OVERVIEW

### RECRUITMENT

A key theme of our toolkit is that by using best practices in recruitment, even when there are tight labor markets, we can improve the number of quality applicants. The section on recruitment details a number of quick hits (meaning relatively simple strategies workplaces can implement) and long-term strategies that can help.

Hiring people just to fill positions, knowing they are not good matches for the job, is not much of a benefit in the long run, as it could increase turnover and reduce the quality of the workforce. The right path is to focus on new ways of recruiting and targeting practices that identify the best new hires.



### RETENTION

Once you find the right people by improving your recruitment strategies, the second step is to keep the right people at your organization or home. We once again share quick hits and long-term strategies. Some of these ideas are around how to more effectively manage and keep employees engaged in their work. Do you know if your care providers are happy in what they do? Find out! Once you do, you can act.

### COSTS

This toolkit offers a variety of strategies that can be of assistance in this area. It builds off the work performed by the first author in 2004 with the Oregon Rehabilitation Association and the University of Minnesota's efforts in recruitment and retention. Some of the tools can be easily implemented and have no associated cost; others require effort and have a price tag.

# PERSON-CENTERED WORKPLACES

Person-centered approaches have transformed the quality of disability support. These strategies apply to recruitment and retention and may offer great benefits. Person-centered workplace refers to the relationship between supervisors and their staff, relationships among staff members and relationships between staff and people receiving support. In this section, we cover the relationship between staff and people receiving support, and in later sections we cover other types of person-centered relationships.

## WHAT IS “PERSON-CENTERED” AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DSPs?

Vicki Gerrits is the executive director for Minnesota First Community Solutions (MNFCS), which is a nonprofit entity created to develop and administer educational programmatic offerings for personal care assistance agencies intended to increase quality of care and improve program integrity. She describes person-centered thinking as the repeated use of specific skills and tools to help improve outcomes for people served, direct support staff and the system.

In short, these tools help:

- Give clarity to what’s important **to** and **for** a person (and a balance of each)
- Identify what’s working/what’s not working for a person, group, process or organization
- Analyze issues across multiple perspectives
- Organize and plan.

Person-centered thinking underlies and guides respectful listening, which leads to actions. This results in people who:

- Have more control over the life they want to live
- Are recognized and valued for their contributions
- Have relationships that are valued.

There are specific tools than can be used for the people served that can help with all the above. Careful attention to matching potential DSPs to the people they will support greatly increases the likelihood of success for the person and the DSP. One helpful tool is the [Helen Sanderson Associates’ Matching Tool](http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/matching-) ([helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/matching-](http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/person-centred-thinking-tools/matching-)



support). This tool makes you think about the skills, personality characteristics and interests that will be the best match between the DSP and the person/people served. The better the match, the more successful the DSP will be. Studies have indicated this also may result in better staff retention.

“Individuals with disabilities are often supported in individualized settings,” says Gerrits. Some examples of individualized services are self-directed services like PCA Choice, consumer directed community supports (CDCS), individual housing options or independent living skills. She continues: “When recruiting employees for these services, many of the same suggestions from this toolkit apply. For these services, the individual should be as involved as possible in determining the type of DSP that they will work best with. In self-directed services, the individual often chooses family and friends. It can also be helpful to support the individual and/or their family to think about their personal networks to identify possible workers.”

Additional things to consider when selecting DSPs related to person-centered practices are:

- Supporting versus fixing people
- Power with the person versus power over the person.

Whenever possible, include the people served in the interview/selection process. This assures the process truly is person-centered.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT



This toolkit is designed to be used by both:

- Organizations that provide services and supports
- The person with a disability (or their family) when they hire DSPs.

There are some differences in these types of situations (e.g., larger organizations that hire a large number of people have human resource departments to help with the process), but there are many similarities.

### TOOLKIT FEATURES

There is a self-assessment built into this toolkit. You can complete it as you go through the toolkit or you can simply scan the ideas you see here.

At the end of this document, there is a blank page to list out all of the ideas you liked in this toolkit. There is also a page you can use to assist in calculating the cost of turnover. Finally, there is a list of additional references that has links and print resources for further information.



# SELF-ASSESSMENT AND TOOLS

Use the questions and strategies in each section below to assess your competency. As you identify your level of agreement on how well your organization is performing in each area, use the suggestions to make a list of action steps for your organization. If you are not sure, read the possible strategies to gain insight.

## RECRUITMENT QUICK HITS

### ADVERTISING POSITIONS AND REACHING THE RIGHT CANDIDATES

#### We have clear expectations and accurate job descriptions

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Review the job description for each open position. Does it clearly define the job tasks and environment? Be sure to refer to the [National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\) Code of Ethics and Competency Areas](#) ([www.nadsp.org/15-competency-areas](http://www.nadsp.org/15-competency-areas)) for samples.

#### We know the characteristics of employees who tend to remain on the job

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Identify a list of characteristics (i.e., knowledge, skills and traits) that distinguish top performers in the position. You can do this by interviewing current, exceptional staff or reviewing the characteristics of past top employees. Some of these success factors can be taught, but other characteristics are the type of things that you want to seek in the hiring process.

Some examples of these characteristics identified by



Minnesota care providing organizations include flexibility, adaptability, computer literacy, ability to take initiative, patience, active listening skills and general communication skills.

**Example:** Joe was providing technical assistance to a large disability provider organization. In an effort to improve the recruitment and selection process, managers were surveyed and were asked to list the characteristics of their best employees who had stayed on the job for one year or more. The top three answers were:

- Flexibility
- Compassion
- Sense of humor.

The providers then created behavior-trait interview questions for these three characteristics. Two of the three questions were built into their interview process. The questions used were:

- Tell me about a time when you expected one thing to happen, but something else happened instead. What was it and how did you handle it?
- Have you ever seen anything that felt wrong to you? What was it and what did you do?

For more information on these examples, see the [Behavior trait interviewing section](#).

## We use a range of effective strategies to reach potential employees

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Traditional recruitment practices (e.g., newspaper ads) often are not effective in securing enough applicants. Additional successful strategies include:

- Volunteer programs for students or older people
- Outreach to faith communities
- Asking family members to reach out to their contacts
- Advertisements or fliers in community meeting areas
- Use of the local employment department, including Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Career fairs
- Hosting interns through local higher education programs
- Recruiting people who will benefit from work experience in addition to their degree programs, such as future teachers or social workers, nursing or medical students, future occupational/physical/other therapists, etc.



## We focus on diversity, equity and inclusion in our workforce

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If you are not strong in this area:

- Network with your local ethnic, cultural and LGBT communities
- Focus on how your organization values, practices and embraces diversity, equity and inclusion
- Assure that your organization is culturally competent, including considerations of sexual orientation and gender identity. Consider asking employees which gender pronoun is preferred
- Connect with post-secondary or adult education programs (e.g., CNA, nursing, occupational therapy or physical therapy programs) tailored to specific ethnic or cultural communities.







**We use digital media as part of our recruitment strategy**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**POSSIBLE STRATEGIES**

If you are not using digital media to recruit, you could:

- Use internet-related job sites, such as [directsupportconnect.com](https://directsupportconnect.com) or the [DEED Finding Workers page](https://mn.gov/deed/business/finding-workers) (mn.gov/deed/business/finding-workers)
- Use social media, messaging groups and apps.

**If available, company ownership options for employees are mentioned in recruitment materials and covered during the initial interview.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



**Our recruitment ads are tailored to specific audiences**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**POSSIBLE STRATEGIES**

To target specific audiences:

- Tailor content to different generations based on likely viewers (e.g., highlight work experience and resume building at colleges)
- Ensure your ads include availability of part-time or intermittent work
- Ensure your ads include language that addresses potential employees who might not currently be looking for work
- Keep your recruitment materials free of jargon
- Include a person-centered focus in ads.

## EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAM

Job retention is higher for employees recruited using inside sources and referrals than employees recruited from outside sources, such as ads. Examples of inside sources include rehires, referrals from other employees, volunteers, friends and families. Employee referrals are one of the most effective hiring strategies in terms of length of employment and performance of the new hire. Offer bonuses as incentives for existing employees to refer applicants for a successful hire.



### We have an effective referral system

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If you need to strengthen your referral system:

- Encourage friends and family members to refer people to apply
- Use online resources to make referrals easy
- Stay in touch with good former employees via newsletters and encourage referrals
- Stay aware of regional academic institutions and develop a working relationship with faculty and staff who may recommend students who are looking for related work experience in nursing or human services
- Make sure your referral materials have a person-centered focus.

### Employees know how to recruit and refer potential candidates

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

To promote current employees to recruit:

- Encourage employees through gift cards, newsletters, etc., to refer other staff
- Remind employees how they can help build a quality workforce through referrals
- Make materials they can share for referrals readily available.

### We have a bonus system for existing employees

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Bonus systems, if allowed, for existing employees create an incentive for successful referrals. Make sure that your bonuses:

- Meet the preferences of the individual employees
- Are progressive (i.e., bonuses continue as the referred employee stays employed longer, and bonuses increase for the second referral, etc.).

## HIRING QUICK HITS

Once you identify a pool of potential applicants, the next step is to be selective about who you hire. Especially in times when there is a tight labor market, the hiring process is also intended to convince the employee why they want to work for you.

Hiring often consists of a review of the employee's prior work and an interview. Some people may not have professional references (e.g., this might be their first job, they may not want to tell their current employer they are looking for a new job, etc.) but might be good potential employees. Allowing personal references or a probationary period might be good substitutes for people who cannot provide the traditional three professional references.

The interview should provide a realistic job preview so that the prospective employee understands what the job will include. The reason for this is that a significant source of turnover comes from employees accepting a job offer and then finding out that the job is not what they expected. This type of turnover is costly, difficult for everybody and often avoidable with some attention to the hiring process.

This section of the toolkit will focus on two strategies: Realistic job previews and behavior-trait interviewing.

### REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS

Involving the people with disabilities who will receive supports in the interviews has a host of benefits, such as increasing the chance of a good match with the applicant. Hammer, a Minnesota residential provider, holds their second interviews for applicants on-site so that it provides a realistic preview for the potential employee. This helps them hire people who will be more likely to stay on the job and not be surprised by what a job requires.

The realistic job preview should accurately describe the job, including some of the less appealing aspects, as well as the good parts of the position.

**We effectively use realistic job previews to give potential hires an accurate picture of what the job will be like; we balance negatives with positives and highlight why this career field is rewarding**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

A concise and accurate job description can guide what a realistic job preview will include. Here are some strategies if you are not doing this well:

- Gather information from current employees about the real-life aspects of the job
- Present information early in the process. Some care providers do so before the interview
- Realistic job previews can include sending online videos, videos shown in the interview process, written materials, interviews with current care providers and on-site visits (remember that privacy and confidentiality regulations need to be followed as the job applicants have not been hired yet)
- Consider using realistic job previews that are available on websites or via streaming video. You easily can find these through an internet search. Look at the various options and see which best matches your programs.
- Invite people with disabilities who receive supports to participate in the interviews.

The following are resources for providing realistic job previews:

- [Hammer career webpage](http://hammer.org/careers) (hammer.org/careers)
- [ANCOR's realistic job preview online video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnKRzGVC8o) (www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnKRzGVC8o).





## BEHAVIOR TRAIT INTERVIEWING

**Interview questions determine if the applicant has the right characteristics for the position**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If you are not strong in this area, ensure that you:

- Include interview questions that inquire about the applicants' skills
- Use interview questions to ask about experiences beyond prior disability supports
- Focus interview questions on desired characteristics
- Avoid asking questions that focus on disability policies or jargon
- Ask questions where the applicant can describe how they would respond to real-life scenarios
- Use behavior trait interviewing strategies that ask about applicants' prior experiences in relation to desired characteristics. (For more information, refer to [ANCOR's interview guides for supervisors](#) in their online toolkit [www.ancor.org/toolkit/employers/interview-guides-core-competencies-supervisors]).

Some organizations give the list of interview questions before the interview. This acknowledges that not all applicants answer on the spot, complex questions well, but may still be excellent DSPs.

### NOTE

Recall in the section titled [Advertising positions and reaching the right candidates](#), we discussed how behavior trait interview questions were created at some disability provider organizations. Those two questions were then added to the interview process at those organizations. Interviewers reported that many candidates who did not do quite as well on the technical questions did very well on those two questions. The questions were carefully crafted to ask not only about work experience, but also about more general life experience. As such, some candidates were hired due to those two questions.

**The hiring process includes a focus on the good parts of working as a care provider**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

The hiring process can include information on these types of benefits:

- Having part-time and flexible work schedules
- Getting job satisfaction from meaningful work
- Having the ability to do fun things as part of work
- Working with people you can learn from
- Learning new skills, such as cooking and teaching
- Building your own knowledge of finance, including budgeting skills
- Enjoying a supportive work culture
- Learning first aid, CPR and wellness.

Hammer offers this content on [their testimonial page](#), (hammer.org/staff-testimonials) as an example.



### We conduct well-planned interviews

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If your interviews are not well planned, make sure:

- Interviewers know the job requirements and areas to be covered in interviews
- Questions are prepared ahead of time based on the skills and values needed for the job
- Questions address most desired characteristics for DSPs
- The interview team includes the right people, including people with disabilities who receive supports
- Interviews use established scoring systems
- Questions comply with applicable federal, state and municipal laws and regulations, including anti-discrimination laws. For example, all applicants must be asked identical questions, though you can ask individualized follow-up or clarifying questions based on their application materials or responses.



- The interviews are timely and do not delay they hiring process. People looking for work might need income right away and may take the first job offered to them, so you could lose candidates to competing employers.

Be aware of red flags (meaning indicators of potential problems) during interviews and listen to your intuition about candidates.

The first author, Dr. Baker worked with a disability provider in Oregon that looked at their most recent terminations. He found that in almost every instance, there was a red flag during the interview that they ignored.

However, some red flags can be addressed through additional training, background checks, monitoring, reminders or other personnel management strategies. The hiring supervisor should determine the pros and cons of additional measures before committing to hiring someone who will need additional support.

# MEASUREMENT QUICK HITS

## TRACKING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

To know the state of our workforce, we need to collect accurate information and use it to help make decisions.

**W**hat are we doing that works well? What are we doing that isn't worth the cost or effort? For each of these questions, a simple table can present the data in a manner that allows you to make decisions on recruitment and retention. The more you agree with the statements, the better your organization is doing.

### We track DSP turnover organization wide

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track DSP turnover data by site and supervisors

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track DSP tenure organization wide

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track DSP tenure by site and supervisors

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



### We track the tenure of DSPs who quit

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track applications by the recruitment source

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track tenure of DSPs who come from various recruitment sources

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We track the cost of various recruitment efforts

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## NOTE

The University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration and several partners conducted a study of the Minnesota direct support workforce. The [2019 report \(PDF\)](https://ici.umn.edu/products/kfpN9PofQGWQNrV3FwsfeA) (https://ici.umn.edu/products/kfpN9PofQGWQNrV3FwsfeA) showed a 39 percent annual turnover rate.



EXPERIENCE OF DSPs AT WORK

We use exit interviews to gather information from DSPs as they leave about their experiences at work and why they are leaving

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

The exit interview is also a great chance to see if the exiting employee (if they are leaving in good standing) would continue in an on-call or intermittent basis, or would consider assisting in recruiting new DSPs.

We interview current DSPs about their experiences at work and the factors that make their jobs satisfactory for them

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

- If you are not strong at this:
- Reach out to new hires 30 days after they start to secure feedback and offer any assistance
  - Include a link, email or suggestion box so employees can provide feedback.

Figure 1, on the next page, is an example of an exit interview. Of course, having a discussion about these questions is better than reading a completed survey, but takes a lot longer. Giving the current or exiting DSPs a chance to write out answers helps get more information from them. In addition, they could remain anonymous if they choose.

The previously mentioned 2019 study by the University of Minnesota and others identified pay and benefits as the top two reasons why DSPs leave their job; but job conditions, coworker relations, training and quality of supervision all appeared in the top 10 reasons.



# FIGURE 1: JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY

NAME (NOT REQUIRED)	DATE
---------------------	------

On a scale of 1-5, indicate if each of these factors make you want to stay in the job, or want to leave the job.

- 5 = Very important to me
- 4 = Somewhat important to me
- 3 = I'm not sure or I don't have a strong opinion on this
- 2 = Only slightly important to me
- 1 = Not important to me

## Feeling like my work makes a difference

1      2      3      4      5

## Pay

1      2      3      4      5

## Benefits

1      2      3      4      5

## Schedules

1      2      3      4      5

## Opportunities for promotion or advancement

1      2      3      4      5

## Ongoing learning at the job

1      2      3      4      5

## Relationships with people I support

1      2      3      4      5

## Relationship with supervisor

1      2      3      4      5

## Relationships with coworkers

1      2      3      4      5

## Job tasks

1      2      3      4      5

## QUESTIONS

What do/did you like most about the job?

What do/did you like least about the job?

What can/could the organization do/have done to make you enjoy the job more?

## For people exiting

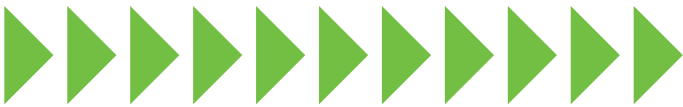
What will your next job be? Is it related to disability supports?

Why are you leaving?

Any other comments?

# COSTS OF TURNOVER

A key consideration for organizations and support providers is how much it costs each time an employee turns over. According to the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, direct care turnover ranges from 45 to 65 percent. It costs approximately \$2,200 to hire a direct care worker ([The Direct Care Workforce Year in Review \(2018\)](#)).



## RAMIFICATIONS

Numerous studies identify turnover as a significant expense for care providers. A case study looking at one organization, completed by the University of Minnesota in 2016, showed each DSP exit costs \$3,278. Other studies have indicated that turnover costs are 1/3 of an annual salary. The costs go far beyond just measuring dollars and cents. It also includes reductions in the quality of service or supports, burnout for other DSPs who have to cover shifts, and stress on managers, which affects the entire organization. There also is an emotional cost, as DSPs develop significant relationships with people who receive supports, families and colleagues. Frequent turnover is a toll on services in countless ways.

## TRAINING

The first author of this toolkit, Dr. Baker, previously worked with provider organizations in Oregon on issues regarding recruitment and retention. A number of organizations calculated the cost per turnover and found a wide range of costs. The biggest single variable for differing costs was training time. Organizations with lengthy pre-service training had higher costs per turnover. Bear in mind that not knowing what to do at work is a cause of turnover (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). One organization changed the structure of their training to have less classroom training up front, and offer more training on an ongoing basis as new hires reached various points in their tenure. In addition to lowering training costs for new hires who did not stay on the job long, the staged training was more enjoyable for new hires.



## COST CONSIDERATIONS

We know the non-financial costs of turnover

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

We know the financial costs of turnover

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

One idea to improve your understanding of the negative impact of high turnover is to create an Excel spreadsheet that automatically calculates the sum of turnover expenses. [Figure 2](#), on the next page, is an example of what to include.



**FIGURE 2:**  
**WORKSHEET TO DETERMINE**  
**COSTS OF TURNOVER**

NEW HIRE COSTS	
Recruitment costs	\$
Hiring process costs	\$
Evaluating applications	\$
Interviewing	\$
Background checks	\$
Reference checks	\$
Criminal history check	\$
Pre-employment drug screening (if applicable)	\$
Completing paperwork	\$
TRAINING COSTS	
Orientation	\$
Formal training	\$
Informal training	\$
Training material costs	\$
In-service training	\$
SEPARATION EXPENSES	
Exit paperwork	\$
Exit interviews	\$
Coverage of work responsibilities (like overtime pay)	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	
	\$

## LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

### ONBOARDING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The time and money spent on onboarding and developing the workforce can be one of the best long-term investments in reducing turnover and improving the performance of the DSP workforce. Skill development has been recognized for years as a tool to reduce turnover across all areas of work. Not knowing how to do one's job is a key predictor of turnover in numerous national studies (e.g., Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

Developing and maintaining an effective onboarding and competency-based training system is an ongoing process that requires careful attention. Desired skills always are changing, and each person with a disability has unique needs. Onboarding starts with the initial application and recruitment materials. This section of the toolkit addresses the onboarding process and ways of to ensure that staff have the needed skills.

### ONBOARDING AND JOINING THE TEAM

When a new hire joins an organization, they have to learn the specific competencies for the job, but they also have to learn about the organization, the culture and how supports are provided. Approaching onboarding with careful planning can help a new hire fit into the site and team as quickly as possible.

This may lead to longer tenure and better performance, as well as fewer future conflicts or difficulties.



---

**Onboarding with our organization or site begins with recruitment materials**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**New hires go through a common set of experiences**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Our onboarding process is planned out**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**The timeline for onboarding is flexible for people who desire or need more time to learn**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Onboarding includes getting to know people who receive supports, coworkers and the organization**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree




---

**New hires “shadow” experienced DSPs and are instructed about the key things to learn**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Values are included in the onboarding process**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**POSSIBLE STRATEGIES**

If you are not meeting these metrics, try the following:

- Give new hires a “passport” to stamp for all the milestones in the orientation and onboarding process
- Give experienced DSPs incentives and responsibilities to help onboard new hires
- Teach new employees exactly how their characteristics and skills will be useful in supports.

COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

All work sites have unique competencies needed for success. In Minnesota’s 245D-licensed sites, many of these are specifically listed.

Competency-based learning means that the learning is not complete until the person can satisfactorily demonstrate skills. It is not enough to have completed a training – the learner must be able to demonstrate the skill on the job. Supervisors play a crucial role in determining if additional training is needed. Flexibility in training is another key component of competency-based approaches to learning.



Competencies are described in detail and are site-specific

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

We have a system for checking competencies

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Supervisors and colleagues know the acceptable demonstrations for each competency

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If you need to grow in this area, consider using electronic learning. Many organizations use it to standardize the initial learning experience (note: it needs to be followed up with specific onsite training and demonstrations of competency). Employing this strategy allows people to apply what they have learned electronically to real-life situations on the job. Keep in mind that electronic learning might not be the best strategy for training people who speak English as a second language or people who have certain types of disabilities.

## MENTORING

**M**entoring is a powerful supplement to supervision in coaching for improved performance. Mentoring is typically informal and it is defined as a professional relationship in which an experienced person assists a less experienced person in developing specific skills and knowledge. It is not a supervisory relationship, but rather includes a focus on help from a colleague. Mentoring is especially helpful when there aren't a lot of coworkers around, or workers are in scattered sites – both often being true in disability supports. Bear in mind that people have different learning preferences, and mentoring can often help address learning styles. Mentoring also may help in retention of new employees, as there is an ongoing resource for the new hire.

### ASSESSING YOUR MENTOR PLAN

#### We have a planned-out system of mentoring

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### We carefully match mentors with new DSPs

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### Mentors are trained in the role of a mentor, focusing on skills such as active listening, how to teach and how to use conflict resolution strategies

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### We regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

To build a mentoring network, some organizations:

- Make mentoring a formal role
- Compensate employees for time spent mentoring
- Have a separate job title for mentors
- Create an application for people interested in mentoring
- Deploy mentoring as either a site-level practice or an organization-wide tool
- Seek the qualities of effective mentors (which include a love of helping others, patience, willingness to listen and belief in the values of support)
- Seek online resources for mentoring (which are easily found through an internet search).

“Mentorship is a great way to empower employees, and it doesn't take much money or time. The important part ... is to make sure mentorship opportunities are available to everyone, not just top performers. When leaders turn into mentors, employees are 72 percent more likely to believe their organization allows all employees to grow. This impact not only empowers employees but can help them to be more engaged in their work.”

— OC TANNER



## SUPERVISION

The supervisor's role is critical in retention, in everything from providing positive feedback to nurturing high performance workplaces. Unfortunately, supervisory practices also can drive good DSPs away. We have all had a bad supervisor. There are specific practices that can be taught that lead to more effective supervision, but we also want to hire people as supervisors who already have many of the right personal characteristics.



**We select managers for their characteristics, including the ability to effectively communicate and lead**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**We identify DSPs who have attributes of successful supervisors**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**We consider introverts as well as extroverts for supervisory positions**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**We assess the competency levels of supervisors using a variety of means**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## Supervisory staff receive education in effective skills

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### NOTES

Effective skills for supervisory staff include:

- Fairness
- Communication
- Writing skills
- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Ability to promote equity
- Understanding how systems work
- Cultural competency
- Good decision-making
- Self-evaluative
- Organization
- Prioritization
- Following documentation requirements
- Knowledge of policies
- Finance skills
- Quality-assurance focused
- Using person-centered thinking
- Employing person-centered tools
- Working with families and advocacy
- Appropriate boundaries
- Active listening.



## Supervisors receive mentoring

(For more information, see the [Mentoring section](#).)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## We provide leadership training as well as supervisory training

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## Our organization has a path for staff to become future managers

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## Managers are trained in team building

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## MANAGEMENT AND STAFF COMMUNICATION QUICK HITS

DSPs, like any other position, often stay at their jobs because of people – the individuals they support, coworkers, supervisors, families and leadership. Valued relationships at work are shown to be a contributor to higher performance and lower turnover (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). DSPs might leave because of people, too. Problems with coworkers are a cause of turnover.

**D**eveloping a positive work culture is not a “quick hit.” This is a complex issue related to the culture of a site or organization. Workplace culture problems can include gossiping, complaining about others or interpersonal conflict. However, there are quick hit strategies you can do that might have a positive impact right away. The following section addresses building collaborative relationships, positive reinforcement, providing feedback and sharing information.

### BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP

#### Supervisors know the preferred work style for employees

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If your organization is not strong at this, make sure that supervisors know:

- The learning styles of each employee
- What kind of rewards each employee likes to receive
- Each employee’s preferred way of being recognized for good work, including whether it is public or in private.

#### We know our colleagues

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

If you cannot answer that you agree with this, try to:

- Use person-centered thinking tools with employees, (e.g., the [One-Page Description tool](http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles) [online at <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/one-page-profiles>] from person-centered thinking can be used to get to know employees and help them know more about each other)
- Be person-centered in how you reinforce employees by asking them how they like to be rewarded/recognized
- Encourage employees to know each other’s hobbies and a little about their families
- Welcome celebrations for different cultures and holidays, and find out which days off are most important to each employee
- Start meetings with an ice breaker
- Onboard new employees into work sites.

REINFORCEMENT AND FEEDBACK



Employees receive positive feedback at least weekly; it is earned, specific, and personal (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

To convey positive feedback, make steps to ensure that:

- Positive feedback from supervisors is given in response to specific performance from employees
- Positive feedback is given on a variety of different areas of performance – not always for the same thing
- The style and form of the positive feedback is individualized to the employee (i.e., what does the employee prefer?)
- Feedback is kept private unless the DSP indicates they prefer otherwise.

This structure is an effective way to give positive feedback:

- Behavior – what did the employee do well?
- Effect – what was the positive effect of the performance?
- Thank you – offer a sincere thank you to the DSP.

Positive feedback does not take long at all. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) showed feedback that occurs at least weekly is associated with higher performance and lower turnover.

Employees receive corrective feedback in a timely, respectful and educational manner

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

The best way to deliver corrective feedback is to:

- Never wait for a formal evaluation (which might be annually) to let employees know of a concern about their work performance. Consider corrective feedback as a teaching tool. No employee ever starts a job knowing everything required and people often make well-intended mistakes. Teaching correct performance is the first response to a mistake
- Give it in an individualized, private manner and in a manner most likely to be taken as simple instruction. It is not employee discipline. Tone is very important. For example, instead of telling someone they did something wrong, rephrase it into a question such as, “Next time you do..., could you also...?” Then explain how changing the strategy will result in a better outcome
- Provide far more positive feedback than corrective feedback.

This structure is an effective way to give corrective feedback:

- Behavior – what did the employee do well?
- Effect – what was the effect of the incorrect performance?
- Expectation – what are better ways to do the job?
- Result – what is the result if the employee performs correctly? What will happen if the employee continues to make the mistake (e.g., what disciplinary action might be taken in the future)?

People want to work in a job where they feel like their coworkers are doing excellent work. An underperforming employee can drag down an entire team.



## SHARING INFORMATION



**Our organization has systems for informing employees about a wide variety of topics**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

Using online resources, newsletters and discussions keep DSPs informed about:

- The direction of the organization
- The organization's strategic plan
- Progress of the organization
- Pay and benefits
- How service provider organizations are funded
- Legislation and public policy
- Quality improvement efforts and satisfaction data.

**DSPs are included in organizational committees**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**The administration has an open door policy**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



**The organization secures feedback and information from DSPs, and acts upon the information, giving DSPs a feeling that their voices are heard**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**The organization educates DSPs regularly about trends and developments in disability supports**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**The organization uses NADSP resources as ongoing development for DSPs**

For more information, go the [NADSP site](http://www.nadsp.org) (www.nadsp.org).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



## SOLVING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS AND COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Relationships with coworkers and supervisors often lead DSPs to stay in a job or to leave a job. Interpersonal conflict and communication problems are a major source of turnover. Some of these concerns may include interpersonal friction, gossiping and differences of opinion of work-related tasks. Conflict is inevitable, but employees can be taught how to work together and supervisors can set the tone for solving conflicts.

**We teach all employees how to communicate well, including active listening and conflict resolution**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**We have policies on workplace harassment and bullying, as well as retaliation**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**Job descriptions specify interacting well with coworkers**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**We offer mediation services for all employees**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**We have multiple ways to communicate and report concerns, even for small things**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Employees can talk to a manager or other supervisor if they do not feel comfortable with their direct supervisor**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**We respect differences of culture, generation, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Leadership models good communication skills and respect**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Our organization teaches and supports appropriate boundaries for all people**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**Communication within the organization is professional and respectful**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

---

**DSPs can work on a variety of tasks, including some special projects**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## CREATING A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

**W**e all want to work in a great place. All leaders want to create a great workplace. These are easy things to say, but requires a lot of dedication and thought about how to structure a positive, high-performance workplace. This requires constant nurturing as well. Luckily, there are some specific ways to guide people in the right direction.

### SUPPORTING WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INJURY PREVENTION

**W**orking as a DSP is a rewarding but challenging career. Some common safety concerns for this field include infection, acts of aggression or violence and injuries from bending or lifting. To retain employees, staff must feel safe at work and supported by management. Peace of mind and improved safety can be built into organizational culture with careful planning. The following is a brief list of safety procedures that can be used to develop a safe workplace culture.

#### Organization-wide potential safety concerns are identified

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### NOTES

This might include building access, weapons policies, key lock-ups, disposal of medications, severe weather, etc.

#### Person-specific potential safety concerns are identified with each person who receives services, when applicable

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



#### Site-specific potential safety concerns are identified at each location where services typically occur, including in vehicles

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### There is written protocol for how to prevent each safety concern, including necessary tools and supplies

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### There is written protocol for how to respond to each safety concern

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree



**DSPs receive training on how to stay safe and prevent injury or infection, which is specific to the job tasks the DSP performs**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**DSPs are reminded that they can ask for assistance if they have a safety concern**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**All safety concerns are taken seriously and handled in a respectful and timely manner**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**When a DSP is injured or infected, policy and procedures are evaluated to identify how the incident could be prevented in the future (this should be done as soon as possible)**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**When a DSP is injured or infected, the person is treated with kindness and concern; corrective actions focus on additional training or environmental modifications, instead of punishment**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**There is a documented and tracked routine for ensuring required safety supplies are in stock and working properly**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**Approximately every six months, the employer has a team of management and non-management employees review all workplace injuries or infections to analyze patterns and identify opportunities for improvement**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## NOTES

There are many effective guides and tools for improving workplace safety, but the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) has developed one, the [Guidelines of Preventing Workplace Violence \(PDF\)](#), that is specific to healthcare and social service workers.

## ENHANCING STATUS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF DSPs

Employees of all kinds are more likely to continue in jobs if they have the opportunity to professionally grow and advance. People also stay in jobs when they feel their contributions are valued. Care-providing organizations and sites can offer these kinds of support for DSPs.

### DSPs receive recognition from families and people they support

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### There are opportunities to learn new skills and have career advancement in our organization

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### DSPs regularly receive recognition from their employers

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### There are opportunities for professional growth and pay increases beyond promotion

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### When there is more than one part-time shift available, DSPs are given the opportunity to combine two part-time shifts into a full-time position

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### Training is clearly differentiated from professional development

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### Internal career ladder opportunities and requirements are well-known to staff and visually displayed in a public location through charts or other graphics

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### If available, grant, scholarship and/or apprenticeship opportunities are communicated to all staff

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## NOTES

To see an example of a career pathway chart, visit [Employment Opportunities - Residential Services Inc.](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page to see the graphic.

## NOTES

For information on developing apprenticeships, visit the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's [For Employers page](https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/employers).(https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/employers)

Employees are allowed to simultaneously work for other health care service providers when we cannot internally offer supervision and training for a specialized health care credential the employee would like to pursue

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## NOTES

This might include something like an employee apprenticeship under a contracted business partner who is providing services to the same service users.

DSPs are able to communicate with administration

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

We promote teamwork and team problem-solving

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

DSPs participate in individual planning and organizational meetings/committees

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

DSPs are supported to obtain additional education

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

There is a budget for DSP skill development

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

The organization clearly demonstrates how DSPs contribute to the mission

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

Administrators regularly visit sites and learn about DSP activities

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

DSPs participate in person-centered planning/thinking training opportunities

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## SUPPORTING A WORK-LIFE BALANCE

**M**any DSPs have second jobs, attend school and have family responsibilities that require flexibility. Organizations that consider these realities may have fewer DSPs quit as a result of having difficulties with balancing multiple obligations. Turnover also can follow a financial crisis, such as a broken-down car. Many DSPs experience poverty.

### We make reasonable efforts to accommodate other commitments or obligations

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We have an in-house or external employee assistance program

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We recognize the existence of poverty and offer financial supports, such as limited advances, inflationary increases for higher food/gas prices or access to rainy-day funds for DSPs

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### We use technology to assist in scheduling or changing schedules

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### Positions have flexibility

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

### All DSPs have regular opportunities to enjoy weekends and holidays off, including DSPs who normally cover those shifts

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## NOTES

Americans tend to value time off with family and friends on weekends and holidays, so all workers should be given opportunities to take off those days. Accomplish this by:

- Scheduling shifts that only cover Saturday or Sunday each week, but not both days.
- Scheduling shifts that rotate every other weekend or alternating time off on holidays.
- Scheduling shifts that only cover three out of four weekends, so all employees get at least one weekend off per month.

### We offer financial education and planning resources

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree





Where appropriate, we include family members in social functions

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

We routinely share childcare/housing/food/healthcare/ etc. resources with our employees, especially new employees or new parents

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

NOTES

One option for this is the [DHS Child Care Resources page](#); your county also may have local resources.



We arrange for employee discounts for common expenses (e.g., car repairs)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

We allow staff to take part in meals, if appropriate, at our site

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

## REWARDING AND RECOGNIZING DSPS



### We have many ways to reward and recognize employees for excellent support and performance

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

#### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

DSPs and other employees often do not feel appreciated and recognized. What can you do to recognize excellent work and show appreciation?

Here are some ideas that have worked for other teams:

- **Achievements box** – Write down achievements and examples of excellent performance. Share them in meetings or other gatherings. Be careful, as some people are embarrassed or might feel uncomfortable by public recognition
- **Letters of recognition** – Encourage family members or other people to write a letter recognizing how DSPs have helped
- **Rewards or gifts** – Reward exceptional performance with some kind of gift. The gift you choose should be individualized to the employee. It could be a favorite cup of coffee, a gift certificate (which are taxable income) or a paid hour off
- **Celebrate your team** — Celebrating National DSP Week is a great place to start! This is typically the first full week in September, but check online for exact dates
- **Team engagement** — Give everyone a list of the people on their team and ask them to write one or two words next to each name that best describes the person. If necessary for your group, explain that the expectation is to put something positive, but most people will do that on their own. Allow the documents to be submitted anonymously so shy people feel comfortable participating. Then put all the descriptive words together on a certificate with the person's name in the middle. Hand out to each DSP individually and thank them for their contributions to the organization
- **Small things** — Let the person know how much you appreciate something they did by leaving a sticky note in their mailbox or folder, so it's private, but the first thing they see when starting their day
- **Document achievements** — Ensure the person's performance review includes specific details about excellent work and things you appreciate. While notes and cards are great throughout the year, it is important to some people to have formal, signed and dated documentation of their good work. This is especially true for college students who are working as DSPs temporarily in order to fulfill requirements for related degree programs.

## NOTES

Use this space to take notes on ideas you might use.

## SUMMARY

The Minnesota Department of Human Services and Department of Employment and Economic Development recognize the challenges in maintaining the direct support workforce. Tight labor markets create additional stress.

However, in our toolkit we offer tools that can be useful in improving recruitment practices, which can increase the number of quality applicants. We also offer tips on keeping the right people at your organization or home. We stress the crucial role in person-centered thinking in establishing and nurturing a quality workforce, and we hope you find this toolkit valuable.

What you do to support people is deeply important, and we thank you for your high quality work.

“ My direct support professionals allow me to be a part of my community, allow me to go to work and I depend on their support to literally keep me alive. ”

— LINDA

## RESOURCES

- [ANCOR DSP Toolkit](http://www.ancor.org/toolkit) ([www.ancor.org/toolkit](http://www.ancor.org/toolkit))
- Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (1999). [First, Break All the Rules](https://www.gallup.com/press/176069/first-break-rules-world-greatest-managers-differently.aspx) (<https://www.gallup.com/press/176069/first-break-rules-world-greatest-managers-differently.aspx>)
- Espinoza, Robert. December 12, 2018. [The Direct Care Workforce Year in Review \(2018\)](https://phinational.org/resource/the-direct-care-workforce-year-in-review-2018). Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (<https://phinational.org/resource/the-direct-care-workforce-year-in-review-2018>)
- [National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals \(NADSP\)](http://www.nadsp.org) ([www.nadsp.org](http://www.nadsp.org))
- Larson, S. & Hewitt, A. (2012). [Staff Recruitment, Retention, & Training Strategies \(PDF\)](https://ici.umn.edu/products/docs/Staff_Recruitment_book/Staff_Recruitment_book.pdf) ([https://ici.umn.edu/products/docs/Staff\\_Recruitment\\_book/Staff\\_Recruitment\\_book.pdf](https://ici.umn.edu/products/docs/Staff_Recruitment_book/Staff_Recruitment_book.pdf))
- [University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration](https://ici.umn.edu): (<https://ici.umn.edu>) [Minnesota Direct Support Worker Survey, 2019 Final Report \(PDF\)](https://ici.umn.edu/products/kfpN9PofQGWQNrV3FwsfeA) (<https://ici.umn.edu/products/kfpN9PofQGWQNrV3FwsfeA>)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](http://www.osha.gov) ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)): [Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence \(PDF\)](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osa3148.pdf) (<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osa3148.pdf>)
- [Direct care workforce shortage in Minnesota webpage](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/news-initiatives-reports-workgroups/long-term-services-and-supports/workforce) (<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/news-initiatives-reports-workgroups/long-term-services-and-supports/workforce>)