



Human Service Credential in Autism Spectrum Disorder *A Providers' Council Program*

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Module 01: Introduction to Human Services and Autism Spectrum Disorder

Understanding and appreciating the importance of one's job is critical to a successful work experience. The Direct Support Professional is at the foundation of the service delivery system, carrying out the mission of the Agency or organization, supporting individuals, and serving as a role model in the community.

Looking at the role of the Direct Support Professional through a professional lens will provide a strong basis for the important work that is accomplished daily by dedicated front-line staff. An overview of autism spectrum disorder and evidence-based interventions that DSPs can use to support individuals with ASD are provided.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the role of DSP and the standards for professionalism in the field of human services.
2. Describe diversity and the importance of cultural responsiveness in the role of DSP.
3. Describe the characteristics, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
4. Identify the challenges of ASD and their effects on the individual and their environment.
5. Describe evidence-based interventions and practices and the steps for linking goals to these practices.



Module 02: Participant and Family Empowerment

Promoting the rights and responsibilities of individuals and empowering them to make personal choices is at the heart of the work of a Direct Support Professional. This module will include strategies and resources for supporting individuals in their relationships with others and creating opportunities to express themselves in a safe and appropriate manner.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate respect for each individual and support for individual choice-making.
2. Understand and support the individual's rights and responsibilities.
3. Assist individuals to create positive relationships with peers.
4. Communicate with individuals around expression, while acquiring teaching strategies that support appropriate behavior.
5. Enhance the ability of each individual to lead a self-determining life.

Module 03: Communication

Communicating effectively is an essential element of the Direct Support Professional's daily work. Specific strategies and tools will be reviewed in this module. You communicate regularly with people inside and outside the agency in order to successfully manage the needs of the individuals you support. In this module, we will look at communication tools that promote communication as well as the importance of presenting ourselves professionally.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify effective listening and verbal communication strategies at all levels of the organization.
2. Describe how speech and language disorders affect communication.
3. Define internal, external and distance communications, and the role of professionalism in each.
4. Describe the importance of confidentiality and how to maintain confidentiality in all communications.
5. Communicate respectfully with and about individuals you support.



Module 04: Assessment

Assessments are critical in determining the services and supports an individual receives. Assessments also serve to identify changes and recognize newly acquired skills. The Direct Support Professional has an important role in monitoring the needs and wants of the individual and assuring that services provided support the individual's goals.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Explain why assessments are important and how data is collected.
2. Identify the purpose of formal and informal assessments.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of positive behavioral supports and the basic principles of behavior.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of how the information from assessments benefits the individual.
5. Write goals and objectives based on an assessment.

Module 05: Community Supports and Service Networking

Positive relationships, social connections and an affiliation with community groups positively impact the quality of our lives and the lives of the individuals we support. The Direct Support Professional plays an important role in assisting an individual to develop and maintain meaningful relationships in the community, overcome attitudinal barriers and find fulfilling activities. The Direct Support Professional needs to know both the community resources and the individual.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Understand the supports residential and day services provide the individual.
2. Review strategies that they can model to inform community members how to interact with individuals with ASD.
3. Create opportunities for the community to welcome the individuals you support as valuable community members.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of community resources and community supports available to people they support.
5. Match specific resources and interventions to the unique needs of individuals, recognizing the importance of friends, family and community relationships, as well as a healthy lifestyle.



Module 06: Supporting Skills Development

Supporting skills development is an important part of your job. Gaining confidence in your ability to teach individuals new skills that will help them realize their full potential and lead to a more independent life can be challenging and satisfying. There are strategies and tools that you can use to assist you in this important task.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe and apply teaching methods that will support skill development.
2. Identify the stages of skill development and the role of the DSP in supporting an individual through the stages.
3. Identify the appropriate use of prompts and responses to common mistakes when prompting.
4. Demonstrate responsiveness to the individual learner and evaluate teaching success.
5. Describe medical or behavioral conditions that make skill development more complex.

Module 07: Advocacy

Your role as a Direct Support Professional is to help individuals identify issues of concern and help them know when they are being treated unfairly. Your role also includes helping them solve these issues. This is called advocacy.

In this module, you will explore ways to work with the individual to gather information related to a situation. You will also become aware of laws, services, and supports that are in place to assist individuals; and will explore ways to help the individual stand up for themselves and present themselves in a positive way.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify advocacy issues by gathering information, reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the problem.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of current laws, services and community resources to assist and educate individuals to secure needed supports.
3. Facilitate, assist and/or represent the individual when there are barriers to service needs and lobby decision-makers when appropriate to overcome barriers.
4. Interact with and educate community members and organizations regarding advocacy for participant's needs or services.
5. Demonstrate understanding of the process of advocacy, the role of advocacy in the lives of individuals and the role of the DSP.



Module 08: Vocational, Educational and Career Support

When we are children, the adults in our life make choices for us. They choose what we wear, where we go, what we eat and what we learn. As we grow older, we make more of those choices on our own. Learning is life-long. As an adult, we may enroll in art and crafts classes, writing classes and language classes. We might join a gym or go to the library. We have these choices, and so should those who have autism spectrum disorder. For individuals with autism spectrum disorder, they may not be given the opportunity to make these choices. We want individuals to learn how to make as many of their own choices and decisions as possible. It is up to DSPs to help each person learn the skills needed to make choices and decisions.

In Module 6 “Supporting Skill Development,” you learned different ways to teach and reinforce new skills that help each individual you support to be more independent and have more control of their lives. Given the tools to teach, this module will take the process one step further and apply those teaching techniques to community participation, career and vocational growth and other educational tasks that will enhance a person’s community participation, risk-taking and increased choice making.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Assist individuals with skills needed for them to achieve their educational and career goals.
2. Identify resources available to assist the individual in reaching their goals.
3. Understand how to support the day-to-day needs of an individual in pursuit of vocational, educational and career goals.
4. Recognize the career and education-related needs and concerns of the individuals supported.
5. Understand how to mobilize the resources necessary to assist the individual to reach his or her goal.



Module 09: Crisis Intervention

This module is designed to help give you the knowledge and skills to ensure safety and well-being for the individuals with whom you work, your colleagues, and yourself. Crises occur in the work that we do. But you can learn to identify potential crisis situations and be prepared to help manage the situation.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Understanding the range of levels and types of crises.
2. Recall and review behaviors and recognize signs of a crisis and its antecedents.
3. Proactively respond to a crisis situation by managing the environment and staying safe.
4. Discuss ways to support the individual during a time of crisis.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of positive behavioral supports and the basic principles of behavior.

Module 10: Documentation

Documentation is the act of writing and description of your work with supported individuals that helps communicate important information to others. It serves as a resource and record on the individual's behalf and should fulfill all legal, financial and regulatory requirements. Documentation makes people and programs more efficient, decreases errors, decreases risk, and promotes informed decision-making.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the regulations related to mandated documentation.
2. Describe the purposes of documentation and how to present information objectively and concisely.
3. Identify the variety of paper and electronic forms used for documentation for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
4. Understand the negative effects of language in documentation and ways to reduce stigma and discrimination in written materials.
5. Identify the basic requirements of documentation and how to execute these requirements effectively.



Module 11: Health and Safety

This module on health and safety will introduce the basic concepts of nutrition, healthy lifestyles, symptoms and signs of illness, medication issues, responding to environmental emergencies, and basic good health practices. Health is not just the absence of disease; it is being in the best possible health physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

A healthy lifestyle includes good nutrition, physical activity, avoiding smoking and other substances, stress management and early detection and treatment of health problems. Wellness is about habits that maintain good health, such as handwashing, eating properly, getting plenty of exercise and good personal hygiene. Safety is about avoiding harm or injury. Certain practices, such as locking up poisons, increase safety by reducing the risk of being injured.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the basic concepts of nutrition, dietary needs and medication management.
2. Identify symptoms and signs of illness, as well as risk behaviors.
3. Identify the steps for promoting client safety and responding to environmental emergencies.
4. Describe basic good health practices that promote healthy lifestyles.
5. Describe the importance of infection control and the role of standard precautions.