Course Overview:

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Module 01: Introduction to Human Services and Professionalism

The purpose of this module is to provide an introduction to intellectual and developmental disability, and additional material on professionalism and professional boundaries. The module concludes with a detailed discussion of cultural responsiveness and diversity.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the history of human services.
2. Define your role in working with individuals with a developmental disability.
3. Define and describe the causes of developmental disabilities.
4. Identify professional expectations.
5. Discuss the importance of appreciating diversity and how your culture impacts communication.
Module 02: Individual Empowerment

Promoting the rights and responsibilities of individuals and empowering them to make personal choices is at the heart of the work. 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. Support individual choice-making.
2. Assist individuals to create positive relationships.
3. Demonstrate teaching strategies that support appropriate behavior.
4. 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. In this module, we’ll discuss how to communicate regularly with people inside and outside the agency in order to successfully manage the needs of the individuals you support.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Identify effective listening and verbal communication strategies.
2. Describe how speech and language disorders affect communication.
3. Define distance communications and list its benefits and challenges.
4. Describe the importance of confidentiality and how to maintain confidentiality in all communications.
Module 04: Assessment

Assessments are critical in determining the services and supports an individual receives. Assessments also help you identify changes and recognize new skills. As the Direct Support Professional, you have 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

The purpose of this module is to describe the importance of positive relationships, social connections and an affiliation with community groups that impact positively on the quality of our lives and the lives of the individuals we support. As the Direct Support Professional, your role is to assist the individual in developing and maintaining meaningful relationships in the community, overcoming community members’ negative attitudes and finding fulfilling activities.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Understand the supports residential and day services provide the individual.
2. Create opportunities for the community to welcome the individuals you support as valuable community members.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of community resources and community supports available to people they support.
4. 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 can be challenging and satisfying. In this module, you will learn strategies and tools that will help you teach individuals new skills that will help them realize their full potential and lead to a more independent life.

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 fading prompts.
4. Describe medical or behavioral conditions that make skill development more complex.

Module 07: Advocacy

In this module, you will explore ways to work with the individual to gather information about a situation. You will also learn about 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 experienced by the individuals you support.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of agencies and community resources.
3. Facilitate, assist or represent the individual to overcome barriers to their service needs.
4. List three ways to educate community members and organizations regarding advocacy.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the process of advocacy.
Module 08: Vocational, Educational and Career Support

Individuals with disabilities need to make as many of their own choices and decisions as possible, including where and when to work, and what career or vocational option to pursue. It is up to DSPs to help each person learn the skills they need to make these choices and decisions.

After completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Assist individuals with decision-making skills.
2. Identify resources available to assist the individual in reaching their goals.
3. Demonstrate how to support individuals who are pursuing their vocational, educational and career goals.
4. List three ways you can mobilize the resources necessary to assist the individual to reach their goal.

Module 09: Crisis Intervention

This module is designed to help give you the knowledge and skills to support skills development and ensure the safety and well-being of the individuals you support, your colleagues and yourself. Crises occur in the work that you 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. Understand the stages 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, manage the environment and stay 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 describing your work with the individuals you support in order to help communicate important information to others. It serves as a record on the individual’s behalf and should fulfill all legal, financial and regulatory requirements. Documentation makes people and programs more efficient, decreases errors or 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.
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

In this module, you will learn about many things that contribute to an individual’s best possible health, such as nutrition, healthy lifestyles, the signs and symptoms of illness, health education issues, environmental emergency response and basic good health practices.

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.
3. Identify risk behaviors and steps for promoting individual safety.
4. Describe basic good health practices that promote healthy lifestyles.
5. Describe the importance of infection control and the role of standard precautions.