Credentialing Guidebook for Direct Support Professionals

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Intended to guide Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and organizations in credentialing through NADSP. Please do not reprint or use without permission. Contact NADSP 240 Washington Ave. Extension, Suite 501, Albany, NY 12203 with permission requests.
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Contact Us

For information about and assistance with NADSP’s Credentialing, Accreditation, and Apprenticeship Programs, contact: Joseph M. Macbeth or Lisa Mount, at: 518-449-7551 or  imacbeth@nadsp.org & lisam@nysacra.org

Mailing Address

NADSP
240 Washington Ave, Extension
Suite 501
Albany, NY 12203
Welcome to the NADSP Credentialing Program!

Thank you for your interest in national direct support professional credentialing through the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. You are embarking on a unique opportunity for people who support other people to reach their goals and dreams. Gone are the days of just “taking care” of people… Today’s direct support practitioner is a professional whose work is guided by a code of ethics, and a range of skills and knowledge that will help people reach positive outcomes and live quality lives in communities of their choice. The NADSP credential process is designed to support you in your journey to master the skills you need to advance your career and become an ethical and effective DSP.

The NADSP credentialing program offers powerful benefits to practitioners, their employers and to the people they support. Direct support professionals benefit by learning and applying best practices and evidence-based skill and knowledge in the workplace. The organizations employing credentialed DSPs can provide stronger assurances of quality to funders and consumers, and can proudly market their employment of nationally credentialed staff. People receiving supports from credentialed DSPs will have the advantage of partnering with highly trained professionals committed to supporting them using the ethical and effective interventions that they have mastered. Finally, anecdotal evidence suggests that employees who complete rigorous credential programs stay on the job longer and provide a higher quality of support.

Remember, it all depends on you. Written plans are only paper. Each direct support professional has the ability to immediately make life better for the people they support regardless of budget issues, the environment, and life circumstances. The NADSP Credential prepares professionals to offer respect, choice, and dignity in every day practice enabling you to make a positive difference every day.

Congratulations on taking the first step to advancing your career… now best wishes as you begin your journey on becoming a credentialed direct support professional!

Sincerely,

The Staff and Board of Directors,
National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals
The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) is a non-profit membership association dedicated to the advancement of Direct Support as a valued profession. The Alliance’s voluntary Direct Support Professional (DSP) Credentialing program encourages professionalism in the human services workforce by providing national recognition and credentials to those human services workers who demonstrate that they have achieved mastery of the ethical principles, skills and knowledge that are at the core of professional direct support practice and requirements of the three-tiered NADSP Credentialing program. Individuals who choose to pursue these credentials are choosing to become the best in their profession. This guidebook is dedicated to guiding and supporting learners who choose this path to professional success.

The tiered voluntary credentialing program structure enables learners to receive recognition and portable credentials for mastery of requirements at each of four levels of learning and skill application in direct support. As a nationally-based program, the credentials earned at each level will help the credentialed worker to show employers his or her commitment and expertise in direct support. Employers who are seeking merit-based methods of hiring and promoting their workforce will welcome and value credentialed employees who have advanced along their career path through each level of mastery.

The initial level of this career path begins with the NADSP Registration Level (DSP-R) that recognizes DSPs who have completed all state and employer required educational requirements, stated their commitment to providing quality supports in community human services settings, and met other entry level conditions. Once Direct Support Professionals become DSP-Rs, they are eligible to pursue the two DSP Certified Credential Levels (Initial Level DSP - I and Advanced Level DSP - II) that supports the development of skill, knowledge and ethical practice in fifteen nationally recognized competency areas. DSP- I and DSP- II certified practitioners also have the opportunity to build additional expertise and seek the NADSP – Certified Specialist (DSP-III) certification in specific competency areas.
What is credentialing?
Credentiaing is a process of receiving official recognition, including an authorized certificate, for mastering and demonstrating professional standards of practice. The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals has identified and nationally validated the skills, knowledge sets, and ethical principles needed to be an effective DSP, and has organized these into a series of increasingly advanced levels of credentials. The NADSP credentials are national and portable. This means that they are credentials recognized for their value across the country and may be used to demonstrate competence in any national location where the credentialed person chooses to work.

Why is credentialing important for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)?
Direct Support Professionals have been overlooked and undervalued by policy makers, employers and community members for far too long. The support they provide is critical to assist people with disabilities to live self-directed and satisfying lives. While we know there are hundreds of thousands of highly qualified DSPs supporting people who use community human services, there are also DSPs who do not provide quality supports or practice according to ethical standards. Credentialing DSPs is important because it will ensure that people who pursue careers in direct support share a common knowledge base and skill set. Credentialing further ensures that DSPs make a commitment to practice according to the NADSP Code of Ethics. DSPs will be required to show mastery in the nationally validated competency areas through the completion of a portfolio based on job skill demonstration.

The NADSP Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program has created an opportunity to build a nationally recognized profession for Direct Support Professionals across the country. This program embraces the knowledge, skills and values of this profession and binds them in ethical practices which will result in the following:

- Credentialed DSPs will feel valued and take pride in their direct support work.
- People outside the field of community human services will see direct support work as an authentic profession with a career path.
- Credentialed DSPs will be recognized for the important work they do.
- Employers will find less DSP turnover problems if they hire and develop credentialed DSPs.
- Employers will see an increase in the consistency of high quality supports delivered by credentialed DSPs.
- DSPs will see wage enhancement programs for those who seek credentials.
- Most importantly, people who use support services will lead higher quality lives because DSPs will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to support individuals’ preferences and personal goals.
Purpose of the DSP Credentialing Guidebook

The NADSP Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program Guidebook was developed to:

1. Help DSPs and employers understand the NADSP credentialing program.
2. Explain what DSPs need to learn and do to obtain the different levels of NADSP credentials.
3. Explain the process for an organization or educational body to become accredited by NADSP.
4. Inform employers about NADSP’s credential registry, available on-line to check the credential status of a DSP being considered for employment.
5. Provide strategies that DSPs and employers can use to create mentoring relationships that will help DSPs to achieve the NADSP Certified DSP-I and DSP-II or DSP-III Specialist credentials.
Overview of the NADSP
Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program
NADSP Direct Support Professional Credential Levels and Requirements

NADSP’s national credentialing program for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) working in community human services is designed to provide national recognition for the contributions and competence of Direct Support Professionals who apply for and meet the credentialing standards. Portable and consistent in educational and work experience requirements, each credential describes a specific level of direct support practice.

Below are broad descriptions of each credential level and the basic requirements involved. More detailed guides for applicants can be found in “Applying for the DSP-R Credential,” “Applying for the DSP-I and DSP-II Credential” and “Applying for a DSP-S Credential.”

NADSP - Registered (DSP-R):
This is the first level of credential offered. The DSP-R is intended to recognize people who have entered the profession and desire to have careers in the field of community human services. It is not intended to be a credential for which NADSP prescribes or sanctions DSP competence. DSP-R applications that are complete and include payment will be reviewed within 6 weeks of receipt. Applications will not be reviewed until payment has been received. Applicants should ensure they meet the following criteria before applying.

Required elements:
1. Documentation showing a cleared criminal background check within the past twelve months in the state the DSP is employed (there is some variation by state);
2. Letter from employer indicating that the DSP:
   a. has completed all required training and orientation as prescribed by the state and an employer in community human services or a person who self-directs her or his own services and supports;
   b. has six months continuous and current employment with an employer in community human services or a person who self-directs his or her own services and supports;
   c. is an employee in good standing and legally able to work in the United States.
3. Letter of intended professional commitment from the DSP which describes the DSP’s values, commitment to and purpose for entering the profession; and
4. Signed and dated commitment to adhere to NADSP’s Code of Ethics.

Recognized award:
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as a DSP-Registered;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional - Registered;”
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on committing to the profession of direct support.

Fee: $50; Re-certification: Not required; one-time application and fee.
NADSP - Certified Initial Level (DSP-I) and Advanced Level (DSP-II):
The second and third levels of credentialing recognize Direct Support Professionals who have demonstrated competence that is measured and approved by the NADSP. These credentials set this group of DSPs apart from other DSPs in that they have demonstrated skills that typical entry level DSPs would not have acquired. As the primary competence credentials for direct support practice, the DSP-I and DSP-II credentials are the core of our credentialing program. Regardless of specialization, every DSP approved as a DSP-I and DSP-II has demonstrated skills and knowledge that enable him or her to practice high quality direct support.

Required elements for DSP-I and DSP-II:
1. Must be a DSP-Registered for a DSP-I credential and a DSP-I for a DSP-II credential;
2. Proof of completion of 100 training and related instruction hours for DSP-I and an additional 100 hours for DSP-II, including classroom/online learning and such strategies as: skills mentoring or learning seminars or applying the learning through on-the-job training or portfolio development sessions, from an NADSP accredited education or training program;
3. Proof of two years of continuous and current work with a community human services employer (an individual/family who self-directs their supports or a provider organization) for DSP-I and no additional employment requirement for DSP-II;
4. Professional resume;
5. Updated letter of professional commitment;
6. Letter of support/recommendation from a person to whom the DSP provides service or, in some situations, their family member or legal representative;
7. Portfolio of work samples that demonstrate competence in 4 of the 15 NADSP competency areas for DSP-I and 4 additional competency areas for DSP-II;
8. Signed and dated re-commitment to adhere to the NADSP Code of Ethics.

Recognized award:
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as NADSP – Certified DSP-I or DSP-II;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional - Certified,”;
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on his/her achievement.

Fee: $150

Re-certification:
The following requirements for DSP-I Renewal must be met every two years after the DSP-I has been awarded except if the DSP-II has been awarded during the same time period and the same exception for the DSP-II renewal if the DSP-III Specialist has been awarded during the same period:

1. The completion of 20 hours of continuing education in the area of community human services
   a. Up to 8 hours can include employer required re-certifications, for example:
      i. CPR,
      ii. First Aid,
      iii. Abuse and neglect,
iv. Medication administration,
v. Mandt or other required training/education on behavior support and intervention,
vi. OSHA required safety such as handling blood borne pathogens and fire safety

b. The remaining 12 (or more) hours may include advanced professional development courses of the DSP's choosing, for example:
   i. Participation in local, state, and national DD/ID conferences
   ii. On-line course completion on topics pertaining to human services
   iii. College coursework completion on a relevant topic in human services
   iv. Completion of workshops offered by professional human service organizations on relevant topics

c. Documentation of the completion of all continuing education is required. The date(s) and topic or title of the training, number of training hours, and the name and title of the presenter/trainer). The training must have been completed during the two year period between certifications.
d. Continuing Education Units (CEU's) are NOT required.

2. Signed and dated re-commitment to adhere to the NADSP Code of Ethics.

3. Fee: $50.00

NADSP- Certified Specialist Level - (DSP- III):
The specialist credential is designed to recognize DSPs who have obtained specialized training and have demonstrated competence in one of five specialized support service areas. Four of the five specialty areas are described in detail below and include: Inclusion, Health Support, Employment Support, and Mentoring and Supervision. A fifth specialty area in Positive Behavior Support will be available in 2012 and an Aging Specialty in 2013.

NADSP- Certified Specialist (DSP-III) in Inclusion: The DSP-Specialist in Inclusion credential (DSPIII-S-I) recognizes competence in supporting the inclusion of people receiving support services in the communities in which they live and work. These specialists understand why inclusion is important and have demonstrated the skills to enhance inclusion of people receiving support services including: understanding their role in community inclusion, matching community resources with individual interests, building bridges within communities and utilizing natural supports.

Required elements:
1. Must have been awarded the DSP- II credential;
2. Training/education of 40 hours in Inclusion that must be approved by an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator), completed during the 2 years prior to the DSP-III Specialist application, and none of the required 40 hours can duplicate the training/education hours used for the 200 hours required for the combined DSP I and DSP II credentials.
3. Three Portfolio work samples - each demonstrating competence in 3 different and essential components of Inclusion;
4. Letter from the employer that: a. verifies the applicant has one year of continuous employment providing inclusion opportunities for people who use community
human services, and b. supports the applicant's competence and professional integrity in the area of inclusion.

**Recognized award:**
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as a Specialist in Inclusion;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional – Specialist - Inclusion,”
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on his or her achievement.

**Fee:** $100

**Re-certification:** In order to maintain DSP-Specialist in Inclusion status the DSP must be re-certified every two years. The re-certification process requires:
1. Proof of re-certification of the DSP-Certified credential;
2. Proof of completion of 5 hours of continuing education/training in inclusion that is approved by the employer and completed during the 2 years between certifications;
3. Signed and dated re-commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics

**Fee:** $10

**NADSP- Certified Specialist (DSP-III) in Health Support:** The DSP-Specialist in Health Support credential (DSP-III-HS) recognizes competence in supporting people utilizing community human services to make good choices related to their health. These healthy choices may include things such as eating healthy, visiting the doctor regularly, and getting the right amount of exercise. These specialists understand health-related issues across the life span for people with disabilities and can support individuals working with health care providers.

**Required elements:**
1. Must have been awarded the DSP- II credential;
2. Training/education of 40 hours in Health Support that must be approved by an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator), completed during the 2 years prior to the DSP-III-Specialist application, and none of the required 40 hours can duplicate the training/education hours used for the 200 hours required for the combined DSP I and DSP II credentials
3. Three Portfolio work samples - each demonstrating competence in 3 different and essential components of health support;
4. Letter from the employer that: a. verifies the applicant has one year of continuous employment providing health support opportunities for people who use
community human services, and b. supports the applicant’s competence and professional integrity in the area of health support.

**Recognized award:**
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as a Specialist in Health Support;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional – Specialist-Health Support,” and
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on his/her achievement.

**Fee:** $100

**Re-certification:** In order to maintain DSP-Specialist in Health Support status, the DSP must be re-certified every two years. The re-certification process requires:
1. Proof of re-certification of the DSP-Certified credential;
2. Proof of completion of 5 hours of continuing education/training in health support that is approved by the employer and completed during the 2 years between certifications;
3. Signed and dated re-commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics

**Fee:** $10

**NADSP-Certified Specialist (DSP-III) in Employment Support:** The DSP-Specialist in Employment Support credential (DSP-S-ES) recognizes competence in knowing and understanding the value of work to all people and their role in the facilitation of positive work opportunities for those they support. Employment Support specialists help create these opportunities by using a personalized combination of job development, job coaching, and interpersonal skills to make employment a reality.

**Required elements:**
1. Must have been awarded the DSP- II credential;
2. Training/education of 40 hours in Employment Support that must be approved by an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator), completed during the 2 years prior to the DSP-III-Specialist application, and none of the required 40 hours can duplicate the training/education hours used for the 200 hours required for the combined DSP I and DSP II credentials.
3. Three Portfolio work samples - each demonstrating competence in 3 different and essential components of employment support;
4. Letter from the employer that: a. verifies the applicant has one year of continuous employment providing employment support opportunities for people who use
community human services, and b. supports the applicant’s competence and professional integrity in the area of employment support.

**Recognized award:**
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as a Specialist in Employment Support;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional – Specialist – Employment Support,” and
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on his/her achievement.

*Fee:* $100

**Re-certification:** In order to maintain DSP-Specialist in Employment Support status the DSP must be re-certified every two years. The re-certification process requires:
1. Proof of re-certification of the DSP-Certified credential;
2. Proof of completion of 5 hours of continuing education/training in employment support that is approved by the employer and completed during the 2 years between certifications;
3. Signed and dated re-commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics

*Fee:* $10

**NADSP-Certified Specialist (DSP-III) in Mentoring and Supervision:** The DSP-Specialist in Mentoring and Supervision credential (DSP-S-MS) recognizes competence in the following areas: staff orientation, competency-based training method, supporting employee development, building successful teams, employee appreciation and motivation, organizational involvement, employee recruitment and marketing, realistic job previews, selection and hiring and how to assess and address workforce challenges.

*Required elements:*
1. Must have been awarded the DSP-II credential;
2. Training/education of 40 hours in Inclusion that must be approved by an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator), completed during the 2 years prior to the DSP-III-Specialist application, and none of the required 40 hours can duplicate the training/education hours used for the 200 hours required for the combined DSP I and DSP II credentials.
3. Three Portfolio work samples - each demonstrating competence in 3 different and essential components of mentoring and supervision;
4. Letter from the employer that: a. verifies the applicant has one year of continuous employment demonstrating mentoring and supervision knowledge, skills and attitudes in his or her work, and b. supports the applicant’s competence and professional integrity in the area of mentoring and supervision.
Recognized award:
1. Officially embossed certificate that identifies the DSP as a Specialist in Mentoring and Supervision;
2. Lapel pin that says “Direct Support Professional – Specialist – Mentoring and Supervision,” and
3. Personalized letter from NADSP congratulating the DSP on his/her achievement.

Fee: $100

Re-certification: In order to maintain DSP-Specialist in Mentoring and Supervision status the DSP must be re-certified every two years. The re-certification process requires:
1. Proof of re-certification of the DSP-Certified credential;
2. Proof of completion of 5 hours of continuing education/training in mentoring and supervision that is approved by the employer and completed during the 2 years between certifications;
3. Signed and dated re-commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics

Fee: $10

Please note: NADSP is also currently developing a DSP-Specialist Credential in Positive Behavior Support. More information will be added here when this credential becomes available in 2012. In addition a Specialty Area in Aging is being developed and will become available in 2013.
The NADSP Registry:
Verification of Credential Status by DSPs and Employers

NADSP requests applicant permission to publish credential status via NADSP’s on-line credential registry. Applicants may decline if they do not wish to be listed. Any employer or member of the public currently has access to this registry, which provides DSP names, states, and level of credentials. Please visit www.NADSP.org to access NADSP’s on-line credential registry. Registry users must know a DSP’s name and the state in which the DSP lived at the time when he or she achieved the credential to view his or her status.

It is NADSP’s policy that under no circumstances will NADSP sell or give out its membership list or the names and contact information of the credentialing program participants to any person or organization. This list will remain the sole responsibility and under the full control of NADSP and will never be shared or sold.

Education and Training Requirements for Each Credential Level

Consistent training and education requirements are a key component of NADSP’s national credential. At each level, the DSP credential applicant is responsible for ensuring that all educational requirements are met. DSPs should ask their employers if they currently participate in an education or training program accredited by NADSP whose educational hours will count toward credentialing. If a DSP’s employer does not choose or is unable to participate in an accredited education/training program, the employer has the opportunity to seek NADSP accreditation for their own education/training program. The process of pursuing accreditation for a training program is detailed in the Accreditation section of this Guidebook. DSPs also have the option of participating in an accredited education/training program independently.

DSP-Registered Educational Requirements: At this level, the only education requirement is that you have completed all of the state mandated training and your employer’s mandated training (typically within the first 6 months of employment). In most states where there is mandatory training, this includes training topics such as first aid, CPR, OSHA blood borne pathogens, maltreatment of vulnerable adults, and other similar health and safety topics. This is usually (but not always) about 40 hours a week of classroom/online curricula and on-the-job training with a supervisor. Employer and state mandated training will vary from employer to employer and from state to state. The purpose of the NADSP requirement for the DSP-Registered level is to ensure that, at the
time of application, the DSP has completed and is current with all required training. At this level, the DSP must submit to NADSP a letter from the employer verifying that the DSP has completed all state and employer required training.

**DSP- I and DSP - II Educational Requirements**: At these two levels in the DSP credentialing program, DSPs must complete 100 hours for the DSP - I and 100 hours for DSP - II of Training/Education from an NADSP-Accredited Program and related instruction (For example, classroom/online learning and such strategies as: skills mentoring or discussion seminars or applying the learning through on-the-job training or portfolio development sessions) . Accredited curricula and training/education programs have been reviewed by NADSP and meet the established criteria for yielding appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes for learners who are pursuing NADSP credentialing. A list of currently accredited curricula and education/training programs can be viewed at https://www.nadsp.org/accreditation/list-of-accredited-organizations.html

**DSP- Specialist Educational Requirements**: At this level, the DSP must complete 40 hours of education/training, approved by the employer, to effectively master the skills, knowledge and ethical practice in the specialty area for which the applicant is applying. The forty hours of training/education must be completed during the two years prior to application in the specialty area. The DSP must submit a record of these training hours. This record must include: 1) the date and name or topic of each training/education event attended, 2) intended learning outcomes or objectives of the event, 3) the name and title/position of the presenter/speaker/author, and 4) the number of hours the DSP participated in the training/education event.

In addition to verifying the completion of the required hours of training/education, the DSP-Specialist candidate is required to submit three portfolio work samples with narrative descriptions, each covering four skill statements, to demonstrate the candidate's mastery in the required skill and knowledge areas required for the Specialty Area.

**Creating a Direct Support Professional Credentialing Plan**

Once a DSP decides that credentialing is right for them, the next step is to sit down and think about how he or she will complete the credentialing process over time. Becoming a credentialed DSP isn’t something a DSP does overnight. It is a process that takes time and considerable energy. The process is designed to challenge a DSP to demonstrate commitment to the profession and competence in performing his or her job.
The DSP Professional Credential Plan can help the DSP understand the steps they need to take to become credentialed. It can help to clarify professional goals and personal values. The Credential Plan is an optional tool you can use to help you decide if you are interested in pursuing DSP Credentials. NADSP encourages every DSP to consider credentialing as part of a satisfying career in direct support and community human services. Good luck!

DSP Professional Credential Plan - Optional Worksheet

Think about your goals, qualities, and achievements, and write your thoughts below.

1. Read through the 15 NADSP Competency Areas and choose which specific competencies you’d like to develop more:

2. My Credential Goal is (e.g. to be Registered in three months, or to be Certified by next year):

3. Why is this goal important to you?

4. Specific Action Steps I will take to achieve my credential goal:

5. Time frame to accomplish this goal:

6. Resources needed to achieve this goal:

7. My supervisor or mentor can help me by:

8. How will you know when you have achieved this goal?
For Direct Support Professionals
Applying for the NADSP–Registered (DSP-R) Credential
What is the NADSP-Registered (DSP-R) Credential?
The DSP-R is the first level of credentialing for DSPs offered through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals’ national credentialing program. This level of credential recognizes people who have entered the direct support profession and desire to provide high quality and ethical supports in the field of community human services.

Why is it important that I apply for a NADSP-Registered (DSP-R) credential?
By applying for and receiving a DSP-Registered status you acknowledge your commitment to the profession of Direct Support. You become part of a national group of professionals committed to the mission and goals of NADSP and the values of the Code of Ethics.

How do I apply to become a DSP-Registered?
— Complete the DSP-R application packet that follows these instructions (or complete the application materials online)
— Fill out and sign the application form.
— Review, sign, and date the Commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics.
— Write a statement of commitment to the field of direct support.
— Gather and submit all other required documents on the checklist with your application.
— Pay the registration fee.
*Please do not submit your application until all required documents are included. Send the printed completed application and required materials to:
NADSP
240 Washington Ave. Extension
Albany, NY 12203
Attn: NADSP Credentialing Program

What happens after I apply?
You’re NADSP-Registration (DSP-R) application packet will be reviewed by NADSP within 6 weeks of receipt. If it meets the criteria for the DSP-R credential, you will receive your DSP-Registered recognition package. The recognition package includes: a printed certificate that personally identifies you as DSP-Registered; a lapel pin that reinforces the achievement of the NADSP-Registered (DSP-R) credential; a personal letter from NADSP congratulating you on receiving your new credential and your commitment to the profession of direct support, and a one-year FREE NADSP membership.

Once you become credentialed at the DSP-Registered level, you will be eligible to move forward to additional certification levels that recognize your skill-based competency in providing direct support to individuals who use community human services.
**NADSP-Registered (DSP-R) Application**

**Direct Support Professional Information**

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DSP Employment History: (enter the total number of years and months you have worked as a Direct Support Professional with all employers)

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<tr>
<th>Years:</th>
<th>Months:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Current Employer Information**

(To be completed by an Employer Representative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Current Employer (Agency Provider or person/family who self-directs supports):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer address 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer address 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City: City and Zip Code:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: Phone, Fax: Web Site Address:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Continuous employment: Yes | No If no, explain gaps (circle one) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Employer Representative Phone E-mail Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Many important NADSP communications are sent by email, so please include if you use email.*
Check list for Required DSP- Registered Documents that Must Accompany the Application Form

(Applications will be processed only after all documents and payment are received)

(Note: Do NOT enter “date of application” on the application form UNTIL you send or upload the application and accompanying documents)

- Copy of current (within 12 months of the application date) Criminal Background Check showing proof of clearance
- Statement from the community human service employer stating that the applicant:
  - has completed all required employer and state level training,
  - is an employee in good standing and legally able to work in the United States, and
  - has six months of current and continuous employment.
- Statement (dated and signed) from the Direct Support Professional that describes his or her:
  - reasons for working in the field of direct support,
  - values related to direct support work, and
  - professional commitment to the field of direct support.
- Signed and dated Commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics form
- Application / Registration Fee: ____________
- Application proof of payment:
  - Check attached (check #:______________) personal or agency check (circle one)
  - Charge (Pay Pal confirmation number (for on-line payments only) ____________)
  - Purchase order (purchase order number:______________)

Please initial only one of the following two statements.

_________ Initial here
I give my permission to NADSP to verify my status as DSP-Registered to all current and future employers who may inquire about my status. I understand that no personal information will be released.

I understand that this release of information may be revoked by me at any time after NADSP receives a written notice that is signed and dated by me. If I choose to revoke my release of information, I understand that no verification of my DSP-Registered status can be released to employers who make such an inquiry.

_________ Initial here
I DO NOT give my permission to NADSP to release information regarding my status as a DSP-Registered

I verify that all information on this application and attached documents are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

_________________________________________  _____________________________
Signature of the Direct Support Professional  Date

_________________________________________  Do NOT write below this line
For Office Use Only

Date Application Received: ____________________________
NADSP Identification number assigned: ____________________________
Date payment received: ____________________________  Date DSP-Registered status awarded: ____________________________
Date DSP-Registered credential sent: ____________________________
Commitment to the NADSP CODE OF ETHICS

I have reviewed the NADSP Code of Ethics and make a commitment to uphold and honor the NADSP Code in my daily practice and to follow the guiding principles contained within the Code. These principles include:

**Person Centered Supports**, I pledge that my first allegiance is to the person(s) I support.

**Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being**, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support.

**Integrity and Responsibility**, I support the mission and authenticity of my profession.

**Confidentiality**, I will safeguard and respect the privacy of the people I support.

**Justice, Fairness and Equity**, I affirm the human rights, civil rights and responsibilities of the people I support.

**Respect**, I respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support.

**Relationships**, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

**Self Determination**, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.

**Advocacy**, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

_______________________________
Signature

_______________________________
Date
Applying for the NADSP – Certified Initial Level DSP- I and Advanced Level DSP- II
What is the DSP-Certified Credential?
The NADSP-Certified DSP – I and DSP – II are the second and third levels of credentialing for DSPs offered through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals’ national credentialing program. These two credential level recognize direct support professionals who have demonstrated competence that is evaluated by the NADSP. The DSP – I and DSP – II sets these groups of DSPs apart from other DSPs in that they have demonstrated a mastery of the skills that typical entry level DSPs would not have yet acquired.

Why is it important that I apply for the DSP – I or DSP – II levels of certification?
By applying for and achieving a DSP- I and DSP – II levels of certification, you acknowledge your continuing commitment to be a highly trained DSP who has developed competence in providing supports to individuals who use community human services.

How do I apply to achieve the Initial Level DSP I and Advanced Level DSP – II Certification?
— Complete the DSP- I or DSP - II application packet that follows these instructions
  (also available online at www.NADSP.org/dsp-credentialing) in the future
— Complete the application form.
— Review, sign, and date the Re-Commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics form.
— Gather and submit all required Portfolio documents as a separate packet with your printed application (or online in the future)
— Pay the registration fee of $100 for DSP-I and $50 for the DSP-II.
  *Please do not submit your application until all required documents are included. Send the printed completed application and required materials to:
  NADSP
  240 Washington Ave. Extension
  Albany, NY 12203
  Attn: NADSP Credentialing Program

What happens after I apply?
Your DSP-I or DSP-II application packet will be reviewed by NADSP trained portfolio reviewers within 6 weeks of receipt. If it meets the criteria for certification, you will receive your DSP-I or DSP-II recognition package. The package includes: an embossed certificate that personally identifies you as NADSP-Certified Initial Level DSP-I or NADSP-Certified Advanced Level DSP-II; a lapel pin that states “Direct Support Professional-Certified”, and a personal letter from NADSP congratulating you on your achievement.
### Direct Support Professional Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Application:</th>
<th>Check Level of Certification</th>
<th>DSP I</th>
<th>DSP II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name:</td>
<td>Middle Name:</td>
<td>Last Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td>State:</td>
<td>ZIP Code:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth:</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>Cell:</td>
<td>*Email (as available):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP Employment History: (enter the number of years and months you have worked as a Direct Support Professional)</td>
<td>Years:</td>
<td>Months:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Current Employer Information
(To be completed by an Employer Representative)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Employer Representative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Many important NADSP communications are by email, so please include if you use email*
Checklist for Required NADSP-Certified DSP- I OR DSP- II Documents that Must Accompany the Online or Downloaded Application Form

(Applications will be processed only after all documents and payment are received)

(Note: Do NOT enter “date of application” on the application form until you upload or send the application and accompanying documents)

- Proof of DSP - Registered status such as a copy of DSP-R certificate or NADSP ID #.
- Statement from your employer (an individual who uses community human services or a provider agency) stating that the applicant has two years of current and continuous employment at the time of applying for DSP-I and DSP-II.
- Updated Applicant statement of continued professional commitment to the field of community human services and direct support work.
- Copy of a current professional resume.
- Letter of support/recommendation from a person to whom you provide service or, in some situations, from a family member or legal representative.
- Signed and dated copy of the Re-Commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics form.
- Portfolio work samples that demonstrate your competence in 4 competencies (DSP-I) and 4 additional competencies (DSP-II) of the 15 NADSP Competency Areas.
- Completed permission forms from individuals being supported or a family member or a guardian indicating what information is OK to share in the portfolio.
- Copies of the training or education records from an NADSP accredited program verifying that the applicant has met the requirements of 200 hours of training/education and related instruction (skills mentoring, discussion seminars, on-the-job application of learning, portfolio development pr).
- Application Fee: [ ] $100.00 DSP-I [ ] $50.00 DSP-II Check one
- Application proof of payment:
  - Check attached (check #:________________) personal or agency check (circle one)
  - Charge (Pay Pal confirmation number (for on-line payments only) ____________)
  - Purchase order (purchase order number:________________)

Please initial only one of the following two statements.

_________ initial here I give my permission to NADSP to verify my status as a DSP-Certified to all current and future employers who may inquire about my status. I understand that no personal information will be released.

I understand that this release of information may be revoked by me at any time after NADSP receives a written notice that is signed and dated by me. If I choose to revoke my release of information, I understand that no verification of my DSP-Certified status can be released to employers who make such an inquiry.

_________ initial here I DO NOT give my permission to NADSP to release information regarding my status as a DSP-Certified.

I verify that all information on this application and attached documents are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of the Direct Support Professional ___________________________ Date ____________

Do NOT write below this line

or Office Use Only

Date Application Received: ___________________________ Date DSP-Certified status awarded: ____________

Date DSP-Certified credential and Award Packet sent: ___________________________ Date payment received: ____________
Re-Commitment to the NADSP CODE OF ETHICS

I have reviewed the NADSP Code of Ethics and make a re-commitment to uphold and honor the NADSP Code in my daily practice and to follow the guiding principles contained within the Code. These principles include:

**Person Centered Supports**, I pledge that my first allegiance is to the person(s) I support.

**Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being**, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support.

**Integrity and Responsibility**, I support the mission and authenticity of my profession.

**Confidentiality**, I will safeguard and respect the privacy of the people I support.

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**Relationships**, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

**Self Determination**, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.

**Advocacy**, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

__________________________________________________________________________

Signature Date
Creating a DSP-Certified Credential Portfolio

Each NADSP-Certified DSP-I or DSP-II applicant will assemble a portfolio of four work samples/reflection statements (DSP-I) or four additional work samples/reflection statements (DSP-II) to demonstrate his or her educational and training achievements and mastery of 8 total of the 15 competency areas approved by the NADSP Executive Committee. The NADSP-Certified DSP-I and DSP-II levels of credentialing is the core NADSP competency credential, reflecting a direct support practice in line with best practices and the NADSP Code of Ethics.

The portfolio development process offers DSPs the opportunity to shape and direct their own learning and assessment experience. DSPs create samples of their real direct support work that demonstrate proficiency in the required competencies, and show how they applied their skills and knowledge toward the outcomes desired by the people they support. The portfolio is used as a competency-based assessment to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the applicant.

This section of the Guidebook provides a detailed description of each portfolio component as well as instructions for completing forms and guidelines for the assessment of the NADSP-Certified DSP-I and DSP-II portfolio. The DSP-Specialist portfolio development process and completion of work samples will be described in the DSP-Specialist section.

Overview of the NADSP-Certified DSP-I and DSP-II Portfolio Components

The portfolio is designed to illustrate, in a comprehensive way, the many skills, values and attitudes that each applicant contributes in his or her daily work supporting people who use community human services. Each applicant’s portfolio must include numerous components. Briefly, the components are: a statement updating the applicant’s commitment to the field of community human services, a professional resume, a letter of support from an individual who receives supports from the DSP, a signed statement committing the DSP to honor and uphold the NADSP Code of Ethics, four authentic work samples/reflection statements (DSP-I and DSP-II, permission forms from individuals receiving supports indicating what information is OK to share with NADSP in the portfolio, and training/education records.

The authentic work samples/reflection statements are the majority and most essential components of the portfolio. Each work sample is a collection of work-related products showing the applicant’s knowledge, skill, and understanding relating to one of the 15 NADSP Competency Areas. By creating the work sample, a DSP practices and demonstrates what he or she has learned through training, education, and experience about that competency area. The DSP may learn new things as he or he develops the work sample stating how he or she is providing direct support to the specific people he
or she serves. The work sample may include both written documents and non-written information, such as photographs, journal entries, videotapes, and audiotapes. The applicant must also write a reflective statement that describes what is included in the work sample, what they did, what they learned in the process, what the outcomes were, and specifically how this demonstrates the chosen competency.

The portfolio components are briefly described in the following table. Detailed instructions on how to complete each of these components are added later.

**Portfolio Components**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Title Page</strong>: A cover page that contains information to identify the applicant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>Table of Contents</strong>: An organizational page that shows how sections are arranged and the pages where sections are located.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Updated or New Statement of Professional Commitment</strong>: Provides the reviewers with an updated or new statement (from the DSP-Registered statement) of the applicant's professional goals and personal views on community human services.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Resume</strong>: An organized summary of the applicant's work history, including the places worked and positions held within specific organizations, and an educational record.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Letter/Communication of Support</strong>: At least one letter of support from a person the applicant supports, or in some situations, a family member or a guardian.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>Re-Commitment to the Code of Ethics</strong>: A signed and dated re-commitment agreeing to continue to adhere to the Direct Support Professional Code of Ethics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Authentic Work Samples with Reflective Statements</strong>: A set of samples of the applicant's hands-on work that demonstrates competence in 4 of the 15 NADSP competency areas for DSP-C Level I (Initial) and then 4 different competency samples to achieve DSP-C Level II (Advanced). Includes work samples and reflective statements about what the applicant has learned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>Releases of Information</strong>: Permission forms from individuals receiving supports or a family member or guardian indicating what information is OK to share with NADSP in the portfolio. If no permission is granted, identifying information must be blackened.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>Training/Education Records</strong>: Copies of the applicant's training/education from an NADSP accredited program and related instruction record demonstrating that the applicant has met the requirement of 100 hours of education/training and related instruction for both the DSP – I and DSP – II application.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Developing the Portfolio**

Organizing a quality portfolio takes time and commitment, but it can be a fun and informative process. The portfolio may be developed as a component of your participation in a NADSP accredited educational or training program. Your employer might offer you the opportunity to work with a group of DSPs who are also preparing portfolios. Together, DSP applicants can brainstorm ideas and think through the aspects of different ways to develop authentic work samples and reflection statements. Applicants may also find it helpful to ask for support from other DSPs, education/training instructors or mentors as they develop their unique portfolio.
Portfolios are a useful tool for tracking an applicant’s professional growth and development. For example, the applicant might document the growth of an empowering support relationship through journal entries over a period of time and submit these as an authentic work sample. The reflection statement is a narrative that describes the process, activities, outcomes, and thoughts about how and what was learned through the experience. The portfolio that the applicant assembles is an opportunity to showcase the skills necessary for supporting people in achieving their personal and desired outcomes. Portfolios tell the story of the applicant’s professional journey.

**Work Sample / Reflective Statement**

Each work sample should begin with a reflective statement by the applicant of approximately 1000 words. The reflective statement should include a description of what the applicant did, what they learned in the process, how they interacted with individuals supported or co-workers or community members, what the outcomes of their support or professional growth were, and how they integrated the training or education learning into their work. The applicant should also write about how they measured the effectiveness of their direct support work, and reflect on how they might continue to grow in this competency area and in supporting individuals to achieve their own goals.

**Work Sample Materials**

Portfolio work samples will show the applicant's competence in 8 (DSP-I and DSP-II combined) of the 15 competency areas approved by the NADSP Executive Committee. Work samples are put together over a period of time and demonstrate the applicant’s ability to apply the competency in actual work situations. All work sample materials should be clearly related to the work that was done by the applicant. The work samples should address at least two of the skill standards in each competency area, but need not address all the skill standards in a given competency. In reflective statements and in work samples, the portfolio reviewers will seek evidence that the applicant demonstrates overall mastery of the competency area. Work samples are creative products illustrating competency, and may be both written and non-written. Work sample formats include (but are not limited to) the following list:

- Written journal entries
- Communication logs
- Photo essays
  - Hard copy
  - Digital copy
- Scrapbook entries
  - Hard copy
  - Digital copy
- Video tapes or DVD
- Audio tapes or CD-ROM
- Oral presentation
- Personal belief statement
- Career goal essays
- Slide Presentations
  - PowerPoint - Digital
  - Photo slide show
- Photo Albums
  - Hard copy
  - Digital
- Web Page
- Brochures
- Posters
- Artwork

All work samples, regardless of format, must meet the following criteria:

1. The sample must be the work of and produced by the applicant.
2. Each work sample item must show skill and knowledge of the competency area.
3. There must be variety across work samples; learners may not use the same work sample for more than one competency area.
5. Confidentiality of the individuals receiving support, co-workers, family members, and others must be protected. If no permission is granted by the individual or family member or guardian, all names and other identifying information must be changed, deleted or blackened.
6. Permission forms from all parties included in the work sample must be attached to that work sample.

Creativity and the Credential Portfolio
Each NADSP-Certified DSP-I and DSP-II and DSP-Specialist applicant has the opportunity to use the credential portfolio to document skills, knowledge and experience in innovative ways. A broad range of media is permitted within the portfolio format. For example, portfolios are likely to include printed documents, but may also include other forms of media such as photographs, videotapes, audiotapes, or other creative products illustrating the applicant’s abilities in a particular competency area.

It is important, however, that applicants use elements that will truly show their individual and unique direct support work. For example, if the competency area is building and maintaining friendships, stickers showing friends together may look nice, but it will not help the reviewer see how you helped someone to develop more friendships. A better visual to show your work might be a ticket from a musical event the person attended with your support, a picture of them and a new friend, and/or a tracking form on which you have recorded each time they planned and had a visit with a friend.

Portfolio Planning Strategies
The quality of the portfolio can significantly affect whether or not the applicant is able to persuade the review team that they should be awarded the DSP-Certified credential. Portfolios should reflect the applicant’s best work. This can be accomplished using the following strategies:
1. Preparation:
   a. Make a list of possible work samples and different formats.
   b. Think critically about how these samples demonstrate best practices in the field of direct support work and how they best showcase the skills, knowledge and attitudes in each of the competency areas selected.
   c. Identify what items to include in each work sample and gather all the required components of the portfolio.
   d. Select only those samples with information that is relevant and significant for the competency areas included in the portfolio.
      i. Samples that show authentic, robust evidence of the applicant’s growth and effectiveness as a DSP.
      ii. Samples that show realistic skilled-based performance.
      iii. Samples that are purposeful and make sense in direct support work.
2. Presentation:
   a. Carefully consider different formats for each work sample.
   b. Select the best format presentation for each work sample - different formats may work better for specific samples.

3. Particulars:
   a. Organize work samples in a logical order.
   b. Develop a reflective statement for each work sample.
   c. Evaluate each work sample.
   d. Scanning all portfolio materials and burning them onto a CD or DVR is NADSP’s preferred method for displaying your Reflection Statements and Work Samples.
   e. If this method poses a significant barrier to the DSP, use quality material for displaying your reflection statements/work samples.
      i. Use quality 3 ring binders. (NOTE: The entire portfolio will be scanned for the NADSP Review Team, please DO NOT place pages inside plastic sheets because each page would need to be removed for the scanning process)
      ii. Mount photos securely to their background.
      iii. Present materials professionally, but remember to think about the environmental impact – simple, high quality materials are ideal.
   f. Correct all spelling, grammar and typo errors before submitting portfolio.
      i. Edit for neatness and ease of reading. Make sure that hand written samples are legible.
      ii. Keep samples well organized.
   g. Make a personal copy of your credential portfolio – PLEASE NOTE THAT SUBMITTED PORTFOLIOS WILL NOT BE RETURNED.
   h. Keep portfolios to a maximum limit of 70 pages.
Components of the Credential Portfolio- A Closer Look

Title Page
The Title Page is a cover page that contains descriptive information identifying the applicant. It must include:

- Applicant’s name and contact information
- A copy of the DSP – Registered credential OR the NADSP ID number
- Employer, work site location and supervisor name
- Date of submission of the completed portfolio
- Competency areas addressed in the portfolio

Each Competency Area should also have a Title Page that lists the Competency Area Title and the Skill Standards that the DSP intends to demonstrate mastery.

![Credential Portfolio Title Page]

- Applicant's Name
- Address
- NADSP ID#
- Phone No.
- E-mail
- Applicant's Employer
- Address
- Phone No.
- Applicant's Supervisor
- Date of Submission
- Competency Areas included in this portfolio
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
Table of Contents

The *Table of Contents* is an organizing page that shows NADSP Portfolio Reviewers how sections are arranged and the page numbers where sections are located. Entries should be organized as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio Component</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Professional Commitment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter/Communication of Support</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Ethics Commitment Statement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Samples with Reflective Statements</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Competency Area: Supporting Health and Wellness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Sample—Exercise record</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Statement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Competency Area: Vocational, Educational and Career Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See Video - Bob's Job - Included in this portfolio package</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Statement</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Etc.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Training Record</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS Learner Transcript and List of Related Instruction</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of how to reference a non-written work sample
Statement of Professional Commitment

The *Statement of Professional Commitment* provides the portfolio reviewers with an updated or new statement (from the initial DSP-R statement) that introduces the applicant’s professional goals and reaffirms, modifies or states new personal views and values on community human services. This statement should describe the applicant’s reasons for working in the field of direct support, their values related to direct support work and professional commitment to the field of direct support. When reading the applicant’s personal commitment, others will observe how the DSP organizes ideas in writing and how they reflect on their beliefs and goals. The Statement of Professional Commitment should be 1 to 2 pages typed and signed. *Professional Commitment Organizer (Optional Worksheet)* is a tool for applicants to use in developing their *Statement of Professional Commitment*. This sample form provides the applicant with some ideas about what to include in the professional commitment statement and ways to organize her or his thoughts. A copy of the worksheet can be found in Appendix A.

---

**Professional Commitment Development Strategy:**

1. Think about your skills, experiences, achievements and goals.
2. Decide what experiences best show your skills, values and beliefs.
3. Write a first draft of your professional commitment statement.
4. Review your draft with other DSPs, instructors, supervisors, and mentors. Use their feedback to revise and clarify your statement. Then write a second draft.
5. Type your final draft. Proofread and correct all your mistakes before submitting.
6. Make sure the FINAL flows with paragraphs and IS NOT a "Lead Statement and Response format"

---

**CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO**

*Professional Commitment Organizer*

The "lead statements" below are designed to help you organize information for your Statement of Professional Commitment and the FINAL product should be in paragraph form and NOT a “Lead Statement – Response format”.

I work in human services because:

My career goals are:

I will reach my goals by doing:

My strengths and qualities are:

My experiences, personal and professional, which relate to human services are:

My personal views and values on community human services are:

Other things I would like the reviewer to know about me include:

My commitment to the field of direct support is:
Resume

A resume is an organized summary of the applicant’s work history, educational background and experience as a Direct Support Professional. It provides information about career experiences and education. It includes a summary or listing of relevant professional or work experience and education. The résumé should include the applicant’s name, address and contact information. It can also include a statement about your long-term career goals. It may include some or all of the following information: 1) your qualifications, 2) long-term objectives and motivations, 3) personal qualities, 4) skills, 5) accomplishments, 6) interests and 7) hobbies. Many resume formats exist. Explore different formats and select the one that best reflects your professional style. The following web resources provide basic information on resume formats: http://www.career.vt.edu/JOBSEARC/Resumes/formats.htm
http://www.career.cornell.edu/resumesAndCoverLetters/formats.html .

The Professional Resume Builder (Optional Worksheet) is a tool for applicants to use in developing their resume. A copy of the Professional Resume Builder can be found in Appendix B.

Resume Development Strategy:

1. Think about your skills and experiences as a Direct Support Professional.
2. List work history chronologically and employer contact information.
3. Write a first draft of your professional resume.
4. Review your draft with other DSPs, instructors, supervisors, and mentors. Use their feedback to revise and clarify the information. Then write a second draft.
5. Format and type your final draft. Proofread and correct all your mistakes before submitting it.
6. Decide whether to include your references, contact information on the resume or state that you will provide references upon request.

CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO
Professional Resume Builder

This worksheet is designed to help you organize information for your professional resume. Use additional sheets as needed to thoroughly list the information for your resume - even if you do not use all of the information you list, it is helpful to have it as you develop your resume.

List your contact information as you would like it to appear on your professional resume:

Identify your professional career goal:

List your educational and training experiences:

List your direct support work experiences in chronological order starting with your most recent experiences. Include both paid and/or voluntary experiences:

List other experiences, achievements, interests or hobbies which are relevant to your professional development:

List the contact information for the people who have agreed to provide references on your behalf:
Letter/Communication of Support

- The Letter or Communication of Support from at least one person the applicant supports. The communication of support can be audio or otherwise recorded if the person is not able to communicate through writing. If none of the persons supported by the DSP are able to communicate either verbally or through writing, the DSP may ask a family member of someone they serve to provide the communication of support. In the portfolio, the DSP should include a note explaining why the family member or another person is providing the communication, rather than a person for whom the DSP provides direct support. If the person being supported is unable to provide the communication of support for the applicant, and does not have family members who can, a member of his or her support network can also do so. This letter or communication should be from a person who is able to comment specifically and honestly on the DSP’s character, direct support performance and professionalism. For a committed DSP, good, authentic letters or communications of support are generally not difficult to obtain. Allow ample time for references to write a quality letter or develop a communication. Remember to send a thank you note for their support!

Requesting a Letter of Support:

1. Make a list of the individuals you support and their contact information.
2. From the list select at least two people who know the most about you.
3. Ask both of these people to write a letter of support or provide a communication of support such as a video or audio recording of their support for you. You must include a minimum of one letter in your portfolio.
4. Things to include in your request:
   a. Date you need the letter or communication
   b. Number of years you have provided support to them
   c. What you want them to include in their letter
5. After receiving their letter or communication of support write a thank you for their support and assistance.
6. Include the letter of support in your portfolio.

**Example - Letter of Support**

July 1, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known Jane Doe as a Direct Support Professional for five years. She has been my direct support worker for the past three years. In addition, she has become an important informal support to me in many ways. She has helped me join a health club and she works out with me. She has helped me make friends at the club. Now when Jane is unavailable to go to the club with me I call one of my new friends and invite them to go to the club with me.

Jane is organized, good at her job, and has good relationships with the people she supports. She and I communicate well together.

I highly recommend Jane for the Direct Support Professional – Certified Credential. She is a very good DSP.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Jessie Smith

555-222-3333

Signature and contact information from the individual

Suggested items for inclusion in the letter of support:

- How long has the reference known this DSP if different than length of support?
- How long has the DSP provided support to the referenced person?
- How has she or he provided excellence in Direct Support to you? Or how has their support helped you realize a personal outcome?
- Can you comment on the DSP’s professionalism?
Re-Commitment to the Code of Ethics

A Re-Commitment to the Code of Ethics form that is signed and dated is an agreement that the applicant re-commits herself or himself to adhere to NADSP’s Direct Support Professional Code of Ethics. A Re-Commitment Code of Ethics form is provided in each credential application packet. Applicants must review, sign and date each time they apply for a NADSP credential. A copy of this document must be included in your portfolio.

Re-Commitment to the NADSP Code of Ethics

I have reviewed the NADSP Code of Ethics and make a re-commitment to uphold and honor the NADSP Code in my daily practice and to follow the guiding principles contained within the Code. These principles include:

Person Centered Supports, I pledge that my first allegiance is to the person(s) I support.

Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support.

Integrity and Responsibility, I support the mission and authenticity of my profession.

Confidentiality, I will safeguard and respect the privacy of the people I support.

Justice, Fairness and Equity, I affirm the human rights, civil rights and responsibilities of the people I support.

Respect, I respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support.

Relationships, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

Self Determination, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.

Advocacy, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

_______________________________________________________________
Signature Date
Four Authentic Work Samples and Reflective Statements for DSP- I
Four Additional Work Samples and Reflective Statements for DSP- II

An authentic work sample is an example of the applicant’s hands-on work in community human services. The work sample is a concrete product of the applicant’s every day work such as securing a YMCA membership for a person they support, written progress notes, or a journal describing how the applicant assisted people to develop and achieve their personal goals. The work samples included in the NADSP Certified Portfolio must show competence in eight of the fifteen specific competency areas (combined DSP- I and DSP – II), reviewed by trained NADSP Reviewers and approved by NADSP’s ETWD Committee. The fifteen competency areas are:

a. Participant Empowerment
b. Communication
c. Assessment
d. Community and Service Networking
e. Facilitation of Services
f. Community Living Skills and Supports
g. Education, Training and Self-Development
h. Advocacy
i. Vocational, Educational and Career Support
j. Crisis Prevention and Intervention
k. Organizational (employer) Participation
l. Documentation
m. Facilitation of Relationships and Friendships
n. Provide Person-Centered Support
o. Supporting Health and Wellness

Each Competency area has corresponding skill statements. These skill statements describe the knowledge and skills DSPs must have to demonstrate competency in each area (see below). The work sample need not demonstrate each skill statement for each competency, but must address at least two of the skill statements and show overall competency in that area. The applicant should indicate which skill statements they are addressing on the title page for each Competency Area in their portfolio.

In deciding on which competency areas to focus, applicants should think about the things they currently do in their everyday work or areas in which they would like to become more knowledgeable and skillful. Through each competency area, DSPs have the opportunity to address challenges, work on issues identified by the person they support or assist a person in working to complete a particular goal. For example, an applicant may provide support to a person with a communication challenge. The applicant could use a work sample which demonstrates how she helped the person she supports to develop a picture communication board.
1) Participant Empowerment

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional enhances the ability of the participant to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem, and assertiveness; and to make decisions.

**Skill Statements:**
- The competent DSP assists and supports the participant to develop strategies, make informed choices, follow through on responsibilities, and take risks.
- The competent DSP promotes participant partnership in the design of support services, consulting the person and involving him or her in the support process.
- The competent DSP provides opportunities for the participant to be a self-advocate by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods and techniques, encouraging and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf, and providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups.
- The competent DSP provides information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources, facilitates access to such information and assists the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision making about living, work, and social relationships.

2) Communication

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the range of effective communication strategies and skills necessary to establish a collaborative relationship with the participant.

**Skill Statements:**
- The competent DSP uses effective, sensitive communication skills to build rapport and channels of communication by recognizing and adapting to the range of participant communication styles.
- The competent DSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants.
- The skilled DSP learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure participant understanding.

3) Assessment

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment practices in order to respond to the needs, desires and interests of the participants.

**Skill Statements:**
- The competent DSP initiates or assists in the initiation of an assessment process by gathering information (e.g., participant's self-assessment and history, prior records, test results, additional evaluation) and informing the participant about what to expect throughout the assessment process.
• The competent DSP conducts or arranges for assessments to determine the needs, preferences, and capabilities of the participants using appropriate assessment tools and strategies, reviewing the process for inconsistencies, and making corrections as necessary.

• The competent DSP discusses findings and recommendations with the participant in a clear and understandable manner, following up on results and reevaluating the findings as necessary.

4) Community and Service Networking

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the formal and informal supports available in his or her community and skilled in assisting the participant to identify and gain access to such supports.

**Skill Statements:**

• The competent DSP helps to identify the needs of the participant for community supports, working with the participant's informal support system, and assisting with, or initiating identified community connections.

• The competent DSP researches, develops, and maintains information on community and other resources relevant to the needs of participants.

• The competent DSP ensures participant access to needed and available community resources coordinating supports across agencies.

• The competent DSP participates in outreach to potential participants.

5) Facilitation of Services

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional is knowledgeable about a range of participatory planning techniques and is skilled in implementing plans in a collaborative and expeditious manner.

**Skill Statements:**

• The competent DSP maintains collaborative professional relationships with the participant and all support team members (including family/friends), follows ethical standards of practice (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent, etc.), and recognizes his or her own personal limitations.

• The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the development of an individualized plan based on participant preferences, needs, and interests.

• The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the implementation of an individualized plan to achieve specific outcomes derived from participants’ preferences, needs and interests.

• The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the review of the achievement of individual participant outcomes.
6) Community Living Skills & Supports

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional has the ability to match specific supports and interventions to the unique needs of individual participants and recognizes the importance of friends, family and community relationships.

**Skill Statements:**

- The competent DSP assists the participant to meet his or her physical (e.g., health, grooming, toileting, eating) and personal management needs (e.g., human development, human sexuality), by teaching skills, providing supports, and building on individual strengths and capabilities.
- The competent DSP assists the participant with household management (e.g., meal prep, laundry, cleaning, decorating) and with transportation needs to maximize his or her skills, abilities and independence.
- The competent DSP assists with identifying, securing and using needed equipment (e.g., adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational and communication).
- The competent DSP supports the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships.
- The competent community based support worker assists the participant to recruit and train service providers as needed.

7) Education, Training & Self-Development

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be able to identify areas for self improvement, pursue necessary educational/training resources, and share knowledge with others.

**Skill Statements:**

- The competent DSP completes required training education/certification, continues professional development, and keeps abreast of relevant resources and information.
- The competent DSP educates participants, co-workers and community members about issues by providing information and support and facilitating training.

8) Advocacy

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing participants (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative and financial) and should be able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges.

**Skill Statements:**

- The competent DSP and the participant identify advocacy issues by gathering information, reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the issue.
• The competent DSP has current knowledge of laws, services, and community resources to assist and educate participants to secure needed supports.
• The competent DSP facilitates, assists, and/or represents the participant when there are barriers to his or her service needs and lobbies decision-makers when appropriate to overcome barriers to services.
• The competent DSP interacts with and educates community members and organizations (e.g., employer, landlord, civic organization) when relevant to participant’s needs or services.

9) Vocational, Educational & Career Support

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the career and education related concerns of the participant and should be able to mobilize the resources and support necessary to assist the participant to reach his or her goals.

**Skill Statements:**

• The competent DSP explores with the participant his/her vocational interests and aptitudes, assists in preparing for job or school entry, and reviews opportunities for continued career growth.
• The competent DSP assists the participant in identifying job/training opportunities and marketing his/her capabilities and services.
• The competent DSP collaborates with employers and school personnel to support the participant, adapting the environment, and providing job retention supports.

10) Crisis Prevention and Intervention

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals.

**Skill Statements:**

• The competent DSP identifies the crisis, defuses the situation, evaluates and determines an intervention strategy and contacts necessary supports.
• The competent DSP continues to monitor crisis situations, discussing the incident with authorized staff and participant(s), adjusting supports and the environment, and complying with regulations for reporting.

11) Organizational Participation

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional is familiar with the mission and practices of the support organization and participates in the life of the organization.

**Skill Statements:**

• The competent DSP contributes to program evaluations, and helps to set organizational priorities to ensure quality.
The competent DSP incorporates sensitivity to cultural, religious, racial, disability, and gender issues into daily practices and interactions.

The competent DSP provides and accepts co-worker support, participating in supportive supervision, performance evaluation, and contributing to the screening of potential employees.

The competent DSP provides input into budget priorities, identifying ways to provide services in a more cost-effective manner.

12) Documentation

**Competency Statement:** The Direct Support Professional is aware of the requirements for documentation in his or her organization and is able to manage these requirements efficiently.

**Skill Statements:**

- The competent DSP maintains accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.
- The competent DSP maintains standards of confidentiality and ethical practice.
- The competent DSP learns and remains current with appropriate documentation systems, setting priorities and developing a system to manage documentation.

13) Building and Maintaining Friendships and Relationships

**Competency Statement:** Support the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships.

**Skill Statements:**

- The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in planning for community activities and events (e.g., making reservation, staff needs, money, materials, accessibility).
- The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in arranging transportation for community events.
- The competent DSP documents community activities and events.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in facilitating friendships and peer interactions.
- The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communication with parents/family (e.g., phone calls, visits, letters).
- The competent DSP implements individual supports regarding community activities.
- The competent DSP provides incentive or motivation for consumer involvement in community outings.
• The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in getting to know and interacting with his/her neighbors.

• The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in dating.

• The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communicating with social workers and financial workers.

14) Provide Person Centered Supports

Skill Statements:

• The competent DSP provides support to people using a person centered approach.

• The competent DSP modifies support programs and interventions to ensure they are person centered.

• The competent DSP challenges co-workers and supervisors to use person centered practices.

• The competent DSP is knowledgeable about person centered planning techniques.

• The competent DSP assists individuals in developing person centered plans.

15) Supporting Health and Wellness

Competency Statement: The competent DSP promotes the health and wellness of all consumers.

Skill Statements:

• Administers medications accurately and in accordance with agency policy and procedures.

• Observes and implements appropriate actions to promote healthy living and to prevent illness and accidents.

• Uses appropriate first aid/safety procedures when responding to emergencies.

• Assists individuals in scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments.

• Assists individuals in completing personal care (e.g., hygiene and grooming) activities.

• Assists with identifying, securing and using needed adaptive equipment (i.e. adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, psychological).

• Assists individuals in implementing health and medical treatments.

• Assists individuals to take an active role in their health care decisions.
The **Work Sample Planning** worksheet (below) is a tool for applicants to begin to identify which competency areas they will use to develop work samples. The **Work Sample Planning** (optional worksheet) can be found in Appendix C.

### Getting Started Strategy:

1. **Use the optional worksheet to help you plan how you will develop your credential portfolio work samples.**
2. **Reflect on what type of work sample will successfully demonstrate your skills and knowledge in the Competency Area.**
3. **How will you collect evidence to support your skills and knowledge in this competency?**
4. **What documents will you need to collect?**
5. **What format will work best with this work sample?**

### CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Sample Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familiarize yourself with each of the competency areas. Identify four competency areas (for DSP - I and four different competency areas for DSP – II) for which you want to produce a work sample. Each work sample must relate to one of the eight Competency Areas you have selected. <strong>Use a separate worksheet for each work sample in your credential portfolio.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant’s Name</th>
<th>NADSP ID#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What challenge, issue, activity, or goal will you address in this work sample?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What methods, interventions or strategies will you use to solve this problem, issue or goal?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an action plan for the work sample.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What specific steps will you take to complete the work sample?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you hope to accomplish through this activity?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What competency area are you addressing in this work sample?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The title of this work sample is:
A written reflective statement must accompany each work sample. The reflective statement explains the work sample, including what items are included, how they show skills and knowledge in a particular competency area, and how the items relate to the individual outcomes of the people receiving supports. In the reflective statement, the applicant will discuss the work sample, its impact, relevance, and relation to the competency area and the personal outcomes of the people supported by the applicant. It will also describe how the learning gained from the approved educational or training program was used with or incorporated into the work sample and what the applicant learned about his/herself throughout the process. The Reflective Statement Organizer (Optional Worksheet) can be found in Appendix D.

A work sample and its reflective statement, together, should:

1. Identify a specific community human service/direct support challenge, issue or goal;
2. Identify a specific method(s) or approach(es) to address the situation;
3. Describe how the method(s) or approach(es) were applied to the challenge, issue, activity or goal at hand;
4. Show the relationship to the NADSP Competency Area and its skill statements,
5. Show the direct effect of the applicant's actions on the person receiving supports in achieving a personal outcome.
6. Show the skills, knowledge, and ethical commitment of the applicant.

**Reflective Statement Organizer**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Statement Organizer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review your work sample carefully. Then use this organizer to draft your reflective statement. *Use additional sheets as needed for all work samples in your credential portfolio.*

Applicant’s Name  
Work Sample Title

Describe the challenge/issue, activity/goal addressed by the sample

Describe your plan for addressing the challenge, issue or goal.

Identify the steps you actually took to complete this work sample and how you interacted with the individual or other people.

Describe some specific outcomes/results of your support work.

Describe what skill standards you addressed for this competency area and how you demonstrated your competence with those skill standards.

Briefly describe what you learned (about yourself, the person you supported, and others) from completing the work sample.

Discuss how you applied the learning you gained from your education/training program within this work sample.
Each work sample and corresponding reflective statement should supply sufficient information about how the applicant has applied his or her abilities, relating to a specific NADSP Competency Area, to a real work situation. Fundamentally, a work sample should help to inform the NADSP portfolio reviewer about whether and how the applicant has applied his or her knowledge in a work setting. The table below provides examples of good and bad work samples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Work Sample</th>
<th>Insufficient Work Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection of journal entries describing a support relationship.</td>
<td>A single log entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotape of an oral report to a planning team about a person’s desired goals.</td>
<td>The sign-in sheet for a team meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incident report describing a serious crisis, how the applicant handled it, what was learned and what she or he would do in the future to prevent a similar crisis from happening.</td>
<td>Incident report describing a minor accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs and narrative describing the development of a job for a person being supported.</td>
<td>Photocopies of classified ads used in a job search.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Insufficient Work Samples* are not acceptable because they do not provide enough information about the issue, goal or problem, the approaches used to address the issue, how the applicant’s skills were used, what was learned, how their education or training was applied, or the overall outcome of the work. *Good Work Samples* provide information on each of these topics.
Permission Forms
When the applicant prepares work samples and reflection statements, she or he must be sure to keep all personally identifying information out of the work sample unless specific written permission has been obtained from the person receiving supports to use identifying material such as information from records, photographs, videos, audiotapes, names, etc. The obtained permissions must be included in the portfolio submission. A sample permission form is located in Appendix E. If permission is not obtained, the applicant must delete, blacken or change identifying information to protect the privacy of individuals receiving support and anyone else included in the work sample. Please note in your work samples if you have not obtained a permission form.

The applicant must be sure to include a statement in the portfolio if they changed identifying information to ensure confidentiality or reviewers will not know the information has been changed. Failure to protect confidentiality or obtain permission will result in a failing score on the portfolio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREDECIAL PORTFOLIO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permission Form - Suggested Format</td>
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</table>

I, ______________________ (name of individual giving permission), agree to permit ______________________ (name of person developing the portfolio) to use the following information or images of me in his or her portfolio (check all that apply):

- [ ] my name
- [ ] my human service records
- [ ] photographs of me
- [ ] audio recordings of me
- [ ] video images/tapes of me
- [ ] other, please explain:

____________________________________________________

Title of the Work Sample: ______________________________

I understand that ______________________ (the portfolio developer's name) may use the portfolio for his/her own purposes and that she or he will submit it for review by the NADSP Certified DSP Portfolio Review Team.

____________________________________________________

Signature of person granting permission Date

____________________________________________________

Signature of Applicant Date

Clearly identify the individual granting permission

Clearly identify the DSP seeking permission

Identify the work sample for which the permission is given.

This form must be signed and dated by both the person granting permission and the DSP applicant.
* It is important to remember that applicants should obtain the permission of the person used in the portfolio. There will be occasions in which that person is not his or her own guardian. In these cases, the applicant must get permission from both the legal guardians and the person represented in the portfolio.

Training/Education Records

*Training and/or Education Records* are copies of the specific training or education experiences that demonstrate the applicant has met the education and training requirements for the DSP-I or DSP- II certificate. Proof of satisfactory completion of a NADSP accredited educational or training program (100 hours of training and related instruction for DSP – I and DSP – II) is required for the DSP-I or DSP-II application. Related instruction means such learning approaches as: facilitated learning seminars that review and share the learning content with a cohort of DSPs, a supervisor or trainer, etc. and how the learning could be applied to specific work situations; hours spent with a skills mentor or supervisor, etc. guiding the applicant with their learning; and time spent learning about and developing the DSP-I or DSP-II portfolio. The education/training records must include documentation like educational transcripts, training session records, related instruction approaches (the type with whom, and total # of hours with each approach), or continuing education units (CEUs).

For re-certification, the following is a list of requirements for NADSP Certification Renewal that must be met every two years after the NADSP Certified Initial DSP-I Certification has been awarded (except if a DSP – II has been awarded during that 2 year time period) and for DSP-II (unless a DSP-Specialist has been awarded during that two year time period):

1. The completion of 20 hours of continuing education in the area of community human services
   a. Up to 8 hours can include employer-required re-certifications, for example:
      i. CPR,
      ii. First Aid,
      iii. Abuse and neglect,
      iv. Medication administration,
      v. Mandatory or other required training/education on behavior support and intervention,
      vi. OSHA required safety such as handling blood borne pathogens and fire safety
   b. The remaining 12 (or more) hours may include advanced professional development courses of the DSP's choosing, for example:
      i. Participation in local, state, and national DD/ID conferences
      ii. On-line course completion on topics pertaining to human services
      iii. College coursework completion on a relevant topic in human services
      iv. Completion of workshops offered by professional human service organizations on relevant topics
   c. Documentation of the completion of all continuing education is required (The date(s) and topic or title of the training, number of training hours, and the name and title of the presenter/trainer). The training must have been completed during the two year period between certifications.
   d. Continuing Education Units (CEU's) are NOT required.
4. Signed and dated re-commitment to adhere to the NADSP Code of Ethics.

5. Fee: $50.00

Completing Your DSP-C Application and Portfolio
Before sending the application and required materials, applicants should make copies of their portfolio to keep for themselves. NADSP needs original copies of items such as letters with signatures. However, photocopies of work samples and items not requiring a signature are permitted. **NADSP WILL NOT RETURN ANY OF THE PORTFOLIO MATERIALS TO THE APPLICANT.**

Please make sure that all components of your application are present, including the payment for the portfolio review. The payment for portfolio review is not refundable. Reviewers prefer to focus on your work rather than on identifying missing items. If, however, you are missing items, you will be asked to submit the missing materials before the portfolio can be reviewed.

Applicants are encouraged to review their completed portfolio carefully. Applicants should also consider having someone else review their portfolio before sending it in. Consider using the Evaluation worksheet (Appendix G) to help you with this final review process. Applicants may consider another option, to complete a ‘final check’ of their portfolio using the Final Check form below. The Final Check worksheet can also be found in Appendix H.
You must make sure your portfolio is complete and neatly arranged. It should look professional and reflect your best work.

1. Are all the required components in the portfolio?
   - Title Page
   - Table of Contents
   - Statement of Professional Commitment
   - Resume
   - Letter/Communication of Support
   - Signed and Dated Re-Commitment to Code of Ethics form
   - Four Authentic Work Samples with Reflective Statements for DSP - I and DSP - II
   - Permission Forms for Any Personal Information Included
   - Training/Education Records

2. Is everything legible, either typed or written very clearly?

3. Are work samples labeled clearly by NADSP Competency Area with Skill Statements being addressed?

4. Does each work sample have a reflective statement?

5. Have you attached permission forms for all individuals identified in each work sample? (If not, have you blackened all their names and identifying information?)

6. If you included pictures or other artwork are these attached securely to the background?

7. Do pictures have captions or explanations?

8. Do you believe this credential portfolio represents your best work?

If you have answered yes to all of these questions you are ready to submit your DSP-C credential portfolio!
What Happens Next?

Here is what you can expect after you have sent your portfolio to NADSP:

1) NADSP will complete a review of your DSP – I or DSP – II portfolio within 6 weeks after the application packet was received at NADSP.

2) NADSP trained portfolio reviewer(s) will carefully review your application, giving close attention to your portfolio reflective statements and work samples. NADSP’s trained portfolio reviewers are based all across the United States. More information about criteria used and the review process can be found in the following pages.

3) Within 90 days of NADSP’s receipt of your portfolio, you will be notified of the reviewers’ decision. This information will be sent to you electronically and will include the reviewers’ summary, which explains your scoring in each competency, and describes the strengths and the areas for development based on the review.

4) If you did not achieve the DSP I or DSP II certification, the reviewers will include specific feedback about how you can improve your portfolio, and may suggest changes you might consider making in your direct support work. Making these improvements will enable you to achieve the NADSP-Certified DSP I or DSP II credential when you resubmit your portfolio. Applicants may re-submit their portfolios for consideration up to two times in a calendar year. An additional $50 fee is required for each revision review. If the applicant does not achieve certification after the second revision attempt, they must wait a period of 12 months, and re-submit a new portfolio at the full cost for DSP I ($100) or DSP II ($50).

5) If you have successfully achieved the NADSP-Certified DSP I or DSP II credentials, congratulations! After the email notification, you will receive via U.S. post a personalized DSP- I or DSP II certificate with other materials recognizing your achievement. (Please note that we cannot mail these materials to a P.O. Box address). NADSP views DSPs who have achieved the NADSP Certified DSP I and DSP II credentials as leaders in the direct support field! We look forward to working with you as we continue to enhance the status of DSPs and communicate the importance of high quality direct support.

6) Certified DSPs may want to consider becoming a NADSP Certified Specialist Level DSP III in an area of their choice. Learn more in the Guidebook section devoted to this advanced credential.
Evaluating the DSP-I or DSP-II Portfolio

How Your Portfolio Will Be Evaluated

A team of trained NADSP portfolio reviewers will review and evaluate each DSP Portfolio that is submitted. The criteria that the reviewers use in the evaluation process are described below. These criteria were developed in collaboration with human service employers, trainers, instructors, and Direct Support Professionals across the United States. A sample of the worksheet used to score the Portfolios is included in Appendix G.

NADSP Portfolio Review Competency Profile

Reviewers score each competency as either “Practice”, “Proficient”, or “Advanced.” Each competency in a DSP-I or DSP-II portfolio scored as “Practice” gives the applicant 1 point. Each competency scored as “Proficient” gives the applicant 2 points. Each competency scored as “Advanced” gives the applicant 3 points. If the applicant achieves 7 points or more and receives no more than one “Practice”, he or she will receive the DSP I or DSP II NADSP Certified credential. Below is a description of what each level means specifically, as a reviewer assesses your portfolio.

Practice = The “Practice” level work sample demonstrates a basic level of knowledge and skill in the competency area necessary to be somewhat effective in building participant trust, competence, and achievement of goals in an ethical manner.

The “Practice” level work sample demonstrates:
• Basic mastery of the knowledge and skill standards in the competency area leading to the achievement of some desired outcomes of the person s/he supports in an ethical manner;
• Beginning ability to support personal choice and self-determination, individualization, community inclusion, and advocacy with the persons s/he supports; and,
• Modest abilities in observation, organization of information, assessment, analysis, problem solving, flexibility, creativity, communication, interpersonal competence, and teamwork.

Proficient = The “Proficient” level work sample indicates mastery of a sufficient level of the knowledge and skill standards in this competency area necessary to be moderately effective in building participant trust, competence, and achievement of goals in an ethical manner.

The “Proficient” level work sample demonstrates:
• Intermediate mastery of the knowledge and skill standards in the competency area leading to the moderate achievement of desired outcomes of the person s/he supports in an ethical manner,
• Strong understanding and a solid practice supporting personal choice and self-determination, individualization, community inclusion, and advocacy with the persons s/he supports; and
• Intermediate abilities in observation, organization of information, assessment, analysis, problem solving, flexibility, creativity, communication, interpersonal competence, and teamwork.

**Advanced** = The “Advanced” level work sample demonstrates full mastery of the knowledge and skill standards in this competency area necessary to be highly effective in building participant trust, competency, and achievement of goals and outcomes in an ethical manner.

The “Advanced” level work sample demonstrates:

• Full mastery of knowledge and skill standards in the competency area resulting in a significant achievement of the desired outcomes of the person s/he supports in an ethical manner;

• Work practices that are highly effective in supporting personal choice and self-determination, individualization, community inclusion, and advocacy with the persons s/he supports; and,

• Superior abilities in observation, organization of information, assessment, analysis, problem solving, flexibility, creativity, communication, interpersonal competence, and teamwork.
DSP Mentor Relationships for the NADSP-Certified Initial Level DSP I or Advanced Level DSP II Credential

Mentors Make A Difference:
For the NADSP Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program, mentoring is a strongly encouraged strategy that provides support and coaching to the applicant as she or he completes the process of obtaining their DSP-Certified or DSP-Specialized credentials. However, a mentoring relationship is NOT a required element of the NADSP credentialing program. Each DSP applicant (DSP-I or DSP-II) must decide for themselves if pairing with a mentor will work for them. The following section of this Credentialing Program Guidebook is designed to help those applicants who want to use a mentoring relationship during their credentialing process.

Mentoring is pairing a more skilled or experienced DSP (the mentor/skills mentor) with a lesser-skilled or experienced DSP (the mentee/applicant). This peer partnership method, if well planned and supported, can help the mentee/applicant expand, refine, and build specific skills as part of their professional growth and development process. Mentoring is not left to chance; it is designed to be an intentional and voluntary relationship with mutually negotiated goals regarding the direction and activities that the mentoring partnership will share.

Applicants may be working for an employer (an organization, family, or individual directing their own supports) who already has an established skills mentor program. If so, we encourage applicants to participate in the program for the purpose of receiving support during the credentialing process. On the other hand, if the employer does not have a mentoring program in place, this section of the NADSP Credentialing Guidebook will provide interested applicants numerous strategies for understanding the purpose, benefits, and possible outcomes of mentoring, learning about the process of selecting a skills mentor, and developing a mentoring agreement and plan of action to achieve professional goals and meet credentialing requirements.

“A key to my success … was the support that I received from the program facilitators and my assigned mentor who partnered with me through this journey. The education and support that I received from these individuals included education and modeling of skills, observation and constructive feedback on my skill performance, written skills test and my final project and presentation to both my fellow apprentices and professional committee. My mentor supported me through observation and feedback as I practiced my skills. This method of instruction was effective for me as it combined both classroom education and practice on the job”.

- Mentee from Wyoming

“I am a mentor in the agency’s Direct Support Professional (DSP) apprenticeship program…I have found that as a mentor, I have also strengthened my skills as a leader, and have
developed good, positive relationships with those whom I have mentored. In regard to the apprenticeship program, my role as a mentor includes initiating frequent contact with my apprentice (mentee). This is done at least once a week. This can be done by either a phone call or a one-on-one meeting, and it is in my opinion the most important aspect of what I do. In conclusion, the mentor must be able to exercise these roles and perform a variety of responsibilities, in order to help the apprentice (mentee) develop their skills, expand on those skills, and grow as a Direct Support Professional."

- Mentor from New York

Applicants should review the table below to learn about the benefits of mentoring.

Benefits of Mentoring for Both the Mentee and Mentor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits for Mentee/Applicant</th>
<th>Benefits for the Mentor/Skills Mentor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Share the knowledge and experience of a mentor</td>
<td>• Recognition as a leader in the field of direct support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safe opportunity for feedback</td>
<td>• Recognition for their advanced skills and abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can share anxieties and concerns with a mentor</td>
<td>• Opportunities to develop new skills in leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connect socially with others</td>
<td>• Achieve career advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decrease feelings of isolation</td>
<td>• Renewed interest in their job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gain access to information</td>
<td>• Help strengthen a co-worker’s skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve quality of support for individuals you support.</td>
<td>• Receive raises, bonuses, and/or rewards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase professional growth and self-confidence</td>
<td>• Opportunity to teach and learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have fun and create fellowship</td>
<td>• Professional growth and self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have fun and create fellowship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mentor and Mentee Roles

Mentoring programs have different purposes; some are intended to nurture leaders, others are intended to help new employees feel welcome in a company or learn the everyday culture of the place they work. Still others help guide people through specific circumstances, such as assisting a DSP to transfer to a new worksite and learn a new role with a different skill set. For DSPs interested in the NADSP Direct Support Professional Credentialing Program, the focus of mentoring is on helping DSPs build confidence, support the development of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and to assist the mentee/applicant in documenting or demonstrating their abilities and values in various support situations with individuals who use community human services.

The mentor uses numerous skills in the partnership, including:

- showing support, posing challenges
- sharing knowledge and information
- modeling correct techniques and flexible attitudes
- teaching content and process
- coaching for performance
- providing immediate, clear, and specific feedback
- listening openly and carefully.
Each of these skills focuses on the facilitating nature of the mentor. That is, the mentor helps by identifying and supporting the strengths, talents, and hopes of the mentee rather than telling, nudging, or cajoling the mentee what they must or ought to do. The mentor is most successful when she or he asks the mentee what they want to learn and how they want to learn it versus the approach of informing the mentee what they will learn and how they will learn it.

The mentee/applicant also uses numerous skills in the mentoring relationship, including:
- thoroughly examining what competency areas she or he wants to demonstrate
- documenting their skills
- accepting support in situations involving risk or uncertainty as well as areas of strength and pride
- being open to explore honest and specific feedback
- listening carefully during coaching sessions
- asking questions, sharing thoughts, and expressing feelings directly and frequently.

Like the mentor, the mentee/applicant will learn more if he or she approaches the partnership openly yet with their vision in mind, listens carefully to feedback yet sorts out what will work best for him or her, and sets goals and creates an action plan while remaining flexible.

**Qualities of a Great Mentor**

Whether the mentee/applicant works for an employer who assigns a skill mentor or they are expected to identify and select their own mentor, there need to be expectations that a skills mentor meets in order to participate as a mentor in any credentialing system. Below is a brief list of mentor qualities and qualifications that a mentee can use as a guideline in their search for a competent and compassionate skill mentor.

1. The mentor has received training to be a skill mentor.
   - Trained in the learner outcomes for a credentialing program
   - Trained in understanding the importance of and ability to complete a high quality certification portfolio
   - Trained in observation skills and instruments
   - Trained in techniques of skills mentoring (for example, coaching, communication skills, observation, rating, and monitoring)

2. The mentor is a DSP with one or more years of experience in the field of community human services.

3. The mentor is a DSP with an “above average” performance rating in their personnel record.

4. The mentor is willing to be available to the mentee on a regular basis.

5. The mentor has a desire to be a facilitator of learning versus a person who expects that “things be done only one way.”

6. The mentor makes the mentee feel comfortable, recognize his or her fears, and supports their efforts.

7. The mentor will use the learning partnership agreement as a tool for guidance and accountability.
Mentor and Mentee Responsibilities

*Mentor*

The responsibilities of a mentor are to: 1) support the mentee through their journey of applying for one or more of the three levels of credentialing, 2) identify mentees professional goals and aspirations, 3) assist their mentee in completing the required education and training, and 4) help the mentee document and demonstrate their knowledge, skill, and attitudes in various competency areas. Related responsibilities include: 1) being available to listen, review and provide feedback on draft and final credentialing materials, 2) advocate for the mentee with the employer, 3) encourage and challenge the mentee when necessary and appropriate.

Below is a sample list of mentor responsibilities. Mentors must:

- Meet with your mentee over the course of the year to ensure successful completion of the DSP credentialing requirements.
- Be familiar with learner outcomes and related instruction material.
- Provide support to mentee during this learning process ensuring you understand the training program.
- Know and understand each competency profile the mentee chooses to complete for the required DSP levels of credentialing.
- Be trained in techniques of skill mentoring.
- Be trained in portfolio development for your mentee and complete a portfolio in skill mentoring.
- Have completed the training and experiential equivalent of the DSP-Certified level of the credentialing program; participate in periodic training sessions and monthly mentoring support group meetings.

*Adapted from the Ohio PATHS Credentialing Program and used here with permission.*
**Mentee**

The primary responsibility of the mentee is to identify and clarify their professional goals, dreams, and hopes about the content, process, and outcomes of participating in the NADSP DSP Credentialing Program. Related responsibilities include: sharing openly and directly with the mentor about fears, successes, challenges, and excitement about the content, process, and outcomes of the credentialing program. In addition, the mentee needs to share what style of learning works best for himself or herself, how frequently they need to meet with the mentor (and the length of their work sessions), and how the mentor can best give feedback.

Below is a sample list of mentee responsibilities. Mentees must:

- Take responsibility for the learning process by being proactive in seeking information and assistance that I need, complete assignments in a timely manner, and help my peers as needed.

- Become familiar with the NADSP credentialing requirements.

- Successfully complete all portfolio components.

- Meet with my Skill Mentor regularly and be prepared with questions or issues that I wish to discuss.

- Be an active participant in the mentoring relationship. Share my workplace experiences to enrich mentoring discussions while always maintaining an awareness of agency and client confidentiality.

- Be open to giving and receiving feedback in a helpful, non-defensive manner.

- Maintain an acceptable criminal record check.

- Offer suggestions for improvement in the mentoring relationship.

*Adapted from the Ohio PATHS Credentialing Program and used here with permission.*

The NADSP Credentialing Program is designed so that both the mentor and mentee enter into their mentoring relationship voluntarily. A mentorship agreement can be a guideline for both the mentor and mentee and is NOT a ‘binding contract’. The purpose of the agreement is to ensure that both partners understand the goals and expectations each has of the other person and how they will work together to achieve those goals and expectations. If the mentor and mentee develop a voluntary agreement, we strongly recommend that both parties agree upon a method of terminating the agreement should the mentoring relationship not work out.
Sample Mentorship Agreement
If a NADSP DSP Credentialing Program applicant/mentee is interested in developing a Mentorship Agreement with a skill mentor, they should review the sample agreement below. The Mentorship Agreement form can also be found in Appendix H. This form can be used or modified as desired.

DSP Mentorship Agreement (sample)
For Participation in the NADSP Credentialing Program

Name of Mentor: Ahmed Abato Date: January 2, 2012
Name of Mentee: Jamal Washington Date: January 2, 2012

As partners in this mentoring relationship, we have agreed to participate in the partnership for a period of 12 months ending on December 21, 2012 (insert projected date). We will review the overall effectiveness of our partnership at the midpoint of our agreement and again three weeks prior to the end date. We will explore what is working and what is not working with our mentoring relationship; we will discuss what has been achieved and what is undone; we will also decide whether or not to continue the mentoring relationship at both the midpoint and ending evaluation times. To extend our partnership, we will enter into another mutually negotiated partnership agreement.

During the period of this agreement, either partner may choose to end the partnership. The decision to end the relationship by either partner will be recognized as the right of that person. Neither partner will be criticized, sanctioned or otherwise judged by the other partner.

As partners in this mentoring relationship, we agree to the following responsibilities:

Mentor responsibilities:
1. Initiate frequent contact (phone, in-person, or e-mail) with Jamal (1 x per week);
2. Respond to a contact from Jamal within 24 hours;
3. Meet regularly (no less than 1x per month) with Jamal at mutually convenient times and locations;
4. Assist Jamal in identifying his or her goals related to the NADSP Credential Program and in developing expertise in direct support work in these areas and others;
5. Recognize when I am unable to assist Jamal and refer him to other resources as needed;
6. Freely share information, contacts, and other resources that will assist Jamal in performing competently, completing the education and training, and developing portfolio work;
7. Provide recognition and positive reinforcement to Jamal for quality work performance;
8. Provide honest and constructive feedback regarding Jamal’s work performance;
9. Refrain from taking credit for the accomplishments of Jamal;
10. Maintain strict confidence regarding all communications and conversations with Jamal;
11. Maintain a positive, respectful and helpful approach in all of my contacts with Jamal;
12. Notify my employer’s Credentialing Program Coordinator or supervisor when this agreement concludes (if applicable);
13. Other: __________________________________________________________

Mentee Responsibilities:
1. Welcome frequent contact (phone or e-mail) with Ahmed (1x per week);
2. Meet with Ahmed at mutually convenient times and locations (at least 1x per month);
3. Work with Ahmed to identify the specific goals pertaining to my participation in the NADSP Credentialing Program that I will seek to achieve during the relationship;
4. Actively seek information regarding my employer’s direct support practices and the NADSP Credentialing Program Guidelines that I do not understand or for which I need additional support;
5. Remain open to constructive feedback from Ahmed regarding my work performance and be willing to develop a plan of action to incorporate the feedback into my work;
6. Recognize and appreciate Ahmed’s contribution to my learning;
7. Maintain a positive and respectful approach in all contacts with Ahmed;
8. Be proactive in improving my performance by acting on feedback, and proposing methods and strategies for improvement;
9. Maintain strict confidence regarding all conversations and communications with Ahmed.
10. Other: __________________________________________________________

Competencies, Skills, Priorities, and Completion Dates:
As the Mentee in this partnership, I have identified the following credentialing competency areas, and corresponding skill statements with intended timelines to complete them during this mentoring relationship. (Mentee should choose eight of the fifteen competency areas, and specific skill statements for each competency area. The Mentee should prioritize each competency area to remind themselves which area they want to work on first, second, etc. Lastly, the mentee should identify an intended completion date for each competency area). I understand that my priorities may change and my completion dates may need to be adjusted. If a change to this plan is necessary, I will inform and discuss the matter with my mentor.

Signature of Mentee: Jamal Washington          Date: January 2, 2012

1. Competency Area 1: Participant Empowerment
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP promotes participant partnership in the design of support services, consulting the person and involving him or her in the support process.
Skill Statement: The competent DSP provides opportunities for the participant to be a self-advocate by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods and techniques, encouraging and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf, and providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups.

Priority (1-8): 1 Intended Completion Date: February 15, 2012

2. Competency Area 14: Communication
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP uses effective, sensitive communication skills to build rapport and channels of communication by recognizing and adapting to the range of participant communication styles.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants.

Priority (1-8): 2 Intended Completion Date: April 1, 2012

3. Competency Area 9: Vocational, Educational and Career Support
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP explores with the participant his/her vocational interests and aptitudes, assists in preparing for job or school entry, and reviews opportunities for continued career growth.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP assists the participant in identifying job/training opportunities and marketing his/her capabilities and services.

Priority (1-8): 3 Intended Completion Date: May 15, 2012

4. Competency Area 6: Community Living Skills and Supports
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP assists the participant to meet his or her physical (e.g., health, grooming, toileting, eating) and personal management needs (e.g., human development, human sexuality), by teaching skills, providing supports, and building on individual strengths and capabilities.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP assists the participant with household management (e.g., meal prep, laundry, cleaning, decorating) and with transportation needs to maximize his or her skills, abilities and independence.

Priority (1-8): 4 Intended Completion Date: July 1, 2012

5. Competency Area 8: Advocacy
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP has current knowledge of laws, services, and community resources to assist and educate participants to secure needed supports.
Skill Statement: The competent DSP facilitates, assists, and/or represents the participant when there are barriers to his or her service needs and lobbies decision makers when appropriate to overcome barriers to services.

Priority (1-8): 5   Intended Completion Date: **August 15, 2012**

6. Competency Area 10: **Crisis Prevention and Intervention**
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP identifies the crisis, defuses the situation, evaluates and determines and intervention strategy and contacts necessary supports.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP continues to monitor crisis situations, discussing the incident with authorized staff and participant(s), adjusting supports and the environment, and complying with regulations for reporting.

Priority (1-8): 6   Intended Completion Date: **October 1, 2012**

7. Competency Area 15: 
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP maintains accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP maintains standards of confidentiality and ethical practice.

Priority (1-8): 7   Intended Completion Date: **November 15, 2012**

8. Competency Area 13: **Facilitation of Relationships and Friendships**
   Skill Statement: The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the implementation of and individualized plan to achieve specific outcomes derived from participants preferences, needs and interests.

   Skill Statement: The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the review of the achievement of individual participant outcomes.

Priority (1-8): 8   Intended Completion Date: **December 20, 2012**

As the Mentor in this partnership, I have reviewed Jamal’s goals and I will assist him in reaching these goals to the best of my ability.

Signature:  Ahmed Abato   Date:  January 2, 2012

*Adapted and used with permission of the Research and Training Center on Community Living at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota (2006)*
Applying for the NADSP Certified Specialist Level DSP III Credentials
What is the NADSP- Certified Specialist Level DSP III Credential?
The DSP III is the fourth tier of credentialing for DSPs offered through the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals’ National Credentialing Program. This credential recognizes people who have achieved DSP-I and DSP-II Certified status and want to pursue specialization in any or all of the following specialty areas:

- **Inclusion** – The DSP-III Inclusion certification recognizes competence in supporting the inclusion of people receiving support services in the communities in which they live and work. These specialists understand why inclusion is important and have the skills to enhance inclusion of people receiving support services including: understanding their role in community inclusion, matching community resources with individual interests, building bridges within communities and utilizing natural supports.

- **Health Support** – The DSP-III Health Support certification recognizes competence in supporting people utilizing community human services to make good choices related to their health. These healthy choices may include things such as eating right, visiting the doctor regularly, and getting the right amount of exercise. These specialists understand health-related issues across the life span and can support individuals working with health care providers.

- **Employment Support** – The DSP-III Employment Support certification recognizes competence in recognizing and understanding the value of work to all people and their role in the facilitation of positive work opportunities for those they support. Employment Support specialists help create these opportunities by using a combination of personalized job development, job coaching, and interpersonal skills to make employment a reality.

- **Mentoring and Supervision** – The DSP-III Mentoring and Supervision certification recognizes competence in the following areas: staff orientation; competency-based training methods; supporting employee development; building successful teams; employee appreciation, motivation, and organizational involvement; employee recruitment and marketing; realistic job previews; selection and hiring; and how to assess and address workforce challenges. These specialists have the knowledge and skills to influence the retention rates of high-potential staff.

- **Positive Behavior Support** – The DSP-III Positive Behavior Support credential recognizes competence in ways to support people who engage in challenging behaviors. These specialists are skillful in strategies that are safe, fair, compassionate, person-centered and effective in preventing and reducing challenging behaviors.
Why is it important that I apply for a DSP-III Specialist status?
By applying for and receiving a DSP-III Specialist credential in any or all of the specialty areas, you receive recognition for your continuing commitment to be a highly trained DSP who has obtained specialized training and demonstrated competence in providing specialized support to individuals who use community human services.

How do I apply to become a DSP-III Specialist?
1. Complete the DSP-III Specialist application form online or by printing the application (NOTE: A separate application form must be completed for each specialist area).
2. Gather and upload or send the documents specified on the Checklist for Required DSP-Specialist Documents that Must Accompany the Application Form
3. Pay the registration fee.
   *Please do not submit your application until all required documents are included. Send the completed application and required materials to:
     NADSP
     240 Washington Ave. Extension
     Albany, NY 12203
     Attn: NADSP Credentialing Program

   OR upload the documents and submit the application form online.

What happens after I apply?
Your DSP-III Specialist application packet will be reviewed by NADSP within 90 days of receipt. If it meets the criteria for advanced credentialing you will receive your DSP-III Specialist recognition package. The package includes: an embossed certificate that personally identifies you as a DSP-III Specialist in your particular specialty area; a lapel pin that reinforces your achievement and states: DSP-III (plus the specific credential); and a personal letter from NADSP congratulating you on your achievement.
**NADSP Certified DSP - III Specialist Application**

### Direct Support Professional Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Application:</th>
<th>Make all entries neat and legible</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Check the box of the DSP-S credential for which you are applying
- [ ] Inclusion
- [ ] Health Support
- [ ] Employment Support
- [ ] Mentoring & Supervision

First Name: | Middle Name or Initial: | Last Name: |
-----------|------------------------|------------|

Address: |

City: | State: | ZIP Code: |
------|-------|---------|

Phone: | Cell: | *Email (as available): |
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### Training and Education Information for Applicant Specialty Area (If more space is needed, print copy of this form)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title and Date of Topic/Event/Resource:</th>
<th>Number of Hours:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Learning Objectives:</td>
<td>Speaker/Trainer/Author + Title (If applicable)</td>
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### Current Employer Information (To be completed by an Employer Representative)

Name of Current Employer (Provider Agency or Individual/Family who self-directs support):

Employer address: |

City: | State and ZIP: | Web Site Address (if applicable): |
------|---------------|----------------------------------|

Name of Employer Representative | Phone: | Email |
--------------------------------|-------|------|

Applicant work experience in specialty area:

- Years: | Months: |

Applicant continuous employment in specialty area: | Yes | No (circle one) |

*Many important NADSP communications are by email, so please include if you use email.*
Checklist for Required DSP-III Specialist Documents that Must Accompany the Application

(Applications will be processed after all documents and payment are received)

(Note: Do NOT enter “date of application” on the application form until you upload or mail the application and accompanying documents)

- Copy of applicant’s DSP II and renewal (if applicable) certificate(s)
- Copies of training/education records verifying 40 hours in a specialty area that must be approved by an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator), completed during the 2 years prior to the DSP- III Specialist application, and none of the required 40 hours can duplicate the training/education hours used for the 200 hours required for the DSP- I and DSP - II certification.
- Statement from the employer regarding applicant’s:
  - Competence and professional integrity in the selected specialty area.
  - Verification of one year of continuous work experience providing supports for people in the selected specialty area.
- Copy of a signed and dated Re-Commitment to NADSP Code of Ethics form.
- Three portfolio work samples that demonstrate competence in the selected specialty area.
- Releases of Information from individuals receiving supports or a family member or guardian indicating what information is OK to share in the portfolio.
- Application Fee: $100.00
- Proof of payment:
  - Check attached (check number:______________) personal or employer (circle one)
  - Charge (Pay Pal confirmation number (for on-line payments only) ______________)  
  - Purchase order (purchase order number:______________)

Please initial only one of the following two statements.

Initial here  I give my permission to NADSP to verify my status as a DSP- III Specialist (I, HS, ES, MS – circle one) to all current and future employers who may inquire about my status. I understand that no personal information will be released.

Initial here  I understand that this release of information may be revoked by me at any time after NADSP receives a written notice that is signed and dated by me. If I choose to revoke my release of information, I understand that no verification of my DSP-Specialist status can be released to employers who make such an inquiry.

I verify that all information on this application and attached documents are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of the Direct Support Professional  Date

Date Application Received: __________________________ Date DSP-Specialist (I, HS, ES, MS-Circle one) status awarded: __________________________

Date Payment Received: __________________________ Date DSP-Specialist (I, HS, ES, MS-Circle one) credential sent: __________________________
Re-Commitment to the NADSP CODE OF ETHICS

I have reviewed the NADSP Code of Ethics and make a re-commitment to uphold and honor the NADSP Code in my daily practice and to follow the guiding principles contained within the Code. These principles include:

Person Centered Supports, I pledge that my first allegiance is to the person(s) I support.

Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being, I am responsible for supporting the emotional, physical and personal well-being of the individuals receiving support.

Integrity and Responsibility, I support the mission and authenticity of my profession.

Confidentiality, I will safeguard and respect the privacy of the people I support.

Justice, Fairness and Equity, I affirm the human rights, civil rights and responsibilities of the people I support.

Respect, I respect the human dignity and uniqueness of the people I support.

Relationships, I will assist the people I support to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.

Self Determination, I will assist the people I support to direct the course of their own lives.

Advocacy, I will advocate with the people I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation.

________________________________________________________   ____________________________
Signature                                           Date
DSP- III Specialist Portfolio Work Sample Requirements

The following pages list the Specialist titles and descriptions of three required competencies for each of the Four Specialist Areas in which a DSP- III Specialist applicant must demonstrate competence. For each of the competencies, the applicant must demonstrate mastery in two required skill statements and two selected additional skill statements through their reflection statements and work samples.

Following the list of competency and skill statements, there is a Resources section for that DSP- III Specialist area. The Resources are intended to assist the applicant in developing her or his work samples and reflective statements as well as completing training and education requirements in the DSP- III Specialist area. The DSP Applicant IS NOT required to use the listed resources to meet training/education requirements. However, he or she must obtain approval from an employer representative (such as a supervisor, trainer, HR administrator) for training/education opportunities that are directly related to the DSP Specialty Area.

Please review the three required Competency Titles and Descriptions for each Specialty Area. For each competency, review the required Skill Statements and select two additional Skill Statements for the selected specialist area for which you are applying. Then, include this information on the Title Page of each DSP- III Specialist Competency Area. Next, upload or mail the three Work Sample package with the DSP- III Specialist Application form and other required DSP- III Specialist documents.
DSP- III Specialist in Inclusion

COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 1: Community Connecting

The competent DSP Specialist in Inclusion enhances and facilitates participant opportunities to make community connections by having knowledge of the person's interests and support needs, knowing the community in which the person lives, and providing supports necessary for active participation.

Skill Statements:
Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
• Uses knowledge of a person’s interests, strengths, and support needs to support active involvement in the community.
• Demonstrates knowledge of inclusive community activities and events near the home(s) of the people using support.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
☐ Researches, develops and maintains information on community activities, events, clubs, and other resources relevant to including individuals using supports in the community.
☐ Facilitates community connection and inclusion by providing the supports needed for the person to be an active participant and develop relationships.
☐ Provides supports necessary for a person to participate in integrated settings based on individual preferences.
☐ DSP is an active, contributing member of the community along with the person being supported and as such serves as an advocate, role-model (for interaction, dress, etc…), and community educator.
☐ Ensures opportunities for people to experience a variety of social roles (For example, co-worker, son/daughter, choir member, coffee shop “regular”, baseball fan, etc.) by supporting people to pursue social activities and roles of interest.
☐ Uses a variety of methods including volunteering, frequenting, networking, and joining to assist people in making community connections. Supports inclusion on a daily basis by planning, preparing, and following-up.
☐ Demonstrates knowledge of the social and procedural norms of activities and provides supports accordingly.
☐ Takes time to plan for and avoid barriers when working toward inclusion. Knows what to do when unexpected situations come up. Works to support the person’s comfort and success in the activity.
DSP- III Specialist in Inclusion, continued

COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 2:
Building and Maintaining Relationships

The competent DSP Specialist in inclusion increases opportunities for the participant to enhance current relationships, meet new people, and maintain relationships over time.

Skill Statements:

Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
- Provides supports needed to identify community members/group members/natural supports that can help the person be included (work, relationships, group participation, etc…).
- Provides education and supports necessary for the person to have safe and healthy relationships.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
- Recognizes and makes connections with people in a given community activity that can best support the person to become actively involved and meet others.
- Supports the person in initiating, maintaining, and changing family and friend interactions as he or she desires. Is friendly and welcoming to family and friends, knows and respects relationships norms, and respects the privacy of healthy relationships.
- Provides supports necessary for the person to successfully participate and interact with others during community activities.
- Provides frequent and regular opportunities for persons to participate in community events as individuals (i.e. not with “housemates”); Identifies and acts on chances for encouraging the use of natural supports.
- Supports people to use technology and social media to help people to enhance connections with family, friends, and people in their community.
COMPETENCY STATEMENT #3: 
Promoting Natural Supports

The competent DSP specialist in inclusion supports and advocates for the support of friends, family, and community resources in place of paid staff when possible.

Skills Statements:

Mandatory  Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Supports the strengthening of relationships with others, reducing the need for paid supports.
- Assists the people he or she supports to foster, maintain, and grow their own social networks.

Additional  Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

☐ Identifies personal strengths, positive attributes and goals that people he or she supports would bring to a relationship and uses this information to deal effectively with the their challenges related to closeness and intimacy (e.g., lack of privacy, low frequency of interactions, personal space and social boundaries, etc.).

☐ Identifies the most important relationships in the lives of those being supported and uses this information to plan and support opportunities to broaden and deepen their social networks. Contributes observations about the person’s social network, and related support needs, when working with the person’s team and in planning meetings.

☐ Prepares for and minimizes common barriers to developing natural supports; Applies effective strategies in day-to-day practice and works with others to create effective, long-term supports in these areas.

☐ Helps people being supported maintain contact with friends and family members as desired and through a variety of means. (i.e., phone calls, letters, visits, etc.) to enhance family relationships and to deal constructively with their conflicts through advocacy and negotiation.

☐ Participates in agency reviews of policies and practices and makes recommendations to change those which interfere with friend and family relationships (e.g. advocates to eliminate a “call before visiting” policy; provides transportation to family members to visit, etc.)

☐ Advocates for the person to participate in various activities with the support of friends, family, and community members in place of paid staff as appropriate.
Books/Pamphlets/Journals


Training


The College of Direct Support has courses on: Community Inclusion, You've Got a Friend, and Working with Family and Other Support Networks. More information can be found at: www.collegeofdirectsupport.com

Essential Learning has courses on: Supporting Everyday Lives for People with Disabilities, Recreation for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, People with Disabilities Building Relationships and Community Membership, and Supporting Quality of Life for a Person with Developmental Disabilities found at: www.essentiallearning.com

Web Sites:

http://soeweb.syr.edu/thechp/friend.htm
http://inclusion.com/
http://www.abcdinstitute.org/
http://www.nlapl.ca/inclusion.html
http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/education/inclusion.html
http://home.swbell.net/jraneri/inclusion.html
http://www.learningcommunity.us/

The Direct Service Workforce Resource Center has numerous resources on Inclusion at: http://www.dswresourcecenter.org
COMPETENCY STATEMENT #1: Promoting Health

The competent DSP Specialist in Health Supports believes that people have the right to attain the highest standard of health. The competent DSP-HS facilitates and supports opportunities for persons to take control over and improve their health by embracing the principles of self-determination so that people are in a position of control over their health and well-being.

Skills Statements
Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
- Enhances the capacity of people to express their health concerns.
- Supports people in making informed health care decisions to improve the quality of care.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
- Recognizes the importance of culturally appropriate health services.
- Understands health concerns that people experience due to chronic health conditions (immobility, altered postures, long term use of medications, poor nutrition, etc).
- Understands health concerns that people experience due to age related health conditions (incontinence, swallowing difficulties, sensory losses, adaptive behavior losses, cognitive declines, etc).
- Educates health care professionals about the unique needs of people with disabilities.
- Promotes and facilitates the utilization of adaptive equipment and assistive technology which supports greater independence and health satisfaction.
DSP- III Specialist in Health Support, continued

COMPETENCY STATEMENT #2:
Supporting Health Behavior Change

The competent DSP Specialist in Health Supports facilitates opportunities for people to develop & maintain healthy lifestyles and to change their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs toward physical activity and nutrition.

Skills Statements: Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples: Mandatory
- Assists people to develop personal health promotion goals.
- Utilizes a variety of strategies to increase physical activity and promotes healthy nutrition.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
- Develops, organizes and implements tailored health promotion activities that address environmental and cultural constraints.
- Promotes access to information on healthy lifestyles provided in a variety of formats - written, video, web-based, etc.
- Identifies and supports community based health programs by encouraging them to welcome individuals with disabilities, e.g., local health clubs.
- Integrates health promotion in organizations and communities that support healthy living such as schools, churches, community centers, residential programs, etc.
- Collaborates with caregivers, co-workers and other professionals to develop a range of strategies to increase positive behavior change.
- Recognizes the influence and importance of how the person, his/her family and support professionals, service providers, environmental issues and community resources are inter-connected and impact overall health behavior change.
COMPETENCY STATEMENT #3: Health Care Advocacy & Coordination

The competent DSP Specialist in Health Support identifies challenges and barriers which often include an inability to obtain routine and preventative health, mental health and dental services; limited access to specialists; and health, mental health and dental service providers who deny or limit services to people because of biases, inadequate training, etc. The competent DSP-HS advocates for access to appropriate, timely, and effective health care services.

Skills Statements:
Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Advocates to ensure that people do not experience disability-related discrimination in decisions to provide, delay, deny or limit health care.

- Identifies barriers such as transportation, inaccessible facilities, untrained professionals, etc; and coordinates strategies to overcome barriers.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

☐ Researches and remains abreast of health care protocols for various chronic conditions, illnesses, etc.

☐ Identifies and utilizes appropriate health care and healthy lifestyle resources within the community when barriers are presented.

☐ Actively participates in agency activities that address health promotion including participating in agency development and review of health related policies and procedures.

☐ Initiates strategic activities within the agency to create an organizational culture that considers health promotion a priority.
DSP- III Specialist Resources on Health Support

Books/Pamphlets/Journals


Training
The Arc of New Jersey and its Mainstreaming Medical Care Program have developed an initiative called *Let's Talk About Health,* a comprehensive effort to develop educational programs and materials that address health care issues of people with developmental disabilities. [http://www.arci.org/programs/mainstreaming_medical.html](http://www.arci.org/programs/mainstreaming_medical.html)

Essential Learning has courses on: Medical Problems and Adverse Drug Events in People with ID/MI, Responding to the Health Needs of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, Environmental Safety for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, and Client/Patient Rights found at: [www.essentiallearning.com](http://www.essentiallearning.com)

The College of Direct Support has courses on: Supporting Healthy Lives and a course coming soon on Introduction to Mental Health. More information can be found at: [www.collegeofdirectsupport.com](http://www.collegeofdirectsupport.com)

Web Sites
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - [http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Disabilities](http://www.cdc.gov/Features/Disabilities)
Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association (DDNA) association website and resource page found at [http://ddna.org/pages/resources](http://ddna.org/pages/resources)


The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging with Developmental Disabilities: Lifespan Health and Function (RRTCADD) University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Disability [http://www.rrtcadd.org/index.html](http://www.rrtcadd.org/index.html)

The Direct Service Workforce Resource Center has numerous resources on Health Support at: [http://www.dswresourcecenter.org](http://www.dswresourcecenter.org)
COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 1:

**Discovery**
The competent DSP-Specialist in Employment Support has the ability to involve individuals in their own planning process by person-centered planning, including the ability to assess goals, interests, past experience, learning styles, academic skills, assets, independent living skills, and needs (for example, transportation); and understands benefits planning including Social Security income and health benefits and their relation to working.

**Skill statements:**

**Mandatory** Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Uses a systematic and/or informal approach to get to know the person for whom employment is being sought by learning more about the person’s strengths and interests in multiple environments: home, work, social, community, familial, and spiritual.
- Engages in discussions with the person and their team about the impact of employment and benefits on the person and on their financial situation including how the Ticket to Work, PASS and medical assistance work incentive programs can increase a person’s access to employment.

**Additional** Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Uses tools to create a plan or map with the person on how to progress through the discovery process.
- Demonstrates working knowledge of various assessment tools and strategies and the ability to complete environmental scans and create ecological inventories.
- Documents activities, actions, and tasks for team members. Encourages and expects participation and engagement of all team members.
- Understands how to use information from assessments including any potential need for accommodations and assistive technology.
- Encourages and participates in benefits counseling to ensure they are using the benefits they are entitled to, including waivers, SSI, SSDI, or VA benefits, etc.
- Engages in discussions with the person and their team about the impact of benefits, both positive and negative, on the person and their financial situation.
- Is familiar with the key elements of self-advocacy and how this important skill can help those served in vocational/employment settings to speak up for their wants and needs.
- Demonstrates several attempts to eliminate barriers for person served.
- Identifies work life balance issues.
COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 2: Job Development

The competent DSP-Specialist in Employment Support understands various approaches to employment including customized, supported and integrated employment; demonstrates professional communication and interactions with employers; facilitates job readiness skill-building and assesses employability strengths/barriers; teaches job search skills, including use of technology and the Internet; is able to match individuals with appropriate jobs and careers, including job analysis and skills standards; involves employers in the preparation process; conducts job analysis, matching, customizing, and job carving, including accommodations, supports, and modifications.

Skill Statements:
Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
• Works with the individual and their team to find appropriate jobs and careers, involving employers in the process, in such ways as: customized and integrated/wage employment, job analysis, work site evaluations, and job carving.
• Utilizes a variety of strategies to find or customize a job which is a good match for the individual through such inventories as job preference, individual, and/or job skills

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
☐ Assesses and develops soft skills: interpersonal skills, problem solving, decision making.
☐ Demonstrates professional communication and interactions with employers and other stakeholders.
☐ Teaches job search skills, including use of technology and the Internet
☐ Describes reasonable accommodations including assistive technology devices, augmentative communication, personal care assistance, worksite modification, and universal design.
☐ Collects stakeholder satisfaction data by gathering regular feedback from the individual, employer, supervisor, etc.
☐ Assists the person in setting up, conducting, and analyzing interviews with businesses and/or managers.
COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 3: 
Job Coaching

The competent DSP-Specialist in Employment Support will demonstrate the ability to provide job skills support to the individual and promote independence; to ask for help and assistance when needed; has the ability to develop relationships and communicate effectively with employers; demonstrates effective customer service skills; and has the ability to mediate/resolve conflicts.

Skill Statements: 
Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
- Supports the individual by teaching the skills required in the workplace using teaching methods adapted to the learning style of the individual he or she supports.
- Helps the individual to move toward greater independence in the workplace, fading out in favor of increased skill, natural supports or assistive technology whenever appropriate.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:
- Supports the individual in the completion of the tasks required by their employment without taking responsibility away from the individual.
- Demonstrates an ability to communicate effectively and professionally with employers, potential employers, colleagues, and the individuals they support through both written and verbal communication.
- Maintains a professional relationship with the individuals he or she supports and makes an ongoing assessment of their job satisfaction.
- Maintains a professional relationship with employers, collaborates with the employer to adapt the job and the environment, and serves as an advocate for the individual receiving supports.
- Shows knowledge of the industries he or she is providing job coaching in, or demonstrates the ability to research the necessary information.
- Demonstrates understanding of the information technology present in the workplace, and supports the individual in its use as needed.
Training

ACRE
Training in employment supports is offered by the member organizations of ACRE (Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators), many of which are the regional TACE (Technical Assistance and Continuing Education) centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. [http://interwork.sdsu.edu/acre/certificates.html](http://interwork.sdsu.edu/acre/certificates.html)
More information can be found at [http://www.acreducators.org/](http://www.acreducators.org/).

APSE
APSE offers webinars and a national conference. Many APSE state chapters also offer conferences and trainings related to employment supports.
More information can be found at [http://www.apse.org/](http://www.apse.org/).

College of Direct Support
The online College of Direct Support offers two courses related directly to employment supports: “Employment Supports: Exploring Individual Preferences and Opportunities for Job Attainment” and “Supporting Jobs and Careers in the Community.” More information can be found at [http://info.collegeofdirectsupport.com/](http://info.collegeofdirectsupport.com/).

University of Georgia
The Human Services Management Institute, housed within the College of Education at the University of Georgia, has an online certificate program for job coaches called National Web-Based Employment Specialist and Job Coach Training. More information can be found at [http://www.coe.uga.edu/hsmi/jobcoach/index.html](http://www.coe.uga.edu/hsmi/jobcoach/index.html).

University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities offers introductory, advanced and supplemental trainings for Employment Specialists. More information can be found at [http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/training/supported_employment.html](http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/training/supported_employment.html).

The Integrated Employment Institute, also housed at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, offers training, including some web based training, on increasing employment among people with psychiatric disabilities. More information can be found at [http://shrp.umdnj.edu/smi/index.htm](http://shrp.umdnj.edu/smi/index.htm).

Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Commonwealth University RRTC on Workplace Support has three free self-paced courses available online. There are also other scheduled web based courses that have a fee. More information can be found at [www.worksupport.com](http://www.worksupport.com).

Training Resource Network
Florida-based TRN offers a series of web-based courses on employment supports. More information can be found at [https://trn-store.com/](https://trn-store.com/).


Web Site
The Direct Service Workforce Resource Center has numerous resources on Employment Support at:
[http://www.dswresourcecenter.org](http://www.dswresourcecenter.org)
COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 1: Leadership and Supervision

The competent DSP-Specialist in Supervision and Mentoring provides leadership using a variety of team development strategies and tools; develops a mission, vision, and core values for the work unit; creates a positive learning environment through effective orientation and competency-based training; sets flexible work schedules that meet established deadlines; supports the team through challenging times by developing plans to resolve key issues; and works closely with supported individuals, family members, and other support team members.

Skill Statements:

Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Promotes a collaborative work environment through effective communication with staff by listening to their concerns, supporting and encouraging their ideas and work, thanking them for their contributions and providing positive feedback regarding their performance.

- Engages self and employees in team building processes such as developing team norms, establishing core work expectations, goals, and action plans, solving problems creatively, making decisions and managing conflicts effectively, and organizing productive team meetings.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Actively engages in workforce development initiatives that include a process of identifying workforce challenges (for example, DSP turnover, ineffective training, poor morale, etc.), researching the breadth and depth of the challenges, investigating and choosing among possible interventions (e.g., a competency-based training program, a mentoring program, or a recognition program, etc.), developing a plan to implement the intervention, and evaluating its effectiveness.

- Sets work schedules and workload standards that promote the effective and efficient use of staff in the delivery of individual supports and services while maintaining a focus on agency goals and staying within budgetary guidelines.

- Secures staff to fill-in when vacancies occur due to staff illness, vacations, resignation or other reasons, periodically examining data in this area to determine if there are any trends or patterns and exploring approaches to resolve any issues with "fill-in" or "float" staff.

- Maintains regular contact with individuals receiving supports, family members, and other support team members regarding complaints and issues, designing, implementing and evaluating strategies to address the issues and reporting and discussing individual, family, or program issues as needed with management.
DSP- III Specialist in Mentoring and Supervision, continued

COMPETENCY STATEMENT # 2: Ethical Supervision

The competent DSP-Specialist in Supervision and Mentoring exhibits ethical supervisory skills by ensuring workplace values are respected and by supporting system values that align with the agency’s mission statement and the ethical values outlined in the NADSP code of ethics.

Skill Statements: Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

Mandatory

- Understands the value of diversity and the appreciation and acceptance of differences among staff by recognizing the strengths, needs, challenges, and feelings of staff and others and by providing appropriate training and interaction among staff, families and persons being supported.

- Trains and coaches direct support staff to provide supports that are based on the code of ethics and the community support skill standards and that will help individuals experience high quality lives in communities of their choice.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Safeguards and respects the confidentiality and privacy of the individuals served, staff, and others as well as ensures that staff maintains these standards as well.

- Recognizes emotion-laden issues or crisis situations and handles them with sensitivity by debriefing with consumers, staff, and family, by modeling positive interaction, and by exhibiting appropriate intervention and reaction/interaction during crisis management situations.

- Demonstrates appropriate knowledge and use of consumer medication, finances, and treatment plans by reporting misuse or abuse in these areas in accord with agency policies, procedures, and principles as well as applicable laws.

- Exhibits understanding and knowledge of personnel laws, rules, regulations and union contracts (if applicable) and is able to enforce them as needed.

- Creates and communicates a clear vision, motivation and commitment to the safety, well-being, and inclusion of the individuals served.
COMPETENCY STATEMENT #3:
Mentoring and Coaching

The Competent DSP-Specialist in Mentoring and Supervision inspires and guides new as well as seasoned employees, peers, and individuals supported to achieve desired career path goals, enhanced job performance, and personal development through modeling, advocacy, and effective mentoring and coaching practices.

Skills Statements:

Mandatory Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Creates a positive learning environment that encourages, supports, and rewards competency, creativity and compassion through welcoming orientation practices, competency-based training approaches, informal employee development strategies, and career development pathways and networking opportunities for life-long learning.

- Displays mentoring/coaching styles to address individual needs and aspirations of the mentee/supervisee that foster motivation to set and work toward specific, meaningful job and career goals, providing feedback, encouragement, and supports toward achieving desired goals.

Additional Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

☐ Seeks out new endeavors that assist in career development, informs supervisees/mentees of opportunities for growth and education, and encourages and supports these employee development activities.

☐ Promotes and acknowledges professional judgement and sound decision making in supervisees/mentees.

☐ Expresses passion, enthusiasm, and confidence in the abilities of mentees that motivates them to strive for optimal growth and performance, to assume additional responsibilities, and to transfer knowledge and skills learned through in-service training to their jobs.

☐ Demonstrates inspiration and excellence through job performance, personal and professional growth, and expresses positive attitudes and values toward individuals supported, family members, support team members, within the organization and the community.

☐ Mentors and coaches peers, supervisees, and team members at all levels of the organization and within the field by fostering opportunities for development based on individual interests, strengths and assets and by celebrating their accomplishments.
DSP- III Specialist Resources on Mentoring and Supervision

Books/Pamphlets/Journals


DSP- III Specialist Resources on Mentoring and Supervision (Continued)

Training
College of Direct Support has six courses in its College of Frontline Supervision and Management. More information can be found at: www.collegeofdirectsupport.com

Essential Learning (www.essentiallearning.com) has courses on: Supervision & Leadership, Coaching & Mentoring in the Workplace, Managing Teams, and Valuing Diversity in the Workplace.

The University of Minnesota’s Research and Training Center has two key training Resources on Supervision and Mentoring located at: http://rtc.umn.edu/publications/#training The supervision curriculum is: Removing the Revolving Door: Strategies to Address Recruitment and Retention Challenges

The mentoring curriculum is: The Peer Empowerment Program (PEP): A Complete Toolkit for Planning and Implementing Mentoring Programs Within Community-Based Human Services Organizations

Web Sites
The most comprehensive, online, free library on Management in the USA, including specific resources on Supervision, Mentoring, Training and Organization Development, can be found at: http://managementhelp.org/

The Direct Service Workforce Resource Center has numerous resources on Supervision and Mentoring at: http://www.dswresourcecenter.org
Competency Statement #1:

Collecting Data

The competent DSP Specialist in PBS data collection will be able to observe, record, and analyze data to inform an understanding of the behavior and strategies to support the person.

Skill Statements:
Mandatory
Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Collect data using system appropriate methods to understand behavior and circumstances (frequency, duration, latency, interval recording, time sampling, permanent products)
- Recognize when criteria have been achieved and modify strategies in accordance with the procedures outlined in the behavior support plan

Additional: Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Define behavior objectively (in terms of what the individual says or does)
- Collect data on progress toward instructional goals (e.g., items correct, prompting levels)
- Gather data across relevant circumstances, times, places, and social conditions
- Record patterns surrounding behavior using appropriate instruments as designed (ABC recording, scatterplots, and other pattern analysis tools)
- Record fidelity data on plan implementation using appropriate instruments as designed
- Document changes in quality of life (e.g., community participation, social interactions) as indicated in the behavior support plan and person-centered or wraparound plan
- Recognize trends and intervention effects in graphed data and summary reports
- Request guidance from the plan author when progress is not occurring as anticipated

Competency Statement #2:

Implementing Interventions

The competent DSP Specialist in PBS will be able to implement the key elements of Positive Behavior Support interventions including an understanding of person-centered values, inclusion, positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, extinction, stimulus control, discriminative stimulus, and/or prompt.

Skill Statements:
Mandatory
Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:
- Describe how behaviors can have multiple functions and apply the appropriate intervention within the PBS plan.
- Implement interventions with fidelity/integrity, exactly as written in the Positive Behavior Support plan.

**Additional:** Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Describe the importance of context and communicate contextual circumstances contributing to an individual's behavior to the PBS professional.
- Operationally define each of the behaviors on the PBS plan.
- Accurately define, describe, and give examples of setting/contextual events and antecedents.
- Accurately define, describe, and give examples of positive punishment and negative punishment, and describe the rationale for their exclusion from Positive Behavior Support plans.
- In creating a schedule or calendar of activities for an individual, 1) skills targeted for improvement/development are scheduled to be addressed with sufficient frequency to promote their acquisition, generalization, or maintenance, and 2) the individual is enrolled in creating the schedule to the extent feasible and according to their person-centered plan and PBS plan goals.
- Ensure discriminative stimuli for desirable behaviors are salient for the person given their cognitive, physical, and sensory abilities.
- Deliver any required prompts within the scope of a prompt fading plan such that target behaviors will increasingly come under control of discriminative stimuli.
- Identify age-appropriate stimuli to be used as reinforcers for desirable behavior.
- Deliver verbal praise statements and other feedback in a manner consistent with the person's age and the setting in which the feedback occurs.
- Respond to challenging behavior as directed by the Positive Behavior Support plan, to promote a return to target desirable behaviors that will be reinforced.
- Use antecedent, prompting, reinforcement, and error correction procedures to bring about acquisition and independent performance from the DSP.
- Systematically schedule and fade ongoing observation and feedback so the DSP generalizes and maintains their implementation skills.
- Collect implementation integrity/fidelity data.
- Using integrity/fidelity data, provide formative and summative feedback during the training process, which should be used as a basis for positive comments and ongoing training plans needed to bring the DSP’s skills to expected level of competency.

**Competency Statement #3:**

**Comprehensive Lifestyle Planning**

The competent DSP Specialist in PBS will be able to demonstrate and act in accordance with the values of person-centered planning and self-determination when planning to improve the lifestyle of the person supported.
Skill Statements:

Mandatory
Demonstrate these two skill statements through your reflections and work samples:

- Describe how to use essential features of the person-centered planning process to participate in, and support the person during team brainstorming and action planning to improve quality of life.
- Review goals and objectives regularly to make sure interventions reflect person centered practices and self-determination.

Additional: Click on two skill statements that you will also demonstrate through your reflections and work samples:

- Assist individuals and their families to invite team members to the planning meeting
- Use verbal strategies for increasing the engagement of the individual and team
- Actively communicate with the focus person and team between meetings about progress on lifestyle change
- Emphasize positive social skills, personality, and character traits of individual and team members during meetings
- Describe important elements of quality of life that are important to an individual
- Accurately interpret visual data related to lifestyle interventions
- Articulate the social and personality strengths for an individual and family
- Work collaboratively with the focus person and team to design meaningful lifestyle interventions
- Actively assess whether interventions are being implemented as designed
- Provide support, training, and supervision to new staff members learning lifestyle interventions
- Bring information related to lifestyle interventions to functional behavioral assessment meetings (when necessary)
- Actively implement lifestyle goals and objectives with an individual on a daily basis
- Provide opportunities for self-determination and systematically provide choices to an individual throughout the day
- Use information about social and personality strengths to empower an individual and family across routines
- Schedule team meetings when lifestyle interventions are not being implemented effectively, and generate collaborative solutions
- Ensure individual and family preferences for meetings and goals are honored in meetings
- Bring individuals into conversation by prompting and reinforcement
Document interventions as agreed upon by the team and ask for clarification as needed

**NADSP Positive Behavior Supports Authors:**

Matt Enyart: University of Kansas, Kansas Institute for Positive Behavior Support  
Rachel Freeman: University of Kansas, Kansas Institute for Positive Behavior Support  
Meme Heineman, PhD: Independent Consultant - PBS Applications  
Tim Moore, PhD: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration  
Annie Smith: Lifeworks Services, Inc  
Valarie Oresto, PhD: Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services

**References:**


Appendices
Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO</th>
<th>Professional Commitment Organizer</th>
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</thead>
</table>

The following questions are designed to help you organize information for your Statement of Professional Commitment. (NOTE: Your final Professional Commitment Statement must be a document that flows in paragraph form and NOT in a Question-Response type of Format)

I work in human services because:

My career goals are:

I will reach my goals by doing:

My strengths and qualities are:

My experiences, personal and professional, which relate to human services are:

Other things I would like the reviewer to know about me include:

My commitment to the field of direct support:
Appendix B

CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO
Professional Resume Builder

This worksheet is designed to help you organize information for your professional resume. Use additional sheets as needed to thoroughly list the information for your resume - even if you do not use all of the information you list, it is helpful to have it as you develop your resume.

List your contact information as you would like it to appear on your professional resume:

Identify your professional career goal?

List your educational and training experiences:

List your direct support work experiences in chronological order starting with your most recent experiences. Include both paid and/or voluntary experiences:

List other experiences, achievements, interest or hobbies which are relevant to your professional development:

List the contact information for the people who have agreed to provide references on your behalf:
Appendix C

CREDSITIAL PORTFOLIO
Work Sample Planning

Familiarize yourself with each of the competency areas. Identify eight competency areas you want to work on. Each work sample must relate to one of the eight Competency Areas you have selected. Use a separate worksheet for each work sample in your credential portfolio.

Applicant’s Name: NADSP ID#:

What challenge, issue or goal will you address in this work sample?

What methods, interventions or strategies will you use to solve this problem, issue or goal?

Develop an action plan for your activities and the work samples that will document them.

What steps will you need to take to complete the activities and the work samples?

What do you hope to accomplish through this activity?

What competency area are you addressing in this work sample?

The title for this work sample is:
## CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO

### Reflective Statement Organizer

Review your work sample carefully, and use this organizer to draft your reflective statement. A reflective statement should come before and introduce each work sample.

**Applicant's Name:**

**NADSP ID#:**

---

The title of the work sample is:

---

Describe the challenge, issue, or goal addressed by this sample.

---

Describe your plan for addressing the challenge, issue, or goal.

---

Identify the steps you actually took, what you did, that this work sample describes.

---

Describe some specific outcomes/results of your support work.

---

Describe what skill standards you addressed for this competency area and how you demonstrated your competence with these skill standards.

---

Briefly describe what you learned (about yourself, the person you supported, and others) from completing the work sample.

---

Discuss how you applied the learning you gained from your education/training program within this work sample.
# Appendix E

## CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO

### Permission Form

I, _________________________ (name of individual giving permission), agree to permit _________________________ (name of person developing the portfolio) to use the following information or images of me in his or her portfolio (check all that apply):

- [ ] my name
- [ ] my human service records
- [ ] photographs of me
- [ ] audio recordings of me
- [ ] video images/tapes of me
- [ ] other, please explain:

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Title of the Work Sample: ____________________________________________

I understand that ________________________ (the portfolio developer’s name) may use the portfolio for his/her own purposes and that she or he will submit it for review by the NADSP DSP Credential Portfolio Review Expert.

_________________________ 
Signature of person granting permission 

_________________________ 
Date

_________________________ 
Signature of Applicant 

_________________________ 
Date
Appendix F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Review Organizer</td>
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</table>

Look at your finished credential portfolio with an eye for detail. Assess the quality of your work.

- What did you achieve and why?

- Can your work be improved and how?

- Rate your own work.

Ask someone else to review your portfolio- another DSP, Supervisor, or Mentor. This should be a process of exchanging feedback that will help you improve your portfolio and should not be about criticism. Select someone you are comfortable with.

- Are the work samples clear demonstrations of mastery in the competency area identified by the DSP?

- What is good and shows evidence of your skills in direct support work?

- What is the strongest evidence presented in the Credential Portfolio that demonstrates the DSP's skills, knowledge and values in the direct care field?

- What is missing? Are there unanswered questions?

- What needs to change?
# Appendix G

## Reviewer Form for DSP-I and DSP-II and DSP-III Portfolio

**NADSP Portfolio Evaluation Tool for Reviewers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component Description</th>
<th>Sufficient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page: a cover page that contains descriptive information including Participant name, the Participant's Supervisor's name, the Date of Portfolio Submission, Administrator's Name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents: an organizing page that shows how sections are arranged and the pages where sections are located</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Commitment Statement: provides an introduction to the participant's professional goals and personal views on human services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume: an organized summary of the participant's work history including the places that s/he has worked and the positions held within those organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter/communication of Support: at least one letter of support from a person the participant supports, or their family member or if a person is unable to verbally communicate and does not have family members, then a member of their support network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission Forms: keeps all personally identifying information out of the work sample unless specific written permission has been obtained from the person receiving supports to use identifying material such as information from records, photographs, videos, audiotapes, names, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training/Education records: copies of the training or education records of the applicant, which demonstrates that the applicant has met the education and training requirements for the DSP-C and/or DSP-G credentials. Proof of satisfactory completion of a NADSP accredited educational or training program for each credential level is required. These records may include documentation like educational transcripts and continuing education units (CEUs) certificates. Other records of education and/or training include verification of attendance (e.g., certificate of completion, employer-approved training record), the learning objectives of the training and/or education event and a statement about instructor credentials or qualifications.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Ethics signed statement: a signed agreement by the participant that s/he agrees to abide by the Direct Support Professional Code of Ethics in their practice as a Direct Support Professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eight Work Samples with Summaries: Applicant selects 8 of the 15 NADSP endorsed competencies and creates a work sample and summary for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Empowerment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Direct Support Professional enhances the ability of the participant to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem, and assertiveness; and to make decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The competent DSP assists and supports the participant to develop strategies, make informed choices, follow through on responsibilities, and take risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The competent DSP promotes participant partnership in the design of support services, consulting the person and involving him or her in the support process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The competent DSP provides opportunities for the participant to be a self-advocate by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods and techniques, encouraging and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf, and providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The competent DSP provides information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources, facilitates access to such information and assists the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision making about living, work, and social relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
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<th>Advanced</th>
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Work Sample & Summary Statement:

Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Areas for Continued Professional Growth:
Communication

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the range of effective communication strategies and skills necessary to establish a collaborative relationship with the participant.

1. The competent DSP uses effective, sensitive communication skills to build rapport and channels of communication by recognizing and adapting to the range of participant communication styles.
2. The competent DSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants.
3. The skilled DSP learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure participant understanding.

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Work Sample & Summary Statement:

Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Areas for Continued Professional Growth:
The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment practices in order to respond to the needs, desires and interests of the participants.

1. The competent DSP initiates or assists in the initiation of an assessment process by gathering information (e.g., participant’s self-assessment and history, prior records, test results, additional evaluation) and informing the participant about what to expect throughout the assessment process.

2. The competent DSP conducts or arranges for assessments to determine the needs, preferences, and capabilities of the participants using appropriate assessment tools and strategies, reviewing the process for inconsistencies, and making corrections as necessary.

3. The competent DSP discusses findings and recommendations with the participant in a clear and understandable manner, following up on results and reevaluating the findings as necessary.

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<thead>
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<th>Work Sample &amp; Summary Statement:</th>
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Reviewer Comments:
Strengths:
Areas for Continued Professional Growth:
Appendix G

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<th>Community &amp; Service Networking</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the formal and informal supports available in his or her community and skilled in assessing the participant to identify and gain access to such supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The competent DSP helps to identify the needs of the participant for community supports, working with the participant's informal support system, and assisting with, or initiating identified community connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The competent DSP researches, develops, and maintains information on community and other resources relevant to the needs of participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The competent DSP ensures participant access to needed and available community resources coordinating supports across agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The competent DSP participates in outreach to potential participants.</td>
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Work Sample & Summary Statement:

Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Areas for Continued Professional Growth:

G
Facilitation of Services

The Direct Support Professional is knowledgeable about a range of participatory planning techniques and is skilled in implementing plans in a collaborative and expeditious manner.

1. The competent DSP maintains collaborative professional relationships with the participant and all support team members (including family and friends), follows ethical standards of practice (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent, etc.), and recognizes his or her own personal limitations.
2. The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the development of an individualized plan based on participant preferences, needs, and interests.
3. The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the implementation of an individualized plan to achieve specific outcomes derived from participants’ preferences, needs and interests.
4. The competent DSP assists and/or facilitates the review of the achievement of individual participant outcomes.

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Community Living Skills & Support

The Direct Support Professional has the ability to match specific supports and interventions to the unique needs of individual participants and recognizes the importance of friends, family and community relationships.

1. The competent DSP assists the participant to meet his or her physical (e.g., health, grooming, toileting, eating) and personal management needs (e.g., human development, human sexuality) by teaching skills, providing supports, and building on individual strengths and capabilities.
2. The competent DSP assists the participant with household management (e.g., meal prep, laundry, cleaning, decorating) and transportation needs to maximize his or her skills, abilities and independence.
3. The competent DSP assists with identifying, securing and using needed equipment (e.g., adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational and communication).
4. The competent DSP supports the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships.
5. The competent community based support worker assists the participant to recruit and train service providers as needed.

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### Advocacy

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing participants (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative and financial) and should be able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges.

1. The competent DSP and the participant identify advocacy issues by gathering information, reviewing and analyzing all aspects of the issue.
2. The competent DSP has current knowledge of laws, services, and community resources to assist and educate participants to secure needed supports.
3. The competent DSP facilitates, assists, and/or represents the participant when there are barriers to his or her service needs and lobbies decision makers when appropriate to overcome barriers to services.
4. The competent DSP interacts with and educates community members and organizations (e.g., employer, landlord, civic organization) when relevant to participant's needs or services.

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**Work Sample & Summary Statement:**

**Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Continued Professional Growth:**
### Vocational, Education & Career Support

The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about the career and education related concerns of the participant and should be able to mobilize the resources and support necessary to assist the participant to reach his or her goals.

1. The competent DSP explores with the participant his/her vocational interests and aptitudes, assists in preparing for job or school entry, and reviews opportunities for continued career growth.
2. The competent DSP assists the participant in identifying job/training opportunities and marketing his/her capabilities and services.
3. The competent DSP collaborates with employers and school personnel to support the participant, adapting the environment, and providing job retention supports.

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<td>Areas for Continued Professional Growth:</td>
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Appendix G

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<tr>
<th>Crisis Prevention and Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Direct Support Professional should be knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The competent DSP identifies the crisis, defuses the situation, evaluates and determines an intervention strategy and contacts necessary supports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The competent DSP continues to monitor crisis situations, discussing the incident with authorized staff and participant(s), adjusting supports and the environment, and complying with regulations for reporting.</td>
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Work Sample & Summary Statement:

Reviewer Comments:

Strengths:

Areas for Continued Professional Growth:
Appendix G

Organizational Participation

The Direct Support Professional is familiar with the mission and practices of the support organization and participates in the life of the organization.

1. The competent DSP contributes to program evaluations, and helps to set organizational priorities to ensure quality.
2. The competent DSP incorporates sensitivity to cultural, religious, racial, disability, and gender issues into daily practices and interactions.
3. The competent DSP provides and accepts co-worker support, participating in supportive supervision, performance evaluation, and contributing to the screening of potential employees.
4. The competent DSP provides input into budget priorities, identifying ways to provide services in a more cost-effective manner.

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<th>Work Sample &amp; Summary Statement:</th>
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Reviewer Comments:
Strengths:
Areas for Continued Professional Growth:
Appendix G

### Documentation

The Direct Support Professional is aware of the requirements for documentation in his or her organization and is able to manage these requirements efficiently.

1. The competent DSP maintains accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.
2. The competent DSP maintains standards of confidentiality and ethical practice.
3. The competent DSP learns and remains current with appropriate documentation systems, setting priorities and developing a system to manage documentation.

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**Work Sample & Summary Statement:**

**Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Continued Professional Growth:**
Appendix G

| Facilitation of Relationships and Friendships |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
| The Direct Support Professional supports the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships. |
| 1. The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in planning for community activities and events (e.g., making reservation, staff needs, money, materials, accessibility). |
| 2. The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in arranging transportation for community events. |
| 3. The competent DSP documents community activities and events. |
| 4. The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in facilitating friendships and peer interactions. |
| 5. The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communication with parents/family (e.g., phone calls, visits, letters). |
| 6. The competent DSP implements individual supports regarding community activities. |
| 7. The competent DSP provides incentives or motivation for consumer involvement in community outings. |
| 8. The competent DSP assists the individual as needed in getting to know and interacting with his/her neighbors. |
| 9. The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in dating. |
| 10. The competent DSP encourages and assists the individual as needed in communicating with social workers and financial workers. |

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<th>Work Sample &amp; Summary Statement:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Areas for Continued Professional Growth:</td>
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### Appendix G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Person-Centered Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Direct Support Professional provides support to people using a person centered approach.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The competent DSP modifies support programs and interventions to ensure they are person centered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The competent DSP challenges co-workers and supervisors to use person centered practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The competent DSP is knowledgeable about person centered planning techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The competent DSP assists individuals in developing person centered plans.</td>
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**Work Sample & Summary Statement:**

**Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Continued Professional Growth:**
Appendix G

### Supporting Health and Wellness

The Direct Support Professional promotes the health and wellness of all consumers.

1. Administers medications accurately and in accordance with agency policy and procedures.
2. Observes and implements appropriate actions to promote healthy living and to prevent illness and accidents.
3. Uses appropriate first aid/safety procedures when responding to emergencies.
4. Assists individuals in scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments.
5. Assists individuals in completing personal care (e.g., hygiene and grooming) activities.
6. Assists with identifying, securing and using needed adaptive equipment (i.e., adaptive equipment) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, psychological).
7. Assists individuals in implementing health and medical treatments.
8. Assists individuals to take an active role in their health care decisions.

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</table>

**Work Sample & Summary Statement:**

**Reviewer Comments:**

**Strengths:**

**Areas for Continued Professional Growth:**
### Scoring the Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Checks</td>
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<tr>
<td>per Level:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiply by:</td>
<td>X1</td>
<td>X2</td>
<td>X3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score per Level:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Add all Total Scores:</td>
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</table>

**Grand Total Portfolio Score:**
- To receive credentialing a minimum score of 14 is required.

**Overall Reviewer Comments:**

**Overall Strengths:**

**Overall Areas for Continued Professional Development:**
Appendix I

DSP-I and DSP-II CREDENTIAL PORTFOLIO
Final Check

You must make sure your portfolio is complete and neatly arranged. It should look professional and reflect your best work.

1. Are all the required components in the portfolio?
   - Title Page
   - Table of Contents
   - Statement of Professional Commitment
   - Resume
   - Letter/Communication of Support
   - Signed Code of Ethics Statement
   - Four Authentic Work Samples with Reflective Statements for DSP-I and DSP-II
   - Permission Forms for Any Personal Information Included
   - Training/Education Records

2. Is everything legible, either typed or written very clearly?

3. Are work samples labeled clearly by NADSP Competency Area?

4. Does each work sample have a reflective statement?

5. Have you attached permission forms for all individuals identified in each work sample? (If not, have you blanked out all their names and identifying information?)

6. If you included pictures or other artwork are these attached securely to the background?

7. Do pictures have captions or explanations?

8. Do you feel this credential portfolio represents your best work?

If you have answered yes to all of these questions you are ready to submit your DSP-I or DSP-II credential portfolio!
DSP Mentorship Agreement

For Participation in the NADSP Credentialing Program

Name of Mentor: __________________________________ Date: __________________
Name of Mentee: __________________________________ Date: __________________

As partners in this mentoring relationship, we agree to participate in the partnership for a period of ______________ months ending on __________ (insert projected date). We will review the overall effectiveness of our partnership at least two weeks prior to this date. We will explore what is working and what is not working with our mentoring relationship; we will discuss what has been achieved and what is undone; we will also decide whether or not to continue the mentoring relationship. To extend our partnership, we will enter into another mutually negotiated partnership agreement.

During the period of this agreement, either partner may choose to end the partnership. The decision to end the relationship by either partner will be recognized as the right of that person. Neither partner will be criticized, sanctioned or otherwise judged by the other partner.

As partners in this mentoring relationship, we agree to the following responsibilities:

Mentor responsibilities- list at least 5 or 6. Be very specific and use more space if necessary.

Mentee Responsibilities—list at least 5 or 6. Be very specific and use more space if necessary.

Competencies, Skills, Priorities, and Completion Dates:
As the Mentee in this partnership, I have identified the following credentialing competency areas, and corresponding skill statements with intended timelines to complete them during this mentoring relationship. (Mentee should choose eight of the fifteen competency areas, and specific skill statements for each competency area. The Mentee should prioritize each competency area to remind themselves which area they want to work on first, second, etc.. Lastly, the mentee should identify an intended completion date for each competency area). I understand that my priorities may change and my completion dates may need to be adjusted. If a change to this plan is necessary, I will inform and discuss the matter with my mentor.
Appendix I

Signature of Mentee: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

1. Competency Area: ___________________________
   (List the # of the Competency Area from the Credentialing Guidebook)
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Priority (1-8): ___________________________
   Intended Completion Date: ___________________________

2. Competency Area: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Priority (1-8): ___________________________
   Intended Completion Date: ___________________________

3. Competency Area: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Priority (1-8): ___________________________
   Intended Completion Date: ___________________________

4. Competency Area: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Priority (1-8): ___________________________
   Intended Completion Date: ___________________________

5. Competency Area: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Skill Statement: ___________________________
   Priority (1-8): ___________________________
   Intended Completion Date: ___________________________
Appendix I

Skill Statement

Priority (1-8): ____________________________ Intended Completion Date: __________

6. Competency Area : ____________________________
   Skill Statement: ____________________________

Skill Statement

Priority (1-8): ____________________________ Intended Completion Date: __________

7. Competency Area : ____________________________
   Skill Statement: ____________________________

Skill Statement

Priority (1-8): ____________________________ Intended Completion Date: __________

8. Competency Area : ____________________________
   Skill Statement: ____________________________

Skill Statement

Priority (1-8): ____________________________ Intended Completion Date: __________

As the Mentor in this partnership, I have reviewed my partner’s goals and I will assist my mentee in reaching these goals to the best of my ability.

Signature of Mentor__________________________ Date: __________

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