DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING (DSPT)

The Direct Support Professional Training (DSPT) is a competency-based training program that is mandatory for all Direct Support Professionals (DSP) working in licensed community care facilities vendored by regional centers. The DSPT is divided into two equal segments of 35 hours each to be completed in successive years for a total of 70 hours. DSPs who are mandated to meet the training requirement, may opt to meet it by passing the Challenge Test for each 35-hour training program. Any questions or concerns, email **ccfdsp@dds.ca.gov**.

Q1.   How do I get my questions answered?
A1.   If you have any questions about the training program, you may e-mail your questions to ccfdsp@dds.ca.gov. Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) will be posted on the FAQ page so that others can benefit from information provided. Please review the FAQs before sending questions to see if the information you need has already been provided.

Q2.   What is a competency-based training program?
A2.   Competency-based training is training designed to teach skills necessary for satisfactory job performance. Training is based upon a set of competencies or job skills that have been identified through a detailed job analysis.

In developing the competencies and curriculum for the Direct Support Professional Training (DSPT), staff from Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) met with Community Care Facility (CCF) direct support professionals (DSPs) and administrators; individuals living in CCFs; and, regional center service coordinator, quality assurance, and clinical staff. The meetings were held at four different locations in the state: San Diego, Los Angeles, San Jose, and Stockton. During these meetings, participants were asked to provide information about important aspects of the job of the DSP and the skills necessary for satisfactory job performance. Staff from the ROCPs and DDS also visited several CCFs and talked to and observed DSPs on-the-job.

Based upon the input from all participants, the ROCP developed a set of direct support professional competencies which were approved by DDS and are used as the basis for the training and testing program.

Q3. **Is the training program required by law?**

A3. Statutes of 1998 require all existing and new DSPs to either pass a Challenge Test or take the Training Class and pass a test for each of the 35-hour training segments. See Direct Support Professional Training Statue, Welfare and Institutions Code 4695.2.

Q4. **When do I have to take the training?**

A4. DSPs in Service Levels 2, 3, and 4 facilities employed on or after January 1, 2001, have one year from date of hire to satisfactorily complete the first 35-hour training segment; and, two years from the date of hire to complete the second 35-hour training segment.

Q5. **Will day program staff be required to take the training?**

A5. No. The Statute requires DSPs in licensed residential services and CCFs vendored by regional centers to take the training.

Q6. **Will each 35-hour training be offered all at once or in sessions over a period of time?**

A6. The training is designed to be offered in three (3) hour sessions. There is flexibility in the scheduling to meet the needs of DSPs throughout the state (e.g., a class can be scheduled for 6 hours covering 2 training sessions). One may also read and print the curriculum for either Year 1 or Year 2 through the DDS website.

Q7. **What are the qualifications for trainers?**

A7. Trainers are required to have experience providing services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and knowledge of the specific subject areas covered in the training.

Q8. **Who will recruit, select and hire or contract with the trainers?**

A8. Each of the 4 Service Hubs are responsible for recruiting, selecting and contracting with or hiring the trainers. Those interested in being a trainer, should contact their local Service Hub. See Directory of Service Hubs.

Q9. **Does the mandated 70-hour training program apply to both owner-operated and staff-operated homes?**

A9. Yes, facility DSPs in both owner-operated and staff-operated homes who provide direct care must take the training. "Direct Care Staff" means facility staff, in Service Levels 2, 3 and 4 facilities, who personally provide direct supervision and special services to individuals receiving regional center services who live in CCF's, and is synonymous with "Direct Support Professionals." The term includes the licensee, the administrator, management, and supervisory staff during that time when they are providing direct supervision and special services, or are involved in performing program preparation functions. Title 17, Section 56002(a)(12).

Q10. **Are family members considered 'employees'?**

A10. Anyone, including a family member who is also an employee, who provides direct supervision and special services to an individual residing in a CCF vendored by a regional center, is a direct care staff (direct support professional) and as such would be considered an employee of the facility. "Direct Supervision" means assisting, prompting, or training an individual to meet his/her service needs, in the areas related to self-help, food preparation, household maintenance, handling money and making purchases, accessing community resources, and participating in leisure time activities. "Special

services" means specialized training, treatment, and/or supervision required by the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and provided by the facility in addition to direct supervision. Title 17, Section 56002(a)(14) and 56002(a)(48).

Family members who are also employees, are DSPs, and are required to either pass a Challenge Test for each of the 35-hour training segments or successfully complete the required 70 hours of training

Q11. **With the addition of a skill check to the DSPT challenge test starting September 2007, does that mean I have to re-take the test if I've already been certified?**
A11. People are not required to take the Challenge Test again if they've already passed. After September 1, 2007, people taking the Year 1 or Year 2 Challenge Test have to pass both the written exam and a skill check in order to become certified.

Q12. **Can the videos available through DDS serve as substitutes to the 35-hour DSPT? Are there any other means to become certified?**
A12. No, people can only get certified by successfully completing the Training Class or passing the Challenge Test.

Q13. **Can I take the Challenge Test if I already have a previous challenge test or training class enrollment on record?**
A13. No. You can no longer register for the Challenge Test if you have a previous challenge test or training class (in-person or online) enrollment on record.

Q14. **Are continuing education units (CEUS) available for people taking the DSPT?**
A14. Yes, but through two different mechanisms. Community Care Licensing (CCL) requires 40 hours per year of CEUs for administrators. For either Year 1 or Year 2 DSPT, the 35 hours in class do count toward meeting this requirement. However, this only applies to administrators working at Adult Residential Facilities (ARFs) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFEs), not homes serving children or infants (DSPT material does not have adequate crossover for that population). Administrators may receive CEUs by submitting a copy of their Certification of Completion and verification of attendance to the Department of Social Services, CCL Division.

In addition, Title 17 requires all DSPs working in Adult Residential Facilities to complete up to 12 hours per year of CEU credits. The DSPT hours meet the annual Title 17 requirement.

Q15. **Not sure how to register for class?**
A15. DSPT Registration is done online at http://www.dsptrain.org.

Q16. **Who can I contact if I am having trouble registering for a challenge test or training class online?**
A16. If you are having difficulties registering for a class, please refer to our website under Publications & Resources for our FAQ on Technical Support. You can also contact our help desk at ccfdsp@dds.ca.gov.

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