Direct Support Professionals Curriculum

Titles (Alphabetical)	Modality	Refresher	Estimated length	Certificate Description
Welcome to Direct Support Professional Training Course Code: DSP-00	Online	none	1.5 hrs	An overview of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) training program and how to use the Docebo Learning Management System (LMS) to complete trainings. **Detailed Description:** This quick online course provides an overview of the Direct Support Staff curriculum and how it works through the Docebo Learning Management System (LMS). An overview of learning plans, teaching approaches, using technology, and trouble-shooting is offered for new and returning users.
A Quick Guide to Talking About Disabilities Course Code: DSP-1F	Online	none	30 min	This course focuses on respectful communication, the words that we use, and the non-verbal communication behind what we say. **Detailed Description:** Active advocacy and reduction of stigma are important aspects/ roles of being a Direct Support Professional (DSP). This course focuses on our communication, the words we use and the non-verbal communication behind what we say. The use of people-first or person-first language is a focus.
Annual Recipient Rights Update Course Code: DSP-7a	Online	annual	1.25 hrs	This is the annual refresher course for recipient rights training. The review covers topics such as the basic rights of individuals receiving public mental health services, the role of the Office of Recipient Rights, use of Incident Reports, and reporting requirements. **Detailed Description:** Following the completion of New Hire Recipient Rights, Direct Support Professionals must complete an annual recipient rights update class. This class provides a review of the basic rights of individuals receiving public mental health services, the role of the Office of Recipient Rights, use of Incident Reports, and reporting requirements.
Behavior and Crisis Intervention Course Code: DSP-5B	Online	annual	30 min.	Maintaining a safe and positive environment for individuals receiving services is important, especially when challenging behaviors occur. This course reinforces the concepts of safety, security, and dignity for individuals receiving behavioral health services. Crisis Plans and Behavior Support Plans are covered. **Detailed Description:** Even in the midst of challenging behavior, people served in the behavioral health system are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. The expectation for the Direct Support Professional is to be at their best when the circumstances are at their most challenging. Course content covers aspects of a Crisis Plan and Behavior Support Plan, as well as the role of a Behavior Support Committee. Direct Support Professionals are always working on maintaining a positive relationship, even at difficult times.

Bloodborne Pathogens & Infection Prevention for DSPs Course Code: DSP-3B	Online	annual	1.5 hrs	This course provides an overview of ***bloodborne pathogens***. It includes ***prevention of disease transmission, universal precautions and environmental controls.*** **Detailed Description:** This course covers the basic principles of prevention and management of disease transmission, including universal precautions. These principles apply to both individuals who receive services and staff. ***Note:*** *This course is designed for DSPs who are NOT required to take Health and Wellness*
Building Natural Supports Course Code: DSP-1B	Online	none	30 min	**Detailed Description:** We all need supportive people in our lives. This course delves into who natural supports are and how we can support individual's receiving services in building a natural support system.
CPR and First Aid (Registration Information) Course Code: DSP-2B1	Online/ Live Demo required	2 years	Length based on CPR service provider	This course covers the basic skills for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation including checking a conscious or unconscious victim, conscious choking, CPR and unconscious airway obstruction. **Detailed Description:** This course covers the basic skills for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation including checking a conscious or unconscious victim, conscious choking, CPR and unconscious airway obstruction. The course may be online, live, or hybrid (live online teaching) but MUST include an in-person return skill-set demonstration. Certifying organizations (American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Health and Safety Institute or National Safety Council) are recommended.
CPR and First Aid (Skills Session Registration) Course Code: DSP-2B2 DUE TO LIMITED SPACE, LEARNERS ARE PERMITTED TO ONLY SIGN UP FOR ONE SESSION AT A TIME	Live Demo	2 years	Length based on CPR service provider	**Detailed Description:** This course allows USERS to sign up for the LIVE return demonstration for CPR/First Aid. USERS will pick a DATE and TIME to do their skills demo. Be sure to mark this date/time on your calendar! Certificate will be considered complete only after in person training is complete. **Note:** OCHN does not award certificates for this, certificate will be granted by the CPR/First Aid service provider
Crisis Planning Course Code: DSP-5A	Online	none	45 min	Learners examine the role of crisis plans and the strategies typically contained within them. This course introduces the steps on how to proactively prevent/minimize a crisis by identifying early warning signs and using a person-centered approaches. Workplace violence prevention is addressed. **Detailed Description:** Crisis planning is identifying the steps to be taken when a crisis event arises and how to proactively prevent/minimize a crisis by identifying early warning signs. Learners examine the role of crisis plans and strategies typically contained within them. The role of person-centered approaches is highlighted and stressed.
Critical Thinking and Creative Problem-Solving Course Code: DSP-4B	Online	none	1 hour	Designed for participants to develop and hone their critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. The focus is to understand the role of critical thinking in health services as well as cultivate skills in information gathering, analysis, choice, and possible solutions. **Detailed Description:** Behavioral health services must be person-centered and encourage a diversity of outcomes. Direct Support Professionals need to be flexible and able to see beyond the "what is" to the "what could be" and help persons receiving services realize their potential. Many people often see problems rather than solutions and opportunities. This course is designed for participants to develop critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.

Cultural Competency for Direct Support Professionals Course Code: DSP-1C	Online	3 years	1.75 hrs	This course illuminates the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion when providing services. Learners explore the principles of culture and how it affects perceptions and services. Learners are encouraged in to pursue continuous effort to be culturally competent inside and outside of work. **Detailed Description:** This course is designed to help Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) understand why diversity, equity, and inclusion are important in the delivery of services and how to implement principles of cultural competence into our everyday work and life.
Documentation Responsibilities and Skills Course Code: DSP-1D	Online	none	45 min	The importance of documentation in behavioral health services is highlighted. Participants learn the process and formatting of records, how to record observations,and ensuring documents are legible, clear, concise, and professional. **Detailed Description:** Documentation of what we do in the carrying out of our job duties is essential for communication, a legal obligation in many cases, and helps to demonstrate how the individuals who are supported by us are doing. This course looks at the whens, hows, and wheres of documentation typically done by Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Participants will have the opportunity to learn essential documentation skills sets and practice them.
Due Process　　　　Course Code: DSP-7B	Online	none	45 min	Highlights the legal requirements under **Due Process** when providing services to individuals with disabilities. Staff also are familiarized with the **Grievances and Appeals** process. **Detailed Description:** Part of this process is also understanding requirements for Grievances and Appeals. This course provides Direct Support Professionals with an overview of the requirements and how to support individuals receiving services
Environmental Emergencies and Emergency Preparedness Course Code: DSP-2A	Online	2 years	45 min	This course reviews how to keep individuals recieving behavioral health services safe as well as rules related to ongoing emergency preparedness. Participants explore procedures for weather emergencies, utility failures, fire, evacuation processes and other emergency situations that may be encountered. **Detailed Description:** Preparing for an emergency, knowing what to do, evacuation routes, and understanding individual needs are a crucial part of the roles of Direct Support Professionals when supporting individuals served. This course reviews licensing and other rules related to ongoing preparedness.
Health and Wellness - DSP Course Code: DSP-3A	Online	none	1.75 hrs	Direct Support Professional learn about their role in supporting the health needs of individuals receiving services. Bloodborne pathogens, universal precautions, infection prevention, seizure management, and diabetes management are some covered topics. **Detailed Description:** Health and Wellness focuses on exploring the many aspects of maintaining overall health and wellness while living with a disability. Learners build a better understanding of their role in supporting individuals. Bloodborne pathogens, universal precautions, infection prevention, seizure management, and diabetes management are some of the issues explored.

Health & Medications Return Demonstration **Course Code: DSP-Demo1** DUE TO LIMITED SPACE, LEARNERS ARE PERMITTED TO ONLY SIGN UP FOR ONE SESSION AT A TIME	Live Demo	none	Length based on live demo	**Detailed Description:** Providing ongoing support to individuals served is required of Direct Support Professional (DSPs) while on the job. This includes health, safety, and medication monitoring and/or administration. DSPs who take, as part of their assigned Learning Plan, "Health and Wellness" (1 course) and "Medication Administration" (4 courses) must conclude their learning with a "Health & Medications" return demonstration with a Nurse Educator.
Health & Medications Skill Enhancement (Combo Class) **Course Code: DSP-Combo**	Live Class. Includes a half day class, practice, and afternoon demos.	none	Full day	Learners review fundamental processes regarding the administration of different types of medication with a Nurse Educator. Supervised practice time allows for skill building. Taking and passing a medication administration return demonstration is the conclusion. **Detailed Description:** This skill enhancement class is offered for learners who are struggling to pass the assessment and/or return demonstration components of the Health and Medication Administration courses. In small, live, classes, students will review key aspects of health and medication administration with a nurse educator. Practice time and coaching is provided prior to the learner completing an independent return demonstration. May be repeated as necessary. Is also available to any learner who would benefit from additional study and for those who have had medication errors. **ONLY POWER USERS MAY SIGN LEARNERS UP FOR THIS CLASS! SELF-ENROLLMENT IS NOT PERMITTED!**
HIPAA and Confidentiality for DSPs Course Code: DSP-7C	Online	annual	45 min	The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (**HIPAA**) is reviewed and core concepts covered. Legal requirements overall and in the workplace are addressed. Protection of health information, **confidentiality,** and disclosure rules are learned. **Detailed Description:** Learners understand the basics of the HIPAA laws and its primary requirements, "protected health information" and the types of information included within HIPAA, and disclosure rules and how to apply these rules.
Human Relationships **Course Code: DSP-4A**	Online	none	45 min.	The direct support professional role in supporting, developing, and maintaining of positive, healthy and meaningful relationships in the life of an individual receiving behavioral health services is the primary focus. The principles of person-centered planning, dignity, respect, self-direction, choice, recovery, and positive behavior supports are all important concepts that are addressed. **Detailed Description:** A primary role of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) is to assist and support individuals in developing and maintaining positive, healthy, and personally satisfying relationships throughout all aspects of their life. Some of the relationships may include the person's relationship with DSPs, with others sharing his or her living arrangements, with family members, with friends, with clinical and professional staff, with teachers, and with members of the general community. The principles of person-centered planning, dignity and respect, self-direction, choice, recovery, and positive behavior supports are an important part of this goal.

Introduction to Human Services and Meeting Special Needs **Course Code: DSP-1A**	Online	none	45 min.	**Detailed Description:** This course is designed to develop Direct Support Professionals' (DSP'S) understanding of basic definitions, diagnosis, causes, and myths around Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Mental Illness, and Substance Use Disorder. This training also addresses issues pertaining to **co-occurring disorders** and introduces the importance of **integrated health care.**
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) for DSPs Course Code: DSP-10E	Online	3 years	45 min	Participants learn the legal requirements of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) rules and guidelines. How to apply the requirements in the workplace is addressed. **Detailed Description:** Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a term used to describe individuals who are not fluent in verbal English and would have trouble communicating in English or understanding English without the help of an interpreter. This LEP course is designed to teach individuals to eliminate barriers and provide accommodations so individuals served can receive equal access to services
Medication Administration: An Overview **(1 of 4 courses)** **Course Code: DSP-3Ca**	Online	3 years	2 hours	The first of four classes covering Medication Administration. Participants learn about the basics of medication use and safety. The importance of medication knowledge, how medications are prescribed/obtained, and general medication security and abuse are covered. **Detailed Description:** This is the first of four classes covering Medication Administration. Participants learn about the basics of medication use. This class explores why it is important to know about medications, how medications are prescribed and obtained, general medication security, and medication abuse. **Note:** This course may be taken by itself by staff who do not administer medications but still need an understanding of how medications work. This class alone does not permit staff to handle or administer medications! Approximate length: 2 hours.
Medication Administration: Medications and Side Effects **(2 of 4 courses)** **Course Code: DSP-3Cb**	Online	None	45 min	The second of four classes covering Medication Administration. Focus is on medications in general, categories of medications, commonly prescribed medications, general safeguards, and the effects of medications on patients, including allergies and side effects. **Detailed Description:** This is the second of four classes in the Medication Administration sequence. This course focuses on medications in general, categories of medications, general safeguards, commonly prescribed medications, and the effects of Medications on the human body. **Note:** This course may be taken, following completion of Medication Administration: An Overview by staff who do not administer medications but still need an understanding of medications and side effects. This class does not permit staff to handle of administer medications!
Medication Administration: Proper Administration Process **(3 of 4 courses) Course Code: DSP-3Cc**	Online	None	2 hours	**Detailed Description:** The third of four classes in the Medication Administration sequence. Participants learn safe medication administration checks, reading medication labels, how to transcribe medications from the Pharmacy to the Medication Administration Record (MAR), and the proper process of medication administration and documentation.

Medication Administration: Documentation and Charting (4 of 4 courses) Course Code: DSP-3Cd	Online	None	45 min	The fourth of four classes in the Medication Administration sequence. Participants learn how to document, record, and/or chart medication administration. Medication disposal and recording disposal is addressed. **Detailed Description:** This course is the final class of four for Medication Administration sequence. Participants learn how to document, record, and/or chart medication administration. Remember, if it is not documented or charted, it did not happen! **Note:** All FOUR Medication Administration courses MUST be passed, along with a successful Return Demonstration, in order for DSPs to pass/administer medications.
Medication Education Course Code: DSP-11A	Online	3 years	2 hours	Medication Education covers basic medication knowledge for direct support professionals who may support individuals with disabilities who are independent in their taking of medications. Understanding of the types, effects, and side effects of medications are covered. This course does NOT train staff in medication administration. **Detailed Description:** Medication Education serves TWO functions: (1) it is the tri-annual (every three years) Medication Administration refresher course for DSPs who pass medications as part of their job. (2) it is an introductory class to understanding how medications work and how to assist individuals who are independent with their medications but could benefit from support and monitoring. Staff may NOT "pass" or administer medications as a result of taking this class. The full Medication Administration course series (4 classes AND passed Med Return Demo) is required to pass/administer medications of any kind.
New Hire Recipient Rights Course Code: DSP-7A DUE TO LIMITED SPACE, LEARNERS ARE PERMITTED TO ONLY SIGN UP FOR ONE SESSION AT A TIME	Virtual or in-person	initial	4 hours	This course helps identify individual rights protected under the **Michigan Mental Health Code** and other laws. Learners explore the various types of rights and rights violations, such as abuse or neglect. Understanding their role as a mandatory responders, the complaint process, how to write i**ncident reports**, and **due process** requirements are covered. **Detailed Description:** Every person who receives mental health services has certain rights which are protected by the Michigan Mental Health Code. This course helps the participant to support an individual's rights as well as be able to identify various forms of rights violations such as abuse and neglect. Participants learn about reporting requirements and accurately implementing those requirements.
Nutrition, Food Safety, and Assisting People with Eating/ Swallowing Difficulties Course Code: DSP-6	Online	none	1 hour	This class highlights the importance and complexity of proper nutrition. Learners are able to identify the differences between special diets for healthcare and special diets for personal choice or preference. Skills such as menu planning, grocery shopping, and meal preparation are explored. Importance of food consistency for individuals with eating/swallowing difficulties is discussed **Detailed Description:** This course is designed to assist Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) in learning about healthy nutrition and how to help others develop and maintain healthy diets. Special diets related to health care and special diets maintained as a personal choice or preference are examined. Menu planning, grocery shopping, and meal preparation are amongst the topics explored. Food safety, storage, and handling are covered. The importance of food consistency when supporting individuals with eating/swallowing difficulties is discussed.

Philosophy & Current Trends Course Code: DSP-1E	Online	none	1 hour	An exploration of the current evidenced-based practices in behavioral health services, best practices in support, and innovative thinking. Emphasis is placed on how the behavioral health field has changed over time and the development person and family-centered philosophies and strategies. New and innovative approaches continue to be developed that empower and enhance the lives of persons receiving services. **Detailed Description:** Meeting the challenges of providing behavioral health services can be stimulating and rewarding for both individuals served as well as Direct Support Professionals. The ultimate outcome is enhanced quality of life, increased personal control and independence, and feelings of happiness and belonging. As the system moves forward in the development of person and family-centered philosophies and strategies, new and innovative approaches continue to be developed and tested that empower and enhance the lives of persons receiving services. This course focuses on current trends in the field, evidenced-based practices, and innovative thinking.
Suicide Risk and Intervention Course Code: DSP-5D	Online	none	30 min	How to reduce stigma, learn about protective factors, detect signs of suicide, and how to talk about suicide with others. Myths about suicide are covered to help learners be more informed and effective in making their community a more suicide safe environment. **Detailed Description:** Suicide prevention education creates awareness about suicide and counters the stigma tied to mental illness and the many myths and misconceptions people have about suicide. This Suicide Prevention 101 course will discuss how to reduce stigma, protective factors, signs of suicide, and how to talk about suicide with others.
Teaching New Skills/ Life Skills Course Code: DSP-4D	Online	none	30 min	This class delves into the specific strategies that help direct support professionals (DSPs) to teach and support activities of daily living. Emphasis is on the individual plan goals/objectives, meaningful life skills, and how to promote an effective learning environment. **Detailed Description:** Teaching new skills and new life skills is about enhancing lifestyle and improving the quality of a person's life. Teaching skills should be proactive and should be done with cultural sensitivity and competence. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) will learn specific strategies to teach activities of daily living, individual plan goals/objectives, and skills related to meaningful lives.
The Person-centered Planning Process for Direct Support Professionals Course Code: DSP-4C	Online	3 years	1 hour	An introduction to the Person Centered Planning process for direct support professionals (DSPs). DSP's explore their role in ensuring the individuals they support are able to make their own choices and life decisions. The content of the Individual Plan of Service (IPOS) is discussed as are strategies for implementing the IPOS. **Detailed Description:** This course is an introduction to the Person Centered Planning process for direct support professionals. Everyone deserves the right to make their own choices and gain control over their life. In this course the history, philosophy, and importance of Person Centered Planning is covered This course will also detail the DSP role in implementing the Individual Plan of Services (IPOS) and provides an introduction to self-determination.

Trauma Informed Supports **Course Code: DSP-5C**	Online	3 years	45 min	Understanding and supporting individuals with a trauma history is the focus of this class. Exploring the types of trauma, behavioral indicators of trauman, secondary trauma, and avoiding retraumatization are addressed. **Detailed Description:** The ability to provide trauma informed care to individuals receiving services is a crucial skill set for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). It is the responsibility of DSPs to work with individuals in a manner which supports growth and does not contribute to the impact of previous trauma. This training addresses the nature of trauma and its impact on the individuals served.
Supporting Individuals who use Wheelchairs: An Overview **Course Code: DSP-ST2**	Online	none	45 min	**Detailed Description:** Participants learn to support individuals who are manual and/or electric wheelchair users. Topics include basic safety/security, lifing, transferring, positioning, and related topics aimed at comfort and safety.
Writing Effective Incident Reports **Course Code: DSP-7D**	Online	once/ initial	30 min	Incident Reports (IRs) are an important communication tool for documenting issues and incidents involving individuals served. Correctly documenting in an IR, completing notifications, and submitting IR are just some of the topics covered. **Detailed Description:** The writing of Incident Reports (IRs) is an important communication tool when things happen involving persons served. It is the responsibility of Direct Support Professionals to make sure that incident reports are written, written properly and professionally, and submitted in a timely manner.
Specialty Classes (May be added to any User profile by the User or Power User)				
Supporting Individuals with Eating/Swalllowing Disorders 	Online	none	2026	This course provides an overview of different disabilities that include challenges with eating and/or swallowing. Participants learn about different types of eating/swallowing problems, how to assist with or manage dietary needs, and how to support nutrition. **ALTERNATIVE**: The contents of this course is embedded within the Learning Plan course "Nutrition, Food Service, and Supporting People with Eating/Swallowing Disorders".
Supporting Individuals with Dementia and IDD 	Online	none	2026	Developed with the Alzheimer's Association, this course provides an overview of Dementia in individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. Learners will gain knowledge of the sign/symptoms of dementia, the causes of dementia, and best practices in supporting individuals.
Supporting Individuals with Seizures: An Introduction 	Online	none	2026	This course provides participants with an introduction and overview of supporting individuals who experience seizures. Causes of seizures, types of seizures, and what to do when seizures occur are covered. **ALTERNATIVE**: The contents of this course is embedded within the Learning Plan course "Health and Wellness".
Supporting Individuals with Diabetes: An Introduction 	Online	none	2026	This course provides participants with an introduction and overview of different types of Diabetes. The role of nutrition, special dietary needs, exercise, and ongoing monitoring is addressed. Note: DSPs who support individuals with finger sticks and/or insulin administration MUST have special nurse training in addition to this class. **ALTERNATIVE**: The contents of this course is embedded within the Learning Plan course "Health and Wellness".

*	**Active Lessons:** Courses time estimates are based on previous learners' completion times average. Each learner is different as is the difficulty of course content. Individual performance, individual reading skills, etc., will vary.