

# How to Attract and Retain PWS Caregivers

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# DSP Turnover

- ▶ DSP turnover rates average 51.3% nationwide (Parfaite-Claude, 2020).
- ▶ Average wage of DSP nationwide **\$13.92/hr.** (2021).
- ▶ Why has this become the norm?
  - Low wages
  - High stress
  - Company culture
  - Lack of training
  - Not attractive as a career

# How Turnover Effects Individuals & Support Agencies

“ People who rely on supports provided by DSPs report experiencing lower quality of life when stable, reliable supports cannot be found. ”

Study including 1,342 people with IDD participated in a CQL Personal Outcomes Measures interview that analyzed impact of DSP turnover in the previous two years on 21 indicators aligned with quality of life” (Friedman, 2018).

Current and on-going crisis levels of staff shortages among the DSP workforce results in chronically vacancy of direct care positions across all industry sectors of Home and Community Based Support Services

Leaving even emergency staffing resources unavailable, increasing demands of administrative personnel, and need of extensive amounts of time and energy to provide essential direct care services

**THIS**

**EQUATES**

to a significant loss in personnel time engaged in strategic planning, recruiting, and Hiring DSPs, quality training, and other activities that support quality development of DSP Core Competencies

“ A high rate of DSP turnover is also costly for human service organizations, and state budgets more broadly. In 2004, Larson and colleagues estimated turnover costs at \$3,278 per DSP who leaves the organization, including separation costs, training costs, and hiring costs (Larson et al., 2016). In 2009, these costs were estimated at **\$4,872 per DSP** ” (ANCOR, 2010).

# Why such a high rate of turnover?

Skills Don't Match Needs

Company Culture

Manager & Supervisor Effectiveness

Burnout

Emotionally Demanding

“Can't give what you don't have”

Lack of Recognition

# Where To Start

## Recruiting and Hiring Manager

- ▶ Acts as on-site Recourse for Staff Support
- ▶ Coordinates staffing across 9 individual homes in one region.

**Enabling Retention** by increasing opportunities to find the “**Right Fit**” among multiple home-based teams

## Mission of Position

“Support DSP Staff with the same person-centered practices that guide individualized support services for residents.”



# How to Attract New Employees

## Source of Applicants & New Hire DSPs in 2021

Majority of **ALL DSPs Hired this year** had at least 1 existing connection to 2 major “veins” within the Community or Social Network of just 2 Current DSP Employees.

**Capitalized on Current Employees’ Community Connections & Social Networks with support of Referral Bonus incentives to Source & Recruit New Applicants.**

### RESULT:

- ▶ Significant Increase in number of DSPs who are trained to work at multiple home locations.
- ▶ Increased communication & productivity among Home-Based Teams
- ▶ Increased regular occurrence of community outings & planned activities that include multiple DSP and resident participants from different home-based locations



## “ Why Are You Interested In Working with AME? ”

Direct quotes from applicant's submission of agency's online Employment Inquiry form

“...because of the **good news that i heard of the company** from one of my workmate.”

“ My friend told me how AME work with her schedule and **how amazing the teams are**, that made me be interested in AME.”

“ ...I have a couple of friends who work with this company and said they **absolutely love it** and it's **such a nice environment to work** in and be around...”

“...because **a current staff talk a lot of good things** about the company”

“I heard about this opportunity **from a few friends**, who said **it's a great and fun environment** and I will learn how to provide better supports services for I/DD individuals.”

“...a good friend of mine has been working for AME. She told me that **AME supports learning and development** on the job and really rewards hard workers. These are values I also share. I feel would be an excellent fit with AME.”

“To help people with disabilities in realizing their full potential and **believe the AME community is providing such services.**”



# How To Attract New Employees

- ▶ Employee Referral Bonus Program
- ▶ Source of 95% of all New Hire Employees in 2021
- ▶ Social media
- ▶ Recruiting platforms
- ▶ Local schools
- ▶ Job fairs



# Making Investment Into the Future

## Asking about Career Goals

## Supporting Career Goals

- Paid training
- Tuition reimbursement
- Sustainable staffing = Supervisors can be **supportive of training & career development activities without risk of burnout**
- Balance on-going education of Best PWS supports and DSP skills
- Making DSP a Career Choice!

# PWS Training

## Agency Developed & Ongoing PWS Training

- ▶ Behavior
- ▶ Nutrition and Meal Prep
- ▶ PWS History and Medical Research
- ▶ Advocacy & Community Integration
- ▶ Meaningful Interactions
- ▶ Positive Supports
- ▶ Goal-Setting
- ▶ Health & Exercise
- ▶ Communication Strategies

# DSP Competencies & Skills Training



NADSP <https://nadsp.org>



College of Direct Support <https://directcourseonline.com/direct-support/>



Leadership trainings/certificates



Virtual Seminars with certificates



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**CAREER**

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**BENEFITS**

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**COMPENSATION**

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**CULTURE**

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**WORK ENVIRONMENT**

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A hand holding a smartphone with a person icon on the screen.

# Retention Strategies

## 1. Flexible Employee Benefits

Extend Vacation Time & Leaves of Absence For All Employees

### HOW?

- ▶ Recruit & Hire New DSPs to Casual Positions
- ▶ Individualized Scheduling Rooted in Person-Centered Practices

### WHY?

- ▶ Supports Long-Term Employment of High-Demand Position
- ▶ Low Wages Demand Flexible Scheduling to Support Multiple Jobs
- ▶ Serves Needs of DSP Immigrant Worker Population
- ▶ Flexible Scheduling Attractive Benefit Unmatched by competing industries

# Retention Strategies

## 2. Creating Pathways to Leadership

Agency Development of **Advancement Opportunity & Leadership Position** for Direct Support Professionals



### DSP Preceptor Role & Responsibilities

- Benefits DSPs
- Benefits Agency
- Benefits PWS Individuals
- Supports NADSP Goals for Professionalizing Workforce



# Retention

## 3. Facilitate DSP Learning & Development

- Incorporate Discussion of DSP Career Goals into The Annual Performance Review
- Create opportunities for shared Teaching and Learning experiences between DSP & PWS individual

## HOW?

Using the **same Persons Centered Practices** of self-determination & Goal Setting used when Planning Support Services with PWS Individuals

“How can we help support your Professional Development Goal?”

# GOAL



**Long-Term DSP Employment = Strong Long-Term Support Relationship for PWS Individuals**

Important to **Success of PWS individuals** who **THRIVE** on consistency, familiar, & competent execution of well established routines

### **Remember!**

Individuals who receive stable & reliable Supports Experience a...

## **Better Quality of Life!**

Friedman, (2018)



# Vision for The Future

## Advocacy of DSP Profession

- ▶ Accredited Certification & DSP Credentialing
- ▶ Continuing education requirements

## College & University Education

- ▶ DSP Curriculum & Certification Programs
- ▶ Continuing Education Courses

## Agency Provided Supports

- ▶ Paying Livable Wages
- ▶ Build a Career Pathway Program
- ▶ Sustainable Community



# References

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