



# CDS Partner Profiles

## CDS Called ‘Solid Educational Training’ For Kentucky’s DSP Workforce of 6,500

In late 2009, the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID) launched the College of Direct Support (CDS).

The required training program for the Commonwealth’s system of care for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities had been in place for more than four years, but the core curricula remained unchanged. In addition to the need for content updates, the state wanted DSPs and other staff to receive the highest quality training available. With the support of the Department’s new Commissioner, Dr. Stephen Hall, the decision was made to incorporate DirectCourse/ CDS into the larger training curriculum.



Prior to implementation, informational sessions were held across the state from May to September 2010, with live demonstrations of the new training. Adopting a comprehensive, state-of-the-art, web-based curricula proved to be a major adjustment for the provider community, but they rose to the challenge. They sent hundreds of staff to training informational sessions and purchased additional computers. Many created training rooms supplied with computer workstations to allow staff to complete required modules on-site. We also developed Competency Checklists from the competencies listed for each lesson. Competency

Checklists are completed by supervisors and training staff and served as another layer of evaluation for the learner’s retention of the material presented.

Agencies had a six-month window to implement the new training system, and DirectCourse/CDS became mandatory for all newly hired or transferred staff on March 1, 2011. The Training Plan included subject areas that continue to be provided face-to-face with a skilled trainer, such as First Aid/CPR, Medication Administration, and Crisis Prevention and Intervention. In addition, specific CDS courses made up the rest of the core curricula, including Maltreatment, Individual Rights and Choice, Person Centered Planning, Safety, Teaching, Inclusion, and Supporting Healthy Lives. These lessons were customized within each course to meet the standards outlined in Kentucky regulations. Today we have about 200 providers using the CDS.

In addition to DSP, supervisors, case managers, and Executive Directors also completed the same training, as well as additional modules from the College of Frontline Supervision and Management. The decision to make CDS mandatory was based on:

- Portability – CDS makes it easy for training records to move between agencies and to be shared.
- Consistency – CDS ensured that all new hires received the same training, supporting a shared culture that promoted full and inclusive lives.



- Continuous Quality Improvement – The involvement of the University of Minnesota and the National Board of Editors that provided oversight on the development and updating of modules ensured that training content was timely and based on best practice.
- Sustainability – Providers built skills and capacity for web-based learning by utilizing the CDS over time.

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In addition to the mandatory lessons that make up Kentucky’s core CDS curricula, many agencies chose to incorporate additional modules and lessons into their basic training programs, such as Universal Precautions and Confidentiality.

Kentucky has an estimated 6,500 DSPs who work for Supports for Community Living Waiver providers. Since the CDS training is required for managers as well, there have been 12,924 registered users as of May 23, 2012. 73% have completed lessons, with over 200,000 training hours completed. Department

of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disability staff also utilized the system for professional development, monitoring, and oversight.

Tammy Causey, one of the sub-administrators for Lifeskills, located in Bowling Green stated that College of Direct Support is easy to navigate and enhances their staff’s ability to provide quality services and supports to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. She noted that, “College of Direct Support offers a lot more topics and a variety of trainings that are beneficial to our Direct Support Professionals because it gives them the information they need in order to serve individuals on a professional level as well as keeping a respectful relationship.”

Terre Brothers Johnson, who serves as sub-administrator, for Cascades of the Bluegrass, located in Lexington, appreciated the ability to utilize the College of Direct Support’s Learning Management System to track her employees’ progress on assigned modules. She reports that using College of Direct Support leaves less room for interpretation. “For the most part, staff feel ownership over their knowledge and learning process,” reported Terre. “By taking ownership of the learning process, I feel staff are more ready advocates for the people we serve.”

DirectCourse/CDS has enhanced services provided in the Supports for Community Waiver program, and will continue to evolve as new and exciting changes are implemented. In addition, several goals have been identified to expand the use of the system. They include:

- Marketing and expanding the use of CDS among people using participant-directed options.
- Expanding use of the reporting



features in CDS so that tracking by providers and the state monitoring and oversight is achieved in a more efficient and effective manner.

- Exploring other offerings by Direct Course, such as the College of Employment.

Alice Blackwell, Manager of the Supports for Community Living program, said, “The College of Direct Support modules have provided solid educational training that enhances the quality of services and supports provided by the Direct Support Professionals as they work with Kentucky citizens. The curriculum promotes a well-prepared workforce who are valued and respected as essential team members for the people in the Supports for Community Living Program.”

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## CDS Partner Profiles

*CDS Partner Profiles* highlights the activities of state and local organizations that have integrated the College of Direct Support into efforts to elevate the preparation, performance, status and compensation of direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors and managers (FSMs). The purpose of *CDS Partner Profiles* is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities into which the CDS has been integrated. *CDS Partner Profiles* is written by leaders or organizations that are actually engaged in these efforts.

