



CDS Partner Profiles

Kansas Continues to Train DSPs with Statewide CDS Curriculum

Beginning in 2002, Kansas offered a grant to implement the College of Direct Support (CDS) curriculum to organizations around the state. At the time, any intellectual developmental disability service provider could access the CDS online curriculum at no cost.

This was a tremendous resource for direct support professionals (DSPs) across the state. But last year, a month before the end of the fiscal year, a new administration cut funding, and the statewide support of CDS was eliminated.

Earlier this year, InterHab, a statewide association of organizations that provide supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, intervened on behalf of its member organizations and any group that sought to use the CDS curriculum, to bring back state funding.

Their efforts were successful, and once again CDS is being used across the entire state.

InterHab is an organization of 43 members located across the state of Kansas. These members provide or arrange for the provision of services for people with disabilities. Their role is primarily as an advocacy group, working with state legislators and the governor to help shape the systems and supports that exist for Kansans who face these challenges.

After months of negotiation, InterHab was successful

in convincing the administration to restore funding for CDS, and with its return, InterHab became the CDS administrator across the state.

Beginning in January of 2012, organizations that support 25 individuals or less can access CDS at no cost, with InterHab serving as their administrator, setting up learner accounts and learner modules. Organizations with more than 25 individuals work directly with DirectCourse's Client Services team, often with on-site learner administrators.

"These administrators are familiar with software and content and can be a real facilitator for the usage of CDS and incorporation of that training into their work," says Matt Fletcher, Associate Executive Director at InterHab. "It's a very positive experience for these organizations."

There are over 200 licensed providers in Kansas, most of which are outside of InterHab's umbrella. However, any provider can have state-sponsored access to CDS, and membership with InterHab is not a requisite. "We still fulfill the role regardless of whether or not they're members," Fletcher adds.

One of the organizations within InterHab is Flintheills Developmental Services, in El Dorado, Kansas, a group that serves about 100 people, the largest such provider in Butler County. Kathy Walter is Flintheills' Executive Director, she notes that the CDS has thoroughly changed their way of training their DSP staff. "We



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use the CDS pretty extensively,” she says. “It is an integral part of our initial training and orientation. We feel that using the online training that we are able to accommodate people’s schedules as people are entering into our organization a lot more effectively.”

With CDS, Flinthills is able to allow their employees to do their training at home or work, to fit it in around their busy class schedules, around child care, or any of the myriad challenges people face in their day-to-day lives. By cutting down on face-to-face

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time, Flinthills was able to make training more flexible. Initial training can be done through CDS on the computer, giving learners a solid foundation when they begin Flinthills’ extensive on-hands training.

“We have about 45 direct care staff,” Walter adds. “We got great valuable training from CDS for our people. Often, they don’t have a lot more than a high school diploma or GED, and the CDS is a great training tool. We now administer it ourselves, and tailored our trainings to Flinthills. Every agency has its own set of policies, and CDS allows for this customization.”

Another InterHab member, Topeka Area Retarded Citizens, Inc. (TARC), also uses CDS to help their employees pass the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) credentialing program. “We used CDS as the curriculum to get the instructional hours completed,” explains Daniel Hermreck, Human Resources Training Coordinator at TARC. “We have a large number of staff complete a particular lesson on CDS, then bring people together to discuss, this blended learning helps people tie in the lesson with their workday. They can talk with supervisors and co-workers and discuss what the lesson means for day-to-day work.”

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More information:

CDS: <http://directcourseonline.com/directsupport/>

InterHab: <http://InterHab.org/main/>

Flinthills: <http://www.flinthillsservices.org/>

TARC: <http://tarcinc.org/>

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.



For more information about the College of Direct Support curriculum, call 888-526-5756 or email collegeofdirectsupport@elsevier.com.