

Professional Pride LA Direct Support Professional Newsletter

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Technical Competency Area Diploma for DSP

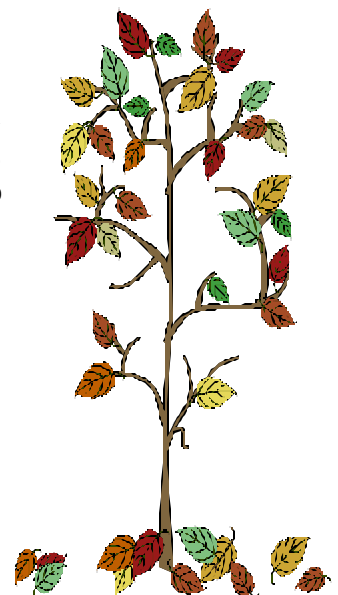
Delgado Community College is now offering Direct Support Professionals (DSP) in Louisiana the opportunity to earn a Technical Competency Area Diploma. DSP interested in the receiving the Technical Competency Area (TCA) Diploma are required to take four college classes for 12 hours of credit. The four classes are Introduction to Direct Support Professional, Communication and Advocacy, Instructional Strategies, and Developing, Implementing, and Evaluating Individualized Supports. The curriculum content for these classes was developed from information 'about what DSP need to know' gathered during forums with consumers, families members, direct support professionals, providers, and regional agency staff members in LA and a review of the national literature about the competencies of DSP. DSP need to demonstrate

certain competencies in order to provide quality services to people with disabilities as they achieve the lifestyle of their choice.

The classes will be offered in other parts of the state as long as there are 15 student that register for the classes. There are plans underway to replicate the Technical Competency Area Diploma in other parts of the state in the future. Delgado Community College Program Development staff are investigating the possibility of credit transfers to other institutions of higher learning. This would allow people taking the Delgado DSP Technical Competency Area Diploma classes to transfer their college credit to other colleges and universities in the state. For more information contact Sharon Delvisco at sdelvi@lsuhsc.edu or 504.942.8230

Two Year Associate Degree for DSP!

Direct Support Professionals can now receive a Two Year Associate Degree in General Studies with a concentration in DSP. Each student will complete the four DSP classes currently offered at Delgado for the Technical Competency Area Diploma and then take two more classes to meet the requirement for the area of concentration in DSP. The two additional classes at this time are Introductory Psychology and Sign Language. Other classes are being considered for development. Each DSP Concentration degree seeker will complete the General Studies two year degree classes at Delgado. This is a new opportunity for DSP and this option is being for the first time in the state of Louisiana at Delgado Community College. College degrees provide DSP the educational training and background needed for career advancement, pay increases, promotions, and access to benefits. For more information about the Two-Year Degree contact Deb Lea at Delgado Community College at drlea@dcc.edu or 504.483.4325.





National DSP Workforce Legislative Action

In late September, Representatives Pete Sessions (R-TX) and Lois Capps (D-CA) introduced a resolution to Congress. The Direct Support Professional Recognition Act (House Concurrent Resolution 477), highlights the issues of recruitment and retention of direct support professionals and the effects for people disabilities. People with disabilities are at great risk because of the issues which prevent the development of a pool of qualified and reliable Direct Support Professionals. The Resolution points out that the crisis is due to a lack of a qualified reliable DSP workforce and is not just an issue for providers anymore. The current crisis for people with disabilities and their families has come to the attention of the policy makers at the state and federal levels. According to the Legislative Action Alert of the *National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals*, there are several factors that contribute to the DSP shortage and high turnover rates. First, more and more people are

demanding community based supports. It is estimated that there are more than 4 million people in the US with Developmental Disabilities and there is a need for over 750,000 DSP to provide critical supports for individuals to live in the community. Also, the pay and benefits offered to DSP do not compete in today's labor market. There are other employment opportunities that provide better pay and benefits and do not require as much skill and expertise. You can support this initiative by taking action now. DSP and their advocates should contact legislators and ask them to support the Direct Support Professional Recognition Act. Sample letters are available at www.nadsp.org/involved. Fax and email addresses of your Representatives may be found at www.house.gov.

For more info about this national legislative agenda visit www.nadsp.org and click on the Legislative Action tab.

DSP Technical Diploma Classes Starting in January 2003

Now is the time to register for the Direct Support Professional Technical Competency Area Diploma classes for the Spring 2003 semester. Classes will begin in January at Delgado Community College City Park Campus and Southern in Baton Rouge. Classes may be offered in St. Tammany Parish and Monroe depending upon registration numbers. There are plans to offer the classes through distance education. The course curriculum complies with national standards related to best practices and provides numerous opportunities for practical 'hands on' learning. All program instructors have practical experience in supporting

persons with disabilities in a variety of community settings. The classes are open to anyone that is interested including Direct Support Professionals, respite/PCA support staff, QDDP's, family members, advocates, etc.

There are several steps in the application process. Interested individuals must complete the admission application by November 29, 2002 and complete the financial aid application (as needed). If you are interested in applying or would like more information contact Sharon Delvisco at sdelvi@lsuhsc.edu or 504.942.8230.

Louisiana State-wide DSP Initiatives

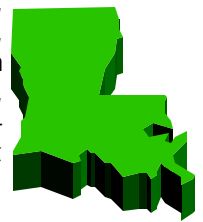
The Louisiana Chapter of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP LA Chapter) members selected officers at the September Meeting. Emily Etheridge is the chairperson and Fabra Cain is the co-chair. Both Emily and Fabra may be contacted at 225.924.7998 or mssemily70056@aol.com. This group has a legislative agenda and organizes the DSP Day of Appreciation for LA. For information about the meetings or joining this group contact Emily or Fabra.

The DSP Framework Development Team meets on a monthly basis. One of the activities for this group is the development of a competency based introductory curriculum for DSP in LA. The first draft of the curriculum is completed



and is currently being reviewed by the members of the Framework Development Team. Copies of the draft curriculum are available for the cost of reproduction/copying. All feedback is welcomed and appreciated about the draft DSP Introductory Curriculum. For more information or to obtain a copy of the curriculum (e-mail or written) contact Sharon Delvisco at sdelvi@lsuhsc.edu or 504.942.8230.

The LA Chapter of the American Association on Mental Retardation has an active LA DSP Special Interest Group (SIG). The DSP SIG selected the 2002—2003 regional representatives at the July Conference in Alexandria. Some of the regional reps are: Emily Etheridge, OCDD Region 1; Sharon Delvisco, JPHSA; Michelle Nall, OCDD Region 9; Mary Jo Worthington, OCDD Region 8. For more information about membership, meetings schedules, or how to contact your regional representatives call Roni Jo Frazier at 318.473.9991 or at roj99@aol.com.





Fall DSP Classes Begin



There are now 32 graduates of the DSP Letter of Completion Program at Delgado Community College. The latest group of students started class in late August. There are 24 students enrolled in Course 1 (Intro to DSP) and Course 2 (Communication and Advocacy). The students are hard at work on the final projects required for the completion of this semester. Classes will end in early December and each student will have earned 6 hours of college credit toward their DSP Technical Competency Area Diploma. Many of these students plan to continue their college education to receive the Two-year Associate Degree in General Studies with a concentration in DSP from Delgado Community College. The students currently enrolled are: Angela

Bertheaud, Lillie Boteler, Gloria Braud, Melissa Buckley, Leslie Bourgeois, Velma Bruno, Cheryl Burley, Janet Coffey, Elizabeth Cruse, Yvette Collins, Dianne Delos Reyes; Patricia Gould, Cassandra Gueaury, Jennifer Johnson, Sherri Lopez, Monique Medley, Trudy Montgomery, Lisa Patty, Jeannetta Patterson, Amanda Roberts, Debra Ann Robinson, Cindy Serigne, Jodie Sievers, and Patricia Warren.

Pictures of the students are available at
www.la-dsp.org
 click on photo album



News You Can Use: Positive Behavioral Supports

Have you ever done something you are not proud of? Cursed, yelled, hit people, lied, cheated, urinated in public? Chances are, you've exhibited these behaviors at least once in your life, especially if you have attended Mardi Gras. We have all displayed challenging behaviors. I am thankful that no one has a file about my behaviors. Challenging behaviors are those that are viewed by people that live, work and support a person as dangerous, disgusting, or disruptive. The most challenging behaviors are those that are harmful to self, others, or damage property. Most behaviors happen when people are not being listened to or do not feel in control of their lives. For most of the people with disabilities receiving support services, we control nearly every aspect of their lives. Where and when they go someplace, because they need a ride from us. When and what they will eat, because they need support from us to purchase and prepare their food. When daily decisions are made for people and not by people, folks have to develop new, creative, and different ways to gain control of their lives.

Strategies for Positive Behavioral Support

-Reinforce people for all the appropriate things they do. If you concentrate and pay attention, you will find things they do and ways to compliment them for these behaviors. If you reinforce the positive behaviors the person is more likely to repeat the behaviors for which they receive positive attention. Be genuine with the acknowledgement of the positive behaviors.

-Do not take it personally. You have to separate the behavior from the relationship you have with the person. Focus on ways to teach new ways to communicate displeasure, pain, discomfort, or irritation.

-Believe that things will change. If you have faith in the person they will respond in a more positive manner. If they know you are going to stick around and not leave them (like others before you) people will respond in a positive manner.

-Analyze the behavior. It is critical to have a clear definition of the behavior that needs to change. Everyone in the circle of support or support team has to agree with the definition. There has to be specific understanding of the function of the behavior. The only way to effectively support someone to change their behavior is to have a clear understanding of the function of the behavior. Once you understand the function, new behaviors that serve the same function can be introduced to the person. A coordinated effort has to take place to teach the person new ways to achieve the same function the previous behavior served.

-Change the environment to prevent the behavior from occurring. Turn off the lights, turn on the AC, turn off the radio, turn on the TV, move outside, move inside, go to a smaller room, etc. Do things with the person that keeps them busy and interested in more pro-social activities. People can not hit and shake hands at the same time. You need to make sure that the person is so busy with activities (they want to participate in) to achieve their desired quality of life that they do not have time to engage in challenging behaviors.

For more information about Positive Behavioral Supports contact Sharon Delvisco at sdelvi@lsuhsc.edu or 504.942.8230.



Sign Up to Receive FREE DSP Newsletter

Sign up to receive this newsletter and other information about Direct Support Professional Initiatives by completing the information below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Parish: _____

Phone:_(_____) _____ Fax:_(_____) _____

E-mail: _____

Job Title: _____

Agency: _____

Submit the completed form by mail or fax :

LSUHSC HDC DSP Newsletter

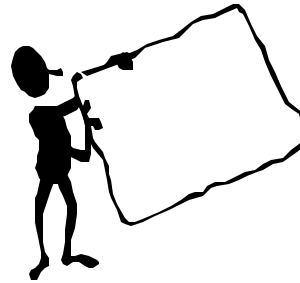
1100 Florida Avenue Building 119

New Orleans, Louisiana 70119

Fax 504.942.5908



Send in Your Stories



Got a good story? News you think other DSP's can use? This is a great chance to share examples about

DSP's providing creative or exceptional support services to people with disabilities which allow people to achieve their personal goals and dreams for the future. Send the stories or news items to Sharon Delvisco at sdelvi@lsuhsc.edu or fax it to 504.942.5908. Send your stories about supporting people with disabilities, creative ideas for access to the community or building community connections, general information, or other announcements.

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*Visit the DSP web site
at www.la-dsp.org*