

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

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### Report on North Dakota Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) December 2022

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Conducted by Bureau of Evaluation and Research Services (BEARS) College of Education & Human Development University of North Dakota

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## **Executive Summary**

#### 570 Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) completed an online survey in September 2022:

- DSPs were typically women, white, spoke English as their first language, had an average age of 39, and worked as a DSP for 9 years between 37-42 hours per week.
- Motivation to become a DSP was predominantly to help others (55%) and the rewarding work (7%). Similarly, what DSPs most enjoy about their work most is their relationships with clients (20%).
- DSPs reported an hourly wage of \$18.52 (average) and annual take home of \$30-40K (mode). DSPs frequently worked overtime (4.25 hours per week) and 51% would like more hours.
- The most common services DSPs provided were residential habilitation (23%), in-home supports (19%), and day habilitation (19%).
- Most DSPs (71.4%) agreed skills trainings are helpful to improve the support they provide, particularly training on special types of diseases and medical conditions (57.7%). Most DSPs believed their agency can provide the training (78.2%), which would be made easier with a different training format and reimbursement.
- DSPs' most common challenges were the behavior of persons supported (30.0%), paperwork (19.2%), and the physically demanding nature of the job (18.6%).
- Higher wages were the most frequently cited way to make it easier to be or become a DSP (40%), followed by responsive support or assistance for work (20%).
- DSPs said the easiest way to stay in the job would be receiving a higher wage (26%), and the most frequent reason DSPs leave is because they found another job that pays more.
- Most DSPs strongly disagreed that they were actively looking for another job (33.5%) or thinking about quitting (33%); however, most were neutral on if they will be working as a DSP five years from now (36.6%).

#### 19 DSPs were interviewed with open-ended questions in Nov. 2022. In their own words, DSPs said...

• People become DSPs to make a difference, because they "have a heart" for the work, for professional development, and perceived job satisfaction.

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- The most common challenges of being a DSP are low compensation, lack of staffing, and burnout.
- DSP jobs could be improved with training, improved communication, more infrastructure, and receiving more appreciation.
- More DSPs could be recruited with higher pay, better training, more advertising, and recruitment efforts.



## **Survey:** Methodology

- An online Qualtrics Survey was developed by BEARS.
- Questions were based on the research literature and collaboration among UND researchers and the Olmstead Commission.
- Recruitment emails were sent to NDACP DSP providers, provided to BEARS researchers by Olmstead Commission.
- The survey link was emailed September 20, 2022, and twice more in approximately 1-week intervals.
- The survey link was clicked 656 times, of which 86 provided no data beyond the demographic questions and were deleted. The <u>final analyzed sample</u> <u>included 570 participants</u> who answered at least 1 DSP survey question.
- The first question asked, "Are you currently a Direct Support Professional? Defined as people who work directly with people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or developmental disabilities with the aim of assisting the individual to become integrated into his/her community or the least restrictive environment."





## **Survey:** DSP Participant Demographics

|                                  |                                 | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Gender identity                  | Woman                           | 463   | 81.2%   |
|                                  | Man                             | 85    | 14.9%   |
|                                  | Other                           | 17    | 3.0%    |
|                                  | Prefer not to respond           | 5     | 0.9%    |
| Race                             | White                           | 472   | 82.8%   |
|                                  | Black or African American       | 19    | 3.3%    |
|                                  | American Indian, Alaska Native  | 28    | 4.9%    |
|                                  | Asian                           | 7     | 1.2%    |
|                                  | Other                           | 13    | 2.3%    |
|                                  | No response                     | 15    | 2.6%    |
| Hispanic/Latinx                  | No                              | 536   | 93.9%   |
|                                  | Yes                             | 21    | 3.9%    |
| Country of origin                | USA                             | 540   | 94.7%   |
|                                  | Not-USA                         | 24    | 5.2%    |
| English 2 <sup>nd</sup> language | No                              | 535   | 94.0%   |
|                                  | Yes                             | 21    | 3.7%    |
| Education                        | Some high school                | 17    | 3.0%    |
|                                  | High school diploma or GED      | 143   | 25.1%   |
|                                  | Associate's or 2-year degree    | 81    | 14.2%   |
|                                  | Some college                    | 175   | 30.7%   |
|                                  | College degree (4yr, post-grad) | 141   | 24.7%   |

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### Survey: **DSP** Participant Demographics (continued)



### **DSP Annual Household Income**



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## Survey: DSP Employment Descriptions

#### How long have you been providing DSP services?



Years

#### How many hours do you work per week as a DSP?

| Mean: 37  | 7 hours  |
|-----------|----------|
| SD        | 13 hours |
| Minimum   | 2 hours  |
| Maximum   | 100      |
| Responses | 501      |





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### Survey: Demographics of DSP Clients

### What are the demographics of the people DSPs support?

|                                  |                                | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Race                             | White                          | 544   | 51.2%   |
|                                  | Black or African American      | 161   | 15.3%   |
|                                  | American Indian, Alaska Native | 218   | 20.1%   |
|                                  | Asian                          | 49    | 4.7%    |
|                                  | Other or multiracial           | 47    | 4.5%    |
| Hispanic/Latinx                  | No                             | 383   | 84.2%   |
|                                  | Yes                            | 72    | 15.8%   |
| English 2 <sup>nd</sup> language | No                             | 513   | 91.9%   |
|                                  | Yes                            | 45    | 8.1%    |

### **Client age**



Note, some DSPs serve multiple people of several demographic characteristics, thus client totals are higher than total number of survey participants.



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### Survey: DSP Employment Descriptions (continued)

### What is your current hourly wage when you work as a DSP?

 Mean: \$18.52

 SD
 \$3.33

 Minimum
 \$7.25

 Maximum
 \$30.43

 Responses
 474



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### Survey: DSP Employment Descriptions (continued)

#### How many overtime hours do you typically work per week as a DSP?



### If more hours or full-time employment as a DSP were available, would you take it?

| Responses: 501 |       |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|
| No             | 48.7% |  |  |  |  |  |
| Yes            | 51.3% |  |  |  |  |  |





### Survey: DSP Employment Descriptions (continued)

#### What services do you provide as a DSP? (Check all that apply)

#### N = 546



**Other text responses**: "Admin;" "Awake night;" "Behavioral group home;" "Customized Employment;" "Day supports;" "Education services and residential services;" "Family support;" "foster care;" "Group Home;" "Health care;" "ICF;" "ICF residential group home;" "ICF services, day habilitation;" "In home cares, hygiene cares, transportation, positive supports;" "MSLA"



## Survey: DSP Training

Are there skills training that could help you improve the support that you provide?



Most of the DSPs (71.4%) stated **skills trainings are helpful** for them to provide support, while more than one-fourth of DSPs (28.6%) said they are not.

# What skill training would be helpful to you and improve or expand your ability to meet the needs of the people you support at this time? (Check all that apply)



More than half of the DSPs (57.5%) mentioned that **training on special types of diseases and medical condition** will help them improve their ability to meet the needs of clients. In addition, 44.4% of DSPs identified that training on **client relationships**, and 47.4% DSPs (222 respondents) considered training to **learn how to provide the care** would be helpful for them.



### Survey: DSP Training (continued)

## Is the agency you work for able to provide opportunities for growth/education/development for their employees?



Most of the DSPs (78.2%) mentioned that the **agencies they work for can provide opportunities** for their growth/education/development; however, 21.8% of participants said their agencies are not able to do that. The training provided was described as follows:

- Growth (14 responses)
  - Sample responses: "career advancement", "I know about growth but not sure about academic support", "agency has plenty of opportunities to learn"
- Education (98 responses)
  - Sample responses: "tuition reimbursement for human services degrees", "college scholarships", "tuition reimbursement", "education funds"
- Training (122 responses)
  - Sample responses: "trainings happening to expand our knowledge", "offer training", "many trainings that help me develop and possibly someday be a supervisor", "monthly and annual trainings"



Image: losangelestrustlaw.com





### Survey: DSP Training (continued)

# What would make it easier to provide opportunities for growth/education/development for the employees in the agency you work for?



DSPs identified different ways training could be made easier for them, with the most common responses being easier training format and reimbursement for training. When asked to specify other ways, they shared:

- Financial (15 responses)
  - Sample responses: "higher wages due to short staffing", "better pay", "more money", "better wages and benefits would be nice".
- Education (13 responses)
  - Sample responses: "grants", "reimbursement for education", "get paid more so I can afford better education for myself"
- Training (138 responses)
  - Sample responses: "reimbursement for trainings", "easier training format", "online trainings"



## Survey: DSP Employment Experiences

## What would make it easier to be or become a DSP? (Check all that apply)



74 respondents (8% of all responses) selected "other" for things that would make it easier to be or become a DSP. For those who entered a text response, common categories included:

#### Better leadership/communication (14 responses)

- Sample responses: "Upper management needs a better understanding of what it is like working for their company as a DSP", "Better communication. It's so bad sometimes, constantly finding out about changes at a moment's notice, and things are always changing."
- Appropriate pay (11 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Getting paid for days we can't work because of weather", "We don't get paid enough for all the hard work we do. It's not easy supporting people with disabilities"
- Better staffing (11 responses)
  - Sample responses: "More staff so that our clients get the best care and attention possible.", "Help when covering shifts", "Fill ins so you can actually take time off"
- Relevant/specialized training and education (9 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Please offer more hands-on training with the people that we support and offer guidance to managers and other DSPs training those new staff. I believe that is why staffing is dropping is lack of structure and lack of training because we have new people training new"

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### Survey: DSP Employment Experiences (Continued)

### What motivated you to become a DSP?

| Theme   | Sample Responses (N = 390)   |
|---|--|
| Help<br>others/clients/population<br>(193; 55%) | "The ability to help people in need and the feeling that what you are doing matters," "I love working with the people we support"  |
| Rewarding work (27; 7%)                         | "I love seeing the smiling faces on the people that receive support. I<br>strongly believe that these individuals help me more than I help them. I like<br>knowing they succeed in their goals and life and knowing that I had helped<br>to that and made an impact is really heartwarming." |
| Encouraged by others (25;<br>6%)                | "Two of my close friends were DSPs and encouraged me to apply. I was<br>hesitant but it was the best decision I've ever made", "My niece was a DSP<br>and told me to apply."   |
| Previous experience (24;<br>5%)                 | "Knowing that I had past experience in the same career," "I helped my grandma throughout my high school years."  |
| Wanted to make a difference (23; 5%)            | "I wanted to make an impact on people's lives and build impactful relationships with people."  |
| Loved one with a disability (20; 5%)            | "My son is autistic and it's my passion to help it makes my heart happy and<br>be a advocate and protect"  |
| Necessity (19; 5%)                              | "The need to eat and afford a home," "Needed a job"  |
| Gaining experience (13;<br>3%)                  | "The experience I am gaining from working with client," "I'm in high school<br>and I know I want to stay in the medical field so I thought it would be a good<br>start."   |
| Wanted to change career (12; 2%)                | "Conflict at previous job, new opportunity became available," "I needed a career change and I wanted to help people."  |
| Strengthen/build<br>relationships (11; 2%)      | "Building relationships," "To build better relationships with people I went to<br>high school with that has DD"  |
| Benefits/Pay (8; 2%)                            | "The sign on bonus pay," "needed insurance, benefits are good"   |
| Schedule/hours (7; 2%)                          | "Day hours," "It worked with my schedule providing care for elderly parents"   |
| Wanted to give back to the community (3; .7%)   | "Wanted to give back to my community," "Observing people in the community."  |
| Age (2; .5%)                                    | "I was young," "I was motivated by my losses I had gained over my young age to current age."   |





### Survey: DSP Employment Experiences (Continued)

### What do you enjoy about being a DSP? (Check all that apply)



The most common response regarding what people enjoy about being a DSP was their **relationship with clients** (19.7% of all responses), followed by **liking the work they** do (18.1% of all responses) and **flexible work** hours (12.3% of all responses).

32 respondents (1% of all responses) selected "other" for things they enjoy about being a DSP. For those who entered a text response, common categories included:

- Meaningful Work (9 responses)
  - Sample responses: "I love helping the people I support succeed and have happy meaningful days", "Like providing them inclusion in the community"

- Support from coworkers (9 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Relationships with staff", "My relationship with coworkers"
- Enjoy agency/ company (5 responses)
  - Sample responses: "I love the Agency I work for", "The company is my family"





### Survey: DSP Employment Experiences (Continued)

### What would make it easier to STAY a DSP? (Check all that apply)



Overwhelmingly, the most common response given for what would make it easier to stay a DSP was **a higher wage** (26.0% of all responses, 94.7% of all respondents). The next most common response was **support from supervisors** (11.3 % of all responses), followed by **flexible work hours** (9.5% of all responses) and **more relevant/flexible training** (9.5% of all responses).

63 respondents (1% of all responses) selected "other" for things that would make it easier to stay a DSP. Among those responses, common categories included:

#### Appropriate pay/benefits (17responses)

- Sample responses: "DSPs are in short supply because we aren't being paid enough. You can't find enough DSPs to keep shifts covered because the pay isn't nearly high enough."
- Better communication (8 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Communication within the company", "Better communication from administration."
- Better leadership (5 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Supervisor need to be more professional", "Better leaders"
- Better staffing (5 responses)
  - Sample responses: "More staff and more training and expectations from said staff", "Not being short-staffed all the time"





## Survey: DSP Retention

## What is the most challenging aspect of working as a DSP? (Check all that apply)



The most common challenge that respondents identified was the **behavior of persons supported** (30.0% of all responses). The second and third most common responses were **paperwork** (19.2% of all responses) and the **physically demanding** nature of the job (18.6% of all responses).

152 respondents (19.1% of all responses) selected "other" as the most challenging factor. For those who entered a text response, common categories included:

- Management (34 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Management who do not listen," "Lack of respect from the managers," "Treatment by administration"
- Staffing (27 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Staff shortages," "Taking on more individuals and not having the staff," "Staff turnover rate"
- Pay/Reimbursement (26 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Poor wages," "Not being properly paid for the work we do," "Surviving paycheck to paycheck"



## Based on your observations and experiences, why do DSPs leave their profession? (Check all that apply)



The most common reason that DSPs leave their profession that respondents identified was that they **found another job that pays more** (17.4% of all responses). The second and third most common responses were that they **found a job with hours that worked better for their family** (12.5% of all responses) and that they were **not recognized for the work they did** (11.5% of all responses).

74 respondents (3.5% of all responses) selected "other" as the reason DSPs leave their profession. For those who entered a text response, common categories included:

- Mental/Emotional Reasons (16 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Burnout, burnout, burnout" "Too mentally and emotionally demanding," "Feeling a lack of respect"
- Management (14 responses)
  - Sample responses: "No communication from supervisors," "Poor leadership skills in the higher up managers," "Loss of trust and respect in management and company"
- Job Characteristics (10 responses)
  - Sample responses: "Communication/expectations changed from day to day," "People think the work is easy and they find out that it is not," "Too much work"



### To what extent do you agree with the following statements? 1) I often think about quitting my DSP job.

| Mean: 1.73 (Neutral/ | Disagree) |                       | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 | 80 | 100 | 120 | ) | 140 |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree:      | 9.1%      | Strongly Agree (4)    |   |    | 42 |    |    |     |     |   |     |
| Agree:               | 20.0%     | Agree (3)             |   |    |    |    |    | 93  |     |   |     |
| Neutral:             | 28.7%     | Neutral (2)           |   |    |    |    |    |     |     |   | 133 |
| Disagree:            | 19.0%     | Disagree (1)          |   |    |    |    | 88 | ;   |     |   |     |
| Strongly Disagree:   | 23.3%     | Strongly Disagree (0) |   |    |    |    |    |     | 108 |   |     |

On average, DSPs who answered this question disagreed slightly with the statement "I often think about quitting my DSP job." The largest proportion, 133 respondents (28.7% of respondents) were neutral towards this statement.

### 2) I am actively looking for a job outside my current DSP position.



On average, DSPs who answered this question disagreed with the statement "I am actively looking for a job outside my current DSP position." The largest proportion, 155 respondents (33.5% of respondents) strongly disagreed with this statement.



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### To what extent do you agree with the following statements? 3) I think I will be working at the DSP job five years from now.

| Mean: 2.23 (Neutral/ | Agree) |                       | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 | 80 | 100 | 120 | 140 | 160 | 180 |
|----------------------|--------|-----------------------|---|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Strongly Agree:      | 16.0%  | Strongly Agree (4)    |   |    |    |    | 74 |     |     |     |     |     |
| Agree:               | 24.0%  | Agree (3)             |   |    |    |    |    |     | 111 |     |     |     |
| Neutral:             | 36.6%  | Neutral (2)           |   |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | 169 |
| Disagree:            | 14.1%  | Disagree (1)          |   |    |    | 6  | 65 |     |     |     |     |     |
| Strongly Disagree:   | 9.3%   | Strongly Disagree (0) |   |    | 43 |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |

On average, DSPs who answered this question agreed slightly with the statement "I think I will be working at the DSP job five years from now." The largest proportion, 169 respondents (36.6% of respondents) were neutral towards this statement.

### 4) I am seriously thinking about quitting my DSP job.



On average, DSPs who answered this question disagreed with the statement "I am seriously thinking about quitting my DSP job." The largest proportion, 151 respondents (33.5% of respondents) strongly disagreed with this statement.



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To what extent do you agree with the following statements? 5) As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave my job as a DSP.



On average, DSPs who answered this question disagreed with the statement "As soon as I can find a better job, I'll leave my job as a DSP." The largest proportion, 138 respondents (30.2% of respondents) strongly disagreed with this statement.



Image: www.rsicares.com



## Interviews: Methodology

- A focus group interview protocol was developed by BEARS (see below).
- Interview questions were based on research interests described by the Olmstead Commission.
- Recruitment emails were sent to NDACP DSP providers by BEARS researchers in late October 2022.
- Recruitment emails linked to a Web site where DSPs could sign up for focus group interview times.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 participants, 17 women and 2 men. Of the participants, their time as a DSP ranged from just a few months to almost 30 years. The majority of the participants were white.
- While all interviews were planned as focus groups, group size ranged from one to five participants. Interviews lasted approximately one hour each.
- Interviews were collaboratively analyzed by BEARS using the Dedoose software program and a thematic coding approach. Key codes included "compensation," "training," "Challenges of [being a] DSP," and "Like about [being a] DSP."

#### **Primary Interview Questions**

- 1. How did you decide to become a DSP?
- 2. What do you like about being a DSP?
- 3. What is challenging about being a DSP?
- 4. Based on your experiences, why do DSPs leave their profession?
- 5. What do you think would make more people want to become DSPs?





### Why are people DSPs?

#### Making a difference

- DSPs feel like they are positively impacting their client's lives.
- DSPs enjoy helping others by taking care of people.
- Building trust and relationships in the community is important and rewarding to DSPs.

"I just enjoy and love helping others. And the satisfaction of that for me personally is so rewarding to where I just absolutely love it."

#### "Having a heart for it"

- Several DSPs referred to "having a heart for" the job of being a DSP.
- These DSPs described it as caring for persons with special needs in general, and their clients in particular.
- DSPs described people without this drive as a poor fit for the job.

"To do this work, I feel like I had to have the heart for it."

"...if your heart's there, it's a job for you and that's what it comes down to... you have that heart and drive, and if you have that caring for individuals."

#### **Professional development**

• For some participants, being a DSP helped them prepare for their future goals, including preparing them for future professional roles.

"Being a DSP just seemed to fit my future goals and was a career path I was interested in."

"With the kind of the career path I'm hoping to go down it kind of suited it more, so I figured I'd give it a try... now I'm applying to PT school."

#### Job satisfaction

- DSPs often said that their personal values and goals aligned with their jobs.
- DSPs reported finding satisfaction and fulfillment through their work

"Working as a DSP made me realize that I was making a difference in these people's lives and I find that very rewarding."





### What are the challenges of being a DSP?

#### Compensation

- DSPs identified low pay as a key challenge of their job, along with a lack of benefits like health insurance.
- Some DSPs described needing to work multiple jobs in order to make ends meet.
- Several DSPs pointed out that they could make more money, with a similar or easier workload, at other jobs in their community.

"Even if you love your job, it's hard to live on love right? Because I know a lot of people live paycheck to paycheck, you know, and I'm probably one of them, because by the time I pay my bills, then I only have a few bucks left to try to go do something, and then you gotta wait for the next pay period, and you know it's hard to do."

### Short Staff, Lack of Staffing

- Short staffing also presents a challenge to many DSPs, making their daily work more difficult.
- Short staffing also impacts DSPs' personal lives, sometimes making it challenging or impossible to take days off for personal reasons.

"We're very low on staff, so we have very little workers...[There's the] the stress of, let's say, Person A or person B. They need to be somewhere, and we gotta get person A here, and then we gotta get Person B there, and it's just a lot. And then we have medicine here at this time, and we get back there, and when there's only one staff [member] to refer to, It's very challenging. It can be very stressful, and sometimes you can be very forgetful of some things that are needed or necessary to fulfill your DSP job, or things that you need to get done. So that has been a challenge lately, the lack of staff and all the responsibilities that are put on staff currently."

#### Burnout

- DSPs described their jobs as very demanding, which can lead to burnout and to DSPs leaving the field.
- The demands of the job include physical, mental, and emotional challenges.
- Some DSPs additionally described internalizing blame for human error or for things outside their control, leading to feelings of guilt and accelerating burnout.

"I think a lot of it has to do with mental health. For me, one of the things I found very tricky was stress, and anxiety, and dealing with different things. I think after a while, for some people that can really build up, and it comes to a point where it's like, 'I need to do something else, this is getting to be too much for me.' I would assume all DSPs can say they've had their challenging days sometimes, where you go home like, 'Wow! Today was a day,' and I think some people can only handle so much of that. And if you are working, say full time, and maybe weekends as well if you need the money, that gets to be quite a bit when you don't even have a day off. It all just builds."





### How could DSPs' jobs be improved?

#### **Training and mentorship**

- When starting out, the job of being a DSP can be overwhelming, and many new DSPs could use more or better training.
- Several DSPs suggested that mentoring, or shadowing more experienced providers, could be helpful to new DSPs.

"In the beginning, extra training would have been a lot better. There would have been a lot of trials I probably wouldn't have had to go through if the training would have been there."

#### Communication

• DSPs identified communication, both with supervisors and with peers, as a key area for improvement.

"Well, since day one since I've worked in this field, communication will always, will always need improvement, no matter what which would make the job easier and less stressful."

### **Infrastructure & Equipment**

- DSPs identified poor or inappropriate infrastructure and equipment as a barrier to the success of their work.
- Examples of needed equipment included handicap accessible vehicles, communication devices, arts and crafts supplies, and cooking equipment. Appropriate and safe exercise space was identified as needed infrastructure.

" I just feel like our hands are tied with the funding piece of what we do, so [we need] better equipment, [for example] more communication devices, more access to speech, you know speech stuff"

### **Demonstrating Appreciation**

• Some DSPs reported feeling unappreciated and unrecognized for their work by both administration and the families and guardians of their clients.

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• Their jobs would be improved with more explicit appreciation, as well as recognition that they are humans and occasionally make mistakes.

"Actually, I'm not feeling appreciated, you know. Let's say I, I'm working really, really, hard. No one really notices it. Eventually it's going to get to the point to me, thinking, Why am I the only one doing this? No one notices it. Am I even valued?"



### How could we increase the number of DSPs?

#### Compensation

- Improved compensation could lead to the recruitment of more DSPs.
- DSPs described both increased pay and the provision of benefits like health insurance as important.

"The main issue always comes back to, you know, it's a job, and it's about pay and benefits. That's certainly, to me, the number one thing that needs to be addressed, or it doesn't matter how otherwise great the job is. Nobody's gonna come in and work. The other issues are certainly things that need to be addressed. But if you don't deal with benefits, I just don't think you're gonna ever have enough DSPs."

#### Training

• Improved training, including mentorship, was described as a way to increase recruitment and retention of new DSPs.

"That support is a big thing, so people get to the point where hopefully they enjoy their job and are supported through the initial start up of working...I mean like support from learning, of course, as they should. Especially for people that have never done this, they should offer more shadowing with a long-term employee so they get to learn the job, the ins and outs of it. They form that friendship with that co-worker. They have somebody they can go to and talk to if they need to and they're not just thrown out there."

#### **Advertising & Job Fairs**

- Job fairs and advertising, including billboards, are promising methods of recruiting DSPs.
- Schools can include discussion about DSPs and the roles they play, especially in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

"...a lot of the kids I know in rural North Dakota didn't even know that working with the development and disabled was an option. They were surprised that I even would talk about it, you know, because they had no clue, no idea that jobs like that were even available. So I mean, I think it's a great thing to have in health careers classes, but we also need to get it out to all school systems somehow."

#### Recruitment

International recruitment may be a good option for finding DSPs.

"We need more people...I have some friends from Jamaica, and they have tons of workers there who want to work, but it takes a miracle to get him here....If they come legally they can be taxpayers, and they can help our economy."

NORTH DAKOTA





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