



Making a world of difference  
**in people's lives**

# National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

Reinventing Quality Conference  
Baltimore, MD  
August 9, 2010



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# NADSP Mission

**The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals promotes the development of a highly competent human services workforce which supports individuals in achieving their life goals.**



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# Guiding Principles

1. Enhance the status of direct support professionals.
2. Provide better access for all direct support professionals to high quality educational experiences (e.g., in-service training, continuing and higher education) and lifelong learning which enhances competency.
3. Strengthening the working relationships and partnerships between direct support professionals, self-advocates, and other consumer groups and families.
4. Promote systems reform which provides incentives for educational experiences, increased compensation, and access to career pathways for direct support professionals through the promotion of policy initiatives (e.g., legislation, funding, practices).
5. Support the development and implementation of a national volunteer apprenticeship and credentialing process for direct support professionals.



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# Creating a Profession

*Every Profession has these five Common Aspects  
– Direct Support has them too.*





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# 1. A Body of Knowledge

A **Body of Knowledge** that is based on sound research and provides practitioners with a universally accepted values base.





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## 2. Standardized Skill Sets and Competencies

**Area 1:** Participant Empowerment

**Area 2:** Communication

**Area 3:** Assessment

**Area 4:** Community and Service Networking

**Area 5:** Facilitation of Services

**Area 6:** Community Living Skills & Supports

**Area 7:** Education, Training & Self-Development

**Area 8:** Advocacy

**Area 9:** Vocational, Educational & Career Support

**Area 10:** Crisis Prevention and Intervention

**Area 11:** Organizational Participation

**Area 12:** Documentation

**Area 13:** Building and Maintaining Friendships and Relationships

**Area 14:** Provide Person Centered Supports

**Area 15:** Supporting Health and Wellness



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# 3. A License, Certificate or Credential to Practice

## NADSP Credential

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) has developed a national credentialing program to recognize the contributions and competence of direct support professionals working in community human services. The three tiers of the program are:

1. Direct Support Professional - Registered (DSP-R)
2. Direct Support Professional - Certified (DSP-C)
3. Direct Support Professional - Specialist (DSP-S):

## National Apprenticeship Standards

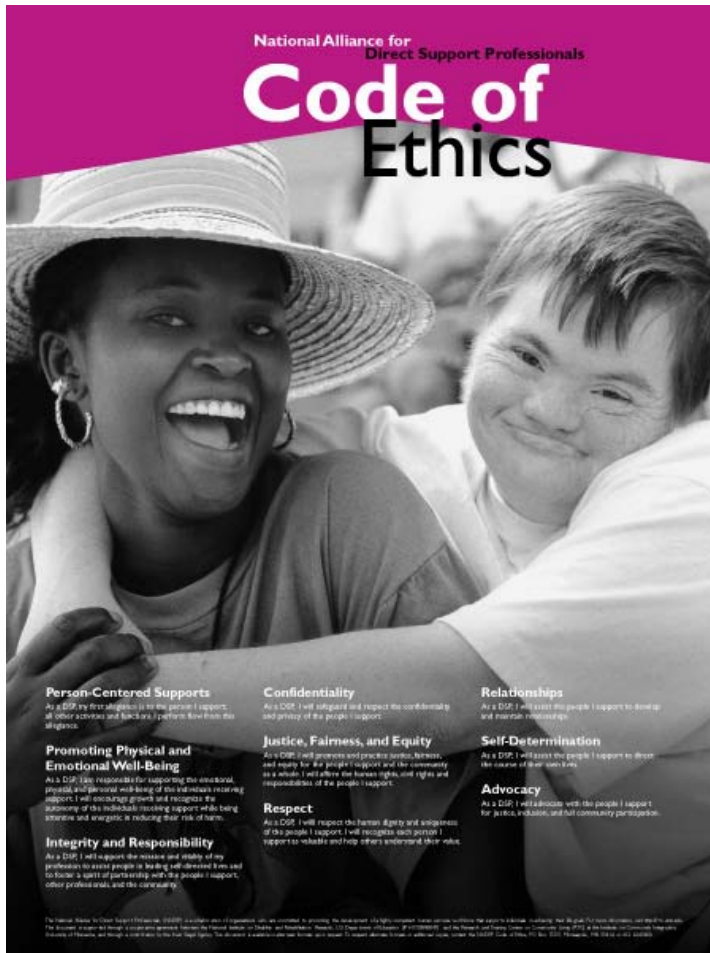
The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and the American Network of Community Options & Resources (ANCOR) have developed standards that have as their objective, the training of Direct Support Professionals skilled in all phases of the industry.

They provide a practical and sound training system that will meet training requirements to develop individuals into skilled professionals, and to ensure human services industry with skilled workers. These Standards were developed in accordance with the basic standards recommended by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, as a basis from which the Sponsor can work to establish an apprenticeship training program that meets the particular needs of a state or a region within a state.



# 4. A Code of Ethics

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- Person Centered Supports
- Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being
- Confidentiality
- Self-Determination
- Integrity & Responsibility
- Justice, Fairness & Equity
- Respect
- Relationships
- Advocacy





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## 5. Affiliation with a Professional Membership Organization

NADSP and its State Chapters provide Direct Support Professionals and others who support them by:

- Giving our direct support professionals a singular voice
- An opportunity to be part of a larger, state, regional and national movement
- A seat at the table during Policy discussions
- Opportunities to Participate in Training & Networking Activities
- Newsletters, websites, social networking sites and other means of communication to learn about issues that are important to them
- A sense of professional empowerment and status
- Recognizing best practices in direct support professional development by giving an annual Award – *The Moving Mountains Award*



# Moving Mountains Award

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National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals

## Moving Mountains Commitment

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) is an organization committed to the well-being and full participation of all people, including people with disabilities, in the every day lives of American neighborhoods and communities. With this in mind, the NADSP recognizes that direct support employees are crucial to this commitment. The NADSP further recognizes that employment conditions must be improved throughout the country to assure the continuity and quality of support necessary to fulfill the goal of self-determination and community inclusion for all people. For these reasons we are asking all individuals and organizations who seek high-quality human services support and better work conditions for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to make a commitment to finding solutions.

The Moving Mountains Commitment is a set of workforce principles developed by the NADSP to encourage organizations and individuals to adapt policies and practices that result in a competent, committed direct support workforce. The NADSP seeks your commitment and asks you to move mountains within your organization by pledging to advance these principles.

### NADSP Workforce Principles

**Actively shape conditions of employment to enable DSPs to sustain themselves and their families in a self-sufficient manner by working to —**

- Provide health care benefits to all employees (pro-rated for part time employment).
- Support employees in acquiring resources to meet basic life needs (e.g. housing, transportation, child care).
- Provide a living wage indexed to the cost of living that is regularly adjusted by geographic region.
- Offer flexible employee benefit plans (i.e. cafeteria plans).
- Support employee assistance programs and work conditions that encourage health and wellness and prevent job burnout.
- Prevent excessive administrative costs (e.g. salaries, bonuses, and overhead) from draining resources for adequate DSP salaries/benefits and high quality support.
- Work vigorously to raise both public and private funds necessary to provide adequate services and favorable salary and benefit conditions for DSPs.
- Assure equity and fairness in determining salary, benefits, and bonuses for employees at all levels within the organization.

**Promote ethical practice in direct support and partnership with service participants by working to —**

- Assure direct support practice is consistent with the Code of Ethics issued by the NADSP.
- Promote the empowerment and advocacy of people receiving support and their families through education.
- Rigorously screen job candidates to eliminate those who have committed acts of abuse, neglect, exploitation or other criminal activity.
- Include the voices of support participants, their families, and DSPs in the governance and evaluation of support activities.
- Honor committed DSPs by actively serving to coach, discipline or terminate ineffective employees.

**Value and empower DSPs by working to —**

- Assure active and comprehensive participation of DSPs in organizational practices, policy development and decision-making.
- Include DSPs in developing plans of support for people who receive services.
- Promote a professional identity for direct support.
- Develop organizational cultures that recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of direct support.
- Promote public awareness of the achievements of DSPs.

**Ensure continuity and quality of support by working to —**

- Modify existing or develop new organizational practices to enhance recruitment and increase retention through the use of prior interventions.
- Track employee recruitment and retention statistics to improve outcomes.
- Provide high-quality consistent supervision.
- Assist DSPs to overcome the isolation of decentralized environments by providing opportunities for peer support and interchange.
- Provide mentors to DSPs.
- Emphasize DSP performance outcomes that are aligned with what service participants want in their lives.

**Develop a career focus regarding direct support by working to —**

- Identify career and educational paths for DSPs and support DSP advancement along these paths.
- Provide incentives for DSPs to pursue professional development opportunities.
- Develop and use multi-level skill and knowledge frameworks that result in recognized awards or credentials tied to advancement (e.g. on-the-job certification, credential and apprenticeship programs, and post-secondary certifications and diplomas).
- Provide professional development opportunities ranging from job readiness and basic skills training to advanced and specialized direct support.
- Use valid skill, knowledge, and ethical practice sets as the foundation for professional development.
- Provide high-quality educational experiences by using quality materials and effective instructional methods.

Signature of commitment to principles by authorized person

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) is a collaboration of organizations who are committed to promoting the development of a highly competent human services workforce that supports individuals in achieving their life goals. The NADSP works with state and local officials and other regional entities for more information and help in implementing. This document is supported through a cooperative agreement between the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (U.S. Department of Education) (H133B0004) and the Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC) at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

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# Membership – Dual with Your State Chapter

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- **DSP Membership\* \$20.00**
- **Associate Membership\* \$20.00**  
(Self Advocates, Family Members & Frontline Supervisors)
- **Other Professional Membership\* \$20.00**
- \*DSP Memberships, Associate Memberships and Other Professional Memberships include a yearly subscription to the NADSP publication Frontline Initiative (FI), a DSP Code of Ethics pocket card and a NADSP membership card.
- **Agency/Provider Affiliate Membership \$200.00**  
Membership includes a certificate of membership and 2 copies of the NADSP publication FI.
- **Supporting Organization Membership \$500.00**  
Membership includes a certificate of membership and 4 copies of the NADSP publication FI. In addition, the organization will be listed in FI throughout the year as a Supporting Organization.



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# Together, We Can Make a World Difference!

## Join NADSP

- [www.nadsp.org](http://www.nadsp.org)

## Start a state NADSP affiliate chapter

- Contact Rachael Sarto at [rsarto@nadsp.org](mailto:rsarto@nadsp.org)

## Become active in NADSP committees

- Policy advocacy, credentialing, membership and state affiliates