



Building Resources for Individuals with Disabilities to Gain Equality

BETHANY TOLEDO'S SPEECH

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Over the years, we have made great strides in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And as the shift from congregate care to home and family-based services continues, Direct Support Professionals will continue to take on ever-greater responsibility and accountability. DSPs spend a lot of time with the people they support, which gives them a unique lens into their lives. In many ways, DSPs are interdisciplinary professionals, with a wide scope of practice. That is to say that their job duties resemble the aspects of many, I repeat - MANY, different professions. There was recently a DSP that was called down the aisle on the show, "The Price is Right". When Drew Carey asked what he did for a living...The young man exclaimed that he was a DSP. Drew Carey asked him what a DSP was, and the man tried to explain it three different times, before giving up. The role of a DSP is complex, and unlike any other job. Today, I want to paint a picture of the role of a DSP for you.

The independent nature of the DSP profession requires significant skill, judgment, independent problem-solving and decision-making. The amount of time DSPs spend with the people they support, make their work different from the roles filled by anyone else in their lives. Direct Support Professionals are often isolated and may not have co-workers, supervisors, medical or other professionals on-site to turn to for assistance or guidance.

- Like teachers, DSPs develop and implement effective strategies to teach people new skills.
- Like nurses, DSPs dispense medications, administer treatments, document care, and communicate with medical professionals.
- Like various allied health professionals, DSPs assess needs, implement specific treatment plans, and document progress.
- Like social workers, DSPs help connect people to community resources and benefits
- Like counselors, DSPs listen, reflect, and offer suggestions.

If you are a DSP, and have not done so already, please stop by the white tent to pick up your DSP scope of practice wristband. I hope you wear it proudly, and use it as a reminder of just how complex and different the work you do is. For those of you in the audience that are not a DSP, I encourage you take some to speak with some of the many DSPs here today. Learn what they love the most about their job, and let them know that you appreciate the complex work they do.