

FRONTLINE SUPERVISORS (FLS) SUPPORTING DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT



Frontline Supervisors (FLS) are responsible for overseeing the direct support provided to people with disabilities. They have many roles, some of which include supporting staff training, mentoring, supervision, and performance appraisal.

Agency human resources (HR), training, and/or quality improvement staff are encouraged to collaborate with FLS to ensure that trainings are completed as needed.

1. Understand what DSPs are Learning

The most effective Frontline Supervisors have skills and experience in what DSPs learn in training. This means that they have completed the training themselves and have demonstrated skill and competency in what was taught. They also demonstrate value in using what is learned to provide high quality, person-centered supports to people with developmental disabilities.

2. Coordinate time and place for DSPs to complete required trainings

Required training is to be completed “on the clock.” Completion of trainings frequently requires FLS to be engaged in scheduling. This may include additional collaboration with an employee that may work multiple jobs. Some FLS may schedule full days or partial days for training. Others may coordinate chunks of time at the beginning or end of a shift.

Training should be completed in a place that is free from distraction and not while the DSP should be supporting people. DSPs must have access to the technology needed to successfully complete the required training.

Agencies with training departments may take the lead or provide guidance to FLSs with scheduling, technology, and location.

3. Verify Training Completion

Frontline Supervisors can ensure that DSPs have completed training within the required timeframes by reviewing transcripts with staff. FLS can ask DSPs to share their transcripts prior to deadlines to help track progress. This provides a great opportunity to see if DSPs have questions about what they learned.

If a training is incomplete, FLS can assist DSPs with trouble-shooting issues, working in collaboration with agency training staff or CDS Agency Administrators as needed.

4. Mentor DSPs

Training is a beginning point to the learning process. Mentoring is essential to help move information from knowledge into practice. It is important that FLS take the time to help DSPs get to know the people they support, use what they learned in training, clarify misunderstandings, and reinforce best practice.

5. Evaluate Performance

Frontline Supervisors are typically tasked with evaluating performance of staff. Tying DSP competencies to training, mentoring, and performance appraisals can lead to better outcomes. The training required by DDD is linked DSP core competencies and skills. Providers are encouraged to use these in their performance appraisals. DSPs should be asked to provide a self-assessment alongside the evaluation conducted by supervisors.

Best practice would also include input from the person using supports and their family as applicable.

Meaningful and effective performance appraisal can reinforce success and identify where additional mentoring and skill building needs to take place.

This document is supported by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$5,000,000 with a portion funded by CMS/ HHS to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Money Follows the Person Demonstration. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

March 2025