

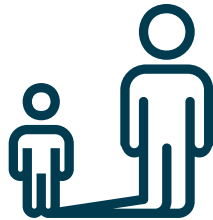
# ONBOARDING STRATEGIES FOR NEW SUPPORT COORDINATORS

**Onboarding** is the process of integrating new employees into your organization. When done well, onboarding sets the stage for long-term success, creating a sense of comfort and confidence early on and increasing retention as a result.

This fact sheet provides Support Coordination Supervisors with onboarding strategies that prepare and support new employees to excel in their roles, including:



**Orientation**



**Job Shadowing**



**Mentoring**



**Ongoing Learning**



## ORIENTATION

**Orientation** sets expectations and helps new Support Coordinators learn about the organization and their role. Orientation should:

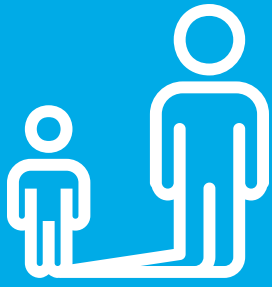
- Provide information about the organization and its mission, vision, and values
- Describe the roles of Support Coordinators, SC Supervisors, and other team members
- Describe the working relationship by establishing what the Support Coordinator can expect from supervisors and agency leadership, and reinforcing what you should expect from each other
- Help new Support Coordinators to learn about resources that exist, including the people and entities they will need to have contact with
- Describe required trainings, instructions for completion, what the Support Coordinator should get out of the training, and how that will translate into their everyday work
- Connect new Support Coordinators with those more experienced for **job shadowing** and **mentoring**



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## JOB SHADOWING

Agencies may have new hires observe, or "**shadow**," an experienced Support Coordinator that exemplifies the organization's mission, vision, and guidelines around providing person-centered services. Job shadowing allows the new hire to observe what is taught in training translated into on-the-job action. Ideally, job shadowing should take place early on, even before formal training, giving the new Support Coordinator something to connect new learning with. Job shadowing will improve a new hire's sense of awareness and confidence and will help them on the path to become fully productive in their new position.



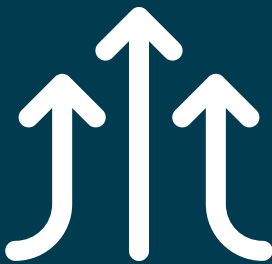
## MENTORING

**Mentoring** pairs new employees with a supervisor or experienced Support Coordinator who is available to listen, answer questions, and provide guidance. It boosts employee development, engagement, and retention by providing the support a new hire needs to learn their job and build rapport within the organization. Mentoring is a long-term relationship designed to help employees navigate the organization, refine job performance, and grow in their career.



## ONGOING TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ongoing training and professional development opportunities** provide Support Coordinators with additional learning to build and improve in knowledge or practice. It improves skills, assists in solving case-specific issues, and sparks motivation to try new and innovative approaches. Professional development doesn't stop once Support Coordinators meet DDD's competency-based training requirements. Support Coordinators must complete at least 12 hours of professional development per year, available through trainings, seminars, webinars, conferences, and the College of Direct Support.



## HOW CAN AGENCIES SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Agencies can support professional development through effective mentoring, intentionally scheduling on-the-clock time for training, and allowing employees to select learning opportunities that align with their learning and/or performance needs. Professional development should be a recognized accomplishment. Ideally, growth in experience and expertise should lead to opportunities for promotion, salary increases, and enhanced responsibilities.

*Content in this document is adapted from "Staff Recruitment, Retention, & Training Strategies for Human Service Organizations" by Sheryl A. Larson, PhD and Amy S. Hewitt, MSW, PhD (2012). Preparation of this document was supported by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities. April 2026*