

WHAT DO DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSPs / CAREGIVERS) DO?

- Support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At The Arc-WC the majority of DSPs work in our residential program, while some work in the day / outreach programs.
- Assist with everyday tasks such as housekeeping and running errands, while also supporting individuals on outings to the library, park, or other favorite places.
- Use a person-centered approach – learning how someone wants to live at home, at work, or in the community. As part of the staff team, you will help individuals achieve their own goals, expand their horizons, and learn to self-advocate.

With the opportunity to work hands-on with others, this job is extremely rewarding and fulfilling. DSPs make a difference in the lives of the people they support – from building strong relationships with them, earning their trust, to understanding their needs to succeed in the community.

This is an entry-level position that interacts directly with people supported, and is a great option for those wanting to kickstart a career in healthcare.

NEW TO PERSONALIZED CARE? NO PROBLEM!

No experience is required to become a DSP at The Arc-WC. Your first 2 weeks of employment will be paid, office-based training to ensure you have all the information and skills you need before going out into the field.

Training includes, but is not limited to, the following topics.

- CPR
- Properly administering medications
- Protocols and procedures to properly manage the house and situations
- Behavioral management training using the Mandt System – a holistic, evidence-based training to reduce incidents without using restraint
- Informational sessions on various intellectual / developmental disabilities, to help you better understand and work with the people you'll be supporting

Once you complete training, veteran staff are always available – whether that's another DSP working alongside you in the house or an on-call manager.



► PATIENCE & UNDERSTANDING

The person you're supporting determines the pace of certain tasks, life skills, and habits. Keeping calm and patient is key to helping them be successful. Understanding each person's strengths and identifying learning opportunities will help you set proper expectations when assisting with a new skill or activity.

► COMPASSION

People in your care need to know that you have their backs in any situation. Without that trust, motivation declines and the relationship will simply fall apart. DSPs must exercise empathy, kindness, and grace when spending time with the people they support. As a caregiver, you must want to make the lives of your companions better, and need to demonstrate that commitment every day.

► ADAPTABILITY

Every day looks different for a DSP. One day you may be teaching someone how to manage their budget, and the next you might be volunteering alongside them at a local nonprofit.

Different activities require different support from the caregiver. DSPs must readjust to new activities and environments, knowing the mood and actions of the person you're supporting will likely fluctuate as well. After all, we're only human – we all have good and bad days. In these moments DSPs need to adapt to shifting needs during the time they spend with the person supported.

► RELIABILITY AND ATTENTIVENESS

Staying organized and being prepared are two key characteristics of a DSP. People supported, and your coworkers, count on you to show up on time to scheduled shifts so they can tackle their activities for the day.

Equally important, DSPs must be alert and provide their undivided attention. Your attentiveness helps build trust and makes for a better outcome between you and the people you support. It is also vital to provide the necessary care, as simple situations can quickly turn into an emergency.

You will become a vital player in establishing the well-being of the people you support. Because of this, DSPs are close with and understand their clients well – advocating for them in times of need and knowing when something isn't right.

When DSPs are patient, compassionate, adaptable, and reliable, they are equipped to do right by the people they support and their families.

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