

Disability Support Program

Understanding Disability Direct Support Competency Requirements: A Workforce Strategy Project

About the Project

In January 2025, the province started the Disability Support Sector Workforce Strategy. This plan supports a key part of the Human Rights Remedy – making sure there are skilled workers to provide the best possible supports for people with disabilities.



While this strategy was developed, we heard the need to update the core skills (competencies) required for support workers. These must meet the needs of today and prepare for the future.

Through this new project, we will work with different groups to make a new set of competencies for frontline workers who support people with disabilities.

Why are we doing this project?

We heard from many different groups, such as direct support staff, service providers, and people with disabilities and their families – that the current core competencies need to be updated.

Support workers told us they are dedicated to their jobs but need stronger training and updated skills to do their work well. People with disabilities shared that while their support workers provide good support, more training is needed to fully understand and meet their needs.



Visit our website to learn more:
<https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>

Or email:
dsp@novascotia.ca



NOVA SCOTIA

Disability Support Program



Understanding Disability Direct Support Competency Requirements: A Workforce Strategy Project



What are the current core competencies?

-  The current core competencies are a list of important skills and knowledge for people who work in group homes or other places where people with disabilities live. These workers are called residential rehabilitation workers and residential care workers.
-  The list was created over 20 years ago and includes: fire and life safety, health and personal care, medication awareness, standard first aid/CPR, crisis intervention, behavioural supports, and individualized planning.

How will we do this?

-  We will research and talk to others to find the most important skills for support workers. This will include workshops to explore key job skills in more detail.
-  Everyone involved in the sector – service providers, direct support staff, people with disabilities, and their families – will also have the chance to share their ideas through a survey.

When is this happening?

This project is starting now with research. The survey and workshops will happen after. The new core skills will be finalized by March 2026.

In Spring 2026, the next part of the project will begin. This part will focus on using the new skill requirements in the sector. It will also recognize the knowledge and experience that workers already bring to their jobs.



Visit our website to learn more:
<https://www.dsp-transformation.ca/>

Or email:
dsp@novascotia.ca

 NOVA SCOTIA