

What Are Core Competencies in Developmental Services?

Core Competencies are the values, traits, and behaviours that people demonstrate when directly or indirectly supporting people with a developmental disability to live more inclusive and fulfilling lives in the community. People with highly developed Core Competencies exemplify the best quality of support in our communities. Core Competencies can be thought of as “*how*” an individual approaches supporting people with a developmental disability. Employees must also possess Technical Competencies – what a person needs to know to do a job (e.g., medication dispensing protocols).

The Core Competencies identified for the developmental services sector are:

1. Advocacy
2. Building Relationships
3. Championing Change and Innovation
4. Facilitating Growth and Development
5. Inclusive Leadership
6. Problem Solving & Decision Making
7. Resilience
8. Resource Management
9. Strategic Thinking
10. Valuing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The Intention of Core Competencies

Every day in Ontario, thousands of direct support professionals assist people with a developmental disability to live more inclusive and dignified lives. The quality of these services and supports has a direct impact on the quality of life of the people supported.

The model of Core Competencies is designed to recognize and promote the personal motivations as well as the professional traits and behaviours that exemplify the best employees in the sector. The guiding principles underlying the Core Competencies model includes an integrated human resource approach that will inspire and recognize skilled employees and raise the level of performance of the developmental services sector across Ontario. The following statements of principle guide the implementation of the Core Competency model and outline its intent and benefits:

- Core Competencies are a part of HR Practices that should include Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Trauma Informed Practices and Person-Directed Practices.
- When Core Competencies are implemented in an organization it should be a collaborative process, reflective of all stakeholders, ie. management, labour relations, and staff.
- Core Competencies should also be used by individuals, families, and support circles when hiring staff or independent contractors.
- Implementation of Core Competencies should be a transparent and well communicated process.
- For best results, Core Competencies should be embedded in HR Practices, such as employee training, coaching, mentoring and hiring practices.

Recognize the professional nature of direct support work

The Core Competency model provides recognition of the professional nature of the work that direct support professionals do every day. While supporting people with a developmental disability to live more inclusive and dignified lives is very rewarding work, effective supports require creativity, motivation and many more professional traits and behaviours.

Recruit the right people

The Core Competency model is designed to enhance the ability to recruit people who share the values of more inclusive communities. The nature of the work demands that the best people are recruited, and the Core Competency model will help do that. An important goal is to make the sector a *career of choice* for both new and experienced employees.

Provide job enhancement opportunities and make career paths more transparent

The Core Competency model is designed to benefit employees by providing job enhancement opportunities and making career paths more transparent. It provides the sector with a unique ability to assist employees in fulfilling their career potential and to consider ongoing advancement. The Core Competencies model provides the sector with an important tool focused on professional growth that will support succession planning by:

1. Recognizing the professional nature of direct support work
2. Enabling and facilitating positive professional development and growth opportunities.
3. Recruiting the right people.
4. Supporting employee behaviors that reflect EDI, Journey to Belonging, Person-Directed/Person-Centred practices and Trauma Informed Practices. (see Intentions Document).

5. Not using Core Competencies for disciplinary purposes, but as a progression tool.

Outcomes of Core Competencies:

The Core Competency model will support a skilled and diverse workforce through:

- Describing what characteristics are valued in Direct Support Professional (DSP)
- Promoting consistency across the entire sector – commonality
- Promoting professional behaviour
- Helping to specify the unique characteristics of the role of the DSP