



# Building Capacity in the Direct Service Workforce (DSW)



*Advancing Learning  
and Recommendations  
from the HCBS  
Conference Intensive*

*April 28, 2021*

**Audio available through  
device speakers**

# Agenda

- Welcome and Logistics
- Topic 1: Person-Centered Practices
- Topic 2: Coordinating Care across Settings and Systems
- Topic 3: Professional Development
- Priority Matrix
- Next Steps and Leaving in Action

# Logistics

The screenshot shows a video player interface for a CMS presentation. The video title is "Building Capacity in the Direct S...". The video content features the CMS logo and a slide titled "Building Capacity in the Workforce (D...)" with a photo of healthcare workers. Below the video, there is a "Closed Captioning" section showing "CLOSEDCAPTIONING\_D\_V4.2 (1).ZIP" and a "FILES 2" section with a "Download Available Resources" button. The interface includes a top toolbar with icons for volume, microphone, video, and hand, and a right sidebar with a "CHAT" section. Blue arrows point from text boxes to these specific controls.

**Adjust Computer Volume**

**Connect Microphone Mute/Unmute**

**Raise hand**

**CHAT**

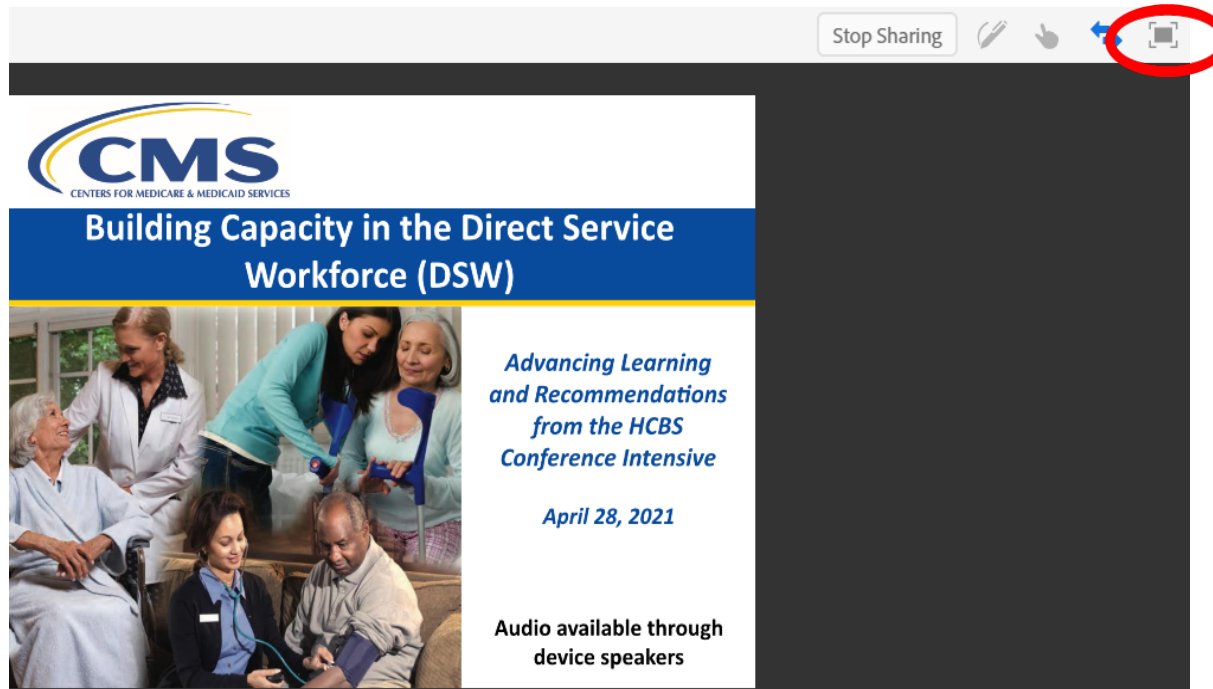
**To Ask Questions or Send Messages**

**Closed Captioning**

**FILES 2**

**Download Available Resources**

# Enlarge the Slides

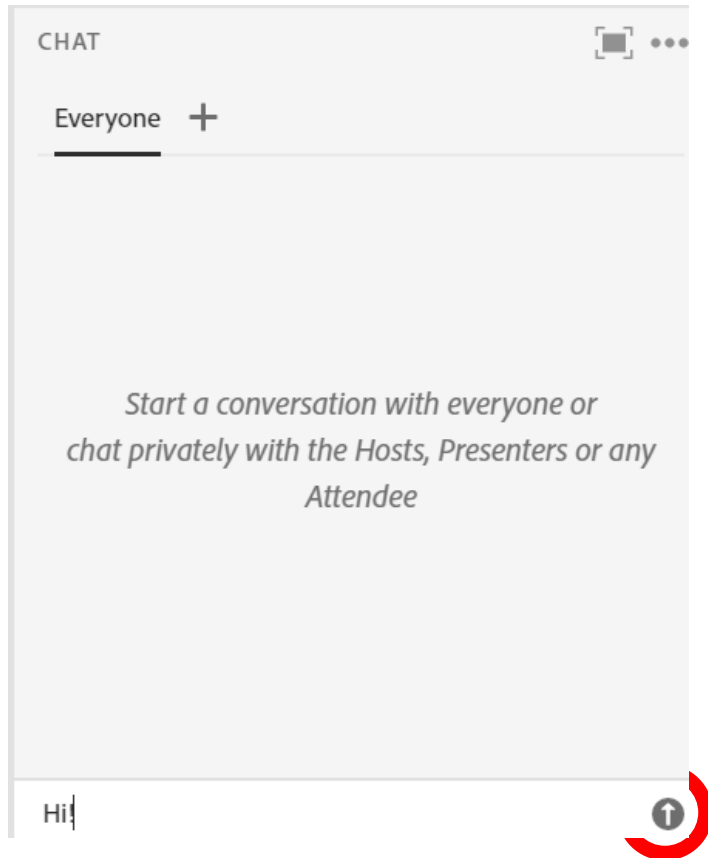


The screenshot shows a presentation slide from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The slide title is "Building Capacity in the Direct Service Workforce (DSW)". Below the title is a photograph of a group of people, including an elderly woman, a woman in a white lab coat, and a man in a wheelchair. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "Advancing Learning and Recommendations from the HCBS Conference Intensive" and "April 28, 2021". At the bottom right, it says "Audio available through device speakers". A red circle highlights the "Stop Sharing" button in the top right corner of the presentation interface.

Click on the four outward facing arrows to enlarge the slides.

To return to the original view, click on the four arrows that will now be facing inward.

# Let's Chat!



- Use the Chat pod to submit any questions or comments
- Please use “@” if your question/comment is directed to a specific presenter
- Submit your question/comment by clicking the arrow icon
- Please share in Chat now:
  - Your name
  - Your organization

# Overview

- Focus areas:
  - Implementing person-centered practices
  - Coordinating care across settings and systems
  - Improving professional development
- Comments from participants at the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Conference intensive categorized as:
  - Challenges
  - Approaches and ideas





# Person-Centered Practices: Delivering Quality Supports People Want



***Sheli Reynolds***

***Associate Director***

***Institute for Human Development***

***University of Missouri Kansas City***

# Implementing Person-Centered Practices

Ideas and challenges shared by participants focused on these areas:

- Statewide person-centered long-term services and supports (LTSS) system
- Role of direct service workers in person-centered practices
- Maintaining and advancing person-centered practices during COVID-19



# Statewide Person-Centered LTSS System: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Moving beyond compliance with person-centered planning regulations
- Providing system flexibility and communicating the various services available
- Implementing person-centered philosophy at every level, including leadership, and engaging stakeholders during the planning and transition to a person-centered system

# Statewide Person-Centered LTSS System: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Convening a stakeholder group with representation from direct service workers and people who use services to inform development and implementation of new policy and approaches
- Collaborating with community partners and across agencies
- Including person-centered planning as a component of quality measurement
- Creating and using a “shared vision” of what person-centered practice means as a foundation for statewide systems
- Creating a local and statewide learning network to try new things together

# Sharing and Discussion

- What are you doing in your state or organization to embed person-centeredness into your LTSS system?
- What new approaches are you considering?

# Role of Direct Service Workers in Person-Centered Practices: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Empowering individuals to have people in their lives (a circle of support) who provide support (paid and unpaid) to assist with planning and implementation of services
- Equipping direct service workers with tools for ongoing assessment and communication
- Asking people what they want; continuously assessing changing preferences
- Implementing the use of person-centered planning and tools
- Creating “safe spaces” for care managers and direct service workers to discuss difficult situations and receive support from peers

# Role of Direct Service Workers in Person-Centered Practices: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Using tools for establishing goals and ensuring that the direct service worker is a good fit (e.g., Charting the LifeCourse framework, One-Page Profile, “All About Me Book”)
- Encouraging people to record their preferences on video so direct service workers have a better understanding of expectations before starting the job
- Using virtual meeting platforms to build relationships between direct service workers and between individuals served and their peers
- Informing individuals of choices and available resources, developing a one-page ‘go-to’ document explaining available services
- Creating family support networks to help individuals achieve greater independence and to support families
- Holding listening sessions to understand the needs of direct service workers as well as the needs of people receiving supports

# Sharing and Discussion

- How is your state or organization supporting direct service workers in implementing person-centered practices?
- What new approaches are you considering?



# Supporting Person-Centered Practices during COVID-19: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Reorganizing use of funds during the pandemic
- Developing protocols for emergency situations
- Preventing a necessary emphasis on safety from limiting individual choice and community inclusion
- Balancing people's choices in managing COVID-19 risk (e.g., masks, social distancing, self-isolating)
- Overcoming people's reluctance to utilize available services and supports due to fear of exposure
- Operationalizing and standardizing successful practices implemented during the pandemic – keeping what worked
- Retaining workers

# Supporting Person-Centered Practices during COVID-19: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Using 1915(c) HCBS Appendix K to support HCBS in response to COVID-19
- Using technology to enhance person-centered practices and self-direction – virtual group meetings, virtual supports, increased communication, and increased telehealth access
- Maintaining the flexibility and adaptability that allow services and supports to continue – “don’t need buildings for services!”

# Sharing and Discussion

- Related to person-centered practices, what are some positive things learned or accomplished during the pandemic that you hope to continue in the future?

# Coordinating Care across Systems and Settings



***Erika Robbins***

*Vice President  
The Lewin Group*

# Coordinating Care across Systems and Settings

Ideas and challenges shared by participants focused on these areas:

- Value-based payment (VBP) models and managed LTSS
- State Medicaid agencies increasing DSW capacity, including the size, availability, and capabilities of the workforce
- Building DSW capacity during COVID-19

# VBP Models and Managed LTSS: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Applying VBP in self-directed programs – individual rather than population health approaches
- Enhancing communication between managed care plans (MCP) and providers
- Improving coordination between agencies, especially related to direct service worker recruitment and retention



# VBP Models and Managed LTSS: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Increasing communication and coordination across state agencies and funding sources
- Incorporating workforce quality measures to improve quality of supports and outcomes for people receiving services
- Leveraging VBPs to enhance DSW wages
- Using VBPs to support workforce training and development

# Sharing and Discussion

- What are effective strategies for developing and implementing workforce quality measures? How are these quality measures leading to improved outcomes?

# State Medicaid Agencies Increasing DSW Capacity: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Lack of registries or provider pools (e.g., repositories for identifying qualified candidates)
- Addressing low DSW wages, limited funding, and an inadequate number of workers
- Responding to divergent needs of stakeholders, including direct service workers
- Addressing limited flexibility in service delivery
- Collecting data to understand current and future needs related to the DSW

# State Medicaid Agencies Increasing DSW Capacity: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Setting pay rates and using all available funding sources to support direct service worker salaries or make one-time payments
- Promoting the DSW as a viable professional career option
- Supporting recruitment and retention studies
- Providing opportunities for workers and agencies to develop strategies that are meaningful to them
- Disseminating information about best practices for recruitment and retention directly to consumers of services
- Supporting DSW cooperatives, especially in rural areas
- Creating and maintaining registries of direct service workers

# Sharing and Discussion

- What are possible approaches to increasing the number of Medicaid enrolled direct service workers?
- How is your state implementing or maintaining a registry of Medicaid enrolled providers and providing a choice of qualified providers to individuals?

# Building DSW Capacity during COVID-19: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Direct service workers leaving the field due to health concerns, family needs, or less work due to cancellations by people receiving supports
- Direct service workers holding multiple jobs and with multiple people – concerns for risk of infection
- In some areas, unemployment benefits exceed direct service worker wages



# Building DSW Capacity during COVID-19: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Using CARES Act funding to increase DSW wages or make one-time payments
- Using Appendix K to increase DSW pay and to provide technology enabling virtual supports
- Revising licensing requirements to allow for out-of-state direct service workers to work within a state
- Piloting state-led coordination centers to help providers cover for each other
- Promoting awareness of the DSW as essential workers

# Sharing and Discussion

- What impact has COVID-19 had on service provision and coordination of care?
- What have you learned during COVID-19 that may enhance service provision and coordination of care in the future?

# Professional Development: Building Competencies



***Barbara Kleist***

***Program Manager***

***Institute on Community Integration***

***University of Minnesota***

# Professional Development: Building Competencies

Ideas and challenges shared by participants focused on these areas:

- Career paths
- Training
- Professional development during COVID-19

# Professional Development: Career Paths – Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Statewide and nationwide coordination on career paths
- Collaboration among leadership within the public workforce system, higher education, employers, and health and human service agencies
- Recognition of the DSW as a profession
- Balance of regulation/standardization with flexibility for those who self-direct services
- Funding to align payment with career advancement

# Professional Development: Career Paths – Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Increasing stakeholder (e.g., direct service worker, provider organizations, people receiving supports, education systems) involvement in designing programs – stakeholder advisory group to inform training, credentialing, and career paths
- Partnering with the state department of education to offer a career ladder for direct service workers including a certificate, academic concentration, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and master's degree
- Designing realistic and varied career ladders with more than one path to advancement
- Developing a mentor network encouraging direct support workers to coach each other on career development



# Sharing and Discussion

- How is your state or organization supporting development of career paths for direct service workers?

# Professional Development: Training – Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Addressing barriers to entering the field created by high volume of initial training required
- Understanding differing access to, and preferences for, virtual or in-person training
- Increasing communication and coordination between state agencies, provider organizations, and independent providers
- Developing relevant, meaningful, customized training
- Providing advanced training beyond basic entry-level requirements

# Professional Development: Training – Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Implementing a stratified wage system that requires wage increases based on specific levels of training achieved
- Allowing flexibility in training requirements for people hiring their own workers
- Implementing state stakeholder advisory groups that include direct service workers and persons receiving services to inform training requirements and policies
- Providing a wider range of virtual training options, including training beyond geographic boundaries
- Including cultural and linguistic competency in training

# Sharing and Discussion

- How do you include direct service workers and people receiving supports in discussions about training?
- What flexibility exists in your training requirements?

# Professional Development during COVID-19: Challenges

Participants identified the following challenges:

- Additional training for compliance with COVID-19-related public health guidelines
- Rapid transition to fully virtual training
- Suspension of training requirements in some states

# Professional Development during COVID-19: Approaches and Ideas

Participants identified the following approaches and ideas:

- Expanding opportunities for people who self-direct their services and supports in designing and directing their own training programs
- Developing training on use of technology
- Enhancing and adapting virtual training – balancing virtual and hands-on training post-COVID

# Sharing and Discussion

- What have been some advantages of moving to virtual training?
- Are there changes to your training and development approach as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that you intend to continue? What benefits do you expect by sustaining these changes?

# Summarize and Prioritize

- Polling: Impact vs. Effort
- [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)
- 1693 5920
- Share your honest and anonymous opinion



# In the area of Person-Centered Practices, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas in your state.

*0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 10 represents high impact and effort on each scale.*

- Including direct service workers' input and person-centered language in developing and implementing new policy and approaches
- Using tools to ensure good direct service worker fit and establish individuals' goals
- Including person-centered practices as a component of quality measurement
- Convening a stakeholder advisory group with representation from direct service workers and people who use services to inform new regulations
- Sustaining changes or flexibilities in program models made as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency



In the area of Person-Centered Practices, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas in your state.

0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 5 represents high impact and effort on each scale.

Including direct service workers' input and person-centered language in developing regulations

Skip

Effort



Impact



Using tools to ensure good direct service worker fit and establish individuals' goals

Skip

Effort



Impact



# What additional approaches might support Person-Centered Practices?



What additional practices or approaches might support Person-Centered Practices?

Short answers are recommended. You have 250 characters left.

250

You can submit multiple answers

Submit

# In the area of Coordinating Care across Systems and Settings, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas in your state.

*0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 10 represents high impact and effort on each scale.*

- Increasing communication and coordination across state agencies and funding sources
- Using available funding, including VBP, to provide one-time payments to direct service workers, pay increases, or support for training
- Creating and maintaining registries of direct service workers
- Developing state-wide coordinating centers to help provider agencies cover for each other
- Removing barriers to "out of state" direct service workers



In the area of Coordinating Care Across Systems and Settings, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas in your state

0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 5 represents high impact and effort on each scale.

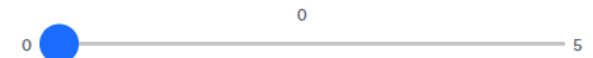
Increase communication and coordination across state agencies and funding sources

Skip

Effort



Impact



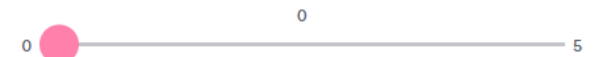
Using available funding, including VBP, to provide one-time payments to direct service workers, pay increases, or support for training

Skip

Effort



Impact



# What additional approaches might enhance Coordinating Care across Systems and Settings?



What additional practices or approaches might enhance coordinating care across systems and settings?

Short answers are recommended. You have 250 characters left.

250

You can submit multiple answers

Submit

# In the area of Professional Development: Building Competencies, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas in your state.

*0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 10 represents high impact and effort on each scale.*

- Implementing a stakeholder advisory group to inform training, credentialing, and career paths with representation from direct service workers and people who use services
- Developing a mentor network encouraging direct service workers to coach each other on career development
- Partnering with state departments of education to offer full career ladders to direct service workers
- Implementing a stratified wage system that requires wage increases based on levels of training achieved
- Flexibility in training requirements for people who hire their own workers



In the area of Professional Development and Building Competencies, please rate the impact and effort of implementing these ideas

0 represents low impact and effort on each scale while 5 represents high impact and effort on each scale.

Implementing a stakeholder advisory group with representation from direct service workers and people who use services

Skip

Effort



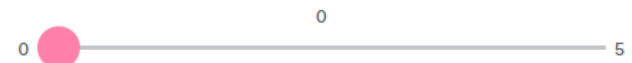
Impact



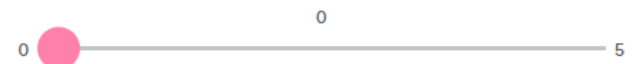
Developing a mentor network encouraging direct service workers to coach each other on career development

Skip

Effort



Impact



# What additional approaches might support DSW Professional Development?



What additional practices or approaches might support DSW professional development?

Short answers are recommended. You have 250 characters left.

250

You can submit multiple answers

Submit

# Next Steps

- Review the resources shared during the webinar
- Consider implementing some of these approaches and ideas in your state
- DSW Learning Collaborative
  - Peer-to-peer learning and sharing among state Medicaid agencies:
    - Develop and expand innovative strategies for strengthening the DSW and addressing specific challenges related to the DSW
  - Eight sessions, one per month, starting May 2021
  - Watch for your invitation to participate



**Thank you!**



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