Direct Support Professional Job Description

Job Summary: Direct Support Professional's support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in being as independent as possible in all areas of their lives, to become and remain involved in their community and to assist each person to achieve personal outcomes that reflect their dreams, hopes and desires. We maintain a structured and healthy environment to enhance the wellbeing of persons served while providing continual guidance regarding life skills.

Position accountable to: Department Supervisor and Department Administrator

Position supervises: N/A

FLSA: Non-Exempt

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Customer Service and Excellence:

- Embodies the mission of the agency and takes pride in the job.
- Is compassionate, honest, patient, encouraging, and treats all individuals supported, family members, and coworkers with respect and dignity.
- Makes ethical decisions even when no one is watching.
- Provides Person-Centered services to all people and is able to adjust interactions from person to person.
- Ensures all needs are met for each individual and coworkers.
- Participates in the environment and culture.

Professional Conduct:

- Has good attendance and highly dependable, uses leave appropriately, is punctual and hardworking, and has professional appearance.
- Can communicate with peers, can multitask, pays attention to detail, and communicate through tough conversations and deescalate situations not only within Aspire but also with family members, guardians, other agencies or community members.
- Is a TEAM player- provides positive and appropriate feedback and support to coworkers, team members, supervisors, and agency representatives. Open to being lead and leading others.
- Is able to receive constructive criticism and feedback.
- Participates in and completes periodic training as required.
- Attends and participates in all assigned meetings, sharing ideas, discussing issues openly and honestly.
- Reports all concerns to the appropriate Quality Assurance Coordinator, supervisor, or administrator in a timely manner.
- Mentors, trains, and provides guidance to staff to ensure their success and is willing to learn from others.
- Is flexible with work schedule and location, and is able to adjust to changes quickly.
- Displays conduct at all times that enhances the image of the people supported and the agency.

Accountability:

- Assumes responsibility for all actions.
- Is a self-starter, meets timelines/ due dates and completes assigned duties, recognizes co-workers work load and things that need to be done, and assists as needed without constant supervision.
- Maintains peoples' finances and resources ethically, honestly and accurately with appropriate documentation and filing of receipts.
- Follows all agency policies and procedures, state and federal regulations and displays moral conviction.
- Provides emergency coverage, and serves as on-call relief staff when needed or assigned.

- Takes initiative in performing additional or less than pleasant tasks and allows for cross-training at multiple sites if required.
- Accurately completes, maintains, and submits all documentation as required by agency policy.
- Able to work independently without supervision and sometimes alone.

Community Involvement:

- Demonstrates, develops, and facilitates the importance of community involvement, social interactions, maintaining relationships, and giving back to the community.
- Aids individuals supported to participate in activities of their choosing.
- Provides inclusive opportunities for activities in various settings and transportation as needed.

Rights, Dignity, Respect, and Choices:

- Allows people to lead self-directed lives by making informed decisions, experience risk, understand consequences and learn from their mistakes, while balancing safety and welfare.
- Teaches appropriate skills and assists all individuals in being actively involved in the daily activities to achieve greater independence using person- centered planning.
- Maintains strict confidentiality of all information and records concerning people supported according to HIPAA, State, Federal laws and guidelines, and coaches others on what is sensitive information and when to release that information.
- Knows, advocates and respects the rights and privacy of individuals supported.
- Assists people supported to have meaningful and fulfilling days.

Safety: Security, Environment, & Health

- Follows all agency policies, procedures and protocols regarding safety in all environments and maintains an environment that is healthy, safe, peaceful and comfortable at all times.
- Monitors and reports concerns/issues regarding maintenance and repairs to the facility or company vehicle.
- Must be able to pass Medication training and testing. Administers and inventories medications in accordance with Aspire, Inc.'s Medication Administration Policy.
- Monitors and documents safety, medical or dietary needs or concerns, and notifies the proper person.
- Assists people with all daily living skills with the least amount of assistance needed for the person to be as independent as possible. Assistance may include but not limited to:
    - Money skills/budgeting (how to write checks, keeping ledger up to date, etc.), accessing and applying for other resources such as food stamps, housing, etc.
    - Performs and is comfortable with assisting with personal hygiene/health duties such as bathing/showering, repositioning, brief changes/toileting, cooking/eating, special diets (making healthy choices, reading food labels, counting carbs and the effects of intakes), shaving, brushing teeth, cleaning/laundry, appointments, activities, work, etc.
    - Understands a variety of diagnosis and how to respond to them. May be physical or mental health diagnosis such as diabetes, dementia, Alzheimer's, seizures, etc.
- Implements individual support plans and protocols as written and follows due process.
- Responds to medical or behavioral emergencies rationally and constructively, remains emotionally detached, directs others and chooses best response to the challenging situation.
- Reports all alleged instances of abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation immediately to the appropriate person by following Aspire, Inc. policy.

Work Challenges:

- Challenges include learning about the people in order to know how to teach and motivate them, recognizing changes in behavior that may indicate additional services are needed, redirecting and implementing Behavior Support plans, and ensuring other plans are implemented correctly while dealing with maladaptive

behaviors. Motivating and educating people to perform up to standards of work, home, and community expectations and instilling pride, confidence, and self-respect in the people served is also challenging.
- Problems include recognizing manipulative and maladaptive behavior, assisting resistive people, determining appropriate level of intervention or de-escalation techniques, and dealing with equipment malfunctions and adaptations.

Decision Making:

- Staff must be confident and decide how to present themselves and how to respond to situations at every moment. Decisions include how to de-escalate a situation and if physical restraint is needed; when a behavior and physical condition should be documented or reported to medical staff; priority of daily work activities that are not related to someone's personal treatment; assisting people served to requisition their funds; making good judgments, how to treat others, when to intervene in disputes between people served; when to refer a person's needs to higher authority; recommendation of changes in treatment and if the team needs to meet to address a person's issues.

- Decisions referred include final plans, medical needs, procedures for implementing treatment plans, and formal counseling.

Working Environment/Conditions:

DSP's work with people who may be unpredictable, verbally and physically aggressive and self- abusive; exposed to mental and physical demands including back and muscle strain, stress, loud environments, and works in a variety of fast paced settings inside or outside the home/workplace and throughout the community. Responsibilities/essential functions that must be met by an employee to successfully perform essential functions require the following physical demands and challenges:

- Must be able to work 12-13 hour shifts
- Must be able to pass the Contingent Employment Offer Health Screening.
- Must have the ability to perform CPR and Safety Care behavioral intervention.
- Frequent kneeling, squatting, twisting, crouching, crawling, and bending.
- Standing/ Walking (for extended periods of time).
- Must be able to lift and/or carrying unassisted up to 50 pounds (may exceed 50 pounds during medical and safety emergency situation) with or without varying amounts of assistance on a reoccurring basis.
- Must be able to physically apply up to 100 pounds of force (i.e. wheelchairs, moving groceries/supplies, etc.)
- Performing all cleaning duties inside and outside such as shoveling snow from sidewalks, gardening, cleaning patio areas, garage, etc.
- Transfers and/or repositioning people who are not able to move on their own, in a sitting or lying position, to and from their chairs, beds, toilets, floor mats, vehicles, etc.
- Some climbing and balancing (i.e. stairs, assisting people walking with gait belts, etc.)
- May be exposed to infectious diseases, bodily fluids, odors, dust, cleaning agents, etc., throughout the day.
- Specific vision abilities are required including close vision, distance vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and ability to adjust focus.

Qualifications:

- Minimum of High School diploma or GED
- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be proficient in oral and written English.
- Must successfully complete and maintain Medication Administration training certification.
    - Ability to stand for up to 2 hours while administering medications.
    - Ability to take medications to a person not willing or able to receive medications in designated med room.
- Has computer experience and is comfortable with navigation with technology.
- Pass qualifying criminal background checks which includes motor vehicle driving records.

- Pass a pre-employment drug screening. Upon hire, employees are subject to reasonable suspicion testing per Aspire Inc.'s Drug Free Workplace Policy.
- Must be able to meet physical requirements of the job- see Working Environments/Conditions above.

Licenses/Required Testing:

A valid driver's license and evidence of insurability is required upon hire. Must have a safe driving record, have at least 3 years of driving experience if under the age of 21, and be insurable under our insurance.

Employees must successfully complete all required agency training in the required time allotted, and recertify annually.

Every effort has been made to make your job description as complete as possible; however in no way is it stated that these are the only duties you are required to perform. Any one position may not include all of the listed items nor do the listed items include all functions which may be found in positions of this class. Aspire, Inc. reserves the right to make changes to job descriptions, job responsibilities and functions, employment practices, supervisory lines of authority, employment titles, etc. as it deems necessary.

By signing this, you agree that you are able to perform all of the required job duties and essential functions of this position with or without accommodations. If accommodations are needed for any of the above essential functions, please contact the Director of Human Resources.

Employee Signature _____ Date Reviewed _____

Being a Direct Support Professional.

I don't remember the exact moment my life was changed by someone with a developmental disability. The memories seem far away, blurry, as if they don't belong to me. But this is what happens after you've been working with adults with developmental disabilities for years. YOU change.

They don't tell you that when you are filling out your application. Instead, they tell you about the hours, the health benefits, the pension plan, the programs and strategies. But they don't tell you about the fact if you do it right, you'll never be the same.

They don't tell you it will be the most amazing job you've ever had. On other days, it can be the worst. They can't describe on paper the emotional toll it will take on you. They can't tell you there may come a time where you find you're more comfortable surrounded by people with developmental disabilities than you are with the general population. They don't tell you you'll come to love them, and there will be days when you feel more at home when you're at work then when you're at home, sitting on your couch. But it happens.

They don't tell you about the negative reactions you may face when you're out in the community with someone with a developmental disability. That there are some people on this earth who still think it's OK to say the R-word. That people stare. Adults will stare. You will want to say something, anything, to these people to make them see. But at the end of the day, your hands will be tied because of some things, as you learn quickly, can't be explained with

something as simple as words. They can only be felt. And most of the time, until someone has had their own experience with someone with a developmental disability, they just won't understand.

They train you in CPR and first aid, but they can't tell you what it feels like to have to use it. They don't tell you what it is like to learn someone is sick and nothing can be done. They can't explain the way it feels when you work with someone for years and then one day they die.

They can't explain the bond Direct Support Professionals develop with the people they are supporting. I know what it's like to have a conversation with someone who has been labeled non-verbal or low-functioning. After working with someone for a while, you develop a bond so strong they can just give you a look and you know exactly what it means, what they want, and what they're feeling. And most of the time, all it boils down to is they want to be heard, listened to and included. Loved.

When you apply for this job, they do tell you you'll be working to teach life skills. But what they don't tell you is while you're teaching someone, they'll also be teaching you. They have taught me it's OK to forgive myself when I have a bad day. There's always tomorrow and a mess-up here and there doesn't mean it's the end of the world. They have taught me to slow down, to ponder, to take the time to just look around and take in this beautiful world and all of the simple joys we are blessed to encounter every day.

So when did I change? I realize now there wasn't one pivotal moment. Instead, it was a million little moments, each important in their own way, that when added together changed me. And I'm grateful for each one.