Providing Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Direct Support Professionals 6-month follow-up survey | Tennessee profile



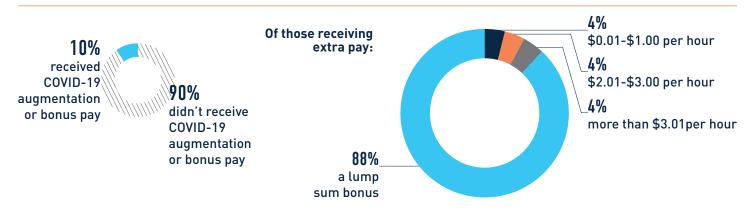
Direct support professionals (DSPs) provide an array of critical supports making it possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live, work, and thrive in their communities. The pandemic has affected this work in many ways. This survey, completed by 278 DSPs from Tennessee, gathered information about the experiences of DSPs intended to inform efforts to prepare for future waves of the pandemic.

WAGES

DSPs reported on their wages before the pandemic and on whether they received extra pay for pandemic-related risks. Many received extra pay, although states and businesses had varying levels of access to additional dollars to compensate essential workers.

\$11.54 mean hourly wage for DSPs before pandemic

(this wage is higher than expected or typical based on previous studies [NCI,2020])



SCHEDULES AND STAFFING

DSPs were asked to report on how the pandemic affected the number of hours they worked, where and when they worked, and how their role may have shifted.

work more hours per week	50%
work the same hours per week	24%
work less hours per week	6%
work different shifts	35%
work in different settings	23%
additional responsibilities/different roles	35%
furloughed/laid off/unemployed/facility closed	3%
working remotely/telehealth now	5%
Lived in residence	3%

The locations in which I work have been adequately staffed

46%

If staff where I work display symptoms of COVID-19, they are guaranteed paid time off

SAFETY MEASURES

DSPs were asked to report on the kinds of personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by their employer, whether they had adequate training in using PPE, and other safety measures that were taken. I have had an adequate supply of PPE to keep myself and the people that I supervise safe 72%

I participated in a training on how to safely use PPE

74%

I have had resources about COVID-19 available to me



















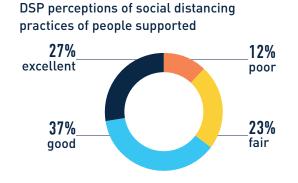
REASONS FOR LEAVING DSP POSITION

The pandemic affected many aspects of peoples' lives and their ability to work. DSPs reported on reasons that they or their co-workers were no longer working in direct support.

testing positive for COVID-19	15%
quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure	18%
fear of becoming infected	11%
childcare issues (e.g. daycare closed)	10%
fear of infecting others	5%
family reasons (e.g. caring for someone with health issues, homeschooling children)	14%

SOCIAL DISTANCING

DSPs were asked to gauge how well the people they supported were following social distancing measures.



We have had the space and ability to practice social distancing

79%

I have had information to offer to the people to whom I provide support that was conducive to their learning styles

77%

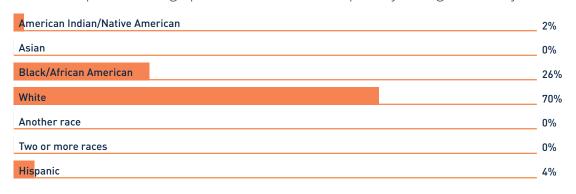
IMPACT OF ISOLATION ON PEOPLE SUPPORTED

Many people experienced social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. DSPs were asked about the consequences of increased isolation on the people they supported.

ifficulty addressing dietary issues	8%
ifficulty addressing pain management	1%
ther health issues	7 %
ecreased exercise	46%
nissed going out into the community	68%
ncreased behavior issues	36%
ncreased mood swings and/or depression	38%
nore anxiety	34%
oredom	59%
oneliness	28%
<mark>c</mark> ademic concerns	2%

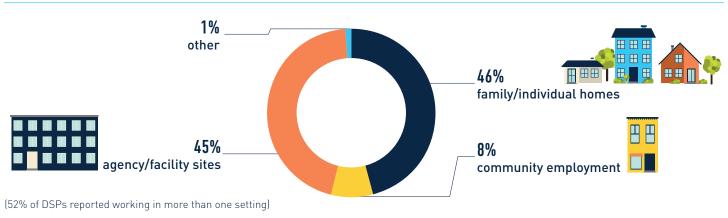
DEMOGRAPHICS, ROLE, AND SETTING

DSPs self-reported demographic information and the primary setting where they worked.





average age **44** years



Please contact Jerry Smith with questions at smith495@umn.edu. View the full report at z.umn.edu/dsp-covid19. Funded by grant #90RTCP0003 from the National Institute on Disability Independent Living Rehabilitation Research and cooperative agreement #90DDUC0070 from the Administration on Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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