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LINKING TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

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The harder it is to find new staff to fill vacancies, the more critical performance issues are for employers. Employers are struggling with hiring from a shrinking pool of available employees, some of whom do not have the needed basic skills. Yet, few employers have a clear idea of how to improve performance. A typical solution is to provide more training opportunities. Despite expending significant effort and resources, however, organizations often do not achieve desired results from this additional training. Employee performance is a multidimensional issue. Employers do not always know how to develop and use performance criteria or how to support and reward employees to positively influence performance. This chapter explores the components of performance and the link between performance and training, including the importance of creating an ongoing competency-based training cycle of setting clear performance expectations; coordinating job analyses; assessing performance; providing feedback; and supporting and training employees in developing necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) and the importance of weeding out underperforming employees and rewarding employees who meet or exceed performance expectations to attract and retain high-quality employees.

TARGETED FRONT-LINE SUPERVISOR COMPETENCIES

Front-line supervisors (FLSs) have variable responsibility for training depending on the organization for which they work. Many organizations see training as firmly in the purview of the "organization trainer" or other human resources personnel. In other organizations, supervisors and managers are the primary or only trainers of direct support professionals (DSPs). For example, in one study, 97% of FLSs reported conducting performance reviews, 94% reported providing house orientation, and 92% reported providing ongoing training to DSPs, but only 65% reported providing organization-level orientation (Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998). Either way, FLSs at a minimum must take an active interest in providing feedback to employees regarding performance and acting as role models and resources for DSPs.

Primary Skills

6 FLSs teach and coach DSPs using various approaches so that DSPs achieve required direct support competence.

FLSs observe, monitor, and provide feedback to DSPs regarding the implementation of individualized support plans.

FLSs provide coaching and feedback to DSPs regarding performance.

FLSs coordinate, schedule, and document DSPs' participation and performance in orientation and in-service training and completion of other self-directed learning and development.

FLSs observe and solicit feedback from DSPs and supported individuals and their families regarding DSPs training needs and desired opportunities.

FLSs share with DSPs resources and information related to supports, technology, intervention, and other issues for supporting the individuals served.

FLSs identify potential trainers and provide resources, coaching, and opportunities for DSP training.

Related Skills

3 FLSs identify necessary resources for individuals served and DSPs and advocate for these resources with their managers.

5 FLSs review, provide follow-up on, and discuss issues with DSPs regarding incident or accident reports.

FLSs provide necessary disciplinary action, including demonstrating correct performance of job tasks as indicated.

FLSs monitor for medication errors and review as indicated with DSPs.

6 FLSs support DSPs in learning how to use a computer, e-mail, and the Internet.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Because the labor pool is shrinking, organizations have started hiring people who have fewer or different skills from the previous pool of employees. Serious skill gaps in basic reading and math continue to grow, but employers are pulling back from testing for basic skills, not believing they can be as selective as they once could (Rottier, 2001). To fill vacancies, organizations are tapping new pools of employees by recruiting from older people (retirees), younger people (high school students), immigrants, displaced employees, and people making the transition from welfare to work. This increased diversity in the workforce means that employers can no longer rely on a common language, understanding, or skill base to shore up employee performance. For instance, some employees may have only a rudimentary understanding and use of English, whereas others may be inexperienced in typical home care activities such as laundry or

cooking. Still others may need training on basic job skills, such as how and when to inform a supervisor regarding an unscheduled absence from work or how to interact with people. If a job candidate meets other important criteria, such as having a positive attitude toward engaging in direct support work, training and orientation can be adjusted to assist him or her with these skill gaps so that he or she will succeed in direct support work. The organization, however, must consider how much of this can be accomplished internally with existing resources and what other strategies need to be used.

Direct support work is viewed as entry-level work by the general public, mostly due to the wages associated with it, but to be effective, DSPs must possess and be able to implement a wide variety of complex skills without benefit of on-site supervision (Hewitt, 1998a, 1998b; Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996). Many employees admit to not having these skills, and they point to their own lack of competence and that of their co-workers and supervisors as negatively affecting job satisfaction, which in turn causes turnover (Hewitt, Larson, & Lakin, 2000; Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998).

Employers often view training as one of the primary solutions to employee performance issues. Many employers take the approach that if an employee is not doing a job properly, additional training is all that is needed for the person to become a competent employee. However, an employee's completing a specified number of hours of training does not guarantee improved performance.

There are numerous federal and state mandates regarding training for DSPs in the community human services industry (Hewitt & Larson, 1994). As a result, most organizations require DSPs to undertake a significant amount of training on various prescribed topics. Yet, many current DSPs still do not have the skills necessary to do their jobs effectively, and organizations feel increased pressure to beef up training as new recruits are hired without essential skills (Gardner et al., 1983). Newly hired DSPs also report that they are not receiving the training and support they need to be successful (Sedlezky et al., 2001).

Employers must set clear expectations for performance. Despite the need for new and existing employees to develop skills, however, organizations report having significant problems getting DSPs to attend even required training (Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998; Larson, Lakin, & Hewitt, 2002). Organizations admit to reducing expectations out of the fear of having to replace people or of not finding people to fill vacancies (ANCOR, 2001b). As the skill gaps between employees and job expectations grow, the threat to people receiving supports, whose basic health and safety needs may no longer be met, grows as well (Anderson & Hewitt, 2002). DSPs have reported becoming frustrated by the low standards of performance of the new employees, and some are leaving as a result (Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998). This turnover of otherwise satisfied employees is certainly a challenge to the industry. For increased employee retention to be meaningful, organizations must work to keep their most competent and qualified employees.

In some communities, organizations are pulling back from developing much-needed new support services due to the lack of adequate employees to fill DSP positions (Kansans Mobilizing for Workforce Change Stakeholder Advisory Group, 2004). This inability to create new and timely services results in people who need support services remaining on waiting lists, to the detriment of those individuals and their families. In-

dustry stakeholders acknowledge that this lack of qualified employees is a significant barrier to person-centered support services and that a high-quality workforce is essential in creating a system that provides high-quality support to everyone (Hewitt & Lakin, 2001; National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, 2000b). There is also concern that the increasingly complex needs of people who receive supports in home- and community-based settings cannot be met by the people who are currently being recruited and employed in the field (Greene, 2000).

Although the lack of qualified DSPs has a profound effect on the lives of the people being supported (Anderson & Hewitt, 2002), the human services industry has been slow to calculate the actual financial cost of low employee performance. Like any other business investment, decisions about training should be based in part on return on investment. In an industry in which training is mandated so heavily and in which training is primarily funded by federal and state governments, it is surprising that accountability for training results has not been part of the discussion, especially given the public support for decreasing government waste.

There are various indicators of the cost of poor performance in traditional businesses or in nonprofit organizations or government agencies (Bowsher, 1998; Carr, 1992). The most frequently cited indicators of poor performance include the following:

- Loss of customers (or individuals supported) due to low satisfaction
- Higher operating costs (e.g., overtime pay, increased insurance premiums due to employee accidents)
- Loss of employees due to low job satisfaction
- Increased need for supervision of employees (resulting in supervisor stress, turnover, and/or inability to complete other critical tasks)
- Increased recruitment and hiring costs (e.g., advertising, hiring bonuses, screening, time to interview)
- Increased need for training of new employees and retraining of existing employees and related costs (e.g., instructor time, materials, overtime for other employees covering training hours)

Poor performance in community human services has huge costs in real dollars and in the human and societal costs of not providing adequate care and support to people with developmental disabilities and to other people who rely on DSPs. The financial losses associated with poor performance are perhaps most distressing in an industry that currently does not provide a livable wage to the bulk of its employees (ANCOR, 2001b; Braddock & Mitchell, 1992; Hewitt & Lakin, 2001) because such losses mean that organizations have less money available for wages.

The question remains: How can the community human services industry have all of the signs of attrition and financial loss due to poor performance and simultaneously spend large amounts of money on staff training aimed at ensuring competence? Understanding the depth of this problem includes understanding two important concepts: 1) Training is only part of the performance equation, and 2) to be effective in improving employee performance, training has to designed and delivered properly.

There are many problems with the methods and to some extent the topics used for training DSPs. Even if every trainer were to become proficient in effective train-

ing techniques and topics were completely in line with current best practices, training would not necessarily improve employee performance. Performance is the product of many variables at various levels within the organization and within the employee. Training alone, no matter how well designed, cannot compensate for barriers within organizations or employees that decrease or impede employee performance. The following are some critical barriers to performance that no training program, no matter how well designed, can overcome:

- A poor match between the employee and the specific job (e.g., personality, hours available, transportation problems; see Chapter 4, which discusses how to select employees who are a good match for the job)
- Lack of needed resources to do the job (e.g., high-quality, person-centered supports are not likely to happen in an environment with one DSP to support eight people with significant support needs)
- Lack of clear vision and expectations by supervisors, administrators, quality assurance monitors, and others (e.g., person-centered support will not happen if feedback and expectations are focused exclusively on other aspects of support; see Chapter 12, which discusses articulating an organization's mission)
- Absence of recognition and reward for improved performance (see Chapter 9, which discusses employee recognition)
- Incompetence accepted and perpetual in the organization (e.g., unsatisfactory performers are maintained)

To create and maintain high-performance work environments, organizations must incorporate a variety of strategies designed to improve and maintain the skills and performance of the organization's best employees. The organization must work from the outset to recruit and select new employees who will enjoy the available work and to weed out undesirable candidates, such as those who may be a threat to the people whom they support or those who do not have a desire or capacity to perform well (see Chapter 4 for strategies on selecting employees). Once high-potential employees are hired, they need to be reinforced, supported, rewarded, and held accountable for job skills in order to maintain these skills.

If performance problems are due to skill gaps (the difference between what employees know and what they need to know to do the job) rather than other factors, high-quality training programs can improve employee performance and help these employees gain critical skills. High-quality training is competency based and is part of a comprehensive system that identifies skill gaps and provides needed supports to the employee to develop and maintain critical skills.

Competency-based training (and performance reviews) are critical, for although organizations may still be focused on whether they are meeting training mandates, to meet the promise of person-centered supports, organizations will have to have a much higher level of confidence in their employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs). It is one thing to satisfy regulators, organizations, and quality assurance monitors evaluating compliance issues in the short term by demonstrating attendance at training. It is another thing altogether to have confidence that an employee knows how to handle a wide variety of situations appropriately and with confidence.

RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR SOLUTIONS

One approach that is being increasingly used in United States business and industry is competency-based training (Blank, 1982; Goldstein, 1993; National Governors Association Center for Best Practice & Mid-Atlantic Workforce Brokerage, 1999). Competency-based programs provide a systematic approach to training that is designed, monitored, and adjusted with work performance and results in mind. Competency-based programs for DSPs are based on specific, precisely stated outcomes (usually called *competencies* or *tasks*) that have been recently verified as essential for successful employment. These competencies describe exactly what a DSP should be able to do upon completion of the training program. Competency-based training programs provide the DSP with high-quality, individual-centered learning activities and materials carefully designed to help the learner master each task. Within these models, the DSP is given enough time to fully master one task before moving to the next. Competency-based models also require each learner to perform each task to a high level of proficiency in a joblike (or real work) environment before receiving credit for attaining the task (Blank, 1982). These training programs typically avoid dictating the method of instruction, thus allowing for more flexibility within organizations and educational institutions (Fiorelli, Margolis, Heverly, Rothchild, & Krasting, 1982).

Research support for competency-based training methods include large-scale evaluations. One such study showed that competency-based training in vocational education made significant contributions to employers because that learning can be acquired on the job (Mulcahy & James, 2000).

In the Spotlight: Dungarvin—A New Perspective on Training

Sandy Henry, Orville Williamschen, and Dawn Smith

Dungarvin provides a wide range of services across an equally wide range of geography. As owner and manager of 12 corporations in 12 states, Dungarvin provides residential, case management, Medicaid waiver, day habilitation, and supported employment services, employing 1,700 DSPs nationwide. With such a large and diverse workforce, orientation and training of DSPs is an enormous task. To transform current practices and develop a new competency-based training program is monumental, even overwhelming. Everyone in the organization has to change the way they think, talk, and act about training.

The traditional model of training DSPs is an initial orientation and periodic in-service sessions. This model meets regulatory requirements but often fails to motivate staff or really address what DSPs need to know. Employees often leave orientation and training not understanding how to apply classroom learning to real work situations. Or, if they are experienced employees, they may leave bored and frustrated because they have not learned new or valuable information.

This is an especially critical issue at Dungarvin, which offers a wide variety of services in many different locales. Some states have an employment pool with many experienced DSPs; others have fewer experienced employees. Dungarvin needs to meet the training needs of a staff with diverse skills and experiences, ensure that they are always learning and growing professionally, and make a direct connection between training and

better services to supported individuals. For these reasons, Dungarvin is moving toward competency-based training.

When Dungarvin decided to make this companywide shift to competency-based training, it set up a committee of members from four states with representation from different levels of management. This committee used the results of focus groups of DSPs, on-site observations, and a needs assessment survey to determine what their DSPs do, what they need to do to be good at their jobs, what they liked and didn't like about the current training model, and what KSAs the DSPs needed. The organization also established a mission and charge for the committee and drew up a 1-year work plan. Each member of the committee shared his or her specific knowledge, experience, and ideas regarding what competencies were required of Dungarvin employees during orientation. They started with the *Community Support Skill Standards* (CSSS; Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996).

In using the CSSS as a tool, the committee identified those standards that all Dungarvin DSPs needed during the orientation period. Once the base competency areas and skill standards were established, the committee developed more specific performance indicators for each skill standard. These were reviewed and refined by Dungarvin managers across the country. The committee then identified how the various competencies would be measured using assessment strategies such as direct observation by peers or supervisors, written documentation or testing, employee self-reporting, or verbal discussion. These assessments may enable some staff to test out of areas of training in which they are already competent, whereas others may receive additional training until they achieve competence.

The committee is currently reviewing existing curricula and hopes to find a mix of appropriate curricula already available, developing only limited additional curricula. Dungarvin pilot-tested the competency measurement and evaluation tool in four states. The committee is making revisions and expects the system to be completed soon. All states will then add to the national standards and curricula for unique services in their areas.

The mission of Dungarvin, Inc., is "Respecting and responding to the choices of people with developmental disabilities." Living by this mission also means that as an organization we must also respect and respond to the needs of our DSPs.

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STRATEGIES FOR RESPONDING TO THE PROBLEM: DEVELOPING COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING

So that DSPs can enhance and maintain their performance, they must have access to a system of competency-based training. In essence, competency-based training is designed to facilitate the development of specific, well-thought, applicable competencies. *Competence* is generally defined as having the needed KSAs to do something that is designed or required to yield certain outcomes. Thus, competency-based training is purposeful and is intended to develop specific skill sets as well as certain knowledge and attitudes. Figure 6.1 illustrates a seven-step training process through which compe-
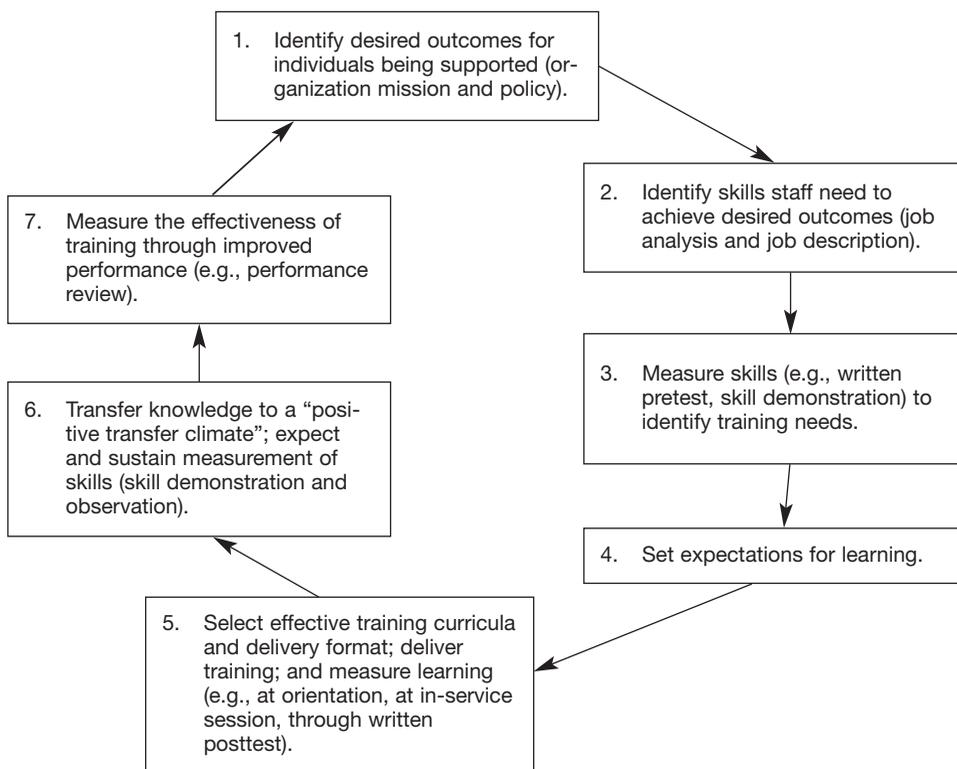
Figure 6.1. Competency-based training model. (From Hewitt, A., & Larson, S.A. [1994]. Training issues for direct service personnel working in community residential programs for persons with developmental disabilites. *Policy Research Brief, 6*(2), 10; adapted by permission.)

tence can be achieved (Hewitt, 1998a; Hewitt & Larson, 1994). The rest of this chapter explains this competency-based training model and discusses potential barriers and methods of evaluation of the model in community human services organizations.

Step 1: Identify Desired Outcomes (Organization Mission and Policy)

"To ensure that each employee is physically present for all state and federally mandated training." Unfortunately, this is often the message employees get from their training experience. Regardless of how well crafted an organization's mission statement and business goals are in relationship to person-centered supports and quality of life, employees can lose their focus on what is important to everyday job functions during mind-numbing, in-depth explorations of first aid; medication administration; local, state, and federal regulations; CPR; blood-borne pathogens; emergency procedures; cleaning checklists; and other process-focused training.

Although most of these topics are critical parts of the foundation on which to build high-quality, person-centered supports, without additional training and development opportunities, DSPs will not develop the skills necessary for more sophisticated supports. Also, depending upon the message and focus of the training, often

DSPs learn only that there are *a lot* of regulations and that if they are not followed, employees and the organization will get into trouble. Most organizations, however, do not move beyond training mandates as a method for identifying employee training needs. To understand what training employees need, it is important for an organization to identify the competencies that they need. This has to be done within the context of the organization's mission and vision. The focus on the mission and vision needs to permeate competency-based training so that employees have a clear understanding of what the organization considers important and why.

Step 2: Identify Skills Staff Need (Job Analysis and Job Description)

The first step to creating effective training is job analysis—identifying what people need to know to do their jobs and understanding when they need to develop these skills and abilities. Many organizations have outdated or inaccurate job descriptions and performance reviews and unclear expectations for DSPs. This lack of clarity comes primarily from changes in the expectations for DSPs, brought about by changing paradigms in support (e.g., use of individual instead of congregate support models; increased focus on self-determination, choice, empowerment, and person-centered supports).

As hard as it has been (and remains) to change the physical location in which support services are provided (as happened in deinstitutionalization), the move to smaller, more individualized support settings has been a great success compared with the industry's response to the changing roles of the DSP. New paradigms of support require a different set of skills for the successful DSP, including being able to manage health and safety concerns in balance with supporting individuals served to achieve personal goals and address individually defined quality-of-life issues. Knowledge and skills in the areas of advocacy; community building; and facilitating choice, empowerment, and self-determination are important, yet few curricula or models for teaching these skills exist. Mandated training primarily focuses on health and safety topics and has not been adequately updated to reflect these new concepts in supports (Hewitt & Larson, 1994). A job analysis of residential direct support competencies (Hewitt, 1998a) shows clearly that many residential DSP duties and skills include tasks well beyond meeting basic health and safety standards (see the Tools section of this chapter for examples)

Another unheralded and often ignored change is that not all direct support positions are identical. As increased skills are needed, increased specialization can be expected and is desirable. It is reasonable to expect that employees who are new to the field have more direct supervision. Full maturity of a DSP often requires years, not days. To stay current, DSPs need ongoing development opportunities.

These perspectives of direct support work fly in the face of industry practices that treat DSPs as if they were a "dime a dozen" and as if "anyone" could do the work. For example, these perspectives call into question organizational practices such as hiring DSPs, regardless of previous experience, at the same wage or providing raises based solely on employee tenure rather than on development of specific skills and experiences that contribute to the organization's mission. Another questionable practice is using repetitive "cookie-cutter" training as the only kind of training opportunity available to DSPs.

Conduct Job Analysis and Apply Results to Training and Performance Appraisal

The lack of definition regarding actual DSP job duties makes it difficult to assess what skills people have and to develop and offer training that meets these people's needs. To fully understand the KSAs needed by DSPs, an organization should conduct a thorough job analysis identifying what employees do and what they should do to effectively complete their job duties. Use of job analysis is one characteristic of high-performing organizations; regular use of job analyses is associated with lower turnover and higher productivity (Huselid, 1995). By taking the time to identify the necessary KSAs required of employees in each position, an organization can ensure that employees are trained to do what they are supposed to and that their performance is measured against the critical elements of the job.

Job analyses can be conducted in a variety of ways (Camp, Blanchard, & Huszczo, 1986; Wiant, 1993). Basically, what is important is that periodically (every 1–2 years), the organization uses a structured and purposeful way to gather information from several sources (e.g., employees, supervisors, individuals served) about what employees are doing that works well, what employees are doing that is not working well, and what employees need to be doing to be the best at what they do. This information can be gathered from written surveys, interviews, focus groups, on-line forums, reviews of incident reports, letters in employees' personnel files recognizing excellent performance, and other sources. Important questions to ask or consider when conducting a job analysis are included in Table 6.1.

At least two comprehensive job analyses have been designed for DSPs who support people with disabilities in community settings. The first is the *Community Support Skill Standards* (CSSS; Taylor et al., 1996), which describe competencies needed by

Table 6.1. Job analysis questions

People to ask	Questions
Employees	What do you do on your job? What tasks or duties do you complete every day, every week, or every month?
	What do you feel you should be doing to be the best at what you do?
	What are the challenges you face, or what are the hardest tasks related to your job?
Supervisors/managers	What do direct support professionals (DSPs) do at their jobs? What tasks or duties do they routinely complete (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)?
	What should DSPs be doing to be the best at what they do? What should they be doing to fully embrace and carry out the organization's mission and values?
	Describe incidents that illustrate excellent performance for DSPs.
	What mistakes do DSPs in your organization make routinely? Describe critical incidents that illustrate poor performance for DSPs.
Individuals and family members supported	What do the best DSPs do to support you well?
	What do the worst DSPs do that is not supportive of you or that you feel is not effective direct support work?
	What do you think DSPs should be doing to provide the very best possible supports?

DSPs across a variety of community settings, including residential, educational, and vocational, and many different populations, such as people with mental health needs, older adults, and people with developmental disabilities. The second is the *Community Residential Core Competencies* (CRCC; Hewitt, 1998b), which are specific to community residential supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, job analyses have been developed for FLSs (Hewitt, Larson, O'Nell, Sauer, & Sedlezky, 1998; see Figure 1 in the Introduction) and executive directors of community support organizations for people with disabilities (Oregon Rehabilitation Association, 1999). Overviews of and samples from the CSSS, CRCC, and the job analysis for executive directors are included at the end of this chapter.

Using an existing job analysis as a jumping-off point can expand an organization's understanding of the skills needed by DSPs (or FLSs or executive directors) and can greatly reduce the time needed to do a job analysis. Rather than start from scratch, the organization can select the competencies needed for the job from an existing job analysis and add any other skills that may be specific to the organization or the position. Organizations that use this process may find that DSPs actually need skills that have not previously been identified or that training efforts to date have not addressed several important categories of skills. Another benefit of building a job analysis on existing skill sets is that many state and national initiatives have linked these skill sets to innovations in postsecondary education, voluntary credentialing, and apprenticeship programs as a way to professionalize direct support and retain competent DSPs and FLSs. By building training and assessment opportunities around these existing job analyses and the skill sets within them, an organization could have an advantage in terms of providing real career opportunities and being considered an employer of choice. (For more on professionalization of direct support work, see Chapter 5.)

Use the Identified Competencies in Job Descriptions and Performance Appraisals

Once the skills needed to perform a job have been identified through job analysis, the next step is to develop up-to-date job descriptions and corresponding performance appraisal protocols. The job descriptions should be comprehensive enough that an applicant for the position, if hired, would not be surprised by the duties he or she is asked to perform and specific enough that supervisors evaluating performance can discern whether current employees are competent in the core areas of their job assignment. One way to accommodate DSPs with different skills is to create multiple direct support positions within the organization. These different positions can be based on clusters of skills that are considered entry level, intermediate, and advanced. They can also be differentiated based on areas of specialization, such as mentoring employees, making community connections, or keeping abreast of health or behavioral supports. Compensation should vary, with advanced and specialized employees being compensated at higher levels than entry-level employees. Performance appraisals should be customized to accurately reflect the skills required of each position. For performance appraisals to be effective, employees must clearly understand the requirements of their positions and participate actively in self-assessment of their skills when completing performance reviews.

Although it is important for organizations to be aware of individual desires for promotions that will take employees into supervisory roles and to nurture those interests through development opportunities and timely promotions, in most community human services organizations, more than 80% of the employees work in direct support roles (Larson, Hewitt, & Anderson, 1999). Many people find direct support work to be more satisfying than supervisory or management work. By providing varied opportunities for DSPs and acknowledging their expertise through fair compensation, an organization can increase retention of highly qualified employees in positions that are still primarily direct support roles. Organizations should not be afraid to develop positions that let different employees capitalize on their strengths and interests. For instance, one location may have three positions requiring primarily direct support, with some supervisory components (e.g., acting as a family liaison, scheduling visits or supports, peer mentoring). Organizations can think creatively while also being clear about job expectations.

Step 3: Measure Skills to Identify Training Needs

When a new employee is hired, an initial skills assessment is needed to ensure that the employee has the basic skills necessary to perform his or her assigned job. Some skills may be assessed during the hiring process, but much of this work will occur after an employee has been hired. Because many training topics are mandated by federal or state law, organizations often send all new employees, regardless of competence, through the full gamut of mandated training within the first few weeks of employment. This approach is not likely to inspire much confidence in an experienced employee who may become bored by having to retake training on topics he or she has already mastered and is not likely to provide enough assistance to the inexperienced employee in initial skill development. Such a strategy should not be confused with orientation, which, as discussed in Chapter 5, is about welcoming employees to the organization and helping them understand how things work at the organization. Orientation covers topics such as how to complete time cards, where supplies and equipment can be found, and whom to talk to for questions about a variety of topics.

For an organization to meet training mandates, it is important to consider providing reasonable options for new but experienced employees to "test out" to be exempted from training on mandated topics. Since so many mandated topics relate to health and safety or regulatory topics, developing effective tests of this knowledge is usually not difficult. Simple demonstration combined with paper-and-pencil tests can provide a good idea of an employee's level of competence and knowledge related to most mandatory training requirements, such as medication administration or understanding of rules and regulations. Certifications and credentials earned prior to hire can help in identifying new employees who should be offered a test-out option.

For employees who come to an organization with little work history in community human services, the organization should avoid making assumptions about what these employees can or cannot do or what they know or do not know. It may be useful to ask all new employees to fill out a self-assessment of their knowledge or skills about direct support work. Generally employees will make a good-faith effort to identify their skills and past training completed. Once exemption tests and self-assessments

have been completed, it is important to next compare what employees know and can already do, using job analysis results (the list of necessary KSAs for their positions).

Immediate and ongoing training opportunities should be identified and should flow directly from the assessment of skills gaps between an employee's current competence and those required of his or her position. Assuming that training is needed and has been identified as a result of a skills gap assessment, prioritizing training needs is important. Those skills that will be required first in the course of the individual's employment should be the target of initial training. Training on topics that are important but less critical should not be covered until the person has had a chance to become acquainted with his or her work site and has begun to see why and how this later training is relevant to his or her work. Training should not occur on topics unrelated to the actual job tasks and duties of the employee's current position or a position that he or she aspires to fill in the future.

Steps 4, 5, and 6: Set Expectations for Learning, Deliver Training, and Transfer Knowledge to Job Performance

Once training needs are identified and prioritized, it is important for the organization to determine how the employee will be trained. Chapter 7 focuses on effective training practices for adult learners and offers detailed information about training techniques, that is, the "how" of training delivery (Step 5 of the competency-based training model).

Organizations must also pay close attention to where and when learners will be trained. To effectively train employees in meaningful job skills, organizations must consider giving up their loyalty to classroom delivery of training. Although an estimated 78% of all corporate training is done in the classroom (Caudron, 2000), organizations that provide community residential services to people with developmental disabilities rely on classroom learning for an even greater proportion of training experiences (Braddock & Mitchell, 1992). Classroom training has many drawbacks. The direct support workforce is geographically dispersed, works odd hours, and has other constraints that make attending classroom training difficult, so classroom training should not be the primary way in which organizations expect to train their employees. Classroom training is the least flexible alternative in terms of location and scheduling. Because people retain more information when they practice a skill in the setting where it will be used (O'Neill, 1998), one of the most effective options is structured on-the-job training. Other alternatives include self-paced training modules (written, videotaped, or computer based), skill mentoring, or a combination of these options with classroom-based training.

Step 7: Measure the Effectiveness of Training Through Improved Performance

Training programs in organizations often focus on tracking *seat time*, or the amount of time a staff person is physically present in a training session. In fact, there may be no other record of the person's training other than the title or topic of the training; the duration of the training session; and the staff person's signature, indicating attendance at the session. Organizations measure the relative success or failure of their training programs by the number of employees who attend training sessions of their own ini-

tiative. Unfortunately, as organization trainers can attest, participants might not be awake for the entire training session. In addition, sometimes training time is padded (e.g., if the session is scheduled to last 3 hours and the material is covered in 2 hours, employees still get credit for 3 hours of training). This strange method of evaluating training is the result of maintaining a focus on meeting training mandates rather than ensuring that employees have actually gained competence in the KSAs on which the training has focused.

Typically, beyond checking completion of hours on various topics, there is limited assessment of posttraining competency at all, and when it does exist, it is usually done through response to multiple-choice or other paper-and-pencil tests. The benefits of these kinds of testing are that they can be standardized and are quick and easy to administer and score. On the other hand, a passing score on a written test may not necessarily reflect a person's actual ability to perform the skills in a real setting.

Enhanced assessment, such as asking the learner to provide responses to problem-solving scenarios, or portfolio assessment, in which the learner gathers work samples that are evidence of his or her effectiveness as an employee, are better options. These assessments are usually richer than true/false or multiple-choice tests, but they, too, have limits. These measures are difficult to develop, harder to reliably assess, and require greater resources (e.g., time, people). To be considered effective by performance and competency standards, training must result in improved performance on the job. Performance appraisals and assessment methods should thus be designed to incorporate direct observation of skills in the actual work setting as the primary method for assessing the employee's competency. This direct observation of skills call on a variety of sources, including people receiving supports and their family members; co-workers; supervisors; and even neighbors or friends of the people being supported, if they are willing.

Because DSPs often work alone and people with developmental disabilities may have limited experience or skills in providing well-rounded performance evaluations, someone else charged with assisting an employee in his or her development and performance—such as a supervisor—will have to be available to observe employee performance. Supervisors often spend so much time hiring and orienting new employees, dealing with scheduling issues, and providing direct support because of vacant positions that they are left with little time to monitor, assess, and train staff. Efforts must be made to provide direct guidance and feedback to employees regarding their performance, particularly entry-level employees who are learning basic job duties and who may or may not be able to perform accurate self-assessments.

One option to enhance this observation opportunity is to create lead DSP positions or peer mentors. More experienced employees who are working on advanced skills should be encouraged to use more sophisticated methods of demonstrating their skill. Presentations to other employees or governing boards, development of portfolios or useful products, and other creative methods can be used to demonstrate competency in higher-level skills as well as to provide additional professional development opportunities to employees. For a review of various performance assessment and evaluation options, see Table 6.2.

Developing and maintaining a highly competent workforce requires ongoing assessment of skills gaps and provision of needed training. Compartmentalizing training

Table 6.2. Performance assessment and evaluation options

Assessment or evaluation type	Pros	Cons
True/false or multiple-choice test		
Written test of knowledge	Easy to score Less costly to implement Easy to use with large numbers of people Familiar to most supervisors and employees	Difficult to design valid questions Difficult to measure application to what occurs on the job Some people do poorly on written tests.
Scenario-based problem solving		
Learner is presented with a real-life situation in a vignette and is asked to respond.	Presents actual situations and focuses on what the learner would do Provides opportunity for in-depth responses	Difficult to ensure scenario is an accurate portrayal of the learner's job Time-consuming to develop Difficult to train scorers to reliably assess Vulnerable to desirability bias; learner may give socially desirable answer rather than what he or she would actually do Learner may give the right answer but may then fail to do it on the job.
Portfolio development		
A collection of work samples selected by the learner as a demonstration of his or her competence in a given area	Provides real work examples and experiential learning Can provide portable evidence of competence for employees seeking career advancement Allows evidence to be presented by learner in various formats and creatively	Time-consuming to develop Difficult to train scorers to reliably assess Unfamiliar to most employees, meaning that training must be provided on how to develop a portfolio Learner has to be self-motivated.
Self-assessment		
Assessment of an individual's own skills using behaviorally anchored rating scales	Allows assessment of hard-to-observe behaviors Provides a chance for individuals to provide input into the assessment process Can help individuals better understand skills gaps and future training needs	More chance than with other methods for false or misleading responses Individuals may not understand the skill well enough to assess themselves.
Direct observation		
Observations made of the employee actually doing their job or demonstrating a skill (these observations can be made by a supervisor, manager, co-worker, peer mentor, person who receives supports, or other person)	Employee is observed demonstrating actual skill on the job.	Hard for evaluators to be around to observe Reliability of sources can be challenging. Observers must have a good understanding of what good performance looks like.

and performance evaluation to specific times and places discourages employees from actively participating in their own development and from holding themselves to higher standards. In contrast, providing ongoing opportunities to learn and develop encourages high-potential employees to continue to enhance and cultivate skills. Although quarterly, semiannual, or annual evaluations may help ensure that the gamut of skills are assessed and may be used in annual compensation adjustments, performance feedback and related training and development opportunities should be scheduled for when employees need them.

In the Spotlight: ELM Homes

ELM Homes is a large organization in south central Minnesota that employs approximately 475 staff members to support individuals across 10 counties in three intermediate care facilities, 50 supportive living services homes, and approximately 100 semi-independent living situations and in-home support locations. ELM Homes has used the CSSS (Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996) in its job analyses since October 1999. ELM Homes's job descriptions and performance evaluations are based entirely on the CSSS competency model. ELM Homes has found great success in its approach to job analysis and is on the cutting edge within the profession. Although challenges have surfaced, the significant advantages have made the process worthwhile and rewarding.

The many advantages of a competency-based work environment are rooted in gains to the individuals involved. First and foremost, supported individuals receive a higher quality of service from DSPs who achieve increased levels of competency as a result of ELM Homes's commitment to this approach. ELM Homes's staff members embrace the competency-based model because they can experience career advancement through the process. Career advancement is built into their job descriptions. Staff members decide for themselves if they want to move forward by achieving higher competency levels in their work. Regardless of the choice regarding advancement, each employee is paid in relation to his or her level of competency.

ELM Homes's employees report that when they attend conferences, they are more knowledgeable and better prepared than some of their colleagues from other organizations. In addition, when employees begin advanced education through a vocational program (also based on the CSSS), they experience greater success. They credit this success to the competency-based approach at ELM Homes because the terminology and concepts, and ultimately the professional competencies, are encompassed in their daily job tasks. These employees express pride in working for a leading organization and in their personal levels of achievement and knowledge.

From the administration's vantage point, a competency-based program affords the opportunity to provide employees targeted feedback, whether complimentary or corrective, in a timely and accurate fashion. The organization is better equipped to handle staffing issues as they arise and to hold employees accountable to their skill competency levels. Employee performance evaluation is objective and less vulnerable to subjective errors and challenges.

The competency-based approach has not come to ELM Homes without resistance, however. Although the challenges have been few, they are worth noting. The creation of job descriptions took considerable time, energy, and resources from the organization. Once completed, the job descriptions were lengthy. This length is, however, necessary to carefully address each competency area in depth. The next challenge is that a lengthy

job description subsequently results in a lengthy performance evaluation. Last, the vocabulary used in the competency-based program and in the organization environment is advanced, and many of the entry-level employees are unfamiliar with this specialized vocabulary when they begin working at ELM Homes. It is time consuming, albeit necessary, to train new employees in the language and concepts inherent in a competency-based program.

Overall, ELM Homes benefits tremendously from implementing the competency-based program with its employees. It is rare that an organization can implement change that results in satisfaction of administration, employees, and consumers. The competency-based program seems to be the key.

OVERCOMING IMPLEMENTATION BARRIERS

The most noteworthy barrier to aligning current training practices with higher performance is the need to significantly revise practices throughout the organization. Enhancing performance may not be business as usual for most direct support organizations. Organizations may fear that turnover of poor or barely adequate performers will be too much to handle or that new training and assessment methods will be too complex.

DSPs and trainers may initially resist a new training paradigm. Employees may resist being responsible for identifying their own training needs and seeking necessary training opportunities. Trainers may resist the transition from being the ones who deliver all of the training to coordinating and communicating about training resources (including such information sources as staff members who have expertise on various topics, and Internet-based resources), especially if the benefits of helping with training are not made clear. Supervisors and co-workers may resent what are perceived as additional responsibilities in welcoming, mentoring, and training new employees. DSPs may not enjoy or feel secure in having training outcomes measured in terms of job performance, and they may not agree with trainers on which competencies are important. In addition, trainers may not like having to adapt their training styles to those of trainees as opposed to trainees adapting to the trainers' preferred styles.

Revamping an outdated and ineffective training and orientation system takes a significant amount of planning time and ongoing effort. It is critical to anticipate barriers to implementation and to seek and build necessary support and buy-in from everyone involved. Organizations are wise to educate governing boards, employees, and people receiving supports about the need to make these changes and to help them understand the parameters and to seek their input in developing and maintaining the new system.

Across industries, only an estimated 15% of training courses are evaluated based on performance on the job (Caudron, 2000). Ultimately the mark of an effective training program is that performance on the job improves. Evaluating the effect of improved training practices is not as hard as it seems. The costs of poor performance should serve as important indicators for tracking the success of performance-based training systems and other changes to improve performance: greater satisfaction on the part of individuals supported and employees, reduced need for remedial supervision, and significant cost savings over time through reduced operation costs and less money spent on hiring new employees and providing remedial training to employees.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Are your organization's mission, vision, and purpose clear at all levels of performance, including during training opportunities? Do employees and trainers know how training relates to the mission, vision, and purpose of your organization?

2. Is yours a learning organization (an organization that continually strives to better itself by seeking new information and ways of doing things)? If not, how can ongoing learning become part of your organization's culture?

3. Do all employees have and understand their current job description, which is based on the results of a job analysis? Do the job descriptions reflect the actual skills people need to accomplish the organization's mission and vision? Are training opportunities, resources, and evaluation tools in line with these critical skills?

4. Are all DSPs working under the same job descriptions and pay scales, despite having different responsibilities, skills, and abilities?

5. How are employees trained? What flexible training opportunities could be developed?

6. At your organization, who is responsible for conducting an employee's training: the employee, his or her supervisor, or the human resources department? How can you empower and support employees to take initiative for identifying and meeting their own training needs?

7. How does your organization identify environmental factors that impede training? How are these resolved?

CONCLUSION

Developing, using, and evaluating a competency-based training program is complex and challenging. Identifying needed skills and competencies by conducting a job analysis is critical. All training for and evaluations of employees should be directly related to the KSAs indicated in the job analysis. Careful consideration of what employees need to learn and how they will apply that learning on the job is an important part of effective skills evaluation. Though implementing competency-based training is a challenge, the payoff of a competent workforce is well worth the effort.

RESOURCES

Hewitt, A. (1998). *Community residential core competencies: Necessary competencies for direct support staff working in community residential services for people with developmental disabilities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, Research and Training Center on Community Living (Available on-line: http://www.rtc.umn.edu/pdf/analysis.pdf)

This is a job analysis completed for the role of DSPs who work in small community residential services supporting people with developmental disabilities.

Hewitt, A., Larson, S.A., O'Nell, S., Sauer, J., & Sedlezky, L. (1998). *The Minnesota frontline supervisor competencies and performance indicators: A tool for agencies providing community services.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, Research and Training Center on Community Living. (Available from the publisher, 612-624-0060; http://www.rtc.umn.edu/pdf/flsupcom.pdf)

This booklet contains the results of a comprehensive job analysis for community FLSs. It describes the characteristics of a contemporary community support organization; the mission, vision, and values that underlie the competencies; and the 14 broad FLS competency areas, competency statements within these areas, and performance indicators for each of the competency statements.

Oregon Rehabilitation Association. (1999). *Competencies for executive directors.* Salem: Author.

This document lists the skills needed by executive directors in community human services settings. It is designed to assists boards of directors as well as current and aspiring executive directors to understand the key skills and competencies that executive directors need to be successful.

Taylor, M., Bradley, V., & Warren, R., Jr. (1996). *Community support skill standards: Tools for managing change and achieving outcomes.* Cambridge, MA: Human Services Research Institute. (Available from the publisher, 2236 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140; 617-876-0426; fax: 617-492-7401; http://www.hsri.org/)

The *Community Support Skill Standards* (CSSS) are a job analysis of the roles and competencies of DSPs who work in community human services organizations.

Excerpts from the *Community Support Skill Standards*

The *Community Support Skill Standards* (CSSS; Taylor, Bradley, & Warren, 1996) reflect the results of a job analysis for community human services practitioners in direct support roles. The standards are organized first by broad competency areas, which describe competencies needed to be effective in direct support roles. Within each broad competency area are multiple skill standards that describe specific competencies required of DSPs. In addition, each broad competency area contains work activities that describe specific job duties or tasks and performance indicators that provide ways to determine if an employee has demonstrated the competency.

Provided here are excerpts from the CSSS, including all 12 broad competency areas and a sampling of the skill standards within some of these areas. Also included are a sample of various work activities and performance indicators for the first competency area. To get a clearer picture of the comprehensiveness of these standards, readers should review them in their entirety.

COMPETENCY AREA 1: PARTICIPANT EMPOWERMENT
The competent community support human services practitioner (CSHSP) enhances the ability of the participant to make decisions and to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem and assertiveness.

Skill Standard A: The competent CSHSP assists and supports the participant to develop strategies, make informed choices, follow through on responsibilities, and take risks.

Activity: Assists the participant to identify alternatives when faced with making a decision
Performance indicator: The participant reports the staff person has helped him or her identify alternatives when making decisions.
Activity: Assists the participant to understand the potential outcomes of all alternatives and helps identify potential barriers
Performance indicator: Given a scenario, cites barriers that limit choices for participants and describes ways to overcome those barriers

Skill Standard B: The competent CSHSP promotes participant partnership in the design of support services, consulting the person and involving him or her in the support process.

Activity: Assists the participant to make informed choices about the design of supports by encouraging the participant to explore a range of options and to think about his or her ambitions, aspirations, and hopes for the future
Performance indicator: Demonstrates, through role-play, techniques and effective strategies to enhance the participant's ability to make decisions about support, treatment, or services

Skill Standard C: The competent CSHSP provides opportunities for the participant to be a self-advocate by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods and techniques, encouraging and assisting the participant to speak on his or her own behalf, and providing information on peer support and self-advocacy groups.

Activity: Provides information to the participant regarding options for peer support and self-advocacy groups and the potential benefits of participation
Performance indicator: Can identify several major self-help and self-advocacy organizations that are relevant to the needs of the participant
Activity: Encourages the participant to participate in opportunities that will facilitate assertiveness and self-esteem
Performance indicator: Given specific scenarios, can describe activities that will enhance the participant's assertiveness and self-esteem

Skill Standard D: The competent CSHSP provides information about human, legal, and civil rights and related resources; facilitates access to such information; and assists the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision making about living, work, and social relationships.

Activity: Seeks current information on human, legal, and civil rights and relevant resources
Performance indicator: Describes the relevant legal and civil rights provisions that affect participants

COMPETENCY AREA 2: COMMUNICATION
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about the range of effective communication strategies and skills necessary to establish a collaborative relationship with the participant.

(continued)

Skill Standard A: The competent CSHSP uses effective, sensitive communication skills to build rapport and channels of communication by recognizing and adapting to the range of participant communication styles.

Skill Standard B: The competent CSHSP has knowledge of and uses modes of communication that are appropriate to the communication needs of participants.

Skill Standard C: The skilled CSHSP learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure participant understanding.

COMPETENCY AREA 3: ASSESSMENT
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment practices in order to respond to the needs, desires, and interests of the participants.

Skill Standard A: The competent CSHSP initiates or assists in the initiation of an assessment process by gathering information (e.g., participant's self-assessment and history, prior records, test results, additional evaluation) and informing the participant about what to expect throughout the assessment process.

Skill Standard B: The competent CSHSP conducts or arranges for assessments to determine the needs, preferences, and capabilities of the participants using appropriate assessment tools and strategies, reviewing the process for inconsistencies, and making corrections as necessary.

Skill Standard C: The competent CSHSP discusses findings and recommendations with the participant in a clear and understandable manner, following up on results and reevaluating the findings as necessary.

COMPETENCY AREA 4: COMMUNITY AND SERVICE NETWORKING
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about the formal and informal supports available in his or her community and skilled in assisting the participant to identify and gain access to such supports.

Skill Standard A: The competent CSHSP helps to identify the needs of the participant for community supports, working with the participant's informal support system and assisting with or initiating identified community connections.

Skill Standard B: The competent CSHSP researches, develops, and maintains information on community and other resources relevant to the needs of the participant.

Skill Standard C: The competent CSHSP ensures participant access to needed community resources coordinating supports across organizations.

Skill Standard D: The competent CSHSP participates in outreach to potential participants.

COMPETENCY AREA 5: FACILITATION OF SERVICES
The CSHSP is knowledgeable about a range of participatory planning techniques and is skilled in implementing plans in a collaborative and expeditious manner.

COMPETENCY AREA 6: COMMUNITY LIVING SKILLS AND SUPPORTS
The CSHSP has the ability to match specific supports and interventions to the unique needs of individual participants and recognizes the importance of friends, family, and community relationships.

COMPETENCY AREA 7: EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT
The CSHSP should be able to identify areas for self-improvement, pursue necessary educational and training resources, and share knowledge with others.

COMPETENCY AREA 8: ADVOCACY
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing participants (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative, financial) and should be able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges.

COMPETENCY AREA 9: VOCATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND CAREER SUPPORT
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about the career- and education-related concerns of the participant and should be able to mobilize the resources and support necessary to assist the participant to reach his or her goals.

COMPETENCY AREA 10: CRISIS INTERVENTION
The CSHSP should be knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention, and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals.

COMPETENCY AREA 11: ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION
The CSHSP is familiar with the mission and practices of the support organization and participates in the life of the organization.

COMPETENCY AREA 12: DOCUMENTATION
The CSHSP is aware of the requirements for documentation in his or her organization and is able to manage these requirements efficiently.

Excerpts from the *Community Residential Core Competencies*

The *Community Residential Core Competencies* (CRCC; Hewitt, 1998b) represent the core skills DSPs need when working in small community residential services organizations supporting people with developmental disabilities. This section includes excerpts from the results of this job analysis. Included are all 14 competency areas, samples of the skill standards within some of these areas, and specific job tasks and duties within the skill standards for the first competency area. This includes only a small portion of the results of this job analysis. It is important to obtain the entire job analysis (see the Resources section in this chapter) before using it to develop a competency-based training program.

COMPETENCY AREA 1: HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT
Assists the individual with household management (e.g., meal preparation, laundry, cleaning, decorating) and transportation needs to maximize his or her skills, abilities, and independence

Skill Standard A: Coordinates necessary shopping activities
1. Assists individuals in purchasing personal need items (e.g., health and beauty supplies, clothing)
2. Purchases groceries based on planned menu in accordance with individuals' preferences
3. Purchases needed household supplies and items
4. Puts supplies away
5. Supports individuals in choosing clothing styles based on their likes and dislikes rather than on staff likes and dislikes
6. Assists individuals to prioritize their personal needs and developing individual budgets
7. Prepares a grocery list based on each individual's food preferences
8. Assists individuals to purchase gifts and presents as needed and within budget
9. Purchases items after comparing prices and quality and selecting the best value
10. Involves individuals in deciding whether they want to go shopping and in choosing the location
11. Assists individuals with making decisions regarding purchases
12. Notifies appropriate staff when various supplies are low in the house
13. Knows and adheres to household spending limits (e.g., groceries, supplies) and follows organization financial procedures

Skill Standard B: Assists with meal preparation and ensures that meals are prepared
1. Assists individuals as needed in preparing for and cooking meals
2. Follows menus and recipes
3. Assists individuals in recognizing safety precautions and issues regarding food preparation and cooking
4. Assists individuals in following special diets (e.g., soft, puree, low calorie, sodium free, low fat)
5. Assists individuals with eating or feeds individuals as needed and identified in their individual plans
6. Washes hands before and after handling food items and/or touching another person or item
7. Stores leftover food appropriately (e.g., dating food, throwing out old food)
8. Handles food properly
9. Assists individuals as needed in planning meals and developing menus based on their preferences (e.g., being creative, offering a variety of foods, providing menu options, using substitution lists)
10. Assists individuals as needed in cleaning up after food preparation, cooking, and meals
11. Assists individuals as needed in preparing individual lunches
12. Uses kitchen equipment correctly (e.g., dishwasher, food processor, oven, stove, microwave, blender)
13. Assists individuals as needed in presenting the meal and eating environment in an appealing manner
14. Cleans out the refrigerator and cabinets as needed

Skill Standard C: Assists with financial planning and management for individuals served
1. Knows the balance of individuals' personal funds and assists individuals as needed in making appropriate expenditures based on the availability of funds
2. Uses household petty cash and individuals' spending money in accordance with organization policies and procedures
3. Organizes and keeps receipts
4. Completes accurate audits of individual consumer funds as indicated by organization policies and procedures
5. Assists and supports the individuals in banking (e.g., making deposits and withdrawals, cashing checks)

(continued)

6. Documents and records all financial transactions
7. Knows the balance of household funds and makes appropriate expenditures based on the availability of funds
8. Balances various accounts (e.g., petty cash, individuals' checkbooks)
9. Completes cash on hand sheets accurately and when necessary
10. Completes medical assistance paperwork and submits it in a timely manner

Skill Standard D: Completes household routines
1. Assists individuals as needed with cleaning (e.g., cleaning bathroom, dusting, dusting blinds, cleaning kitchen, washing windows, emptying and cleaning refrigerator, sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, carpet cleaning)
2. Assists individuals as needed with laundry
3. Assists individuals as needed in decorating the house for celebrations
4. Knows the home is the individual's and is respectful of this (e.g., knocks on the outside door before entering, refrains from calling it "my home")
5. Knows the household routines and shift flow
6. Knows where cleaning and household items are stored in the house
7. Assists individuals as needed with making beds
8. Assists individuals as needed in washing the dishes or running the dishwasher
9. Stores and uses cleaning and household products appropriately
10. Assists individuals as needed in recycling
11. Assists individuals as needed with pet care (e.g., feeding, bathing, providing health care)
12. Completes house walk-through checklists to identify needs
13. Assists individuals as needed in maintaining plants and wall hangings

Skill Standard E: Ensures maintenance of household is completed
1. Completes simple home repairs
2. Schedules needed repairs and home maintenance
3. Knows and uses the maintenance on-call system
4. Identifies accessibility and accommodation issues for individuals within the house
5. Maintains proper temperature in the refrigerator
6. Changes light bulbs
7. Maintains proper temperature in home as determined by individuals' preferences and needs
8. Assists and supports individuals in completing lawn care and yard work

Skill Standard F: Provides transportation and maintains vehicle
1. Uses approved gas purchasing procedures for company vehicles
2. Ensures that individuals use seat belts and that people who use wheelchairs are secured in the vehicle
3. Uses lifts on vehicles appropriately
4. Assists individuals in arranging transportation for appointments and events
5. Maintains legal driver's license and informs organization immediately if license is revoked
6. Knows individuals' needs while riding in a vehicle (e.g., behavior management, safety)
7. Drives vehicle safely (e.g., is aware of weather conditions, practices defensive driving)
8. Understands and follows vehicle maintenance lists
9. Washes company vehicle
10. Supports consumers in using public transportation systems
11. Knows local community routes, roads, major sites, and attractions
12. Communicates with day program regarding transportation needs or problems
13. Uses hazard lights in vehicle as needed (e.g., in case of flat tire or breakdown)
14. Knows what equipment and supplies are located in vehicle and when and how to use them

COMPETENCY AREA 2: FACILITATION OF SERVICES
Staff member has knowledge sufficient to fulfill his or her role related to individual service plan development, implementation, and review.

Skill Standard A: Understands individual service planning process

Skill Standard B: Maintains collaborative professional relationships with the individual and all support team members (including family and friends), follows ethical standards of practice (e.g., confidentiality, informed consent), and recognizes own personal limitations

Skill Standard C: Implements an individual service plan based on the individual's preferences, needs, and interests

Skill Standard D: Assists and/or facilitates the review of the achievement of individuals' outcomes

COMPETENCY AREA 3: HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Promotes the health and wellness of all individuals supported

Skill Standard A: Administers medications accurately and in accordance with organization policy and procedures

Skill Standard B: Observes and implements appropriate actions to promote healthy living and to prevent illness and accidents

Skill Standard C: Uses appropriate first aid and safety procedures when responding to emergencies

Skill Standard D: Assists individuals in scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments

Skill Standard E: Assists individuals in completing personal care (e.g., hygiene, grooming) activities

Skill Standard F: Assists with identifying, securing, and using needed adaptive equipment (e.g., augmentative and alternative communication devices, walkers) and therapies (e.g., physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, psychological)

Skill Standard G: Assists individuals in implementing health and medical treatments

COMPETENCY AREA 4: ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION
Is familiar with the organizational mission

Skill Standard A: Is aware of the organization's mission and priorities and how they relate to job roles and responsibilities

Skill Standard B: Is aware of and implements all organizational policies and procedures

COMPETENCY AREA 5: DOCUMENTATION
Is aware of the requirement for documentation in his or her organization and is able to manage these requirements efficiently

Skill Standard A: Maintains accurate records: collects, compiles, and evaluates data and submits records to appropriate sources in a timely manner

Skill Standard B: Maintains standards of confidentiality and ethical practice

COMPETENCY AREA 6: CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT
Enhances the ability of individuals to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem and assertiveness and to make decisions

Skill Standard A: Assists and supports individuals in making informed choices, following through on responsibilities, and trying new experiences

Skill Standard B: Promotes individuals' participation in support services, consulting each person and involving him or her in the support process (e.g., daily support of the individual's emotional needs)

Skill Standard C: Provides opportunities for individuals to be self-advocates, encouraging and assisting individuals to speak on their own behalf

Skill Standard D: Provides information about human, legal, and civil rights and related resources; facilitates access to such information; and assists the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision making about living, work, and social relationships

COMPETENCY AREA 7: ASSESSMENT
Is knowledgeable about formal and informal assessment practices to respond to individuals' needs, desires, and interests

Skill Standard A: Is knowledgeable of assessment and processes used to discover individuals' needs, preferences, and capabilities and how they are used in development and review of the service plan

Skill Standard B: Discusses both formal and informal findings and recommendations with the individual in a clear and understandable manner

Skill Standard C: Assists, completes, or arranges for assessments to determine individuals' needs, preferences, and capabilities by gathering information, informing individuals about what to expect throughout the assessment process, using appropriate assessment tools and strategies, reviewing the process for inconsistencies, and making corrections as necessary

COMPETENCY AREA 8: ADVOCACY
Is knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing individuals (e.g., barriers to human rights)

COMPETENCY AREA 9: COMMUNITY AND SERVICE NETWORKING
Is knowledgeable about the formal and informal supports available in the community and is skilled in assisting individuals to identify and gain access to such supports

COMPETENCY AREA 10: BUILDING AND MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS
Supports the participant in the development of friendships and other relationships

COMPETENCY AREA 11: COMMUNICATION
Is knowledgeable about the range of effective communication strategies and skills necessary to establish a collaborative relationship with each individual

COMPETENCY AREA 12: CRISIS INTERVENTION
Is knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention, and resolution techniques and should match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals

COMPETENCY AREA 13: STAFF SELF-DEVELOPMENT
Pursues knowledge and information necessary to perform job duties

COMPETENCY AREA 14: VOCATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND CAREER SUPPORT
Is knowledgeable about the career- and education-related concerns of individuals supported

Excerpts from the *Competencies for Executive Directors*

The following competency areas and statements are adapted from the *Competencies for Executive Directors* (Oregon Rehabilitation Association, 1999), which boards of directors of organizations can use when hiring and appraising the performance of executive directors.

A. Personal Skills and Behaviors
A1 Demonstrates a deep commitment to the individuals we support and serve
A2 Models personal integrity and requires the same from others
A3 Takes responsibility for own actions and actively works to correct errors
A4 Strives to develop personally and professionally
A5 Shows a restrained response about personal accomplishments by sharing credit with others

B. Communication Skills and Behaviors
B1 Listens actively
B2 Communicates with staff and management in an open, forthright, and clear manner
B3 Consistently speaks from personal and organizational values
B4 Speaks effectively
B5 Writes effectively

C. Consumer-Centered Programs and Services
C1 Plans, designs, and delivers an individual-centered service system
C2 Puts the individual first
C3 Collects information about and understands the needs of the individuals and customers served by the organization
C4 Integrates services
C5 Measures client satisfaction

D. Leadership and Planning
D1 Creates and communicates a compelling and inspiring sense of purpose in the organization
D2 Builds a mission to guide the decisions of the organization
D3 Initiates and leads a strategic plan that will accomplish the vision of the organization through its mission
D4 Responds to change as a fact of life
D5 Makes tough decisions with information available

E. Organizational Management
E1 Supports the board
E2 Obtains and uses input from the individuals receiving supports and other stakeholders
E3 Plans practical implementation of strategic initiatives
E4 Designs, implements, and evaluates program, fiscal, and human resources development policies and procedures
E5 Knows the process of fundraising and recognizes those who give

F. Human Resources Development
F1 Sets and follows appropriate human resources policies and procedures
F2 Maintains a competitive compensation package that attracts and retains qualified staff
F3 Increases the capacity and competency of staff
F4 Identifies staff recruitment and retention issues, develops and implements intervention strategies, and evaluates the results to inform future decision-making
F5 Addresses disciplinary actions, employee grievances, and employee litigation in a systematic, legal, respectable, timely, and responsible manner

G. Financial Management
G1 Protects the financial resources of the organization
G2 Budgets the resources of the organization effectively, meetings its strategic goals

H. Community Partnerships
H1 Promotes community understanding of the organization and its activities
H2 Understands public policy terminology and process
H3 Builds positive relationships with peers
H4 Resolves conflict with positive outcomes