

# **Missouri College of Direct Support**

## **Report to the Statewide Steering Committee Advanced Trainee Feedback on the Mo CDS Courses September 2008**

**Prepared For**

**Missouri College of Direct Support  
Missouri Department of Mental Health  
Division of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities**

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*This project was supported by award number 30036, Real Choices Systems Change Grants, US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official positions of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services or the University of Missouri-Kansas City.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Missouri College of Direct Support (Mo CDS) consists of a partnership of agencies that have joined together to create a training and certification program for direct support workers in Missouri. Those partners are the College of Direct Support, the Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (DMRDD), the University of Missouri Institute for Human Development, the Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Missouri Association of County Developmental Disability Services, the Missouri Chapter of the American Association of Mental Retardation, Direct Support Professionals of Missouri, Missouri American Network for Community Options and Resources, Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

The overarching goal of the Mo CDS Pilot project is for consumers to have access to a high quality of life. It is believed that this can best be achieved by improving the knowledge, skills and competencies of direct support professionals, and allowing consumers to have better access to a highly trained work force to provide needed services and supports. It is felt that this improvement in training would lead among other goals to increased staff retention, a reduction in worker compensation claims, a reduction in substantiations of abuse and neglect, and an improved sense of professionalism among direct support providers.

To achieve this goal of developing a cadre of qualified workers with consistent training, the Mo CDS Project has examined the courses offered through the national CDS and developed a training program that would be applied throughout the state to participating agencies. This training program is a series of CDS courses and on-the-job assessment that will lead to a Basic Certificate or an Advanced Certificate. The Basic Certificate requirement consists of five mandated trainings by the state of Missouri for all direct support workers, as applicable, and the successful completion of six specified CDS courses. To earn the Advanced Certificate, an individual must qualify for the Basic Certificate and then successfully complete any seven of the CDS courses that have been approved by the Mo CDS Executive Committee. This selection process allows for agencies and individuals to tailor their training to meet agency needs or personal interests.

At the time of this report, there were 34 agencies and over 2,000 trainees who were enrolled in the Mo CDS Pilot Program. Of this total, 243 trainees completed the 13 required courses, received an on the job assessment and applied for and received a Mo Advanced Training Certificate. For this report, 185 Advanced Training certificate holders were eligible to complete this survey. As of 9-19-08, 64 individuals had completed surveys.

1. Most of the trainees (43/62) completing this survey reported that they were direct support professionals.
2. Over 87% of trainees reported an increase in knowledge or skills as a result of CDS courses. In addition, there was a 26.6% percent increase in the number of trainees that felt very capable in serving people with disabilities after taking CDS courses.
3. Many trainees reported that the courses resulted in their feeling that they were overall better employees and more able to provide services and supports. In addition, they felt more confident and better able to handle and prevent behavior problems and deal with health and safety issues. A related improvement was reported for their ability to communicate with clients and families. As one trainee reported that the courses produced an improvement in "My confidence in understanding of persons with disabilities and their families, as well as what are the best ways to deal with difficult behaviors."
4. The CDS courses that trainees found most beneficial were: Individual Rights and Choice, Positive Behavior Support, Person Centered Planning and Documentation.
5. Most trainees (98.4%) felt that the on-the-job assessment was either very helpful or helpful.
6. 95.2% of trainees reported that CDS courses were either easy or very easy to understand and all indicated that the lessons were very complete or complete.
7. 27% of trainees reported that it took 30 min. or less to complete a lesson. Another 52.4% indicated that they were able to complete lessons between 31 and 60 min.
8. 86.9% of trainees indicated that they were very likely or likely to stay with their current employer after CDS training and 93.4% were likely or very likely to stay in the field of disabilities following CDS training.

**To request a copy of the full report contact [jackie.coleman@dmh.mo.gov](mailto:jackie.coleman@dmh.mo.gov)**