DSP knowledge check: trainer key

A free answer key from Special Learning for training leads at provider agencies. Each question is built from the linked source. Where the answer depends on your state or agency, the question asks for your rule.

How to use it

1. **Choose the areas.** Use all nine, or the ones that match the job. The key shows each question's area, so you can pull out one area for a refresher.
2. **Pre-check and post-check.** Give the learner copy on day one and again after training. Learners write answers on paper; nothing is sent to us.
3. **Set the passing bar.** You set it, in writing, before you start. The key has no pass mark. Our suggestion: look at each area as well as the total, and treat a miss on abuse reporting or rights as something to cover whatever the total.
4. **Fill in "your rule".** Questions marked "your rule" depend on your state or agency. Write your answer on the key line before the check, because the sources do not set one national rule.
5. **Retrain on misses.** Go over each missed scenario with the policy and the person's plan in hand, then recheck with a different scenario rather than the same question.
6. **Review as a group.** Staff training works as group training: read the scenario aloud, have everyone answer on paper, then talk about why. Look at the misses across the group, not one person at a time.

This is a knowledge check built from the sources listed. It tests what people know. To see what they do on shift, use the DSP competency observation checklist.

Score by area

	Area	Questions	Learner score
A	Person-centered practice and self-determination	7	/ 7
B	Communication	5	/ 5
C	Rights and community settings	8	/ 8
D	Safety: abuse, neglect and exploitation	7	/ 7
E	Crisis prevention and restraint	6	/ 6
F	Health, wellness and medication	5	/ 5
G	Confidentiality, boundaries and ethics	8	/ 8
H	Documentation, observation and growth	6	/ 6
I	Culture, community and family	4	/ 4
	Total	**56**	/ 56

Passing bar set by our agency: _____ Date set: _____

Answer grid

1	**A**	**8**	**C**	**15**	**B**	**22**	**A**	**29**	**D**	**36**	**B**	**43**	**A**	**50**	**D**
2	**D**	**9**	**C**	**16**	**A**	**23**	**D**	**30**	**C**	**37**	**B**	**44**	**D**	**51**	**C**
3	**C**	**10**	**B**	**17**	**A**	**24**	**C**	**31**	**B**	**38**	**A**	**45**	**D**	**52**	**B**
4	**B**	**11**	**A**	**18**	**D**	**25**	**C**	**32**	**A**	**39**	**D**	**46**	**C**	**53**	**B**
5	**B**	**12**	**D**	**19**	**C**	**26**	**B**	**33**	**A**	**40**	**C**	**47**	**B**	**54**	**A**
6	**A**	**13**	**D**	**20**	**B**	**27**	**A**	**34**	**D**	**41**	**C**	**48**	**A**	**55**	**D**
7	**D**	**14**	**C**	**21**	**B**	**28**	**D**	**35**	**C**	**42**	**B**	**49**	**A**	**56**	**C**

Questions marked "your rule" in the key below depend on your state or agency: write your rule on the line before you use the check.

Area A: Person-centered practice and self-determination

Choices, goals, risk, and who decides. Built from: CMS areas 2 and 7; NADSP areas 1 and 14; NADSP Code: Person-Centered Supports, Self-Determination and Choice.

1. In the CMS core competencies, what is a direct service worker's part in designing a person's services or support plan?

A. Helps design it based on the choices and goals of the person supported, and involves the person.
B. Writes it alone from the agency's standard template, then reviews it with the family.
C. Waits for the clinical team to finish it, then reads it once.
D. Builds it from what staff find easiest to carry out.

Answer: A. **Why:** The skill statement puts the person's choices and goals first and says the person is involved. Staff convenience and templates are not the basis.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Person-Centered Practices, statement a. "Helps design services or support plans based on the choices and goals of the individual supported, and involves the individual in the process."

2. Amara says she would rather go grocery shopping on Sunday with her friend than on Saturday with staff, as the house schedule shows. What is the best next step for a DSP?

A. Keep Saturday, because the schedule was set for everyone.
B. Tell her Sunday is not possible without checking.
C. Take her Saturday and let her friend visit another time.
D. Support her choice, tell the team, and work out any practical concern with her.

Answer: D. **Why:** The federal setting rule asks that a setting support initiative, autonomy and independence in daily choices without regimenting them. A house routine is not a reason to override a stated choice.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(iv). "Optimizes, but does not regiment, individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices"

3. The NADSP Code of Ethics says a DSP respects each person's right to make decisions and take risks. What does the Code say the person gains from this?

A. A guarantee that no harm will follow.
B. Permission to skip the support plan.
C. The dignity of learning from the outcomes of those decisions.
D. A reward for following staff advice.

Answer: C. **Why:** The Code names the dignity of learning from outcomes. It sits beside the commitment to partner with the person and the support network to identify risks and create safeguards.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Self-Determination and Choice. "Respect each person's right to make decisions, take risks, understand responsibilities, and experience the dignity of learning from the outcomes of those decisions."

4. Tomás has a legal representative. Under the NADSP Code of Ethics, what should a DSP understand?

A. His representative makes every choice for him, so he is no longer asked.
B. He still has the right to make choices about his life, and the DSP asks a supervisor or manager when unsure.
C. The representative's role ends the day the agency starts services.
D. Only his family may decide what he eats and wears.

Answer: B. **Why:** The Code says individuals with legal representatives still have the right to make choices about their lives. What a representative's papers cover is a question for your supervisor, not a guess.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Self-Determination and Choice. "Understand that individuals with legal representatives still have the right to make choices about their lives and seek guidance from a supervisor or manager when unsure."

5. Wen tells you, “My sister helps me understand big decisions, but I decide.” Which response fits the NADSP Code of Ethics? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Assume the sister is Wen’s guardian and ask her for every decision.
B. Treat this as possibly supported decision-making, not guardianship: do not assume the sister decides, and ask your supervisor what is on record.
C. Tell Wen that family cannot be part of her decisions.
D. Decide for Wen when the sister is not available.

Answer: B. **Why:** The Code asks DSPs to understand and respect the differences between emancipation, supported decision-making plans, and formal legal representation. Which applies to Wen depends on her documents and your state.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Justice, Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion. “Understand and respect the differences between emancipation, supported decision-making plans, and formal legal representation.”

Our state or agency rule: _____

6. The CMS core competencies describe working with a person on progress toward goals. What does the DSP do when the person’s goals or wishes change?

A. Works in partnership with the person to track progress and adjust services as needed and desired by the person.
B. Keeps the original services until the next annual meeting.
C. Adjusts services as the supervisor prefers.
D. Stops tracking progress until the person decides again.

Answer: A. **Why:** The statement says services are adjusted as needed and desired by the individual, in partnership.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Person-Centered Practices, statement e. “Works in partnership with the individual to track progress toward goals and adjust services as needed and desired by individual.”

7. Dev wants to invite a neighbor to dinner on a weeknight. A house rule says no guests on weeknights. What does the NADSP Code of Ethics ask of the DSP?

A. Enforce the rule quietly, since a rule is a rule.
B. Let the neighbor come and say nothing to anyone.
C. Tell Dev guests are not allowed in any home.
D. Seek Dev’s guidance and bring the limit to the team, because the Code asks the DSP to seek the person’s guidance when policies, practices or others’ wishes limit their choices.

Answer: D. **Why:** The Code asks the DSP to seek the person’s guidance when they see policies or practices limiting choices. Visitors of the person’s choosing at any time are also a federal condition in provider-owned or controlled residential settings (area C).

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Person-Centered Supports. “Seek the person’s guidance when I see policies, practices, or the desires of others limiting their choices.”

Area B: Communication

Being understood, and understanding. Built from: CMS area 1; NADSP area 2; NADSP Code: Respect.

8. In the CMS core competencies, whose understanding is the test of whether a DSP’s communication works?

A. The supervisor reading the shift note.
B. The DSP, if the DSP spoke clearly.
C. The person supported: communication is used in a way the person can understand.
D. The family, whatever the person understood.

Answer: C. **Why:** The statement asks for positive and respectful verbal, non-verbal and written communication that can be understood by the individual, with active listening.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Communication, statement a. “Uses positive and respectful verbal, non-verbal and written communication a way that can be understood by the individual”

9. A new service schedule starts Monday. Who should hear it explained, according to the CMS core competencies?

A. Only the family.
B. Only the case manager.
C. The person being supported, and his or her family members.
D. Nobody until the schedule is printed.

Answer: C. **Why:** The skill statement says a DSW explains services and service terms to the person being supported and to family members. The person hears it first. What is shared with family follows how the person wants their information shared (area G).

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Communication, statement b. “Explains services and service terms to the individual being supported and his or her family members.”

10. Ravi uses a picture board to say what he wants. A new DSP is rushing and talks over it. What does the NADSP Code of Ethics ask?

A. Wait for Ravi to learn to speak.
B. Assist individuals who do not rely on speech to engage using their preferred methods, so the DSP slows down and uses the board.
C. Guess what Ravi wants and save time.
D. Ask a coworker to talk for Ravi.

Answer: B. **Why:** The Code names engaging through the person’s preferred methods. The NADSP competency areas add that a DSP uses modes of communication that fit the person’s needs.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Person-Centered Supports. “Assist individuals who are unable to rely on speech and/or who are unable to see or hear to engage using their preferred methods.”

11. You use a term such as “person-centered plan” with someone who has not heard it. What do the NADSP competency areas say a skilled DSP does?

A. Learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure the person understands.
B. Uses the term without explaining, so it sounds professional.
C. Avoids the topic with the person.
D. Explains it only to the family.

Answer: A. **Why:** Understanding is the aim: the statement asks that terms be explained as needed to ensure participant understanding.

Source: NADSP Competency Areas, Area 2: Communication. “The skilled DSP learns and uses terminology appropriately, explaining as necessary to ensure participant understanding.”

12. You are writing about Imani for a team note and are unsure how she likes to be described. What does the NADSP Code of Ethics ask?

A. Use the diagnosis label from her file.
B. Use whatever the previous staff wrote.
C. Use shorthand every staff member knows.
D. Use respectful and inclusive language that reflects her preferences, so ask her.

Answer: D. **Why:** The Code’s Respect tenet asks for language that reflects each person’s preferences.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Respect. “Use respectful and inclusive language that reflects each person’s preferences.”

Area C: Rights and community settings

The federal qualities of a home and community-based setting. Built from: 42 CFR 441.301(c)(4); 42 CFR 483.420(a).

13. Which statement matches the first quality the federal rule lists for a home and community-based setting?

A. The setting is chosen by the agency for the person's safety.
B. The setting keeps people together so staff can supervise efficiently.
C. The setting limits outside activities to scheduled group outings.
D. The setting is integrated in the community and supports full access to it.

Answer: D. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(i) sets integration and full access to the greater community as the first quality.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(i). "The setting is integrated in and supports full access of individuals receiving Medicaid HCBS to the greater community"

14. Under the federal rule, who selects the setting?

A. The provider agency, from its own homes.
B. The funding agency, by waiting list order.
C. The individual, from among setting options that include non-disability specific settings and an option for a private unit in a residential setting.
D. The family, without the person.

Answer: C. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(ii) says the setting is selected by the individual from among options, identified and documented in the person-centered service plan.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(ii). "The setting is selected by the individual from among setting options including non-disability specific settings and an option for a private unit in a residential setting."

15. In a provider-owned or controlled residential setting, who should be able to lock the door to a person's own bedroom?

A. Staff only, for safety.
B. The person, with only appropriate staff having keys, unless a documented modification in the person's plan says otherwise.
C. Nobody, because doors stay unlocked at night.
D. The house manager only.

Answer: B. **Why:** The federal condition is units with entrance doors lockable by the individual, with only appropriate staff having keys. Any modification must be supported by a specific assessed need and justified in the person-centered service plan.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(B)(1). "Units have entrance doors lockable by the individual, with only appropriate staff having keys to doors."

16. In a provider-owned or controlled HCBS group home, the kitchen is locked at 9 PM for everyone as a house routine. What does the federal rule say about access to food?

A. Individuals have the freedom and support to control their own schedules and have access to food at any time; a limit needs a documented modification for that person.
B. Staff may set food times for convenience.
C. Access to food is a reward for good behavior.
D. Only snacks the agency supplies are allowed.

Answer: A. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(vi)(C) lists access to food at any time. A blanket house rule is not a documented individual modification; raise it with your supervisor.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(C). "Individuals have the freedom and support to control their own schedules and activities, and have access to food at any time."

17. Which condition does the federal rule list for visitors in a provider-owned or controlled residential setting?

A. Individuals are able to have visitors of their choosing at any time.
B. Visitors only during posted hours.
C. Visitors only with staff approval each time.
D. Visitors only if family.

Answer: A. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(vi)(D) lists visitors of the person's choosing at any time.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(D). "Individuals are able to have visitors of their choosing at any time."

18. In a provider-owned or controlled residential HCBS setting, individuals who share a bedroom have which of the following?

A. Roommates assigned by the agency, and a standard room layout.
B. Roommates chosen by staff, and furniture chosen by the family.
C. Neither; these are privileges staff may grant.
D. A choice of roommates in that setting, and the freedom to furnish and decorate their sleeping or living units within the lease or other agreement.

Answer: D. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(vi)(B)(2) and (3) say individuals sharing units have a choice of roommates and the freedom to furnish and decorate.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(B)(2) and (3). “Individuals sharing units have a choice of roommates in that setting.”

19. A coworker wants to limit visiting hours for one resident because evenings are busy. What must be in place before a condition such as visitors can be modified?

A. A note from the shift lead.
B. Agreement of the other residents.
C. A specific assessed need, justified in the person-centered service plan.
D. Nothing, if it is only for a few weeks.

Answer: C. **Why:** Paragraph (c)(4)(vi)(F) says any modification of these conditions must be supported by a specific assessed need and justified in the plan. Staff convenience is not enough. The dignity of risk worksheet and the human rights committee packet show how agencies record this.

Source: 42 CFR 441.301, 441.301(c)(4)(vi)(F). “must be supported by a specific assessed need and justified in the person-centered service plan.”

20. If your agency is an ICF/IID, what does the federal rule say about a person’s mail?

A. Staff open all mail to check for safety.
B. The facility ensures clients the opportunity to send and receive unopened mail, and to communicate, associate and meet privately with individuals of their choice.
C. Mail is held until the next team meeting.
D. Only mail from family is delivered.

Answer: B. **Why:** Paragraph 483.420(a)(9) applies to ICF/IID facilities. HCBS settings are covered by 441.301(c)(4), which names privacy, dignity and respect.

Source: 42 CFR 483.420, 483.420(a)(9). “Ensure clients the opportunity to communicate, associate and meet privately with individuals of their choice, and to send and receive unopened mail;”

Area D: Safety: abuse, neglect and exploitation

Recognizing, reporting, and knowing your state’s rule. Built from: CMS area 5; 42 CFR 441.302(a)(6); 42 CFR 483.420(d); NADSP Code: Physical and Emotional Well-Being.

21. What does the CMS Safety competency expect of a DSW about abuse, exploitation and neglect?

A. Investigate them privately before telling anyone.
B. Identify, prevent and report them according to laws and agency rules.
C. Report them only if the person asks.
D. Leave it to the supervisor, even when you see it.

Answer: B. **Why:** The skill statement names identify, prevent and report, according to laws and agency rules. It does not ask the DSW to investigate.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Safety, abuse and neglect, statement a. “Demonstrates the ability to identify, prevent, and report situations of abuse, exploitation, and neglect according to laws and agency rules.”

22. Which of these must a state's definition of a critical incident include at a minimum, under the federal rule for HCBS waivers?

A. Exploitation, including financial exploitation.
B. A late timesheet.
C. A person declining a meal.
D. A change in the weekly schedule.

Answer: A. **Why:** Section 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A) lists abuse, neglect, exploitation including financial exploitation, misuse or unauthorized use of restrictive interventions or seclusion, certain medication errors, and unexplained or unanticipated death as the minimum. A state may add more.

Source: 42 CFR 441.302, 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A). "Exploitation including financial exploitation;"

23. How soon must you report suspected abuse or neglect, and to whom? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Within 30 days, to your supervisor, in every state.
B. After you have confirmed it happened.
C. Only if you saw it yourself.
D. As soon as your state's law and agency procedure require.

Answer: D. **Why:** The federal HCBS rule leaves timeframes and procedures to the state: providers report critical incidents within State-established timeframes and procedures. The ICF/IID rule says allegations are reported immediately to the administrator or other officials in accordance with State law. Write your own rule on the key.

Source: 42 CFR 441.302, 441.302(a)(6)(i)(C). "within State-established timeframes and procedures"

Our state or agency rule: _____

24. You notice bruises on Jamal, there is no explanation for them, and you did not see how they happened. What is the next step? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Ask Jamal's housemates what happened and decide who is at fault.
B. Wait a week to see if it happens again.
C. Report what you saw to the appropriate authorities through your agency's procedure, as your state requires, and write down what you observed.
D. Mention it at the next team meeting.

Answer: C. **Why:** The NADSP Code asks DSPs to report any observed or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate authorities. For ICF/IID, the rule says injuries of unknown source are reported immediately in accordance with State law. Who the appropriate authorities are depends on your state.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Physical and Emotional Well-Being. "Report any observed or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the appropriate authorities."

Our state or agency rule: _____

25. The CMS Safety competency says a DSW recognizes signs of abuse and neglect, including which practice?

A. The use of any assistive device.
B. A person choosing to stay in their room.
C. The inappropriate use of restraints.
D. A medical appointment on a weekday.

Answer: C. **Why:** The statement lists inappropriate use of restraints among the signs a DSW recognizes and works to prevent.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Safety, abuse and neglect, statement b. "Recognizes signs of abuse and neglect, including the inappropriate use of restraints, and works to prevent them."

26. In an ICF/IID, a staff member says Lee will not get dinner because he did not finish his chores. What does the federal rule say?

A. It is allowed once, as a lesson.
B. Staff must not punish a client by withholding food or hydration that contributes to a nutritionally adequate diet, so this is not allowed and must be raised.
C. It is allowed if the supervisor agrees.
D. It is allowed if Lee has snacks later.

Answer: B. **Why:** Section 483.420(d)(1)(ii) says so for ICF/IID. In provider-owned or controlled HCBS residential settings, access to food at any time is also a listed condition (area C).

Source: 42 CFR 483.420, 483.420(d)(1)(ii). "Staff must not punish a client by withholding food or hydration that contributes to a nutritionally adequate diet."

27. A coworker says they borrowed $20 from Mina's spending money and will put it back. What is this, and what do you do? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. It may be exploitation, including financial exploitation; report it through your agency's procedure and your state's requirement.
B. A private matter between coworkers if it is repaid.
C. Fine if Mina does not notice.
D. Something to mention only if it happens twice.

Answer: A. **Why:** Financial exploitation is in the federal minimum critical incident list. Your state and agency set who takes the report and how soon.

Source: 42 CFR 441.302, 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A). "Exploitation including financial exploitation;"

Our state or agency rule: _____

Area E: Crisis prevention and restraint

Preventing a crisis, approved approaches, asking for help. Built from: CMS area 4; NADSP area 10; 42 CFR 441.302(a)(6).

28. Which of these does the CMS Crisis Prevention and Intervention competency ask a DSW to do?

A. Waiting for a crisis, then using the approved response.
B. Keeping the person away from anything that could upset them.
C. Having a staff member shadow the person at all times.
D. Recognizing risk and working to prevent a crisis in a way that meets the person's need.

Answer: D. **Why:** Statement a is about recognizing risk and preventing, and statement b adds positive behavior supports to prevent crisis and promote health and safety.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, statement a. "Recognizes risk and works to prevent an individual's crisis in a way that meets the individual's need."

29. In a crisis, a new DSP wants to use a hold learned at a previous job. What does the CMS competency say a DSW uses? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Any hold that worked before.
B. Whatever the most senior coworker suggests.
C. A hold from a video, if no one is hurt.
D. Approved approaches your agency and state allow and have trained you on.

Answer: D. **Why:** Rules about which interventions are allowed, who may use them and how they are reported differ by state and agency. Ask for your agency's approved list before you need it.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, statement c. "Uses appropriate and approved intervention approaches to resolve a crisis."

Our state or agency rule: _____

30. A person is escalating and you are alone on shift. What does the CMS competency say a DSW does?

A. Handles it alone to protect the person's privacy.
B. Waits for the person to calm down without telling anyone.
C. Seeks help from other staff or services when needed during a crisis.
D. Asks a housemate to help.

Answer: C. **Why:** Statement d asks the DSW to seek help from other staff or services. Your agency's crisis plan names who to call.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, statement d. "Seeks help from other staff or services when needed during a crisis."

31. You notice your raised voice makes a tense moment worse. What is the best next move?

A. Raise the voice more so it is heard.
B. Recognize that your own tone may be part of the problem, and change how you respond.
C. Leave the person alone without telling the team.
D. Blame the person for the escalation.

Answer: B. **Why:** Statement g asks DSWs to see their own part in a conflict and change their behavior.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, statement g. "Sees own potential role within a conflict or crisis and changes behavior to minimize conflict."

32. Which of these is in the federal minimum list of critical incidents for HCBS waivers? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Misuse or unauthorized use of restrictive interventions or seclusion.
B. Any use of a communication device.
C. A staff member changing shifts.
D. A person choosing a different activity.

Answer: A. **Why:** Section 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A)(4). Which interventions are allowed, and how an incident is reported, is set by your state and agency; learn those rules.

Source: 42 CFR 441.302, 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A)(4). "Misuse or unauthorized use of restrictive interventions or seclusion;"
Our state or agency rule: _____

33. After an incident, what does the CMS competency say about reporting? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Reports incidents according to rules.
B. Reports only if the person was hurt.
C. Reports when the supervisor asks.
D. Reports at the next team meeting.

Answer: A. **Why:** Statement f says reports follow the rules. Which incidents, how soon and to whom are set by your agency and state. See the DSP incident report template.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Crisis Prevention and Intervention, statement f. "Reports incidents according to rules."
Our state or agency rule: _____

Area F: Health, wellness and medication

Appointments, emergencies, and medication within the rules. Built from: CMS areas 5 and 8; NADSP area 15; 42 CFR 441.302(a)(6).

34. Who may give medication to a person supported? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Any DSP, once asked by a coworker.
B. Any DSP, if the label is clear.
C. No DSP, in any state.
D. It depends on your state and agency; know what yours allow.

Answer: D. **Why:** The CMS statement does not name one national rule: it says to follow all laws and safety rules. State medication-administration laws differ, and so do agency policies.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Health and Wellness, statement b. "Gives medications or assists the individual to take medication while following all laws and safety rules."

Our state or agency rule: _____

35. A pill does not look like the one you gave yesterday. What does the NADSP competency area ask? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Give it, since the label matches the person.
B. Cut it in half to be safe.
C. Administer medications accurately and in accordance with agency policy and procedures, so stop and follow your agency's procedure before giving it.
D. Skip the dose and say nothing.

Answer: C. **Why:** Accuracy and agency procedure come first. Your agency's procedure names who you call.

Source: NADSP Competency Areas, Area 15: Supporting Health and Wellness. "Administers medications accurately and in accordance with agency policy and procedures."

Our state or agency rule: _____

36. Which medication event is on the federal minimum list of critical incidents? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Any refused dose.
B. A medication error resulting in a call to poison control, an emergency department or urgent care visit, a hospitalization, or death.
C. Any dose given 10 minutes late.
D. Any change in a prescription.

Answer: B. **Why:** Section 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A)(5). Your state and agency define what you document and report for other medication events.

Source: 42 CFR 441.302, 441.302(a)(6)(i)(A)(5). "A medication error resulting in a telephone call to, or a consultation with, a poison control center, an emergency department visit, an urgent care visit, a hospitalization, or death;"

Our state or agency rule: _____

37. What part does the CMS competency give a DSW for health care appointments?

A. Goes to the appointment and answers for the person.
B. Helps the person make and keep regular health and dental care appointments.
C. Cancels appointments that are hard to cover.
D. Decides which appointments matter.

Answer: B. **Why:** Statement e.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Health and Wellness, statement e. "Helps the individual make and keep regular health and dental care appointments."

38. A person falls and is hurt. What does the CMS Safety competency expect?

A. Maintains the person's safety in an emergency, uses universal precautions and gives first aid as needed, following your agency's emergency procedure.
B. Moves the person quickly to a chair, without checking.
C. Waits for the person to say what hurts, then waits again.
D. Writes the incident note first.

Answer: A. **Why:** The statements are keeping the person safe in an emergency, and using universal precautions and giving first aid as needed. The rest of the response follows your agency's procedure and training.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Safety, emergency preparedness, statement c. "Uses universal precautions and gives first aid as needed in an emergency."

Area G: Confidentiality, boundaries and ethics

The NADSP Code of Ethics in daily work. Built from: NADSP Code of Ethics; CMS area 6.

39. Under the NADSP Code of Ethics, what does a DSP do about the person's information?

A. Shares it with anyone on the support team, without asking.
B. Shares it with the person's neighbors if they ask nicely.
C. Keeps it private from the person.
D. Asks individuals how, when, and with whom they want their information shared.

Answer: D. **Why:** The first listed commitment under Confidentiality and Privacy is to ask the person. The NADSP Code of Ethics onboarding guide covers the full tenet.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Confidentiality and Privacy. "Ask individuals how, when, and with whom they want their information shared."

40. A neighbor asks why Kofi has appointments on Tuesdays. When does the Code allow a DSP to share confidential information?

A. Whenever the neighbor is a friend of the agency.
B. Whenever the person is not around.
C. Only with the person's permission, or when necessary to prevent serious or imminent harm.
D. Whenever it is an ordinary conversation.

Answer: C. **Why:** The Code names those two situations.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Confidentiality and Privacy. "Disclose confidential information only with the person's permission or when necessary to prevent serious or imminent harm."

41. You photograph a person's medication list and text it to a friend who is a nurse, to ask a question. What do the CMS core competencies say?

A. It is fine because the friend is a nurse.
B. It is fine if you delete the text later.
C. A DSW maintains confidentiality in all spoken and written communication and follows HIPAA, so you do not send it and ask your supervisor instead.
D. It is fine if the name is cropped.

Answer: C. **Why:** The CMS Professionalism and Ethics statement names spoken and written communication and HIPAA. Your agency's policy names the right channel for questions.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Professionalism and Ethics, statement f. "Maintains confidentiality in all spoken and written communication"

42. Two DSPs talk about a person's behavior plan in the checkout line. What does the NADSP Code of Ethics ask?

A. Nothing, as long as no names are used.
B. Follow your employer's and the state's confidentiality policies, taking care to prevent private information from being overheard or seen by others.
C. Whisper and keep going.
D. Wait until the person is in earshot.

Answer: B. **Why:** The Code names taking care that private information is not overheard or seen by others.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Confidentiality and Privacy. "taking care to prevent private information from being overheard or seen by others."

43. A person you support asks you to lend them money and to be friends on social media. Which response fits the Code? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Stay warm and respectful, maintain clear boundaries as your agency's policy describes, and talk it through with your supervisor.

B. Say yes to both to build trust.

C. Say no and stop speaking with them.

D. Say yes once, as a favor.

Answer: A. **Why:** The Code asks DSPs to develop and maintain clear and respectful boundaries. Agency policy names the specifics.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Relationships and Social Roles. "Develop and maintain clear and respectful boundaries with the people I support."

Our state or agency rule: _____

44. You are asked to do a task you have not been trained for. What does the Code of Ethics ask?

A. Try it, since most tasks are simple.

B. Decline silently and walk away.

C. Ask the person to show you without telling a supervisor.

D. Acknowledge your limitations and seek guidance from the people you support, colleagues, supervisors or mentors when needed.

Answer: D. **Why:** The Professionalism, Accountability and Growth tenet names acknowledging limitations and seeking guidance.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Professionalism, Accountability and Growth. "Acknowledge my limitations and seek guidance from people I support, colleagues, supervisors, or mentors when needed."

45. You realize you missed a log entry last night. What does the Code of Ethics ask?

A. Fill it in later as if it had been done on time.

B. Hope nobody notices.

C. Ask a coworker to say they did it.

D. Take responsibility for your decisions and actions and learn from mistakes, and be transparent and honest in all communication.

Answer: D. **Why:** Both statements are in the Professionalism, Accountability and Growth tenet.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Professionalism, Accountability and Growth. "Take responsibility for my decisions and actions and learn from mistakes."

46. Bao says he wants to start dating. A DSP is uncomfortable with that personally. What does the Code of Ethics ask?

A. Discourage it until the family agrees.

B. Tell him dating is not part of the program.

C. Support Bao's right to manage relationships as he chooses, and separate personal beliefs about relationships from his.

D. Share your beliefs so he can decide wisely.

Answer: C. **Why:** The Code names supporting each person's right to manage relationships as they choose, and separating personal beliefs from those of the person supported. Safe, positive and reciprocal relationships are the Code's aim.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Person-Centered Supports; Relationships and Social Roles. "Separate my personal beliefs about relationships, including sexual relationships, from those of the people I support."

Area H: Documentation, observation and growth

Notes, data, feedback and training. Built from: CMS areas 2, 3 and 12; NADSP area 12; 42 CFR 483.430(e).

47. How does the CMS Person-Centered Practices competency describe documentation?

A. Writes notes after the week ends.
B. Completes and submits documentation of services on time.
C. Writes notes only when something goes wrong.
D. Leaves notes to the supervisor.

Answer: B. **Why:** Statement g. The NADSP area on documentation adds accurate records, submitted to the appropriate sources in a timely fashion.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Person-Centered Practices, statement g. “Completes and submits documentation of services on time.”

48. At the end of a shift you have notes to write. What do the NADSP competency areas say about records?

A. Maintain accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.
B. Copy yesterday’s note and change the date.
C. Write what you plan to do tomorrow instead.
D. Write only what the supervisor will like.

Answer: A. **Why:** Accuracy and timeliness are in the Documentation area. See the daily notes and incident report templates.

Source: NADSP Competency Areas, Area 12: Documentation. “The competent DSP maintains accurate records, collecting, compiling and evaluating data, and submitting records to appropriate sources in a timely fashion.”

49. In the CMS Evaluation and Observation competency, what does a DSW observe?

A. The health and behavior of the individual within his or her cultural context.
B. Only behavior, apart from health.
C. Only changes the family reports.
D. Only what the plan lists.

Answer: A. **Why:** Statement d. It asks DSWs to watch health and behavior together, within the person’s own cultural context.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Evaluation and Observation, statement d. “Observes the health and behavior of the individual within his or her cultural context.”

50. What data does the CMS Evaluation and Observation competency say a DSW collects?

A. Data about how quickly staff finish tasks.
B. Data about incidents only.
C. Data only when a funder asks.
D. Data about the person’s goals and satisfaction with services.

Answer: D. **Why:** Statement c names the person’s goals and the person’s satisfaction with services.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Evaluation and Observation, statement c. “Collects data about individual goals and satisfaction with services.”

51. Your supervisor gives you feedback after an observed shift. What does the CMS competency describe?

A. Explains why the feedback is wrong.
B. Asks only coworkers who agree.
C. Seeks feedback from many sources and uses it to improve work performance and skills.
D. Treats it as the end of the topic.

Answer: C. **Why:** The Education, Training and Self-Development area asks DSWs to seek feedback from many sources and use it. The DSP supervision log and competency checklist give a place to record it.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Education, Training and Self-Development, statement b. “Seeks feedback from many sources and uses to improve work performance and skills.”

52. If your agency is an ICF/IID, what does the federal rule say about staff training? *(Your state or agency sets this.)*

A. Initial training only, at hire.
B. The facility provides each employee with initial and continuing training that enables the employee to perform duties effectively, efficiently and competently.
C. Training only for staff who ask.
D. Training only for new job titles.

Answer: B. **Why:** Section 483.430(e)(1). Other settings follow your state's and funder's training rules, which differ.

Source: 42 CFR 483.430, 483.430(e)(1). "The facility must provide each employee with initial and continuing training that enables the employee to perform his or her duties effectively, efficiently, and competently."

Our state or agency rule: _____

Area I: Culture, community and family

Learning from the person, and belonging. Built from: CMS areas 10 and 11; NADSP Code: Respect and Person-Centered Supports.

53. You notice you feel uneasy about a person's food and holiday customs. What does the CMS Cultural Competency area ask?

A. Tell the person the customs are inconvenient.
B. Recognize your own bias and keep it from affecting how you work with the person.
C. Ask the person to follow house customs instead.
D. Say nothing and change the menu.

Answer: B. **Why:** Statement c. The NADSP Code of Ethics adds reflecting on your own values and biases and how they may influence your professional decisions.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Cultural Competency, statement c. "Recognizes own biases and doesn't let them interfere in work relationships."

54. According to the NADSP Code of Ethics, how does a DSP learn about a person's culture, preferences and needs?

A. Seeks guidance from the person.
B. Reads the diagnosis in the file.
C. Asks the agency about typical preferences.
D. Assumes from the person's family name.

Answer: A. **Why:** The Person-Centered Supports tenet names seeking guidance from the people supported about their culture, preferences, social networks and needs.

Source: NADSP Code of Ethics, Person-Centered Supports. "Seek guidance from the people I support about their culture, preferences, social networks, and needs."

55. Priya wants to join a community choir. Staff say a day-program music group is easier. What does the CMS competency say a DSW does?

A. Keeps her in the day-program group.
B. Tells her the choir is too hard.
C. Chooses a group for her based on what staffing allows.
D. Supports the person to connect with friends and to live and be included in the community of her choice.

Answer: D. **Why:** The Community Inclusion and Networking statement b. The federal setting rule also asks that settings support full access to the greater community.

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Community Inclusion and Networking, statement b. "Supports the individual to connect with friends and to live and be included in the community of his or her choice."

56. What does the CMS Community Inclusion and Networking competency say about family members?

A. A DSW shares every detail with family on request.
B. A DSW leaves family out of planning.
C. A DSW respects the role of family members in planning and providing services.
D. A DSW lets family decide in place of the person.

Answer: C. **Why:** Statement d. Confidentiality still applies: ask the person how, when and with whom they want their information shared (area G).

Source: CMS Direct Service Workforce Core Competencies, Community Inclusion and Networking, statement d. “Respects the role of family members in planning and providing services.”

Sources

Questions are built from these sources, read November 15-17, 2026. They are our own questions and wording; the quoted lines are as published.

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42 CFR 441.301. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/section-441.301
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One next step

If your staff support autistic people, the Level 1 ABA Online Training Course for groups introduces autism and behavior-support foundations, including errorless teaching and prompting. $99 per learner · One-time purchase · Each learner has 12 weeks of access from the day they activate their code · Free 7-day trial of the first 2 sessions.

Related free tools: DSP competency observation checklist · NADSP Code of Ethics onboarding guide · Abuse and neglect reporting training · Dignity of risk worksheet · Supported decision-making agreement guide · DSP incident report template