

# Learning Matters

## Online Offerings

### September and October 2021

**“The wisest mind has something yet to learn.”**  
**George Santayana**

Office of Learning & Development

Department of Developmental Services – Central/West Region

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#### Learning & Development Contact Information

Administration & Registration

Pat Carney [Patricia.Carney@mass.gov](mailto:Patricia.Carney@mass.gov)

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Learning Matters is now posted online in two locations:

1. [www.communitygateway.org](http://www.communitygateway.org) Once in the website, click on the Training button
2. [www.ddslearning.com](http://www.ddslearning.com) Click on Training and Development Opportunities > Learning Calendars > Central-West Training Calendar

**Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.**

## **Instructions for registering; devices to use to take the trainings; joining the training.**

**To register:** Click on the link directly under the date to register. (Person taking the training must register themselves with the email that will be used to take the training). Please only register for one of the dates per training as space is limited. You may be able to be put on a wait list if that is the only date that you can attend if the registration is full. If you are on a waitlist and we were unable to let you in because the training is at capacity, you will receive a “rejection” email. Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend.

**Joining the training:** Please note, once you fill in your information on the Webex page, you have to scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the registration button to send your registration request. You will receive a follow up email that has a ‘Join Now’ link, which you can click to get into the class. The link will not be active until the day of the class.

**If you need accommodations,** please request them **at least two weeks** before the training by emailing [patricia.carney@mass.gov](mailto:patricia.carney@mass.gov)

**Devices to use when taking the training:** When you register for the training (offered on WebEx), you will need to register with the email that you will use to take the training. The device you use to attend the training must have audio and should have video (camera) capacity. If you are having difficulty with your audio on your device, you may supplement the audio by calling/dialing in while maintaining the visual on your device. You will not be able to fully participate in the training by calling/dialing in alone. Therefore, whenever possible you should attend the training either on a computer/laptop or connect through the Cisco app on a smart phone. If you access through the phone app, you won’t have all the features, but you will still be able to see the power point, hear the presenter and use the chat feature.

### **Unfamiliar with WebEx training and never used it before?**

#### **At least one day before the training,**

#### **1) Please watch this video about how to use WebEx Training:**

<https://launch.webex.com/launch/lsr.php?RCID=2655c5a915dd48c1ab5d2cf3f9dda3a4>

#### **2) Download the App for WebEx on your computer /smart phone or IPad/tablet in advance to be able to use all the functions during the training:** <https://www.webex.com/downloads.html>

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## Basic Human Rights

This class introduces participants to guaranteed rights to which all people in the U.S. are entitled, as well as additional protections guaranteed to individuals who use services and supports offered through DDS and DDS-funded providers. Topics include: Constitutional, civil, legal, and human rights; the role of DDS and provider agencies in safeguarding rights of people we support; systems to support staff's efforts; and responsibilities of mandated reporters and the reporting process. **NOTE:** this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

**Instructor:** Patricia Carney / Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- Thursday, September 2, 2021 9:00a-2:30p  
Click here to register: [Basic Human Rights - September](#)
- Wednesday, October 6, 2021 9:00a-2:30p  
Click here to register: [Basic Human Rights - October](#)

## Human Rights Officer/Advocate

**See training offerings above if you need to attend Basic Human Rights**

This class prepares participants to be effective Human Rights advocates for people they support. It is required for those who will be taking on the role of Human Rights Officer. Topics covered include the structures and policies within DDS to provide safeguards for the rights of people who receive services and supports, the role and responsibilities of the Human Rights Officer and the resources available to the HRO in carrying out their responsibilities.

**Instructor:** Regional Human Rights Specialist

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- Wednesday, September 29, 2021 9:00a-2p  
Click here to register:  
[9.29.21 DDS Central West Human Rights Officer/Advocate Training \(constantcontact.com\)](#)
- Friday, October 29, 2021 9:00a-2p  
Click here to register: [10.29.2021 DDS Central West Human Rights Officer/Advocate Training \(constantcontact.com\)](#)

**Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.**

## A Life Like Any Other

George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Knowing the history of people with IDD in society provides us with an important context for understanding what our current history, values and services contribute to this ongoing story. We'll explore some of the social roles people with IDD have had in the past and how we can support people to develop and enjoy more meaningful social roles today and tomorrow. We'll discuss the gifts and talents that people with disabilities have to contribute to their communities and how we, as workers in any part of the system, can promote positive images and roles for people with disabilities. **NOTE:** this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

**Instructor:** Pat Carney, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- Thursday, September 23, 2021      9:00a-12:30p

Click here to register: [A Life Like Any Other](#)

## Understanding the People We Support

We work with people who are labeled with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), including Autism, and people with Acquired or Traumatic Brain Injury (ABI/TBI). In this session we talk about what those terms mean and what kinds of services are available to people through the Department of Developmental Services and our vendor providers. We will learn about ways to demonstrate respect for all by using People First language and discuss our roles as advocates and teachers with the individuals we support. **NOTE:** this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

**Instructor:** Pat Carney, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- October 13, 2021      9:00a-12:30p

Click here to register: [Understanding the People We Support](#)

## Teaching & Learning

Teaching & Learning is an introductory level class that provides participants with information about essential considerations in identifying learning goals for and with people with developmental disabilities; how to create an effective teaching plan; and a variety of teaching strategies to enhance learning.

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By the end of this class, participants will be able to identify why and how adults learn, articulate the purpose of teaching in relation to the lives of people we support, define the components of an effective teaching and learning experience, list 5 different teaching methods, and explain the purpose of evaluation in effective teaching and learning.

We will include some discussion about the role direct support professionals can fill in supporting people to achieve ISP goals that are meaningful to the individual and the importance of both consistency and clear documentation. Reference is made to Positive Behavior Supports and using Neutral Language in our work, which is explored further in our other training offerings! **NOTE:** this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

**Instructor:** Pat Carney, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- October 27, 2021                      9:00a- 2:00p  
Click here to register:            [Teaching and Learning](#)

## Teams and Communication

In every part of an organization, our ability to perform our job responsibilities depends in our ability to work effectively as a member of a team. In many cases, members of a team are dispersed – across shifts, across programs, across geography. Positive relationships, collaboration, communication, team development, and conflict resolution are essential to a happy and effective team. Teams bring together people with diverse experiences, opinions, and worldviews. These differences make a team stronger but can also lead to miscommunication. As direct support professionals, it is especially important to maintain clear and respectful communication with all members of one's team. The strength of a team directly affects the quality of life of the people we support and makes our jobs more fun!

This training will identify the building blocks of communication and how they strengthen a supportive and collaborative work environment. Attendees will learn tips for effective communication within formal and informal teams and across a variety of environments and relationships. Supervisors are an important source of coaching, teaching, mentoring, and support to the employee and to the team as a whole. Attendees will learn to recognize their supervisor as a resource for professional development and on-the-job learning. Attendees will also be able to identify their own communication strengths and what they bring to the team, how to develop new skills with the support of their team, and ways teams can use conflict as an opportunity for learning and trust-building. **NOTE:** this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

**Instructor:** Felicia Spiess, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

**Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.**

- September 8, 2021 9:00a-12:30p  
Click here to register: [Teams and Communication - September](#)
- October 5, 2021 9:00a-12:30p  
Click here to register: [Teams and Communication - October](#)

## Neutral Writing

Reports, progress summaries, logbook entries, and email are among the communication tools we use on a regular basis. These are also legal documents for which the writer is accountable. Clear and factual writing that is accurate, understandable, and objective is critical. Neutral writing aims to eliminate bias and inaccuracy by avoiding vague or confusing language or presenting personal opinions and conclusions as facts. Participants will practice using oral and written communication that is pertinent, complete, respectful, and easily understood.

**Instructor:** Felicia Spiess, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- October 20, 2021                      9:00a-12:30p  
Click here to register: [Neutral Writing](#)

## See Me as a Whole Person

What comes to mind when you hear the word “sexuality?” If it’s being sexually active, that’s only one aspect. Since birth, sexuality is part of our personality, influencing our self-esteem, how we perceive ourselves, how others see us, and how we interact with the world. Sexually interested or not, sexually active or not, our sexuality is part of who we are. The session will provide a working definition of “sexuality,” explore how it is an integral part of personality and focus on how we can support people to develop a positive sense of their whole selves.

**Instructor:** Pat Carney, Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

- Monday, October 18, 2021      9:00a-1:30p  
Click here to register: [See Me As A Whole Person](#)

**Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.**

## Self-Direction and the Role of the Support Broker

Please join us for an interactive discussion about the DDS Self-Direction project. The purpose of Self-Direction is to support people to expand choice and control in their life through Self- Directed Supports. This is an opportunity to hear how participants and their families can design individualized services to meet their needs through the **Participant Directed Program** or **Agency with Choice** and the role of the Support Broker.

**Instructor:** Pamela Hickey, Self-Direction Coordinator, CW region

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

October date coming soon.

## Formal Fire Safety

This curriculum is the DDS-approved Formal Fire Safety Training. This training is required for anyone who is going to be the designated Fire Safety Officer at the site. It provides participants with basic information about the causes and types of fire, fire prevention, smoke and smoke detectors, and evacuation procedures. NOTE: this training satisfies the DDS NEO requirement for state operated program staff.

\*\*\*According to regulations, agencies can coordinate internal fire safety trainings as long as they meet the below criteria: CMR115, Chapter 7.05(6)

(i) At least one staff person trained in fire safety by an approved fire safety training agency, local fire department or from the Department shall be present at every site where residential supports, day supports or 24 hour site based respite services are provided. All other staff and care providers are trained in basic fire safety.

**Instructor:** Thomas Brothers

**Location:** WebEx virtual training

- Monday, October 18, 2021 9:00a-1:30p

Click here to register: [Formal Fire Safety](#)

**Due to high demand for this training, please do not register more than 4 attendees from each agency!**

**For all DDS Learning & Development Classes:** Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.

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## Additional Learning Opportunities

### ❖ American Red Cross Water Safety course

The American Red Cross offers a free, online course, **Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers**, which you can find here: [Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers \(redcross.org\)](https://www.redcross.org)

The Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers Online Course focuses on developing an awareness of the risks of drowning and how to minimize those risks, especially for young children. This online course teaches parents and caregivers about the concepts of the circle of drowning prevention, water competency and the chain of drowning survival. It also provides guidance for applying water safety to common environments and situations where children are most at risk for drowning.

On completion of the course, you can access and print out a certificate of completion.

**Follow this link to read the DDS Health and Safety Guidelines for Water Safety:** [Health and Safety Guidelines | Mass.gov](#) Scroll down to find the link to the Water Safety Guidelines.

### ❖ Developmental Disability Direct Support Certificate Program

#### Holyoke Community College

*Are you an employee of DDS or a provider agency looking to return to school?* If you are a current employee of a DDS agency and are interested in learning about the grant opportunity for the Developmental Disabilities Direct Support Certificate program, we are currently accepting applications for summer and fall semesters.

---To get started, you'll first need to complete the application to HCC, which is fully online at the link below. Make sure to select "DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DIRECT SUPPORT" as your program of study. If you have attended college previously, you will want to have your official transcripts sent to HCC so that they can be evaluated for any classes that might transfer. If you have not taken any college courses in the past, you'll take the placement test for English as part of the application process to HCC. It's all available online now, and you'll be walked through the process once you submit the application.

<https://www.hcc.edu/admission>

Secondly, please complete the short grant application available online at the second link below. This form will ask you to have a current supervisor send a short letter of reference/ support

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directly to me via email. I am available to assist you in the application process and will be happy to respond to any of your specific questions about the grant, program, or process.

<https://forms.gle/uBPqMqfRpVBLwYhG9>

**Contact:**

**Allison M. Hrovat**

Pronouns: she, her, hers

Assistant Professor

Human Services Program Coordinator

Coordinator of Developmental Disabilities Direct Support Certificate Program

[ahrovat@hcc.edu](mailto:ahrovat@hcc.edu)

Misión: **Educ**ar. **Inspir**ar. **Conectar**.

Mission: **Educate**. **Inspire**. **Connect**.

## Quinsigamond Community College

- Students who are employed by DDS or in a DDS-funded agency pay only \$50 per course plus cost of books for each of the DSC courses.
- Students can take courses at their own pace and according to their work schedules.
- Students are required to take the QCC English placement exam.
- Students receive support, guidance, and assistance in registering and throughout the program from the Coordinator of the Direct Support Certificate Program.
- Students have access to QCC support services.
- Student applicants are required to demonstrate support from their agency supervisor.
- Students can apply credits earned through the Direct Support Certificate Program toward the next higher degree. At QCC, that would be their Associates degree.

**The Direct Support Certificate Program is a great opportunity to further your education!**

**Contact:**

**Susan Moriarty, DSC Coordinator**

[smoriarty@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:smoriarty@qcc.mass.edu) •508-854-7585

Human Services Department Quinsigamond Community College

670 West Boylston St. •Worcester, MA01606

[Direct Support Certificate Program | Quinsigamond Community College \(QCC\)](#)

**Please cancel in advance if you are unable to attend. Do not sign up for more than one waitlist as this takes away opportunity from others.**

## ❖ Online ASL and Sign Language Resources:

From Gallaudet free classes: <https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free/>

Lots of free content on this YouTube Channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvd8SHzSp07\\_U55qFI0-dDA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvd8SHzSp07_U55qFI0-dDA)

Course not free but lots of materials: <https://www.signlanguage101.com/>

Additional info and links to other apps at the bottom of this page:

<https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/learning-american-sign-language/>

There are also apps for the phone like ASL Pro and others that you can get for your phone.

***The following DDS L&D trainings are not scheduled this session:***

### Supporting a Life Beyond Trauma Part I

\*\*\*This training contains sensitive content/topics around trauma that some people may find triggering. Participant discretion advised\*\*\*

Many of the individuals we support have a history of trauma. Also, the relationships that they have with us are often some of the most important ongoing relationships they may have outside of their family. These relationships have the potential to help work through the effects of trauma in order to have a life they can enjoy. Understanding trauma history can help prevent re-traumatization by well-meaning caregivers and community service providers.

This workshop is designed to provide an understanding of the effects of trauma and learn ways to respond that promote post traumatic growth and healthy relationships. This workshop will provide participants with:

- A definition of trauma informed care
- Explanations of various types of trauma and its impact and prevalence on people with ID/D.
- Recommendations for recognizing possible displays of trauma, PTSD symptoms, and potential triggers while being mindful of behavior as a trauma response
- A description of Staff's unintended role in re-traumatization and how we can work in a trauma informed way in order to support a life beyond trauma.

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**Instructor:** Central/West Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

## **Supporting a Life Beyond Trauma Part II** (must have taken Part 1)

This training is designed to help participants use the information from Part I to guide and inform their thinking and approach with the people they support. Participants will learn how to work from a trauma informed place rooted in mindfulness. We will explore how to create a safe space through person centered tools such as universal supports, charting a life course, and more that help prevent re-traumatization, support self-determination, and begin to build pathways to supporting a life beyond trauma. Participants will also learn self-care techniques so that they are able to help mitigate work related stress in order to bring their best self to their work.

**Instructor:** Central/West Office of Learning & Development

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

## **Multimodal Communication/Basic Sign Language**

This is a Five(5)-week **introductory** course in basic sign language and multimodal communication strategies and how they are used to enhance interactions with individuals with developmental disabilities. A basic vocabulary of approximately 150 American Sign Language signs is introduced and practiced during group exercises. The emphasis is on developing skills in “key word signing” techniques as well as increasing awareness and use of a variety of modes including gestures, facial expressions, body movements and eye contact. This is a fun, interactive class that provides participants with skills that they can use immediately to improve interactions with the individuals they support. Class size is limited.

**NOTE: Participants must attend all five(5) sessions to successfully complete the course.**

**Instructor:** Deborah Sillo, SLP

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Training

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“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.”  
— Chinese Proverb

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