



COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT

PARTNER PROFILES

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CDS Changes How Staff at Emory Valley Center View Training: They're Now Requesting Classes

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The Emory Valley Center (EVC) began using the College of Direct Support (CDS) on-line learning in 2008 and our staff, unaccustomed to computer-based training, responded quite well! How well? EVC staff members who once dreaded training now request classes from the CDS. The CDS has made a tremendous difference in how EVC staff view training.

We've seen an increase in accountability for getting things done on time and the online venue is practical for our needs and allows for a broad range of content. With information at our fingertips we have a higher level of training compliance. Norm Nelson, our Supported Employment Coordinator, agrees. "The addition of Winners At Work job coach training has made training my staff more convenient. With everything online we have not had to wait for a face-to-face training on the basic principles of job coaching and supporting people in community employment settings," he said.

EVC was founded in 1955 by a group of parents who wanted a better world for their children with disabilities. The Center was later turned into a school. As the population aged, the Center transitioned to become a vocational center. Over the past 50 years EVC has evolved into a full-service agency. Located in historic Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the Center supports 140 adults in residential and day programs. EVC's Family Support Program supports 250 families in a 10-county region. Emory Valley Early Learning Center (EVELC) provides services to 368 children in day, home and community-based settings in six surrounding counties. EVC has an employee population of approximately 270, primarily direct support professionals (DSPs) and teachers, working in 30-plus job sites locally.

EVC recognizes that each person has



the potential and power to make a positive difference in another's life. No matter how seemingly small or great, the contribution of each employee builds toward a meaningful life for every person supported by EVC. We recognize the need for consistency and effective communication in all we do. CDS has provided this consistency in becoming a major part of our blended approach to training as well as facilitating other communications needs.

At EVC, we have taken a top-down approach to the implementation of the CDS. All employees, including executives, directors, mid-level managers, front-line supervisors, DSPs, and family-based participants are assigned classes on the CDS on a regular basis. We are using the online site to support a teacher pilot program for our EVELC, and we're looking at further implementation of training for our children's programs.

The CDS is appropriate for our DSP population and EVC staff feels it is very valuable. Ray Raby, a Direct Support Professional since 1998, had this to say about the CDS training: "After many years in the field, working in various roles with the company, I am surprised by how rewarding the CDS online training experience is. I have access to the website at all times. Online training has helped us be a more quality team here at EVC."

While EVC takes its blended approach to training, we are decidedly reaping the benefits of online learning -- not only with our

DSPs, but those who support and provide direction to DSPs. We recognize that many topics require classroom instruction, but EVC uses the CDS platform to supplement classroom training. For example, EVC's Policies and Procedures Overview, provided during New Hire Orientation, is presented in summary online and assigned at time of hire and annually to promote employee understanding and compliance of policies and procedures as well as mission, vision and values. EVC's Survey Course on Documentation provides further instruction on why and how to complete goals, health, and safety documentation as a complement to on-the-job training.

In 2008, EVC fully implemented and mandated CDS training agency wide,

requiring all new hires to take initial training online and tenured staff to complete annual refresher courses online. EVC's first year of using the CDS for the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) core trainings went extremely well. In

the subsequent two years, EVC utilized the CDS's survey function and posted additional trainings by tapping into DIDD resources, EVC Human Resources, Nursing, and the Agency Quality Team. Partnering with subject-matter experts, EVC's training department develops vital site-specific health and safety trainings for posting on the CDS.

In 2009 and 2010 EVC used CDS's survey function to obtain employee feedback on job satisfaction and safety concerns. In 2010, EVC purchased a software tool to aid in the presentation of online training. The software provides a "look" and functionality similar to the CDS format. This software further allowed us to develop our site-specific trainings and post them independently with ease of viewing for our employees. Each new hire DSP is assigned 25 hours of combined CDS (DIDD and EVC) training as well as overviews of policy and regulations. We were among the first in our region to utilize a mentoring tool, assigned

to supervisors and new hires within 3-4 months after they've completed required training, to assist them in transferring learning to the job site.

The bulk of our training is geared toward DSPs. This year, we want our entire population to turn its attention toward mission, vision and values. Our company mission "to enhance the lives of children, adults and families in an environment that promotes independence, dignity and respect" is posted at all sites and published online for every employee to see. These elements will serve as catalysts for the positive changes we see in the future of our organization. Our CDS goals for 2011 include utilization of the College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM) and Service Recipient specific

training. EVC has a beautifully diverse population of people served and employees. In 2011 we plan to further recognize our culture of diversity utilizing CDS online.

EVC is grateful to the CDS for providing such a benefit to people with disabili-

ties and for continued technical support and guidance. CDS continues to make relevant trainings available to us as we continue to develop our own. We look forward to a continued relationship as our new culture continues to evolve. As well, we appreciate the support from DIDD in the implementation of online training here at Emory Valley Center.

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– Ray Raby, DSP

About CDS Partner Profiles

CDS Partner Profiles highlights the activities of state and local organizations that have integrated the College of Direct Support into efforts to elevate the preparation, performance, status, and compensation of direct support professionals (DSPs) and frontline supervisors and managers (FSMs). The purpose of the the CDS Partner Profiles is to identify and describe a variety of innovative and exemplary initiatives and activities into which the CDS has been integrated. CDS Partner Profiles are written by leaders of organizations that are actually engaged in these efforts.

College of Direct Support (CDS)
www.collegeofdirectsupport.com

The College of Direct Support (CDS) and its companion College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM) are internet-delivered multimedia, competency-based training curricula for DSPs and FSMs supporting individuals with disabilities.

The CDS is available for review at: collegeofdirectsupport.com

For more information about the CDS, contact Bill Tapp at bill@collegeofdirectsupport.com or Donna Kosak at donna@collegeofdirectsupport.com or call toll-free, 877-353-2767

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