

Impact of the Pandemic on the DSP Workforce



DLTSS Training Call

Presenters:

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- *Deyanelin Galvez, Direct Support Professional*

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Training Objectives

- Understanding the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Experience
 - Current Reality and Ongoing Crisis based on the National Core Indicators (NCI) Staff Stability Survey and US Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Highlighting Current Research on the Direct Support Workforce During the Pandemic
- Hear from Direct Support Professionals about their experiences during the pandemic

Understanding the Direct Support Professional Experience

Current Reality and Ongoing Crisis

Valerie Bradley and Joseph Macbeth

The State of the Direct Support Professional Workforce

- What is the size of the DSP workforce?
- Recruitment and turnover challenges.
- Wages, relation to minimum wage and wage growth.
- Who makes up this workforce?

Who Are Direct Support Professionals?



The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics: Size of the DSP Workforce

4.5 Million - Direct Care Workers in the United States



2.3 million home care workers



721,000 residential care aides



581,000 nursing assistants in nursing homes



>1.3 million DSPs

*National Core Indicators
Staff Stability Report

Source: PHI. 2019. "Workforce Data Center." <https://phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.

The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics: DSP Workforce Demand

According to PHI, due to projected job growth and job separation, there will be **8.2 Million** direct care job openings between 2018 and 2028





National Core Indicators: Vacancy Rates – Point-In-Time

- Considering the projected number of openings in the DSP workforce, vacancy rate findings illustrate the challenges ahead:
 - Vacancy rates for full-time positions ranged from **3.3% to 14.7%** with a National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey average of **11.9%**.
 - Vacancy rates for part-time positions ranged from **5.8% to 23.3%** with a National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey average of **18.1%**.

Source: National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey. Data from 4,400 Service Providers located in 26 states and DC. Estimated 200,000 DSPs represented by the data.





National Core Indicators - Turnover

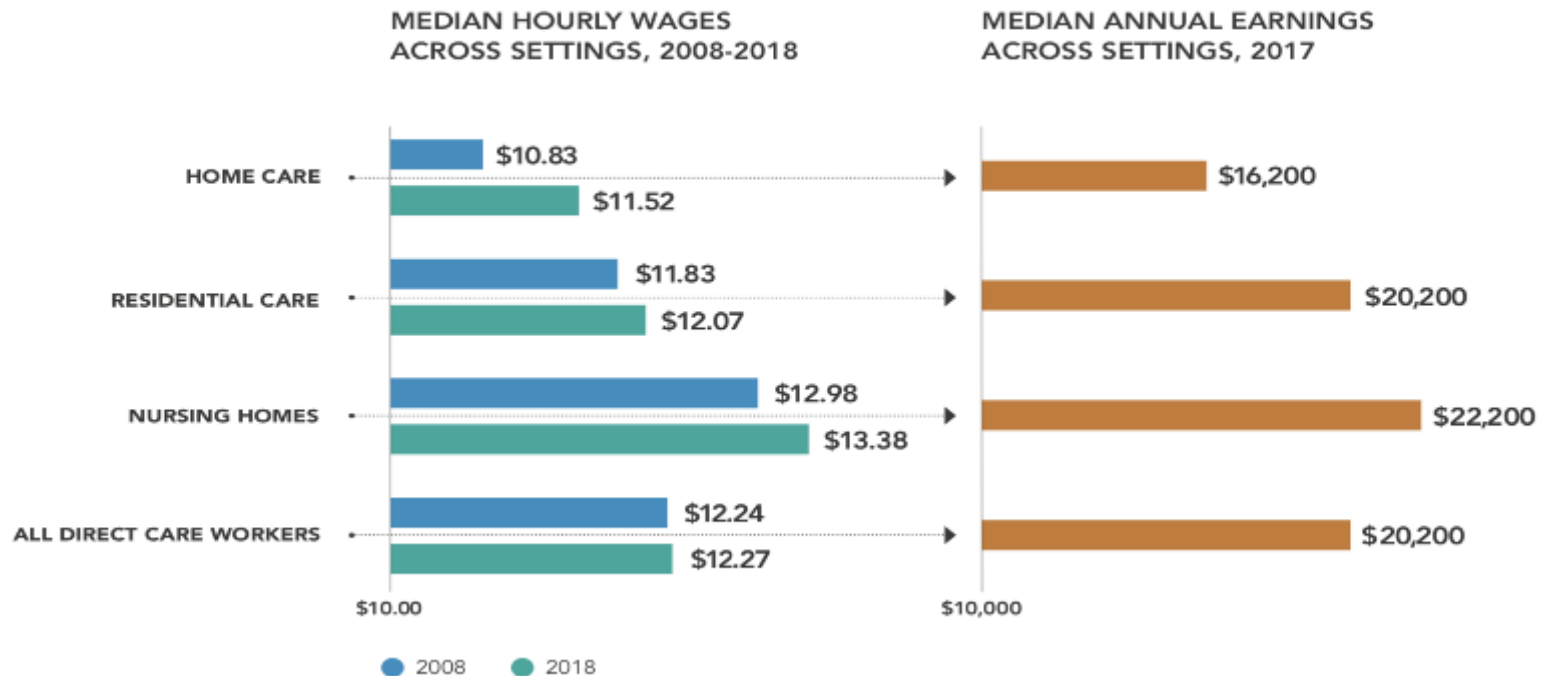
- Across states, the turnover rate for DSPs in 2018 ranged from **30.7%** to **62.7%**;
- The weighted average **turnover rate was 51.3%**.
- 10 states reported >50% turnover rate.

Tenure among DSPs who separated as of December 31, 2018:

- 34.7% Less than 6 months
- 20.3% 6-12 Months
- 14.3% 12-24 months
- 7.3% 24-36 months
- 12.1% 36 months or more

Source: National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey. Data from 4,400 Service Providers located in 26 states and DC. Estimated 200,000 DSPs represented by the data.

A Standard Occupational Code: Wages Still Lag Behind— 2008-2018



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Division of Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). 2019. *May 2008 to May 2018 National Industry-Specific Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates*. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrsci.htm>; Ruggles, Steven, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek. 2019. *IPUMS USA: Version 9.0*. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, University of Minnesota. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0>; analysis by PHI (July 8, 2019).



National Core Indicators – Hourly wages by service type

HOURLY WAGES BY SERVICE TYPES



\$12.57
for DSPs providing
residential supports



\$12.00
for DSPs providing
in-home supports



\$12.90
for DSPs providing
non-residential supports

PROPORTION OF AGENCIES PAYING AT OR ABOVE MINIMUM WAGE

- Within \$.50 above or below minimum wage: 1.4%
- Between \$.50 and 20% above minimum wage: 9.9%
- Between 21% and 40% of above minimum wage: 42.8%
- Between 41% and 60% above minimum wage: 31.8%
- Between 61% and 100% above minimum wage: 14.1%

Source: National Core Indicators 2018 Staff Stability Survey. Data from 4,400 Service Providers located in 26 states and DC. Estimated 200,000 DSPs represented by the data.





Additional Data Available

- Wages as a percentage of state minimum wage
 - Health Care Benefits and any eligibility requirements, including dental/vision coverage offered
 - Bonuses paid to employees
 - Employer sponsored retirement benefits offered/available
 - Other benefits- tuition reimbursement, flex spending accounts, health incentives
- Go to: www.nationalcoreindicators.org

An Increasingly Diverse Homecare Workforce

An Increasingly **Diverse** Home Care Workforce

The typical home care worker is a woman in her 40s—many are immigrants and/or women of color. The demographics are changing.



87%

WOMEN

50%

Public Assistance

60%

PEOPLE OF COLOR

47

MEDIAN AGE

29%

Immigrants

SOURCE: PHI (2018). For detailed citations and information about PHI's research methodology, please contact info@phinational.org.

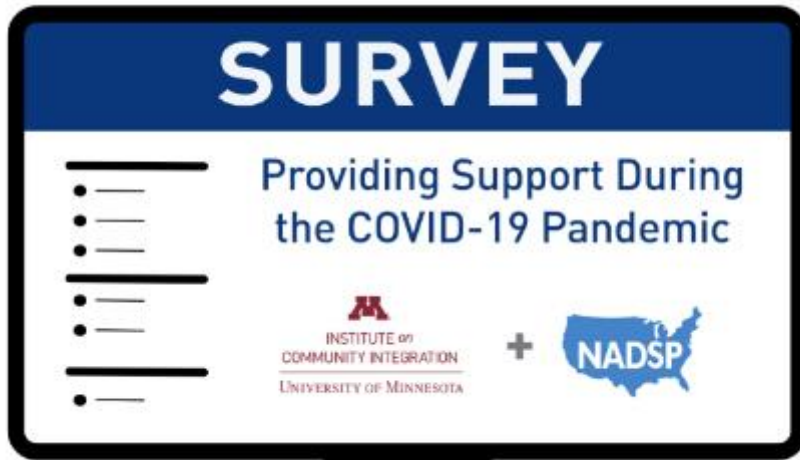
How would the DSP workforce experiences change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Highlighting Current Research on the Direct Support Workforce

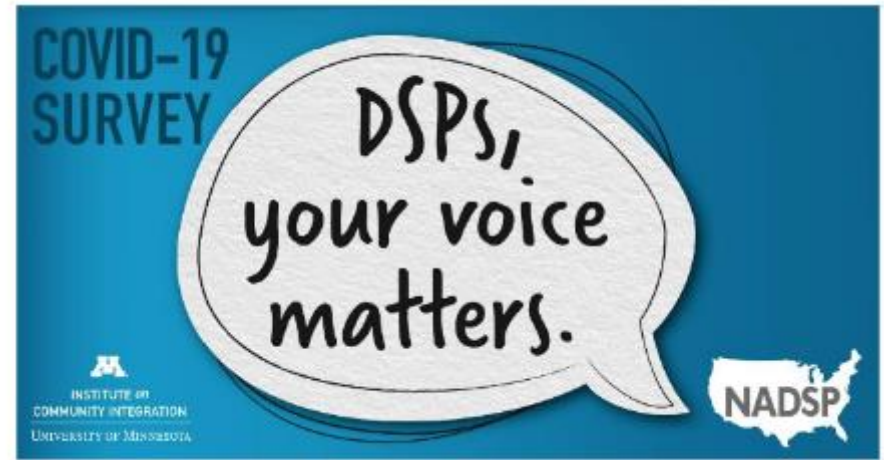


*Amy Hewitt,
Institute on
Community
Integration,
University of
Minnesota*

Survey Distribution



Initial survey,
March-April 2020
(8,914 completed surveys)



6-month follow-up survey,
Nov '20-Jan '21
(8,846 completed surveys)

Survey Recruitment

Convenience sample targeting DSPs

- Partner distribution
 - National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals
 - National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services
 - The Arc
 - Managed Care Organizations
 - Executive Directors of Service Providers
 - Projects of National Significance (PNS) partners
 - Provider trade associations at state level
 - Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD)
 - Many others
- Multiple posts on social media
- Targeted emails

Who Was in the Sample? (1 of 4)

Length of employment

	Initial	6-month
Less than 6 months:	8%	7%
6 – 12 months:	11%	9%
12 – 24 months:	12%	12%
36+ months:	69%	62%



Who Was in the Sample? (2 of 4)

Location

	Initial	6-month
Agency/facility sites:	60%	57%
Individual/family home:	38%	31%
Day programs:	17%	8%
Other:	8%	4%

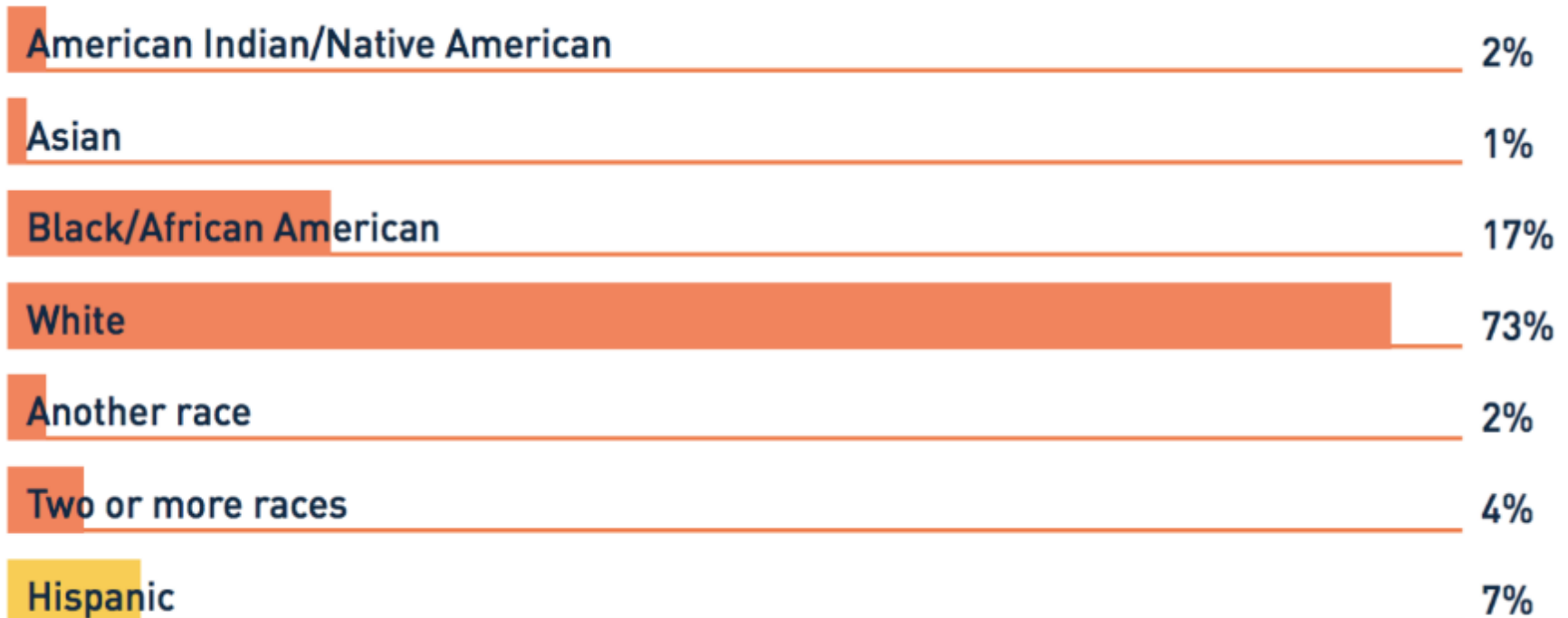


(46% of DSPs worked in more than one location)

Who Was in the Sample? (3 of 4)

Race and Ethnicity

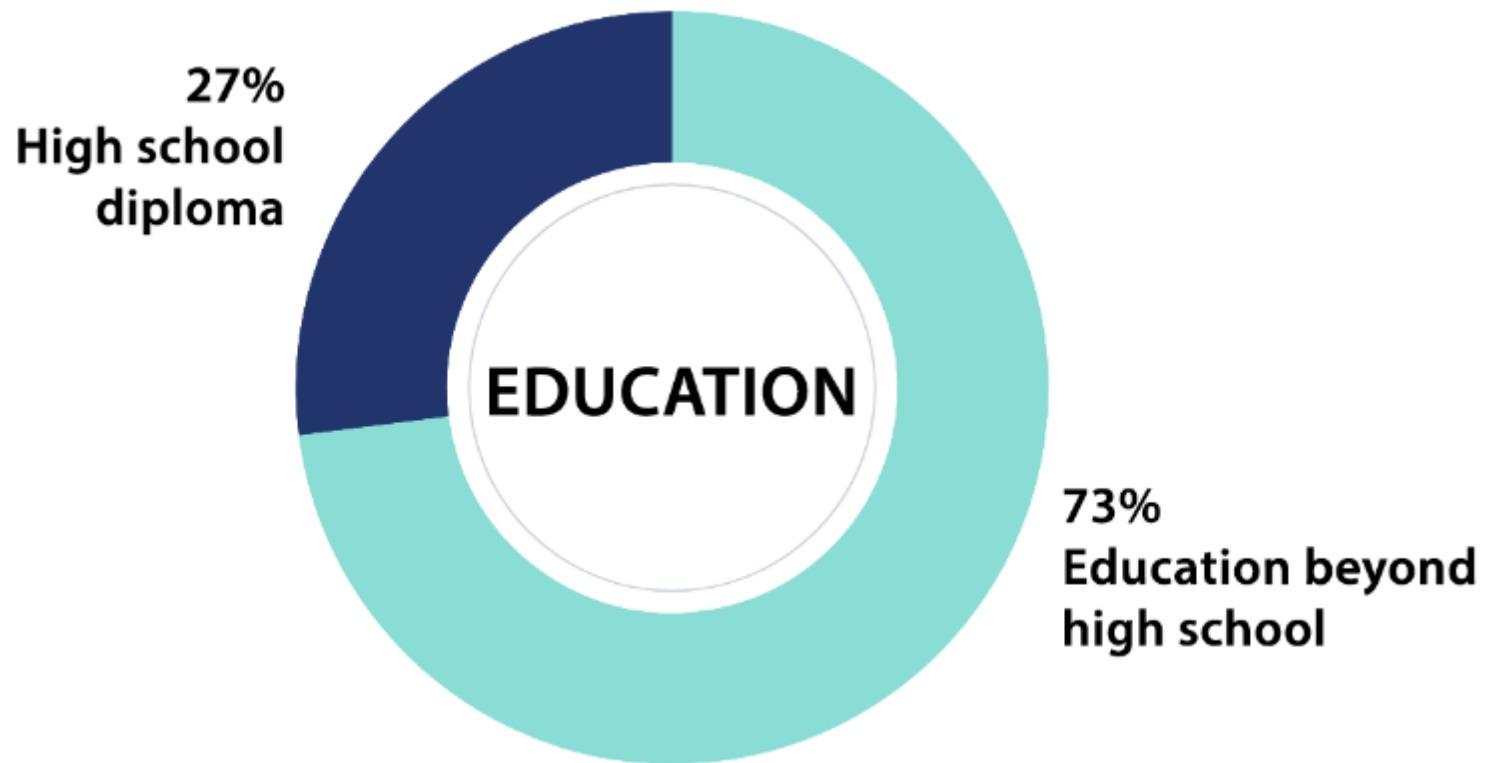
6-month survey



83% female **Median age 45 years**

Who Was in the Sample? (4 of 4)

6 month survey



Identified as an Essential Worker?

In both the initial and 6-month follow-up surveys, 97% self-identified as essential workers.

Essential workers *“conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continue critical infrastructure operations.”*

– U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security

97%
essential
workers



Institutional v. HCBS Worker

Direct Support Professional in Institutional Setting



Direct Support Professional in Home and Community Based Setting



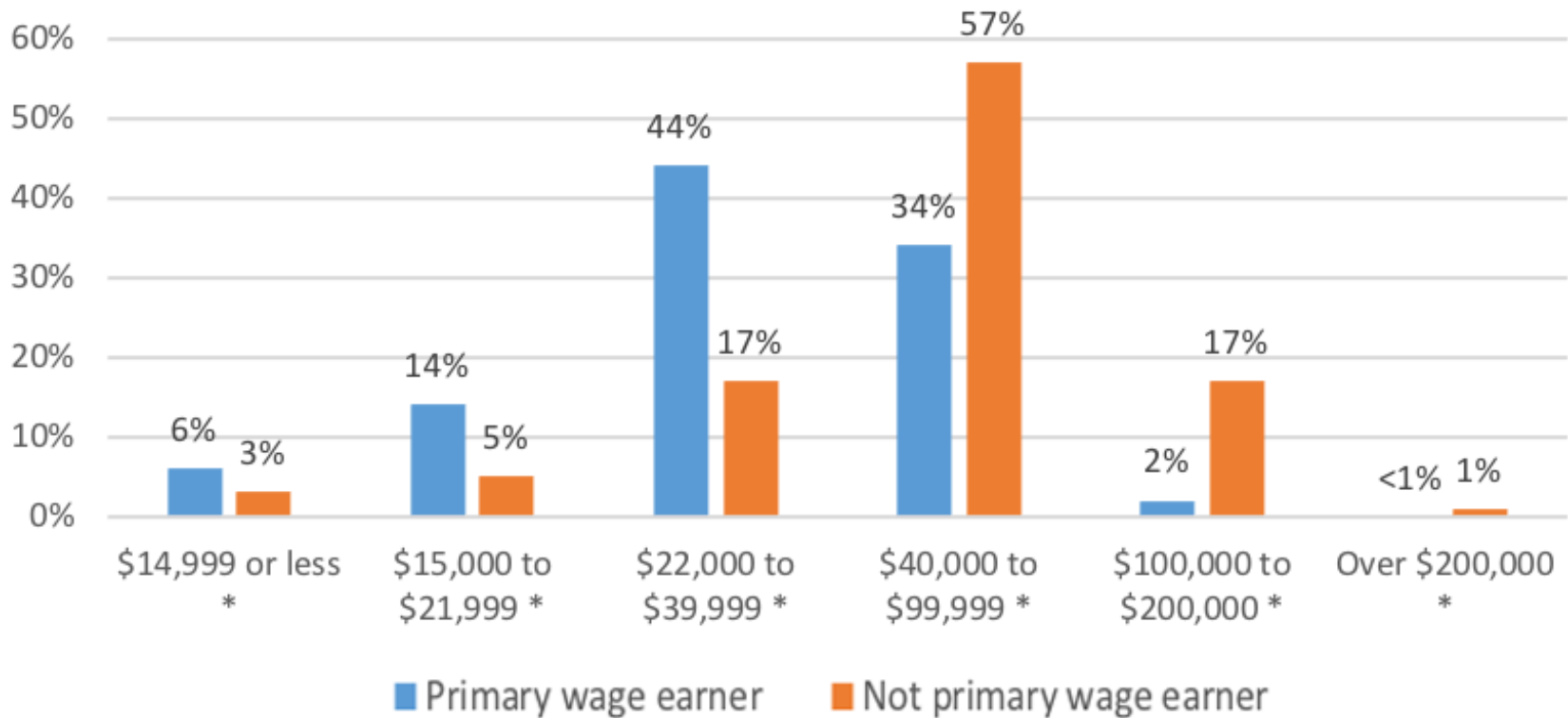
Wages

	Initial	6-month
Reported as primary wage earners:	74%	70%
Mean wage on 1/1/20:	\$13.63	\$13.92
ARE getting paid more during COVID:	24%	30%
– received \$1 per hour more:	19%	11%
– received \$1.01 – \$2.00/hour more:	45%	48%
– received \$2.01- \$3.00/hour more:	15%	14%
– Received \$3.01+/hour more:	22%	6%
– Received a lump sum bonus	NA	21%
NOT getting paid more during COVID:	76%	70%



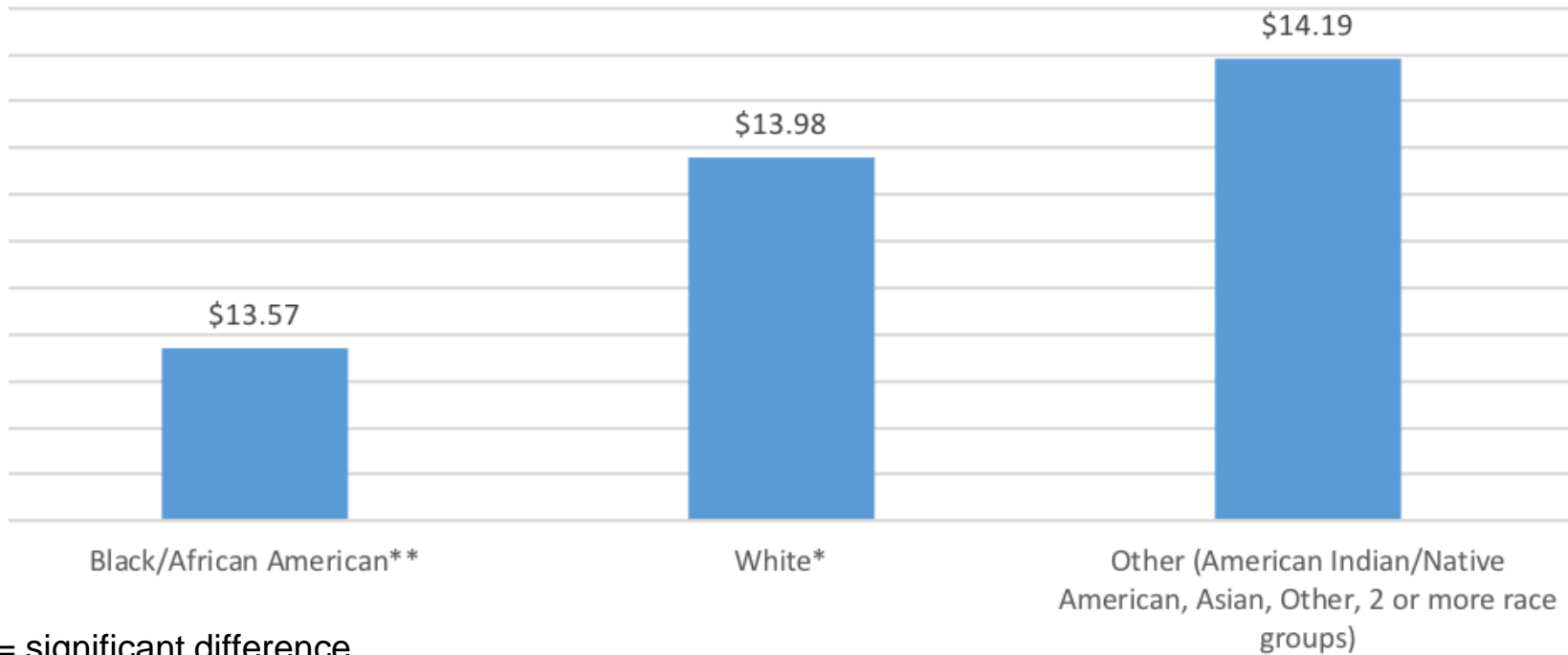
Household Income

6-month survey



Wages by Race Group

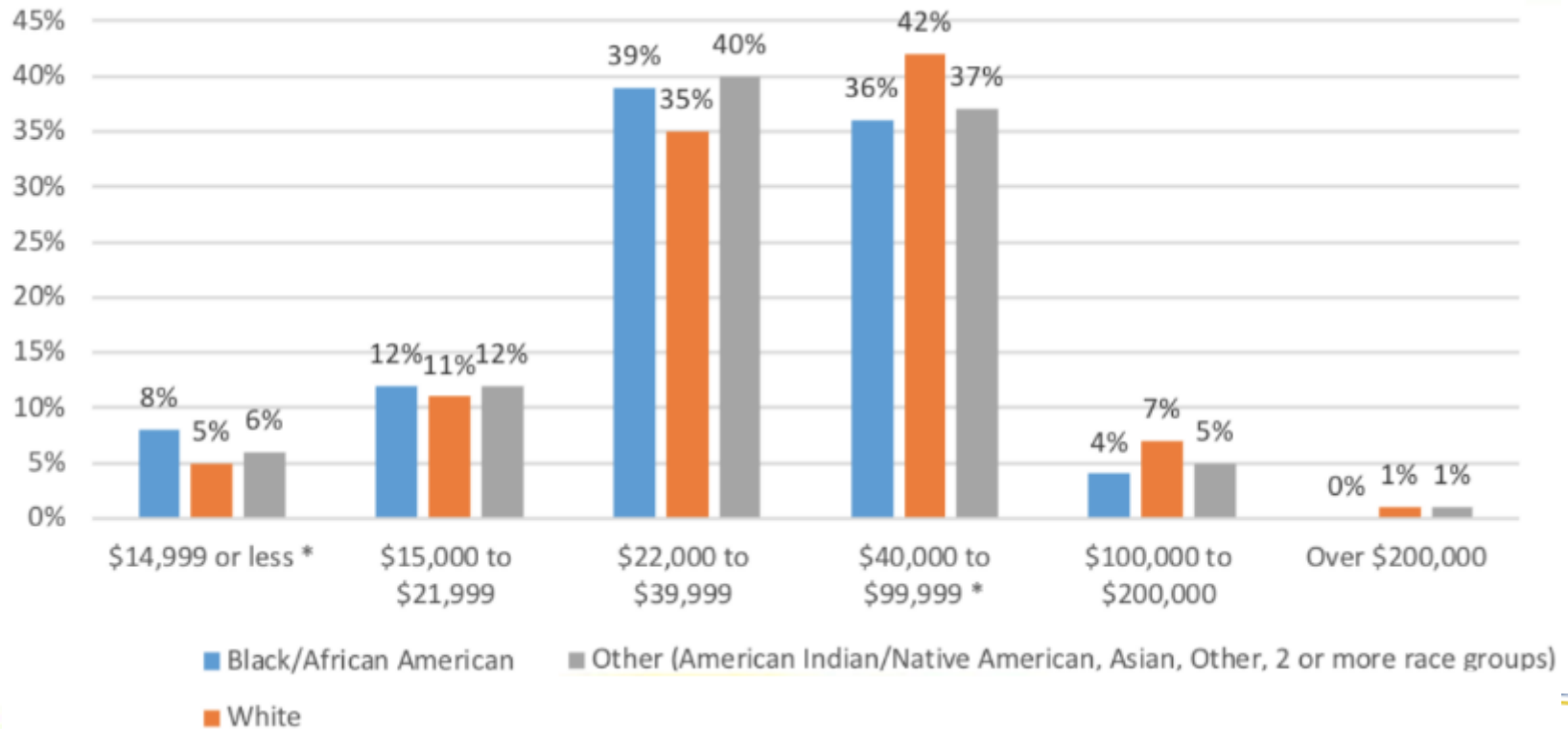
6-month survey



* = significant difference

Wages Cont.

Annual income by race



Schedule Changes During the Pandemic

	Initial	6-month
work more hours per week	34%	44%
work the same hours per week	33%	24%
work less hours per week	18%	12%
work different shifts	30%	35%
work in different settings	29%	28%
additional responsibilities/different roles	2%	43%
furloughed/laid off/unemployed/facility closed	2%	6%
working remotely/telehealth now	2%	12%
lived/lived in residence		3%

Schedule Changes During the Pandemic – 6 month follow up

The locations in which I work have been
adequately staffed

55%

If staff where I work display symptoms of
COVID-19, they are guaranteed paid time off

51%

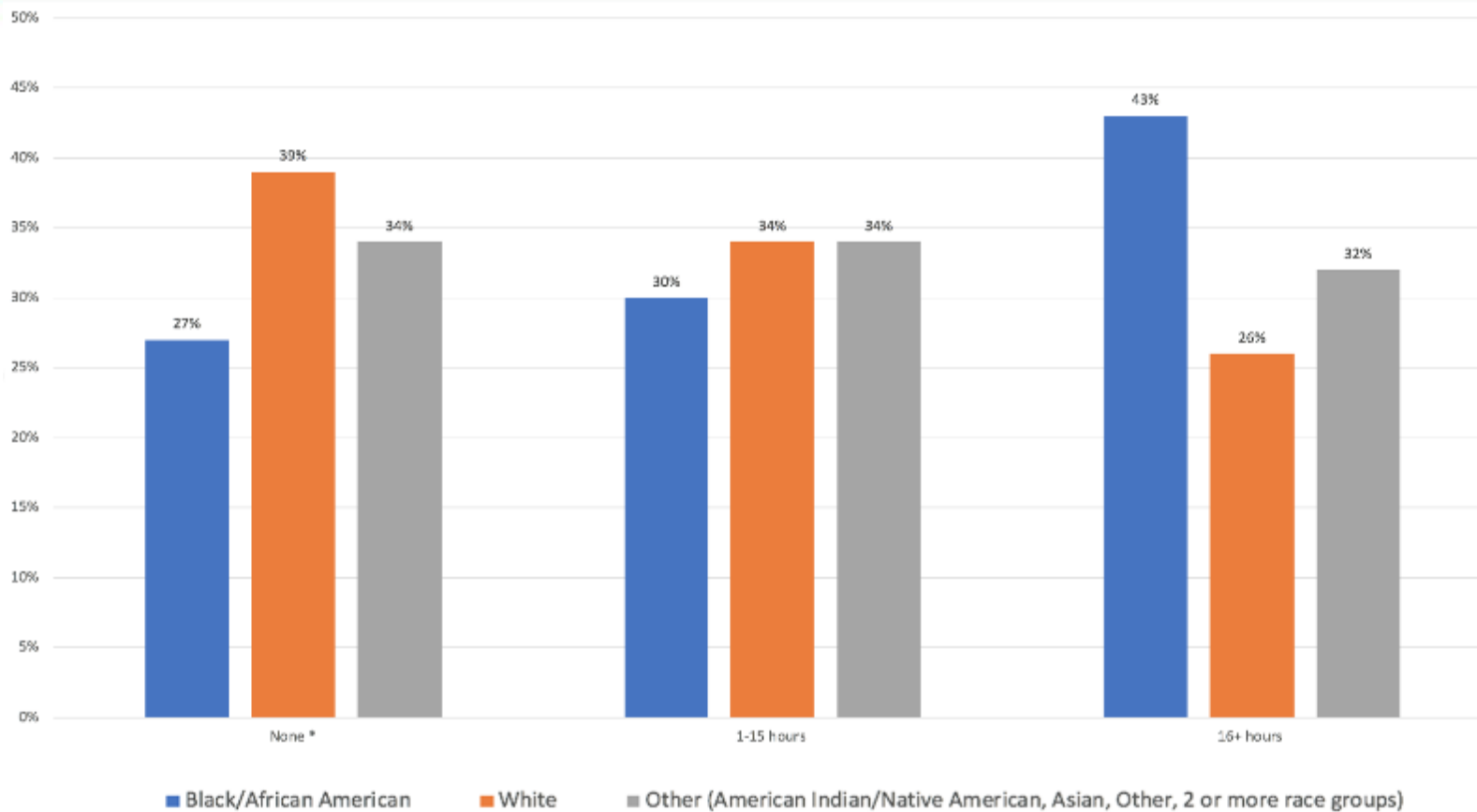


Additional Hours Worked Per Week

	Initial	6-month
No additional hours:	45%	36%
1-15 additional hours:	29%	33%
16-30 additional hours:	10%	14%
31+ additional hours:	15%	17%



Additional Hours Worked by Race



DSP Short Staffing During COVID-19

	Initial	6-month
More short-staffed:	26%	50%
Equally short staffed:	34%	28%
Not short staffed:	40%	22%



New DSP Hires & Training

	Initial	6-month
• Hired during pandemic:	22%	46%
• Typical orientation & preservice training:	29%	30%
• No typical orientation & preservice training:	27%	17%
• Typical + additional training:	45%	53%



DSPs Who Left Jobs

	Initial	6-month
Know a DSP who left due to COVID-19:	42%	55%
Reasons for leaving:		
– childcare issues:	24%	27%
– fear of becoming infected:	33%	20%
– tested positive for COVID-19:	8%	13%
– fear infecting others:	13%	7%
– other:	32%	4%
– family reasons	---	18%
– quarantined:	---	17%
– furloughed/laid off/facility closed	3%	9%



--- = data not available

DSPs Who Supported People with COVID-19

	Initial	6-month
0 people:	91%	59%
1-2 people:	5%	18%
3-5 people:	2%	12%
6+ people:	2%	---
6-10 people:	---	6%
11+ people:	---	5%



People Supported with COVID-19 Diagnosis by Setting Type



Agency/facility sites



Community employment sites



Family/individual homes

Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

	Initial	6-month
Gloves:	84%	79%
Homemade face masks:	54%	27%
Medical-grade face masks:	48%	36%
Purchased fabric masks:	---	36%
Home-repair face masks:	10%	---
Disposable/paper masks:	---	63%
Goggles/safety eyewear:	---	21%
Face shields:	---	43%
Gowns:	---	34%
Other:	16%	---



Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Cont.

PPE by setting type



Agency/facility sites



Community employment sites



Family/individual homes

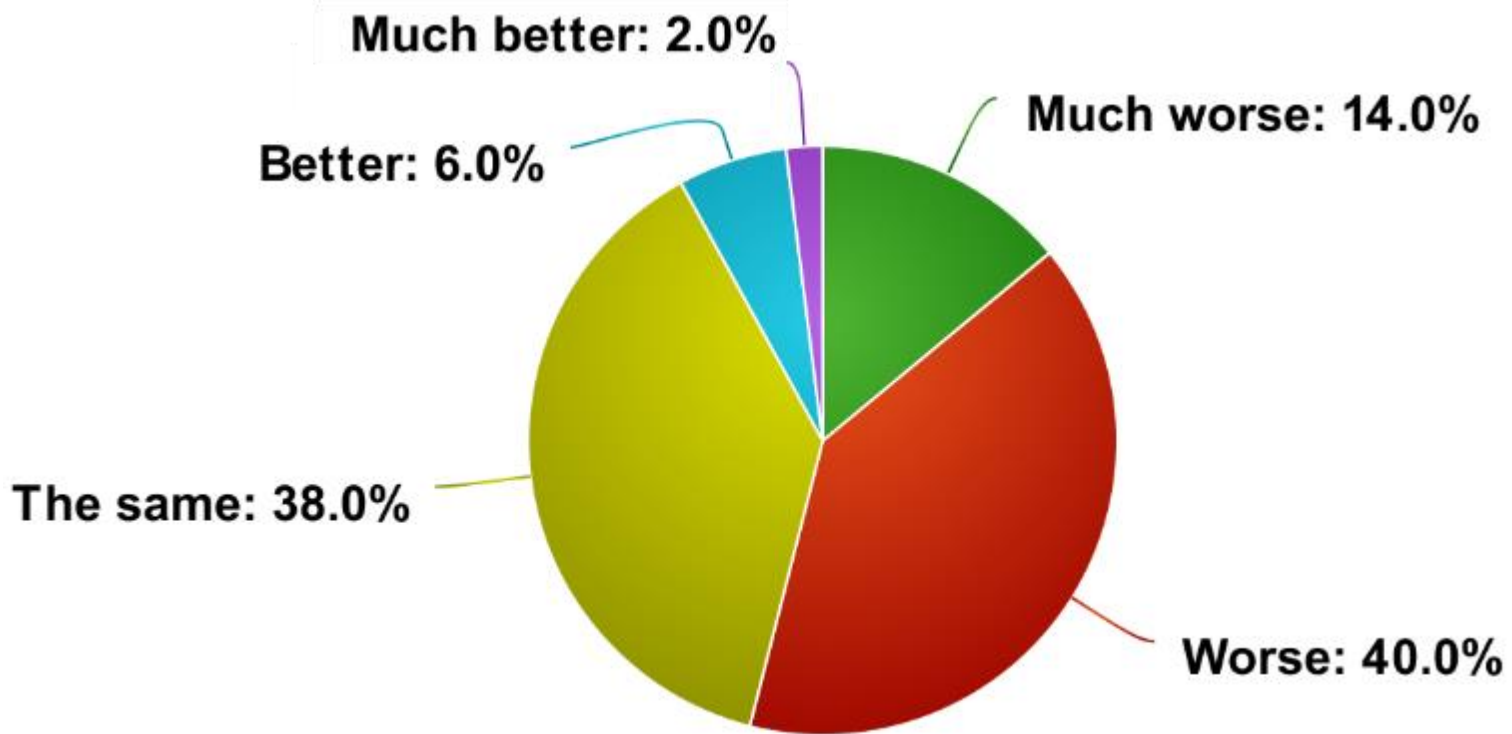
Safety Measures Put in Place

	Initial	6-month
Training on health and safety:	67%	75%
Posted signs on proper handwashing:	72%	70%
Posted signs on social distancing:	59%	64%
Taking employee temperatures:	66%	72%
Access to COVID-19 testing:	10%	36%
Taking client temperatures:	---	69%
Restrictions on visitors:	---	69%
Social distancing enforced:	---	53%
Other:	10%	2%



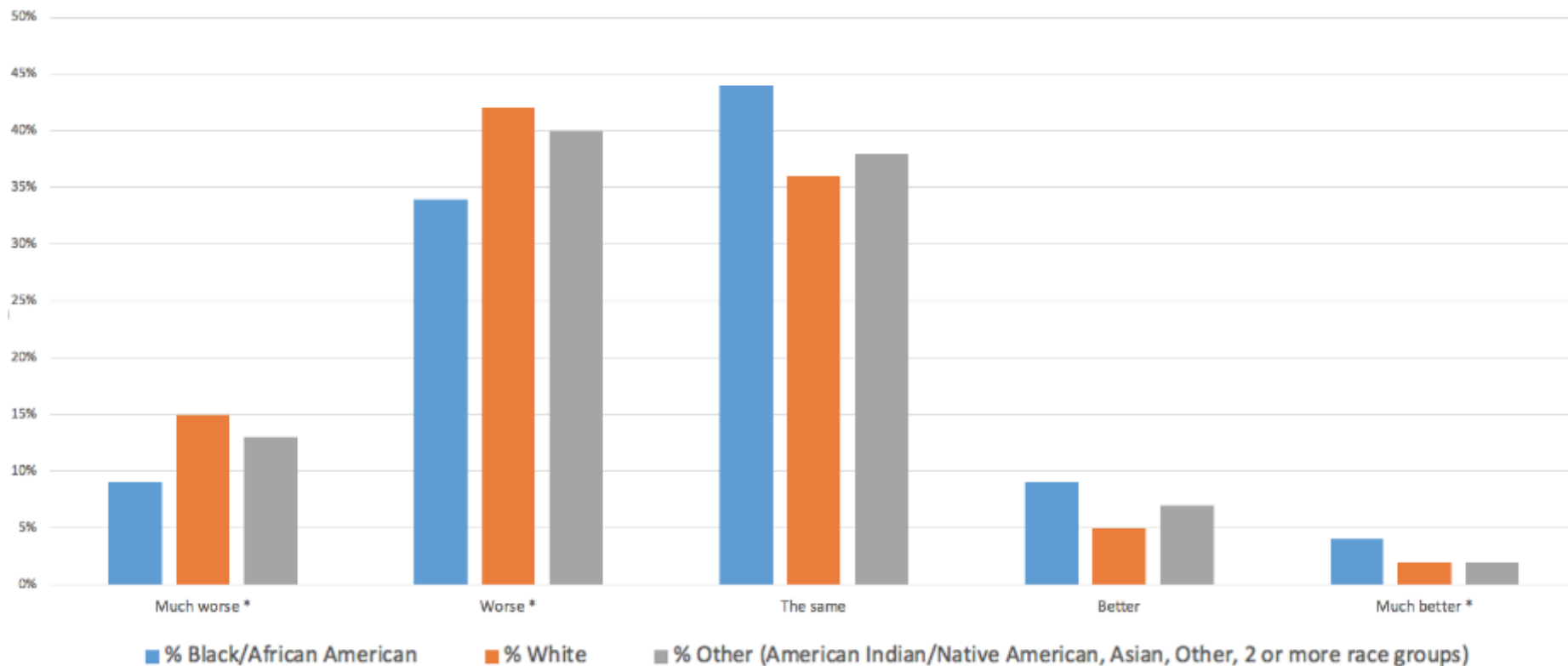
Participant Work Life Status

6-month survey



Participant Work Life Status by Race

6-month survey



Observations of the Effects on People Supported



How Well Did the People You Support Follow Social Distancing?

	Initial	6-month
Good, very good:	60%	58%
Fair:	24%	28%
Poor:	15%	14%
Had the space and ability to practice social distancing:	---	76%



How often are people you support allowed to visit with family and friend in person?

	Initial	6-month
Never:	64%	27%
Seldom:	16%	29%
Sometimes:	10%	26%
Often:	10%	18%



Challenges for People Supported

	Initial	6-month
difficulty addressing dietary issues	15%	14%
difficulty addressing pain management	5%	6%
other health issues	---	11%
decreased exercise	---	56%
missed going out into the community	---	79%
increased behavior issues	52%	48%
increased mood swings and/or depression	57%	51%
more anxiety	---	52%
boredom	80%	71%
loneliness	48%	46%
education concerns	---	9%

DSP Concerns (1 of 5)

"It is very difficult to work during the COVID-19 pandemic because I am very scared for my health, as well as the individuals I support. I wear a face mask every day, but still continue to be concerned about the virus."



DSP Concerns (2 of 5)

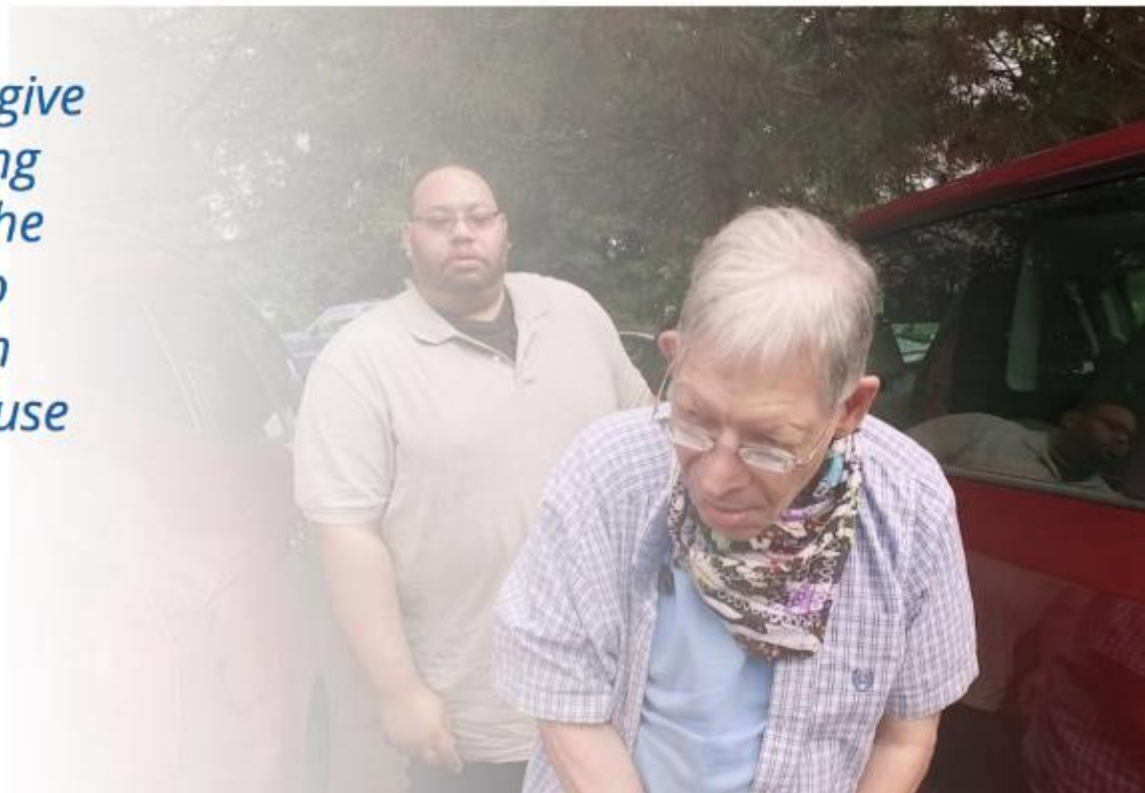
"I intentionally practice gratitude throughout each day. I reduced the hours I work, only working five days a week. On my weekends, I allow myself the luxury of naps and no morning alarms. I also practice growth and development, both professionally through opportunities offered by my employer, and personally, by improving my diet. I limit my intake of news and social media."



DSP Concerns (3 of 5)

"Come into the homes and give us a hand instead of working from home. We could use the extra help. It wouldn't be so exhausting. We cannot even take a needed day off because there is no one to cover."

"Pay a fair wage and not a one-time bonus."



DSP Concerns (4 of 5)

"[Employers] provided all necessary PPE supplies for the staff to maintain a safe continuity of care for its individuals."

"Gave me a bonus which did make me feel a little more appreciated."

"My employer has not done much at all, unfortunately. Give us face masks is the only thing they've really done."



DSP Concerns (5 of 5)

"I have picked up many hours with people who are COVID+, don't know if I get paid more for it, GOT COVID myself, and am now out of work without any kind of pay."

"Lack of personal life, stressed right out, triple the paperwork. Makes me regret my career decision."



Moving Forward - Considerations for the DSP Workforce

1. Comprehensive, organized and funded response plans at national and state levels for additional waves of COVID-19 and future pandemics
2. Access to childcare
3. Wage increases for essential workers commensurate with the increased level of exposure
4. Access to career ladders that lead to skill and compensation
5. Create systems level pipelines and incentives to enter profession
6. Increased training on health and safety
7. Professional recognition and wage equity for direct support

Moving Forward - Considerations for People with IDD

1. Prioritization for people with IDD for vaccination
2. Ongoing education and training on handwashing, hygiene, and social distancing
3. Ensure access to technology that allows social interaction with others
4. Develop evidence-based strategies for teaching people with IDD to use telehealth
5. Review of policies to ensure person- and family-centered practices with informed decision-making regarding social contacts during a pandemic



WHAT'S NEXT

COVID-19 follow up surveys
12 month – May 2021

Moving Forward – An Additional Consideration for the DSP Workforce from CMS

States may temporarily increase HCBS rates to account for the extra time-off needed by DSPs to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. For more information please refer to the presentation provided at the CMS COVID-19 Medicaid and CHIP All State Call held on June 29, 2021, available here: <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/cmcs-all-state-call-20210629.pdf>.

DSP STORIES

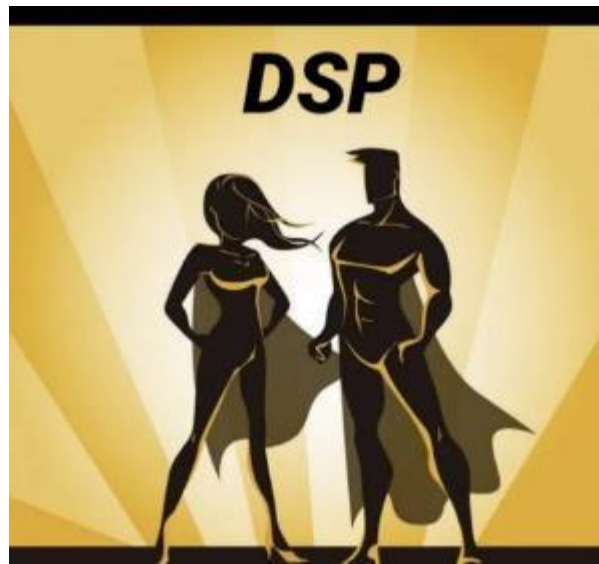


Heroes with an Invisible Cape

Deyanelin Galvez

Overview

- Being a DSP. We are heroes with invisible capes.
- Once we connect with the person, our dedication to them has no comparison.
- More than ever we had to put aside any personal challenges.
- It has been hard to not have answers.
- Sharing personal challenges DSPs, including myself, faced during this pandemic.



Background of the DSPs Interviewed

- The stories from 6 amazing Direct Support Professionals.
- They were selected to share their stories due to their dedication to being the best DSPs they can be.
- As a Mentor for the agency I work for, I've personally worked closely with these amazing ladies.
- Here are their stories.

Deyanelin Galvez (1 of 2)

- Being a DSP doesn't mean just providing support, but also receiving support. My work with T.W.
- The personal trauma when the virus hit close to home.
- Our lives changed in an instant.
- Telehealth gave us some help and hope.



Deyanelin Galvez (2 of 2)

- Benefits of telehealth, and harsh realities when returning to face-to-face support.
- Our new normal in our communities, and the fears that come from people wearing masks.
- The desire for human touch we all feel, and the reality that we must remain distanced and enforce the rules.



Rosa F (1 of 2)

- How things changed so quickly, my work with C.C.
- Faith, recovery and never losing sight of the needs of the person I support even while personally fighting the virus.
- Recognizing the impact of the loss of services for C.C., DSPs step back up to the call.

CARING

Rosa F (2 of 2)

- The impact of the shut down on C.C. and stepping in with telehealth.
- Challenges of returning to face-to-face supports for both the DSP and the people we support.
- Helping people understand the need to continue to take precautions.
- My life is not the same.



Sixta M

- I love being a DSP, I do not do it for the money. The care and love that you feel for the person you support over the years seeing their growth and progress is so rewarding.
- For 15 years I worked with the person I support (J.M.), but the virus placed a hold on this support when the family wanted to stay in a bubble.
- I continue to provide services as a DSP to others, but I can't help but think and wonder how is she really doing.
- Everything is so uncertain now. This has really been a setback in the progress of those we support.



Maria P (1 of 2)

- This has all been so unexpected. When everything shut down, I had my husband and my children safe at home. So, I kept going to work. I had to work, the person I support (C.T.) needed me.
- My life has completely changed. I was infected by the coronavirus after a coworker came back positive. I panicked, now what?
- My husband, kids, and the person I support needed me, that's what would give me strength to fight. C.T. was affected by all this, I was out of work for a month she would ask every day for me. She would cry every day when I would not arrive and ask is Maria coming tomorrow?

.

Maria P (2 of 2)

- I was having a hard time talking, I could not speak to C.C. and that was hard for her to understand as well . As soon as I was able to speak again without having difficulty breathing, we would talk on the phone and that helped her a lot. She quickly got happy and kept asking me Maria when are you coming? I would say soon.
- I still feel afraid, but I had to return to work. The person I support needs me in her life.
- We DSPs are essential to help people achieve the life they want to have and to feel loved and respected.



Melissa H (1 of 2)

- I have been a DSP for approximately 8.5 years. This pandemic has changed who I am and how I react to situations. I am a mother of two young boys and a wife to an essential worker (hospital chef and firefighter). We realized how dangerous my husband's job had become.
- This has changed how we live at home, and the pandemic has had negative affects on my children.
- Due to these and other family challenges means exhaustion is an understatement, but it does NOT define me.

Melissa H (2 of 2)

- Since this pandemic has started, I focused on the positive. Being a DSP (and a special education teacher), has been the most rewarding experience for me these last few months. My fellow DSPs and I created Zoom supports, workshops, clubs, and outlets.
- Speaking with many participants through these last few months I have heard comments such as "I love CFS virtual supports", "The events really helped me stay connected and feel cared for" and "It's amazing how we are from all over NY and NJ, but we can all be here together."
- As things start to slowly reopen we have thoughts of worry, anxiety but joy and excitement as well. I am grateful for the so many amazing people I have met along the way.

AMAZING

- ASTONISHING •INCREDIBLE
- ASTOUNDING •MARVELOUS
- AWESOME •STUPENDOUS
- FABULOUS •UNBELIEVABLE
- FANTASTIC •WONDERFUL

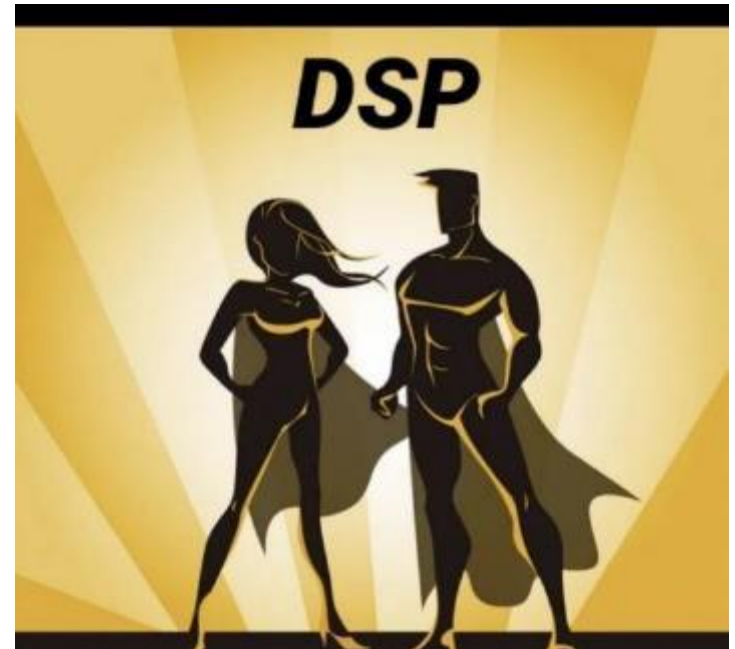
Arlene B



- DSPs are people too who had to deal with all the fall out from the pandemic, lost wages, lost family and friends.
- As for the young lady I support (J.R.) it was extremely difficult for her because she was pregnant during the quarantine. Fear of going out into the community when needed and contracting the virus was a constant trigger for her anxiety. She had to follow up on her pregnancy weekly and every time she had to go out, she was afraid.
- With the birth of her healthy baby girl on July 8th it has helped her move away from the fear of the virus. As her DSP, I encouraged her to write in her journal. Listen and watch motivational videos on YouTube. I encourage her to walk around the community to exercise and feel better about herself. Even though she has her daily struggles she continues to try to push forward.

Please Remember. . .

- DSPs care about the people they support
- DSPs are more than “essential,” they are critical to the well-being of people with disabilities
- DSPs care about the work they do and are proud of their professionalism
- DSPs deserve respect and recognition including increased pay and career opportunities



Questions?

Feedback

Please complete a brief (7 question) survey to help CMS monitor the quality and effectiveness of our presentations.

Please use the survey link to access the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DSP-Pandemic-Impact>

(The survey link CAN'T be opened within the webinar platform)

WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK!

