



ELEVATING THE SPECTRUM
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

Life Enrichment (Residential) DSP - Job Description

Job Description for: Direct Support Professional	Start Date: 2022
Reports to: Residential Program Manager	Section: Life Enrichment – Residential Program
Starting Wage Range: \$20-\$22/hour	Term/Classification: Full or Part-time, year-round, Hourly, non-exempt

About Ascendigo: Ascendigo is a nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of children and adults living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through outdoor/sports education, employment, adventure camps, community integration and an array of behavioral health services. We are headquartered in the heart of the Roaring Fork Valley (Carbondale, CO) and provide programming to over 200 individuals with autism of all ages from Aspen to Rifle. Currently, Ascendigo employs approximately 55 full- and part-time year-round staff members and approximately 30 additional employees during our seasonal summer camp programming. In 2019, Ascendigo celebrated its 15th anniversary as one of the premier nonprofits in the Aspen community and was named “Nonprofit of the Year” by the Carbondale Chamber of Commerce for not only our programming and service to our community but also for how we compensate our employees through competitive wages and benefits while also creating a great culture based around our Mission: *To Elevate the Spectrum by Empowering People, Inspiring Lives, and Shattering Expectations.*

Job Summary: The primary responsibility of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) is to inspire and coach Ascendigo clients to achieve their goals and see their best selves in the DSP’s eyes. The DSP is part of our Residential Team for adult residents within the Life Enrichment program who require support in the evening and is the primary caregiver during one’s assigned shifts. Overnight shifts currently are 16 hours long and begin at 4:30 pm and end at 8:30 am the next day. Support shifts currently are 4 hours long and begin at 4:30 pm and end at 8:30 pm but could change due to future client needs. Specific responsibilities include providing behavioral health services to adult clients on the full spectrum such as leading recreational activity outings, independent living support and general life skill building. The DSP will collaborate with Ascendigo’s Clinical Managers and Case Managers to learn and implement Behavior Plans or other guiding documents included in the client’s Individualized Plan.

Essential Job Functions:

Skills Training:

- Work with other members of the Life Enrichment team (including but not limited to ACE staff, Resident families, clinical or behavioral consultants, therapists, other staff, friends, and community partners) to coordinate care, facilitate care transitions, and implement resident goals and objectives.
- Follow directives established in each resident’s Individual Plan as well as those from the resident and their guardian/parent.
- Act as a peer mentor and household staff who strives to uphold the values of Ascendigo. Residents should have a structured home life with a family atmosphere including a safe, nurturing, caring and clean environment which promotes learning and growth. The DSP should work to be a positive role model, fostering trust, respect, compassion, emotional grounding, and social bonding.
- Work with the Supervisors and other DSP’s to provide for physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of residents.

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- Facilitate an ongoing professional relationship with each resident and their families.
- Supervise residents' personal care with respect and sensitivity while remaining in compliance with each residents' goals and objectives.
- Provide appropriate supports and supervision to facilitate general health and safety for themselves, other staff, and all residents.
- Recognize natural teaching opportunities; provide counseling and teaching to residents as they tackle life's daily problems. Respond to maladaptive behaviors while maintaining calm and composure, using positive behavioral supports and autism-friendly strategies.
- Learn and implement resident communication including specialized language and any auxiliary communication aids/devices/apps.
- Maintain a clean and orderly household; participate in household chores as needed.
- Make sure that residents' personal effects are well cared for and kept in order.
- Participate in training and professional development as directed.
- Become familiar with Personal Needs Funds of residents and assist with appropriate spending and documentation of those funds.
- Document medications and incident reports, fill out billing on time, fill out time sheets and submitting on time.
- Plan and prepare meals that meet the dietary needs of each resident.
- Perform light household chores: cleaning, tidying, laundry, snow removal, grocery shopping, light yard work.

Other Job Duties: Attends trainings and meetings, checks work emails daily. May be asked to help with other Ascendigo programs as needed.

Physical Requirements/Equipment Used: Basic computer skills (MS Office, email, social media), lifting and moving light to heavy objects (up to 25 pounds), use of full physical prompts for teaching or safety, competent to learn new technologies related to disabilities, able to accompany residents in all exercise and recreational activities. Applicants are required to have and use their own smart phone for work duties. Ascendigo provides a monthly cell phone stipend for this use.

ALL ASCENDIGO EMPLOYEES WHO WORK DIRECTLY WITH CLIENTS MUST BE FULLY VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19 AND PROVIDE PROOF.

Qualifications:

- Knowledge of the field of autism as it pertains to adults.
- Understanding and ability to learn behavioral approaches as practiced by Ascendigo, including the ability to allay maladaptive behaviors while maintaining calm and composure, principles of Natural Developmental Behavioral Interventions (NDBI), using positive behavior support plans and recognizing natural teaching opportunities and acting on them.
- Knowledge of healthy nutrition and basic cooking skills.
- Basic knowledge of physical fitness and exercise regimens and willing to engage in physical activities including outdoor activities with residents.
- Ability to handle the personal care of residents with sensitivity and caring.
- Possess effective skills in active listening, coaching, and human supervision.
- Display a positive attitude, show concern for people and community, demonstrate presence, self-confidence, common sense, and good listening ability.
- Be organized and exhibit "follow through" on tasks and goals.
- Have strong interpersonal skills, the ability to collaborate with colleagues.
- Have strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

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- Ability to work independently, set priorities and meet deadlines.
- Ability and desire to be a team player.
- Ability to work flexible hours, including evenings, weekends and extended hours for meetings and events may be required.
- Access to a vehicle for travel throughout local community.
- Ability to follow the policies and procedures of the organization.

In addition,

- Must be age 21 or over and have legal working status.
- Must maintain a valid driver's license with no major violations in the past 5 years.
- Must have a clean background check with no felonies or flags
- Must successfully complete required training.
- Must provide a current BLS or HealthCare Provider CPR/First Aid certification or obtain one before first shift.
- Must obtain certifications or successful training completion for crisis management and medication administration.
- Willingness to take Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) classes and obtain certification.
- Should have at least a high school diploma.
- Understands that some households may be under security surveillance including but not limited to video monitoring, and that video may be reviewed on a need-to-know basis on request by the Ascendigo CEO/President
- Must have flexibility to travel for occasional professional development and resident activities.
- Must have a smartphone with texting capacity for communication and scheduling purposes (Ascendigo provides a monthly cell phone stipend for Skills Trainers)
- Time sleeping is exempt from overtime and is paid at a different rate.
- Housing may be available for this position at a below market rate

Personal Characteristics: Should be committed and passionate about the Ascendigo mission of a holistic, active, community-based, independent, and person-centered life. He/she should believe in the dignity and potential of our clients. Additionally, should:

- **Show maturity, responsibility, and dependability** and follow through on tasks with modest supervision.
- **Be diplomatic and discreet:** commitment to maintain strict confidentiality and respect of clients and the privacy of residents and their families.
- **Be proactive:** taking the initiative, willing to pitch in and assist.
- **Behave ethically:** understand ethical behavior and business practices and ensure that their own behaviors is consistent with these standards and aligns with the values of Ascendigo.
- **Build relationships:** establish and maintain positive working relationships with others, both internally and externally.
- **Communicate effectively:** speak, listen, and write in clear, thorough, and timely manner using appropriate and effective communication tools and techniques.
- **Creativity/Innovation:** develop new ways to improve operations of Ascendigo and to create new opportunities.
- **Focus on client needs:** anticipate, understand, and respond to the needs of clients to meet or exceed their expectations and provide high quality care.
- **Foster teamwork:** work cooperatively and effectively with others to set goals, resolve problems, and make decisions.

- **Lead:** positively influence others to achieve results that are in the best interest of Ascendigo.
- **Make decisions:** assess situations to determine the importance, urgency, and risks, and make clear decisions which are timely and in the best interests of Ascendigo.
- **Organize:** set priorities, develop a schedule to accomplish required tasks monitor progress toward goals, and track details, data, information, and activities.
- **Solve problems:** Assess problems situations to identify courses, gather and process relevant information, generate possible solutions, and make recommendations and/or solve the problem.
- **Be Flexible:** our work often requires a level of flexibility based on the needs and goals of our clients.
- **Express a Willingness to Learn:** we are all Leaders and are learning every day. We welcome all applicants who wish to learn and grow with us.