

Words you might hear

Use this before interviewing a new DSP. Ask for an explanation whenever a word is unfamiliar.

Plain-language word guide

DSP (Direct Support Professional)

A worker who helps you with everyday activities and goals.

Support plan

A written description of what matters to you and what help you want.

Person-centered

Your choices, preferences and goals help guide the support.

Prompt

A reminder or cue, such as a word, picture or gesture.

Accommodation

A change that helps you participate or access something.

ADL / IADL

Daily tasks like bathing; and tasks like shopping, meals or bills.

Self-advocacy

Speaking up, asking questions and making your preferences known.

Guardian / representative payee

People with different legal or financial roles; ask what authority they have.

Handoff

When one support worker shares necessary information with another.

Confidentiality

Keeping your personal information private except when sharing is permitted or required.

Words I want someone to explain

Word / question:

What it means to me:

What I need. What I want.

Check any examples that fit. Add your own words, pictures or answers with help if you prefer.

I need help with...

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Getting ready / personal care | ☐ Meals and grocery shopping |
| ☐ Medications / health routines | ☐ Rides / getting around |
| ☐ Housework / laundry | ☐ Appointments and paperwork |
| ☐ Communication / understanding | ☐ Feeling safe / handling emergencies |

Something else I need:

I want my support to look like...

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Ask before helping me | ☐ Give me time to try first |
| ☐ Explain things step by step | ☐ Use pictures or written notes |
| ☐ Respect my privacy | ☐ Include me in decisions |

What helps me feel respected and comfortable:

It would be nice to have...

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ More community activities | ☐ New hobbies or experiences |
| ☐ More time with friends / family | ☐ A job, class or volunteer activity |
| ☐ More choices in my routine | ☐ Other ideas I want to explore |

My own wish or idea:

A want is worth discussing even when it cannot happen right away.

What must happen. What I hope to do.

Some tasks have deadlines or safety needs. Other goals matter because they make life meaningful.

Things I need to or must accomplish

Task / responsibility 1:

When does it need to happen?

Who can help me?

Task / responsibility 2:

When does it need to happen?

Who can help me?

Things I want to accomplish

My goal or experience:

Why it matters to me:

One first step I can try:

Who I want to help (if anyone):

MY CHOICE: I want to work on _____ first.

Review together on: _____

My support team & important contacts

Only include information you want to share. Store completed copies somewhere private.

People already on my team

Name / role: _____

Phone / best way to contact: _____

Name / role: _____

Phone / best way to contact: _____

Name / role: _____

Phone / best way to contact: _____

People my new DSP should know about

Name / role: _____

Why they matter / when to contact: _____

Name / role: _____

Why they matter / when to contact: _____

How to communicate with my support team

- ☐ Ask me before contacting someone
- ☐ Include me in conversations about me
- ☐ Use my preferred name and pronouns
- ☐ Tell me what information will be shared

My preferred contact method / communication support:

Privacy reminder: Share only what is needed and allowed. Do not put account numbers, passwords or detailed medical histories here.

Meet a potential DSP

Use these prompts to see how someone would support you. You may ask them yourself or have someone help.

Questions I want to ask

1. How will you learn what I like and what matters to me?

2. What would you do if I want to try something on my own?

3. What happens if I say no, need a break or change my mind?

4. How will you communicate with the people I choose?

5. What will you do if you are late, absent or unsure what I need?

After we talk

☐ I felt listened to

☐ My questions were answered

☐ I would like another conversation

☐ I need more information

One thing I liked / one concern I have:

Our next step and who will do it:

My preferences can change. I can ask to review or update this packet.