

Learning Outcomes for 2025 Core Training Modules

Overview of the Department of Opportunities and Social Development and the Disability Support Program

Participants will learn:

1. What DOSD Does

DOSD (Department of Opportunities and Social Development) aims to help people in Nova Scotia live healthier more independent lives through programs like income support, housing, child protection, and disability support.

2. How The Disability Support Program Is Changing

DSP (Disability Support Program) is transforming to give people with disabilities more choices, independence, and better support in their communities.

3. Focus on Equity and Anti-Racism

DOSD and DSP are working to make their services fair and inclusive, with a strong focus on fighting anti-Black racism and supporting equity across Nova Scotia.

4. Rules That Guide the Work

The work of DOSD and DSP is shaped by laws and policies that help make sure services are safe, fair, and effective for everyone.

Introduction to Regional Hubs

Participants will learn:

1. Regional Hubs Help People Locally

Regional Hubs are teams working in different areas of Nova Scotia to support people with disabilities. They're not buildings — they're people who offer personalized help close to home.

2. Support Is Tailored to Each Person

The system focuses on understanding each person's goals and needs. Specialized roles like **Local Area Coordinators**, **Intensive Planning Support Coordinators**, and **Eligibility Funding Assessment Coordinators** work together to help individuals plan and live a good life in their community.

3. Individualized Funding Gives People More Control

Individualized Funding (IF) lets people choose and pay for the supports they want. It's flexible and puts the person in charge, rather than relying on traditional service providers.

4. The Journey Is Personal and Flexible

Each person's path through the system is unique. From first contact to planning, applying for funding, and using supports — the process is designed to adapt to each person's situation and choices.

Human Rights and the Nova Scotia Remedy

Participants will learn:

1. Why the Remedy Exists

People with disabilities in Nova Scotia were treated unfairly by being kept in institutions instead of being supported to live in their communities. A human rights ruling led to a plan (the Remedy) to fix this.

2. What the Remedy Will Do

The Remedy will close large institutions, give people more choices about where and how they live, and build better supports in local communities.

3. How It Will Work

The Remedy includes key directions with action plans to support each direction:

- Individual Planning and Support Coordination

- Closing Institutions

- Community-Based Supports and Services

- A program that works in all regions of Nova Scotia and where many professionals work together to support local choices.

- Individualized Funding

- Disability System Capacity

This module contains first voice contributions on what these key directions mean to Nova Scotians with disabilities.

4. Progress So Far

In the first two years, waitlists were reduced, more people moved into community living, new programs were created, and staff were hired to support the changes.

In 2023 and 2025 the Rebuilding Hope Conference was hosted to bring together people across Nova Scotia to share their experiences and shape the future of disability support services in the province.

Models and Philosophies of Disability

Participants will learn:

1. Different Models Explain Disability in Different Ways

There isn't just one way to understand disability. Models like the **Medical**, **Social**, **Embodiment and Identity**, and **Disability Justice** each offer different views.

2. The Social Model Shifts the Focus to Society

Social Model says disability is caused by barriers in society — like inaccessible buildings or unfair attitudes. It pushes for changes in the environment and policies to include everyone.

3. Identity and Justice Models Embrace Diversity

Newer models like **Embodiment and Identity** and **Disability Justice** highlight personal experiences, intersectionality (how disability connects with race, gender, etc.), and the importance of recognizing disability as a valid and valued identity.

4. These Models Influence How We Support People

Understanding these models helps professionals and communities offer better support. It encourages inclusion, respect, and empowerment — not treatment or charity.

Overview of Pathways

Participants will learn:

1. The Human Rights Remedy Is Driving Big Changes

Instead of making people fit into existing programs, the Remedy pushes for personalized support that helps each person build a life they choose in their own community. It's about treating people with disabilities as active citizens, not just service users.

2. Planning Must Be Person-Centered and Creative

Successful community living starts with understanding each person's vision for a good life. This means building strong relationships, using natural supports first, and creating flexible, individualized plans — not just relying on funding.

3. We Need New Roles and Tools to Support This Shift

Roles like **Local Area Coordinators (LACs)**, **Intensive Planning Support Coordinators (IPSCs)**, and **Community Living Facilitators** are key. They help people plan, transition, and stay connected.

Tools like Individualized Funding and Innovation Funds support creative solutions.

4. Everyone Has a Role in Making This Work

Service providers, families, and communities can start now by shifting their mindset — focusing on strengths, asking better questions, and imagining new possibilities. Partnerships and shared responsibility are essential for lasting change.

Historical Devaluation and Culture

Participants will learn:

1. People with Disabilities Deserve Full Inclusion and Respect

People should be seen as valued individuals, not defined by their impairments. They should have the same opportunities as everyone else to live a good life, make choices, and be active members of their communities.

2. We Must Shift from Control to Partnership

The culture is changing from “power over” (where systems and staff make decisions) to “power with” — where people with disabilities lead their own lives and are supported through authentic partnerships with families, staff, and communities.

3. From Standardized Services to Personalized Supports

Instead of fitting people into rigid programs, the new approach focuses on flexible, person-directed planning. Supports are built around each person’s goals, strengths, and preferences — not just what’s available.

4. Changing Culture Takes Everyone

This transformation requires new attitudes, skills, and leadership. Staff, families, and communities must work together to challenge old assumptions, reduce social devaluation, and build a more inclusive, rights-based system

First Voice Panel

Participants will learn:

1. The lived experiences of the First Voice Panelist – made up of individuals with disabilities from across Nova Scotia.

The importance of hearing directly from people with lived experience to help understand the strengths they have, the challenges they have faced, and the barriers that exist.

2. First voice perspectives are the foundation of all Remedy work.

Listening to lived experiences challenges assumptions and creates opportunities for change and development.

3. True inclusion means centring first voice in planning, decision-making, and service delivery.

Creating spaces for people to share their stories strengthens community and drives cultural change.

Planning and Supportive Decision Making

Participants will learn:

1. Planning Should Be Led by the Person

Person-Centered Planning is about helping people with disabilities **create the life they want**, not just fitting them into services. It's a flexible, ongoing process that focuses on the **whole person**, their dreams, strengths, and relationships — not just their support needs.

2. Supported Decision-Making Respects Rights

Support Decision Making means people with disabilities can make their own decisions with help from trusted people, instead of having decisions made for them. It's based on the idea that everyone has the right to self-determination, and support should help them express their will and preferences.

3. Relationships Are the Foundation

Strong, trusting relationships are key to good planning and decision-making. Strong support networks help people understand options, express choices, and build a meaningful life.

4. Legal Tools Should Be Used Carefully

Legal instruments like guardianship or representation orders should only be used when absolutely necessary. The goal is to protect a person's legal rights, not take them away. Whenever possible, decisions should be made with the person, not for them.
