



Disability Support Program

DSP Connector Refresher Training



Agenda

What are our goals for today?

- Today we are going to refresh the key aspects of the DSP Connector role.

What is our agenda?

1. Introduction to DSP
2. Tools and Forms
3. DSP Pathway Examples
4. LAC, IPSC, EFAC Perspective
5. FAQs
6. Closing

Introduction to DSP

Introduction to DSP | Vision for a Good Life

Connectors play a vital role in addressing the four grounds of discrimination from the Human Rights Remedy. Along with the other new roles in the regional hubs, Connectors support individuals to access the supports they want in their own communities in a timely manner. The entire team helps the individual with disability answer the question, ***What does a good life in community look like?***

Common Components for a Plan for a Good Life



Introduction to DSP | Elevating Natural Supports

In addition to DSP and other government supports and services, Connectors will support individuals to get more connected to **universal and natural supports in their communities.**

Universal supports and activities are those that are available to everyone in the community and aren't disability-specific. True and lasting **community inclusion requires communities to remove barriers, so they are open to all**, rather than requiring individuals with disabilities to overcome those barriers.

Natural supports are those connections that already exist naturally within the person's relationships and community rather than being formalized or professionally provided services. Natural relationships are sometimes called "freely given relationships" because **instead of a financial and professional dynamic, the relationship is based on genuine care.**

Examples of Universal & Natural Supports



Family & Friends



Neighbours



***Community
Organizations, Clubs, and
Groups***



***Public Resources
and Spaces***

Introduction to DSP | Guiding Principles

Supported Decision-Making

- Supported decision-making allows individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions with support from a team of people they choose (e.g., friends, family, roommate, etc.).
- A person may have capacity to make certain types of decisions with specific support, which may include using communication and interpretive support to make information meaningful for the person.
- Supporters of a person with a disability should **not** make choices **for** them. Instead, they support by helping the individual understand the decision, think about what they want to do, remember important things, and/or communicate what their decision is.

Using a Person-Directed Approach

- **Person Directed** is a model where persons with disabilities have control over their own care and support services. Unlike traditional person-centered approaches, the person-directed model emphasizes autonomy in decision-making.
- For example, a person in a person-directed model might select their own caregivers, decide on the frequency and types of services they need, and even handle the budget for these services, making all decisions independently rather than having them managed by the provider.

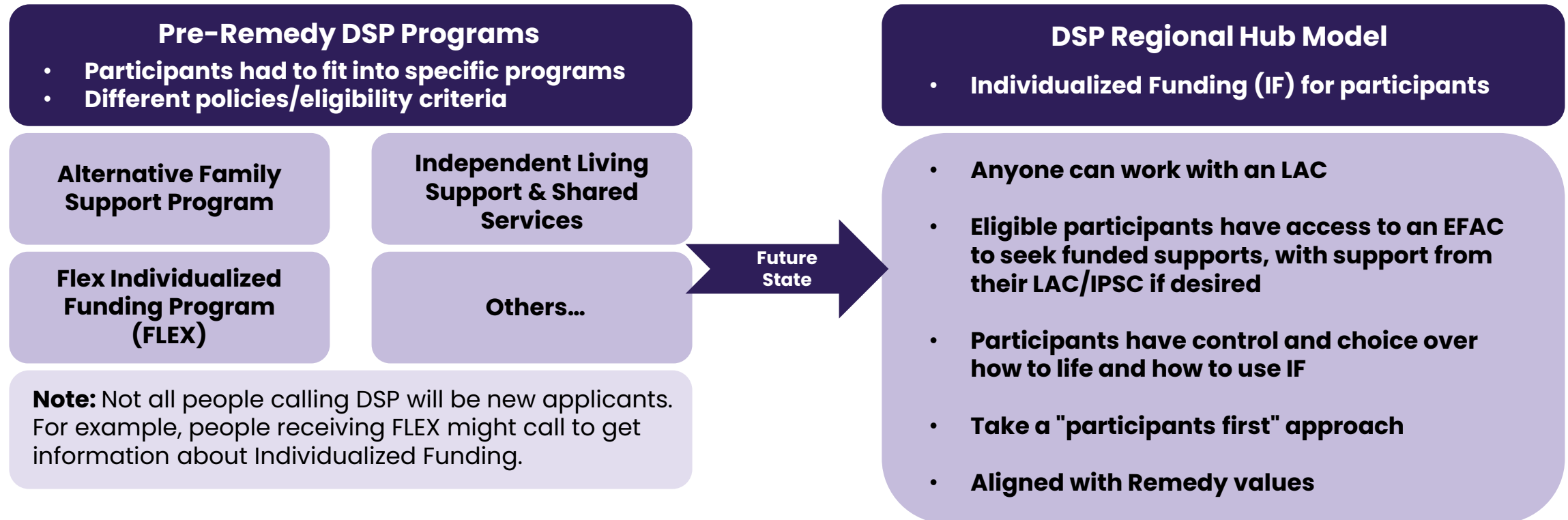
Dignity of Risk

- Wherever possible, staff are guided by the concept of the Dignity of Risk which recognizes that life experiences carry the risk of failure and that we must support people with disabilities in experiencing a spectrum of success and failures.
- In practice this means, coaching and enabling individuals to manage their own risk whenever possible.

Introduction to DSP | Current State of Intake

Within the Department of Opportunities and Social Development, **DSP Care Coordinators manage complex supports for individuals, and oftentimes face high caseloads that limit proactive planning, community inclusion, and crisis prevention.** Many individuals also experience barriers accessing clinical, mental health, and allied health services.

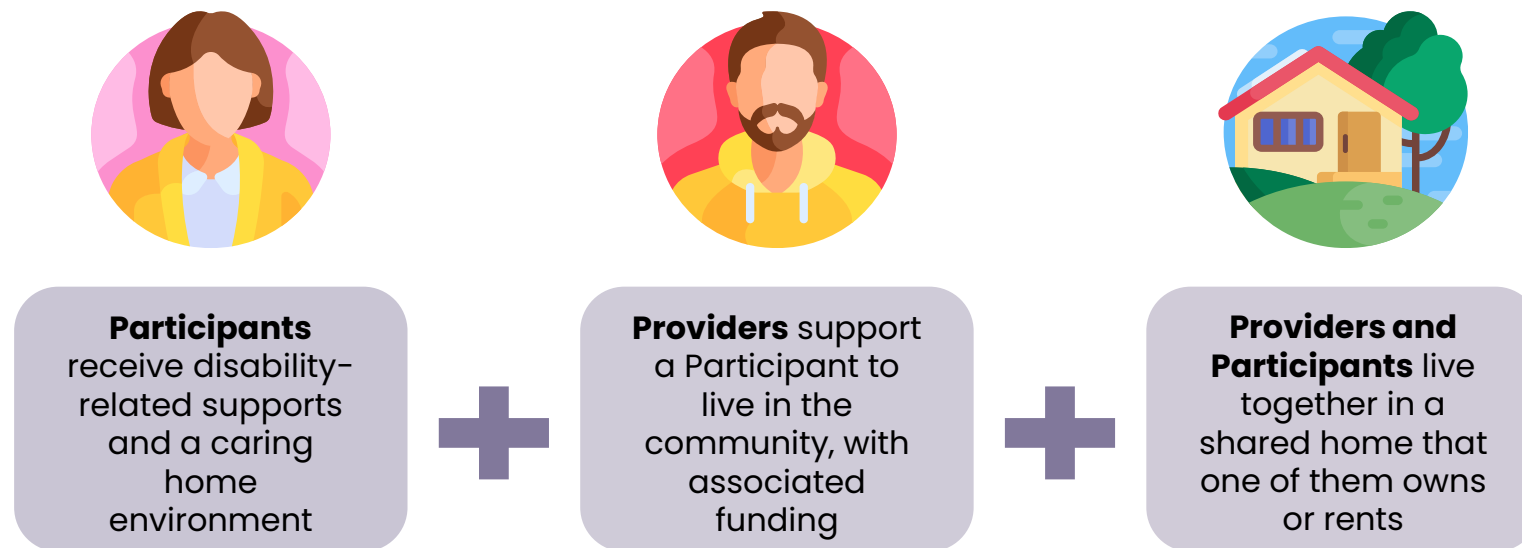
A **new DSP Connector role** is being introduced to allow individuals seeking disability supports to experience a more streamlined connection to services. The launch of DSP Connectors will align with when the intake of new cases gets flipped to the new system of supports (LACs & IPSCs) as opposed to the old one with Care Coordinators.



Introduction to DSP | Home Share

Individuals will be connected to programs based on their individual needs and through their LAC/IPSC. However, you may receive questions on some of the new programs that have been developed (or are in progress). The following slides provide an overview of some of these new programs.

Home Sharing is an approach that **matches Participants and Home Share Providers** to live together in the community, with evidence from other jurisdictions indicating it leads to **improved quality of life outcomes**.



Introduction to DSP | School Leavers

Leaving school is a time of significant change that comes with important decisions, requiring a team approach that supports students as they continue to prepare for their future and **explore options and opportunities in their community after graduation.**

The School Leavers Program welcomed its first participants in Fall 2025, with a focus on Grade 12 students. Through the Program, students are **paired with an LAC** who will work with them, their family, their Student Planning Team, and the community to support their Transition Plan.

The Program will centre on Grade 12 students who have:

- An intellectual developmental disability and/or one or more significant disabilities
- Support from a multi-disciplinary team (including Learning Support Teachers and other supports)
- An Individual Program Plan (in the areas of functional academics, social development, and life skills) with a focus on transition planning from school-to-community



Introduction to DSP | The Purpose of DSP Connectors



Where are Connectors located?

- Based in a local office and often out in the community.
- Connectors are regionally based as part of Regional Hubs.



How do Connectors Support individuals?

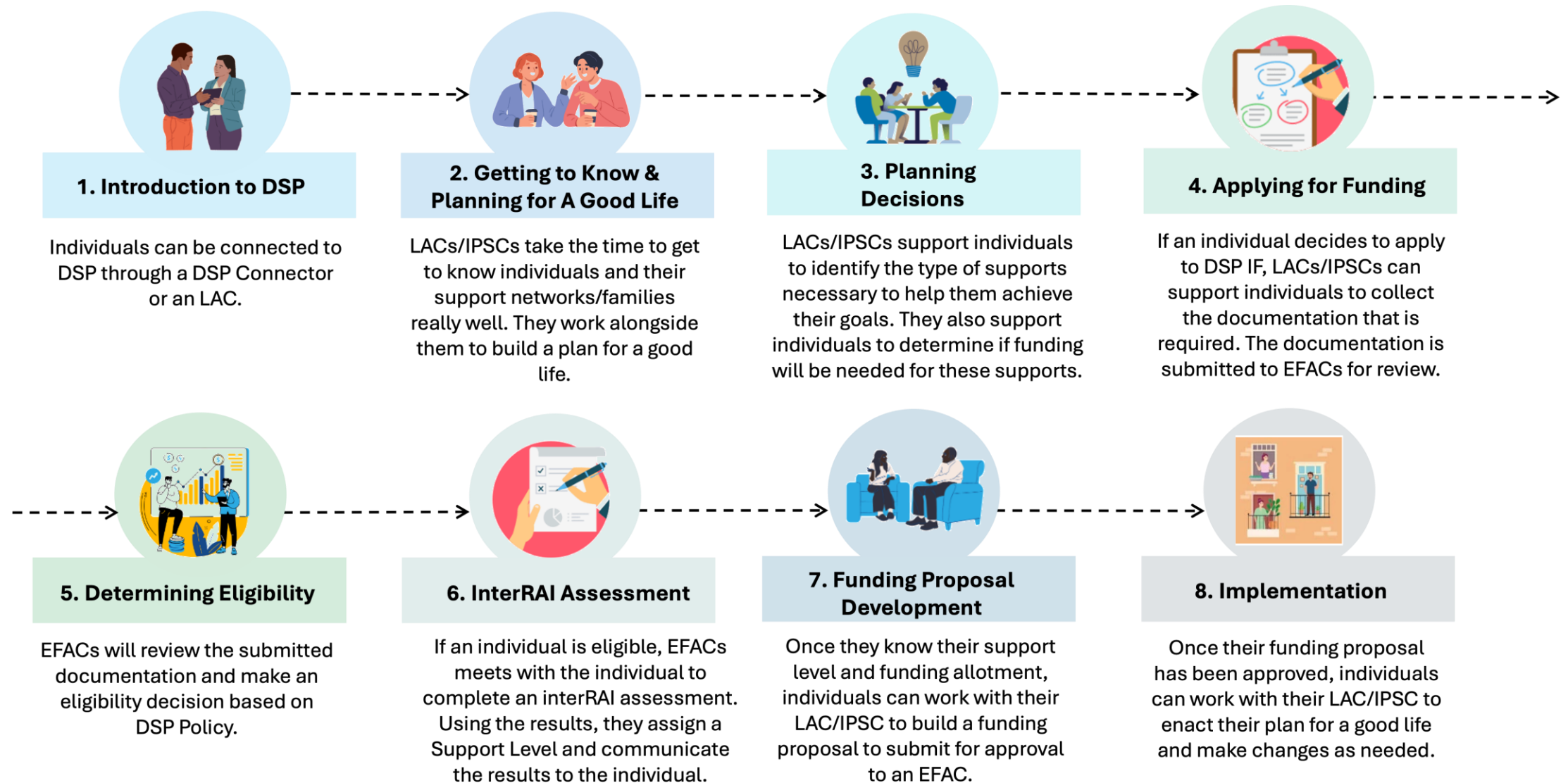
- Connect individuals to supports and services within their region in a timely manner.
- Provide critical information on DSP supports and services in addition to other regional or government supports that may be relevant to the individual.
- Identify patterns and gaps in the questions they get and the available supports, and work with Regional Hubs to problem solve.



How can someone contact a Connector?

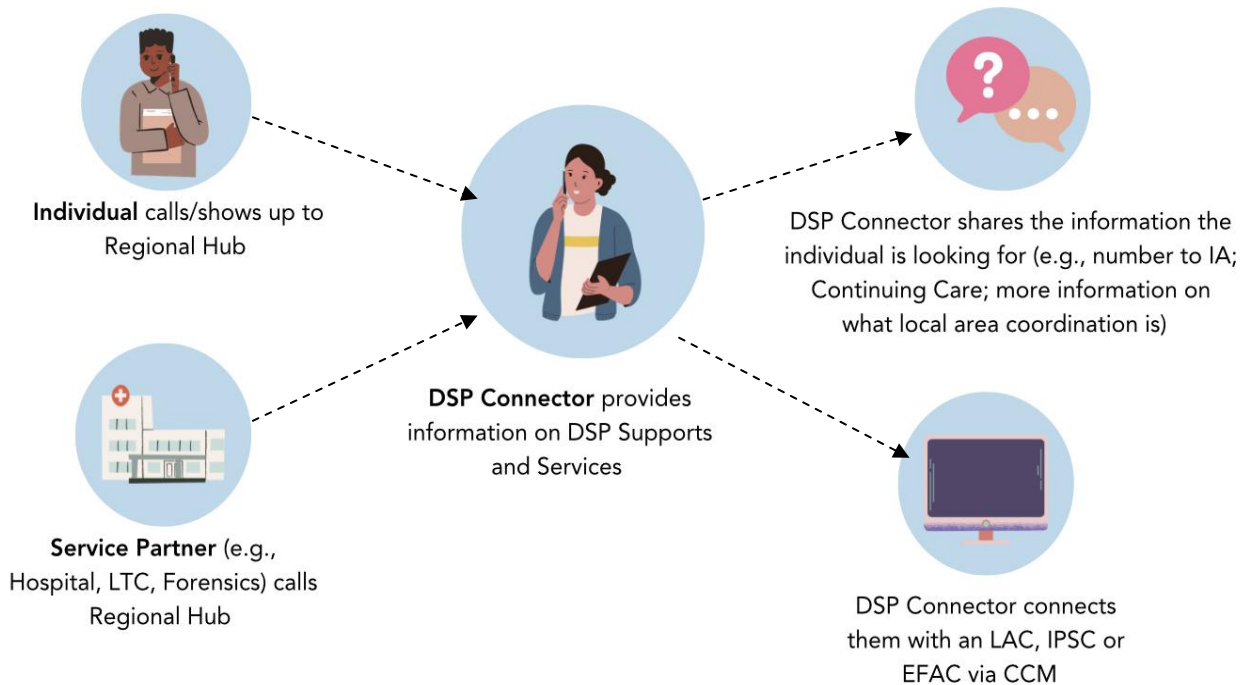
- Directly (phone, email, in the community).
- Be introduced by family, friend or someone from the community.
- Be introduced by a service or organization.

Introduction to DSP | An Individual's Journey with DSP



Introduction to DSP | Roles and Responsibilities of the Connector

Here are a few key responsibilities of your role as a Connector:



Responsibilities

- Link individuals with available supports and services
- Collect foundational information to support connections
- Triage and intake of referrals to DSP from partners
- Introduce individuals to additional DCS or external supports
- Report on patterns in support needs, questions, gaps
- Support the smooth day-to-day operation of the Regional Hub (both the office and the virtual team across the region)

Introduction to DSP | Roles and Responsibilities of the Connector

At a high-level, the Connector role has two key areas of responsibilities as it relates to facilitating connections:



Introducing Individuals with Disabilities and their Support Networks/Families to the Disability Support Program

- Connectors take time **to listen to individuals and their natural support network to better understand the individual's strengths, aspirations, needs, relationships, and contributions** so that they can make appropriate connections.
- As one of the first points of contact for DSP applicants, they facilitate a **positive, person-centered introduction to DSP that leads individuals with disabilities to the supports they need** to live good lives in their communities.



Connecting Individuals with Disabilities to appropriate DSP services and supports, community organizations, and Service Partners

- Connectors are **embedded within community** to stay up to date on local programs, supports, and services.
- Connectors **triage and respond to referrals from service partners** such as hospitals and other non-governmental service providers.

Tools and Forms



What is the Online Connection Form?

- This form is used to gather information on DSP Connection interactions, whether for people who are interested in moving forward with a connection to planning and support services, or for people who are seeking information only.
- If a person chooses to move forward with the registration, data must be accepted into CCM in order to complete the process. You must have a valid login to CCM to complete the DSP Introduction & Connection process.
- This form should not be used for any other purposes.

What is it Not?

- An all-encompassing document of someone's background and history.

Tools and Forms | Helpful Resources

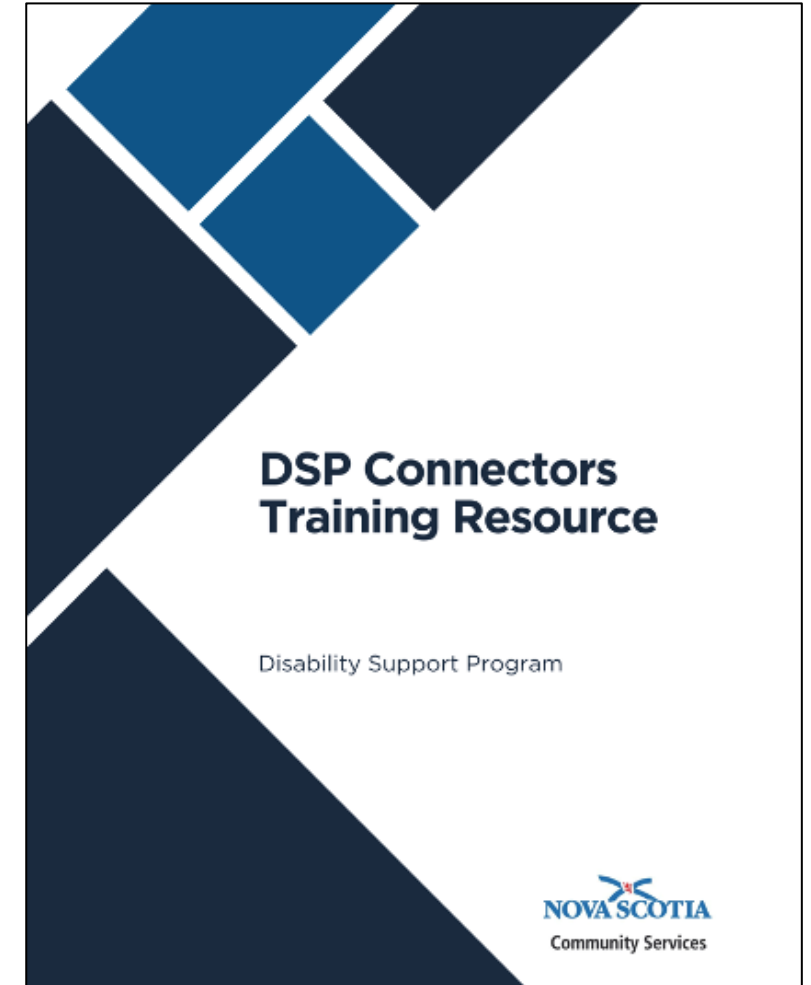


What is the Connectors Training Resource?

Serves as a resource to provide guidance to DSP connectors on how to implement each of their key responsibilities and **guide their relationships, conversations, and how they work alongside** people, families, their support networks, and partners.

What is it Not?

- A resource that provides rigid rules on how DSP Connectors must operate.
- A step-by-step procurement document.
- An all-encompassing list of tools and policies.



Tools and Forms | Helpful Resources

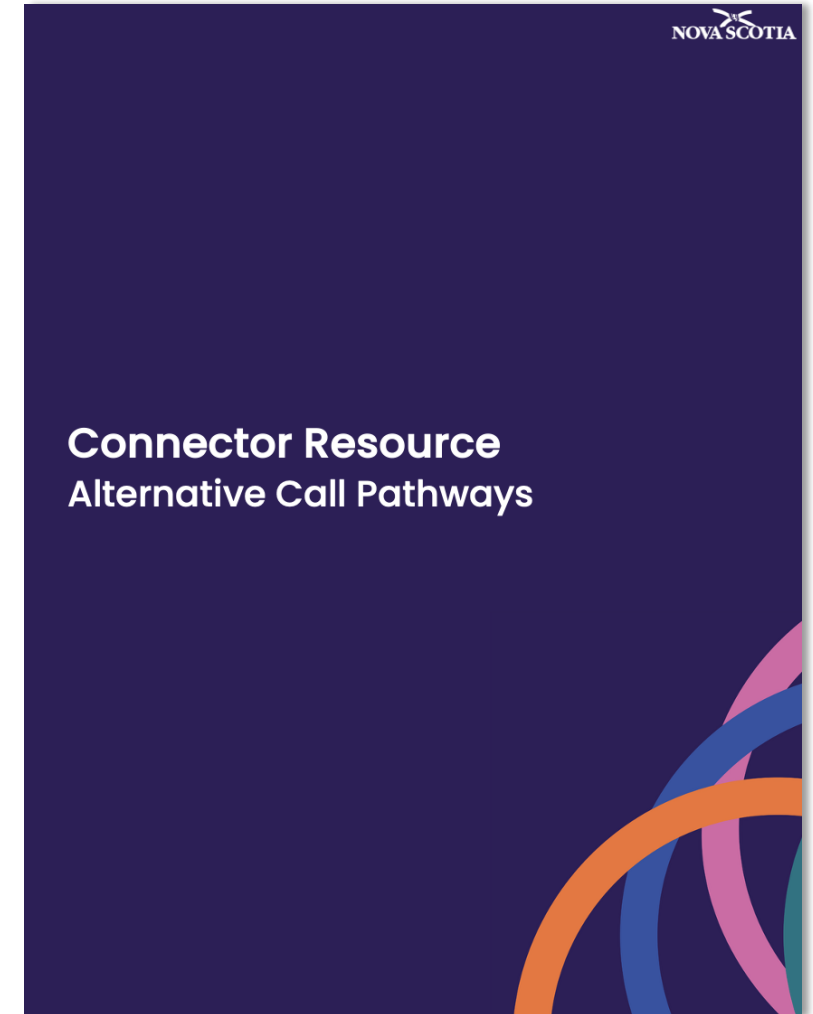


What is the Alternative Pathways Guide?

Serves as a resource to provide guidance to DSP Connectors on call processes that fall **outside of the typical processes and pathways**.

What is it Not?

- A resource that provides rigid pathways and rules that DSP Connectors must follow when dealing with atypical pathways.



Tools and Forms | Helpful Resources



What is the Email Template?

Serves as a consistent means to sending emails that require an **alternative pathway** and therefore likely a timelier **response**.

This template provides consistency in how IPSCs, EFACs, and Team Leads will receive information about calls requiring an alternative pathway, allowing for easier recognition in email inboxes.

It ensures that all information required for the IPSC/EFAC/Team Lead to action a response is included

What is it Not?

- A template to be used for all emails.

"Call Requiring Alternative Pathway" Template

To: <CC/IPSC/LACs or Supervisor/Team Lead>

Subject Line: Call Requiring Alternative Pathway – Time Sensitive

Hello <Insert Name of CC/IPSC/LACs or Supervisor/Team Lead>

I have received a call that requires an alternative pathway of processing and a time sensitive response. The details of the call are outlined below.

Name of Caller:

Caller's Organization/Department/Office and Role/Relationship (if applicable):

Callers Contact Information:

Name of DSP Participant or Applicant call is regarding (if applicable):

Name of DSP Participants CC/IPSC/LAC (if applicable):

Name of Potential Applicant call is regarding (if applicable):

Details of call nature: <any details gathered during the call>

Thank you, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any additional questions.

<Insert Signature>

"Call Requiring Alternative Pathway" Template

To: Betty.Green@novascotia.ca

Subject Line: Call Requiring Alternative Pathway – Time Sensitive

Hello Betty,

I have received a call that requires an alternative pathway of processing and a time sensitive response. The details of the call are outlined below.

Name of Caller: Joe Blue

Caller's Organization/Department/Office and Role/Relationship (if applicable):
Social Worker, QEII Hospital

Callers Contact Information: 902-888-7777

Name of DSP Participant or Applicant call is regarding (if applicable): Donald Brown

Name of DSP Participants CC/IPSC/LAC (if applicable): Mary Rose

Name of Potential Applicant call is regarding (if applicable): Not applicable.

Details of call nature: Donald has been in hospital for the past month with an acute illness. He is recovering and will be ready for discharge within the next few weeks. Joe has not been able to get ahold of Mary as she is currently on leave. Donald will require additional supports before discharge.

Thank you, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if you have any additional questions.

Patty Purple
DSP Connector

Tools and Forms | Helpful Resources



Process Flow #1: IF process for new to DSP clients

The purpose of this process map is to serve as a reference for DSP staff working in Regional Hubs, including Planners, Team Leads, EFACs, Financial Clerks, and DSP Connectors. The map focuses on processes that support individuals who are new to DSP and entering the program for the first time.

The map outlines how the process functions from the point an individual first connects with DSP through to completing the DSP intake process. The map also references relevant guides and tools that staff can use to support and carry out these processes effectively.

Process #2: IF Process – Alternative Pathways

The purpose of this process map is to provide a high-level visual overview of the alternative pathways resource for individuals who may require an expedited process.

* Both resources will be available on the DSP Library

Tools and Forms | Resources Beyond Today



As a DSP Connector, what are my resources?

Orientation: Onboarding and training for all new Connectors, including a supportive approach to building strong knowledge of and partnerships with people with disabilities, their families, local communities and local government and non-government service partners.

Regular Team and Regional Meetings: Regular team and regional meetings and workshops provide an opportunity for reflective practice, shared learning and problem solving, exploring current issues and trends and for learning about new programs and services.

DSP Library: A place where homegrown solutions can be found. This includes various forms, guides and other helpful resources.










As a DSP Connector, who do I report to?

Supervision: DSP Connectors will be reporting directly to a Service Delivery Team Lead.

Tools and Forms | Common Referrals

As the first point of contact for individuals seeking support options, **DSP Connectors will receive a variety of requests that may fall under other government programs. It is their job to ensure they are able to identify when someone may be better served by another program.** Below is a table of common referrals:

	Organization/Program	Description	Who they Serve
	211 Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps Nova Scotians connect with non-profits and government organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone
	Employment & Income Assistance (ESIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps individuals when they are not able to support themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults aged 19+ and in certain situations Individuals aged 16-18
	NSH Continuing Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided to eligible people who need care in their home and community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals needing ongoing care on a long or short-term basis
	Autism Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver various programs and services from their offices across the province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals on the autism spectrum and their families
	Youth Outreach Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based program designed to improve outcomes for vulnerable youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth aged 12-24
	Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps low-income individuals and families find a home that's right for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-income Nova Scotians
	CPP Disability (CPPD) Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide partial income replacement to those with a severe and prolonged disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with disabilities under age 65 (and must be an eligible CPP contributor)

DSP Pathway Examples

Pathway #1 | Meet Joshua



Joshua, 28, was diagnosed with autism when he was 5 years old. He lives with his parents, who are his main support network.



Joshua expressed to his parents that he wants to get more involved in his community. He is really interested in art and art classes that might be offered.



Joshua and his parents attend an information session held at their community's YMCA.



Joshua and his family are introduced to Rasha, a DSP Connector. Rasha talks to Joshua and his family and gets a broad picture of his vision for a good life.



Seeing a new individual has been registered, Brandon's Team Lead assigns Joshua to begin working with Brandon as they plan for a better life in community.



After a conversation with Rasha, Brandon reaches out to Joshua and his family via telephone, and after a conversation, he completes the Online Connection Form.



Rasha registers Joshua in the system as a "net new" DSP participant and reaches out to Brandon, who is an LAC in her area.



At the end of their conversation, Rasha takes Joshua's contact information.



Joshua and his parents express their interest in working with an LAC to help further Joshua's involvement in community and to begin exploring alternate support networks.

Pathway #2 | Meet Ryah



Ryah, 32, was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth. She is also quadriplegic.



Ryah has vocalized to her support network that she wants to begin meeting other individuals in her community.



Ryah and her care worker, Sam decide to call the Disability Support Program to learn more about Ryah's options.



Ryah meets with her IPSC, Sherry, for the first time and they get to know one another. Sherry asks Ryah all about her goals and dreams, and they begin building a plan.



Seeing a new individual has been registered a Team Lead reviews Ryan's information and connects her to Sherry, an IPSC in her area. Now they can begin working together.



After learning more about Ryah and her support needs, Devon registers her in the system as a "net new" DSP participant and fills out the Online Connection Form.



Ryah and Sam are connected to Devon, a DSP Connector. They speak to Devon about Ryah's wants and needs.

Pathway #3 | Meet Graham



A nurse at the Halifax Infirmary has called DSP on behalf of her patient, Graham.



The nurse reaches Paul, a DSP Connector. Paul asks if Graham is currently a DSP participant, to which the nurse replies yes.



Paul is able to find Graham in ICM. He notices Graham has not transitioned to IF, and he is not working with a planner yet.



Paul provides the nurse with the IPSC contact information and informs her that he will send an email to the IPSC in the catchment as well.



After hearing from Paul, the IPSC Team Lead is able to speak with the nurse and Graham, to let them know he has been assigned to an IPSC and can begin the planning process. Graham is discharged from the hospital.



After ending the call, Anna sends an email to the identified Supervisor/Team Lead using the "Call Requiring Alternative Pathway" Template.



Paul then lets the nurse know the Supervisor/Team Leads contact information and informs her that he will follow up with an email to them as well.



Paul sends an email to the IPSC to inform them of the call using the "Call Requiring Alternative Pathway" Template.

Pathway #4 | Meet Sofia



A Minister from Eastern Passage calls DSP on behalf of an individual, Sofia, within the Porter's Lake community to escalate her needs.



The Minister reaches DSP, and speaks with Anna, a DSP Connector. The Minister explains Sofia's situation and asks for assistance from an IPSC.



Anna asks the Minister if Sofia is currently a DSP participant, to which he replies he doesn't know. Anna then performs a Person Search in ICM.



After double checking in CCM as well, Anna determines Sofia is not a DSP participant.



After hearing from Anna, the IPSC Team Lead is able to speak with the Minister and assign Sofia an IPSC to begin their planning journey.



After ending the call, Anna sends an email to the identified Supervisor/Team Lead using the "Call Requiring Alternative Pathway" Template.



Anna lets the Minister know she will send an email to the identified Team Lead and IPSC in Sofia's region as well.



Anna sees the location of the Minister due to his calling information. She is able to provide him with the name and contact information of the identified IPSC Team Lead in Eastern Passage (this can be found in the Key Regional Contacts document on the Connector Share Point page)

LAC, IPSC, EFAC Perspective

LAC, IPSC, EFAC Perspective | Role of Frontline Staff

Connectors are responsible for connecting individuals with DSP staff including LACs, IPSCs, and EFACs based on their needs. Individuals who are interested in DSP will **primarily** be connected to LACs. DSP Connectors will also support individuals navigating between different roles, available supports, and the requirements at different stages of planning.



FAQs

FAQs | First Steps



Transition from the “Old World” to the “New World”

- Transitions will continue based on Remedy priorities, with all individuals eventually moving to the new model.
- The focus is shifting from facility-based funding to individualized funding.
- Waitlist individuals and facility residents remain a top transition priority.



What Participants Can Expect from the Intake Transition?

- Individuals will now connect directly with a **DSP Connector**.
- The DSP Connector will help determine the most appropriate pathway to supports and services.



Role of the DSP Connector

- Acts as the primary contact for individuals entering the DSP system.
- Facilitates connections between individuals and regional supports/services.
- Provides consistency and coordination for referrals from clinical services and government programs.

FAQs | Contacting DSP



Contacting the DSP Connector

- When someone applies for DSP, they will connect with the DSP Connector.
- DFSC will still contact the DSP Connector as needed.
- Regional processes for transferring calls are being developed, and screening procedures post-provincial screening are still being finalized.



Who Should Individuals Contact with Questions or Concerns

- DSP Connectors will be based in local offices and active within communities.
- They can be reached by phone, email, or through community interactions.



Individuals Not Yet Connected to an LAC or IPSC

- Approximately 30–40 individuals are currently not connected to an LAC or IPSC.
- This is under active review, with the goal of ensuring each individual is appropriately connected to the right supports.

Closing

Closing | Reflection & Discussion

Before we go to the next section, **reflect and discuss** :

- What were your 3 key takeaways from this session?
- Can you identify any assumptions you had that were challenged during the session today?
- Are there any key questions that you have that we did not talk about/answer?

