



Disability Support Program

Peer Supported Planning

June 2025



Program Design Principles

The PSP design requirements are built around the following five program design principles:

#1

Enabling Autonomy: Offering peer connection to help individuals take control over their life outcomes, and ensuring options and choice for individuals looking for planning support.

#2

Building Systems Capacity: Creating opportunity for local, community-led planning support networks and embedding disability leadership opportunities in community.

#3

Recognizing the Natural Authority of People with Disabilities and Families: Increasing opportunity for growth and contribution of people with disabilities and their families, and valuing the significance of lived experience.

#4

Ensuring Cultural Relevance: Co-designing with cultural/community groups and ensuring flexibility in the PSP design structure to support culturally specific options.

#5

Building Sustainable Peer-Led Planning Networks: Building community networks and facilitating introductions between individuals with shared lived experiences.

These design principles have been informed by working sessions with the **DSP project team**, **sessions with the Remedy experts**, **sector engagements**, and **external research on best practices**.

Program Design Sections and Overview

The proposed Program Design is comprised of the following sections

PSP User Program Element

Program elements that individuals can expect and experience while accessing the program.

Components:

- Expanded Service Eligibility
- No Fee for PSP Users
- Culturally & Regionally Relevant Peer Support
- Contractual Agreements
- Maximum Amount of Supported Hours
- Streams of Planning Support

Peer Supporter Components & Requirements

Requirements and expectations for Peer Supporters that are involved in the program.

Components:

- PSP Compensation
- Eligibility of Peer Supporters
- Peer Supporter Term Limits
- Peer Support Matching
- Targeted Recurring Training
- Peer Supporter Concern Resolution Processes
- Job Experience for Peer Supporters

PSP Administration & Program Coordination

Administration and coordination areas for DSP in managing the program across DSP regions.

Components:

- Internal DSP Staff Coordinator
- Third Party Coordination and Delivery
- Coordination of Recurring Training
- Program Expansion
- Dedicated Program Funding

PSP User Program Element

About this Section:

The following program components are framed around those accessing PSP. Further information about these components and their implementation considerations can be found in the appendix.

Program Components:



Expanded Service Eligibility: Making PSP available to anyone in community self-identifying with a disability.



No Fee for those accessing PSP: Individuals and their families will not be charged for accessing PSP.



Culturally & Regionally Relevant Peer Support: Ensuring PSP is culturally and regionally relevant by engaging with and seeking input from representative groups.



Contractual Agreements: Enacting signed agreements between various parties involved with PSP outlining parameters and hours of support for each match.



Maximum Amount of Hours: Setting a cap on the amount of time allocated to PSP for individuals and Peer Supporters.



Streams of Planning Support: As the program grows, defining and establishing dedicated streams based on the understanding of demand and potential support areas.

Peer Supporter Components & Requirements

About this Section:

The following program components are framed around Peer Supporters. Further information about these components and their implementation considerations can be found in the appendix.

Program Components:



PSP Compensation: Peer Supporters should be compensated for their work.



Eligible Peer Supporters: Defining those eligible to become Peer Supporters as those with lived experience, not just individuals with DSP experience.



Peer Supporter Term Limit: Establishing a renewable term limit for how long someone can be a Peer Supporter based around the number of people supported.



Targeted Recurring Training: A standardized training program delivered by a third party on how to provide peer support.



Peer Supporter Concern Resolution Process: Creating a process built into the PSP contract for circumstances where a concern or conflict arise.



Job Experience: Designing PSP to build on existing strengths of Peer Supporters and provide them with transferrable skills and experiences while building capacity in community.

PSP Administration & Program Coordination

About this Section:

The following program components are framed around the administration and coordination areas of PSP. Further information about these components and their implementation considerations can be found in the appendix.

Program Components:



Internal DSP Staff Coordinator: An internal DSP coordinator responsible for oversight and consistent service delivery across DSP regions.



Third Party Coordination and Delivery: PSP will be coordinated by a 3rd party who lead service delivery while in contact with the DSP program lead.



PSP Matching: Establishing a roster of Peer Supporters run by the Coordinating Organization and ensuring appropriate matches are made based on common or compatible attributes.



Program Growth: Setting up the program slowly, with organic growth over time to meet the demand of interested parties and program streams.



Dedicated Program Funding: Having dedicated funding to support provincial coordination, regional implementation, and direct service delivery.

Upcoming Engagements

Overview

- The project team is at a stage where we are ready to initiate the First Voice Partners engagement stream which was mapped out in the approved engagement plan.
- These engagements will explore key themes such as individual choice, support expectations, and overall program outcomes to ensure PSP is shaped around the voices of those it aims to support.

Groups to be Engaged

- **Regional Advisory Councils** (engaging with each region through in person working sessions)
- **Inclusion Nova Scotia Family Representatives** (6-8 family representatives)
- **Identified Community Partners** (Partners identified by Danielle Jackson to provide feedback on ensuring cultural relevance of the program, i.e. ABSW)

Methods

- Group working sessions with the Regional Advisory Councils to review and gather feedback on the program design components
- Targeted interviews with INS families and identified engagement partners
- Feedback Surveys



We are aiming to conduct these engagements beginning XX

Next Steps

The project team proposes the following next steps:

- ▶ **Incorporate feedback** from DSP Leadership
- ▶ **Draft Engagement Materials** including:
 - Working Session Materials
 - Communications
 - Surveys
- ▶ **Reach out** to partners to **schedule engagements**
- ▶ Meet with Anne Stokes to **discuss financial modelling** for program launch

Appendix

PSP User Program Element

Program Components:

Expanded Service Eligibility

Overview	As PSP rolls out and evolves, it will be available to anyone in community self-identifying with a disability.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aligning eligibility with the LAC role (anyone self-identifying with a disability) would create consistency with other DSP planning frameworks, this would be dependent on funding.There may be space for a funded program as well as a non-funded program to expand eligibility which could grow over time.Service areas to be expanded as more is learned about community demand.

No Fee for PSP Users

Overview	PSP will be available to individuals and their families at no charge.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Funding structures such as a grant funded by DSP to PSP provider organizations or Peer Supporters will need to be determined.There may be benefits to setting aside separate funding budgets for launching operations and training of the organizations selected for the launch of PSP.

Culturally & Regionally Relevant Peer Support

Overview	Participants should be able to access peer support that is culturally relevant to them. Peer recruitment should take into consideration the intersectionality of participants including: race, ethnicity, religious practices, and more. It will also be important for PSP to be equally accessible in both urban and rural areas.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The PSP program will have a flexible design that can be adjusted to reflect the important aspects of different communities and cultural contexts. This can be done by engaging with diverse groups as program elements are confirmed by DSP.Engaging with partners such as Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) and the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) can help ensure that the program aligns with cultural considerations.Connection through the Regional Advisory Councils may be able to provide regional contexts to enable program access across Nova Scotia and ensure that connection to supports is understood in rural and urban areas

PSP User Program Element

Program Components:

Contractual Agreements

Overview	Contractual Agreements should be in place between DSP and Coordinating Organizations to ensure there are established standards and expectations of PSP. DSP could also provide Coordinating Organizations with guidelines for their own contractual agreements with Peer Supporters. These guidelines could cover topics such as outcomes, conduct, as well as user and Peer Supporter rights and responsibilities.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contractual agreements should not be so complex that it restricts the ability to shape the peer planning support of individuals as needed for their specific needs/circumstances.DSP will have to engage with CAM and OSD Legal to understand scope of peer contracts that can be established while ensuring defined legal responsibilitiesContracts will be signed between persons seeking support and Peer Supporters, outlining hours, code of conduct, etc.Further exploration is needed into the impacts on someone who has a legal substitute decision maker. Coordinating Organizations will need guidance on how to approach this scenario.

Maximum Amount of Hours

Overview	Setting a cap on the amount of time allocated to PSP ensures the scope and budget of each plan does not exceed a reasonable amount. This will also allow Peer Supporters to help more users as their capacity will not be at as much of a risk. Both factors will allow more individuals to be served by the PSP Pathway.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The maximum amount of hours may be subject to change for future iterations of PSP based on learnings from initial program launch.Internal subject matter experts such as LACs and IPSCs should be consulted when determining the initial maximum amount of hours for PSP.A planning hour cap can also help provide off-ramps to DSP planning staff, in situations where further planning and dedicated support is required.Implementing a planning hour cap can also vary based upon the stream of planning support.The cap should be a soft cap with flexibility when needed if there is active planning still in place.

PSP User Program Element

Program Components:

Streams of Planning Support

Overview	Various support needs can be grouped into planning/support streams to better serve the unique needs of individuals accessing planning support. For example, a planning stream dedicated to learning how to find a job, or understanding community based resources in a specific area, would allow Peer Supporters to have a defined understanding of what they are supporting. The purpose of having multiple streams is to avoid a “one size fits all” model.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streams will have to be determined and defined and can grow with the program over time.• Introducing planning support streams would allow the program to launch and grow organically as DSP better understands participant needs in community.• A process will need to be in place for when individuals want to access more than one stream.

Peer Supporter Components & Requirements

Program Components:

PSP Compensation

Overview	Peer Supporters should be compensated for their work on PSP. This would create a job opportunity for individuals while also recognizing and valuing the significance of their skills and perspectives.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A compensation amount will have to be determined.• Peer Supporter compensation will have to be accounted for in the PSP budget.• How Peer Supporters receive their compensation will have to be determined as well as who will be responsible for its administration

Eligible Peer Supporters

Overview	People eligible to become a Peer Supporter should include individuals with lived experience and/or family members. Within the initial iteration, it may be of interest to limit eligibility to those who have gone through planning supports with an LAC/IPSC.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are several questions that will have to be addressed to determine eligibility such as: What else makes potential Peer Supporters eligible? Have they gone through DSP themselves? What is considered lived experience? How are they identified/recruited/vetted?• Coordinating organizations will have to scope out what areas each Peer Supporter will be able to support.• The scope of Peer Supporter eligibility will have to be workshopped with advisory and internal groups.• Limiting initial eligible Peer Supporter requirements would allow the program to grow organically as DSP better understands the needs of individuals in community.• Guidelines may have to be established to determine the ratio of individuals in the Peer Supporter role that are first voice vs families.• It will be needed to assess what is required to ensure the safety of individuals and Peer Supporters.• Timeline will need to be considered if the project team is looking to have the initial eligibility of Peer Supporters to be those who have gone through planning supports with an LAC/IPSC as these roles are still being rolled out.

Peer Supporter Components & Requirements

Program Components:

Peer Supporter Term Limit

Overview	Establishing a term limit for how long Peer Supporters can serve PSP will create opportunities for more individuals to have experience supporting peers. This will provide a natural off ramp for Peer Supporters who are not aligning with the goals of PSP and practice and can also help grow the natural peer networks that exist within communities.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Term limits can be set forth in an established PSP contractual agreement.• Terms should be staggered so all Peer Supporters are not renewing at once.• There should be a reapplication process which will help retain high demand Peer Supporters.• PSP will not be able to guarantee the hours a peer supporter may offer as it will be based on drawing from a roster of potential Peer Supporters who will be matched with individuals.

Targeted Recurring Training

Overview	Standardized training program for involved Peer Supporters will be required to prepare Peer Supporters to provide effective planning support while honoring lived experience and ensuring consistency in messaging between PSP delivery and DSP. This training is to be delivered by a 3 rd party Coordinating Organization.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training will have to be offered on a recurring basis to ensure ongoing Peer Supporter development and program quality.• It is recommended that DSP establishes key considerations/an outline for training that coordinating organizations can use to develop and deliver their training. This will have to be built into the RFP scope of the training.• Ensuring training and supporting the roster of Peer Supporters is the primary role of the 3rd party organizations.• Coordinating Organizations could participate in baseline training provided by DSP.• The system built for Home Share could be duplicated for PSP.

Peer Supporter Components & Requirements

Program Components:

Peer Supporter Concern Resolution Process

Overview	In circumstances where there is a concern or conflict between the Peer Supporter and individuals, there should be a process in place for complaints to be received and a clear process of how complaints are to be addressed.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This process should be incorporated into a signed agreement between the Peer Supporter and the individual.• It should be made clear that DSP is not responsible for the relationship between the Peer Supporter and the individual, however a mitigation process will be required to protect individuals from Peer Supporters who have had multiple, or any, active complaints filed about them.• DSP will have to engage with OSD legal to understand legal implications and required oversight.

Job Experience

Overview	The PSP Pathway should be designed to build on the existing strengths of Peer Supporters and develop transferrable skills for future job opportunities. The benefits of PSP for Peer Supporters should be clearly expressed to the Peer Supporters.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transferrable skills commonly developed through PSP should be documented and presented to Peer Supporters and individuals accessing PSP.• This should naturally provide capacity building in community.

PSP Administration & Program Coordination

Program Components:

Internal DSP Staff Coordinator

Overview	An Internal DSP Staff Coordinator serves as the central program administrator responsible for provincial oversight, ensuring consistency in service delivery while maintaining regional responsiveness. This role bridges provincial standards and regional implementation, providing guidance and support to regional hubs and affiliated organizations delivering peer planning services. This mirrors ISANs and can help PSP organically grow.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An understanding of planning frameworks will be a necessary component of this role.• This role should be positioned within the DSP administrative structure with clear reporting lines.• Job requirements will need to be developed, could be considered to link program oversight to an existing DSP Coordinator role.• This role would support program evaluation, future modifications an possible financial management/oversight as DSP expands PSP operations.• A manager of planner role could also be considered.• A provincial connection would be required.• There would need to be consideration into ensuring the program is not an administrative burden, this role may require additional help from a program admin officer.

Third Party Coordination and Delivery

Overview	The program will be coordinated by a 3 rd party who will lead service delivery, while in contact with the DSP program lead. This organization will serve as the primary connection point for individuals accessing PSP and Peer Supporters.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSP will need to pursue external procurement through a traditional RFP or Alt-P approaches.• The Coordinating Organization will have to take into account cultural and regional perspective through their service delivery.

PSP Administration & Program Coordination

Program Components:

PSP Matching	
Overview	The Coordinating Organization will be responsible for maintaining the roster of Peer Supporters and matching individuals accessing PSP with a Peer Supporter who has common or comparable attributes.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Coordinating Organization will have to help the person entering PSP by going through the roster with them to help find the right match.• If there is not a match for what is needed there could be an off ramp to LACs that could ensure individuals are not waiting indefinitely for support.• If established, PSP specific planning streams could help facilitate peer support matching.• When matching Peer Supporters to PSP users, it will be important to consider which attributes a Peer Supporter possess and whether they align with the PSP applicant's needs. For example, if an individual's needs are based largely upon navigating physical accessibility barriers in their community, their Peer Supporter should have lived experience with such.

Program Growth	
Overview	Growing the program organically will be important to align PSP supports with DSP needs as community-based supports expand from the Remedy. As such, starting the program within a more defined scope (planning streams, Peer Supporter requirements, PSP eligibility) will allow the program to match and grow with DSP demand.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A program expansion map can be established to help understand growth opportunities once the initial program is launched.• Starting with a defined scope will also ensure that Peer Supporter recruitment aligns with PSP needs across the regions.• As the program grows, identifying recruitment pathways for Peer Supporters will be important.• Starting off with a more defined scope will ease implementation and allow DSP to gain insights from an early iteration of PSP and adapt it as required.

PSP Administration & Program Coordination

Program Components:

Dedicated Program Funding

Overview	PSP will require dedicated funding to support provincial coordination, regional implementation, and direct service delivery. The funding model will need to balance program requirements with regional flexibility, ensuring equitable access across Nova Scotia while recognizing regional variations in program uptake and delivery.
Implementation Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding allocation will be required from DSP to understand program capacity and size.• Funding will allow the program to determine the amount of peers supporters it can take on.• Funding scope will determine the capacity for 3rd party support in PSP delivery and responsibility of internal vs external resources.• Funding can be delivered as “start up funding” in order to organically grow the PSP model, recognizing that uptake, training of Peer Supporters, and delivery will take time to become established.• Appropriate compensation rates for Peer Supporters will need to be established.