

PERSONAL CARE  
ATTENDANT  
COMPETENCY  
DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

# Introduction and Overview

A highly competent personal care attendant workforce is critical to the well-being and safety of individuals who need support while living in residential care and community-based settings. Personal care attendants include frontline workers who help older adults or people with disabilities in a variety of settings. Personal care attendants require a significant amount of focused training, retraining, mentoring and coaching to gain the skills needed to care for an aging population with complicated health and social care needs.

The LeadingAge Workforce Cabinet has been working since April 2012 to develop tools that providers of long-term services and supports (LTSS) can use to develop and strengthen the aging services workforce across the full continuum of staff and settings. During this multi-year effort, the cabinet identified a set of skills, knowledge and behaviors that it believes will help personal care attendants deliver effective supports and services across a variety of positions and LTSS settings, including:

- Continuing care retirement communities.
- Nursing homes.
- Assisted living communities.
- Home health agencies.
- Home and community-based services settings.
- Affordable senior housing communities.

## *Structure of this Guide*

The *Personal Care Attendant Competency Development Guide* is based on a Personal Care Attendant Competency Model featuring four broad competency areas:

1. Technical Skills.
2. Applied Understanding.
3. Interpersonal Skills.
4. Self-Directed Care.

# Personal Care Attendant Competency Model



For each broad competency area, the *Personal Care Attendant Competency Development Guide* presents:

- Domains designed to ground each competency in observable behaviors.
- Knowledge areas and key behaviors that demonstrate competency within each domain.
- A checklist of specific tasks associated with performing the job function.

The pyramid-shaped graphic on page 3 depicts how personal care attendant competencies become more specialized, and how personal care attendants require higher level skills, over time. The base of the model (in blue) includes the foundational attributes for technical competence. The next domain (in dark green) includes the application of technical skills to the care setting. The highest domains (in light green and light blue) require interpersonal skills and competencies related to the delivery of self-directed care.

## How to Use This Guide

The *Personal Care Attendant Competency Development Guide* can be used to support workforce development efforts and prepare workers to deliver high-quality services and supports. Frontline supervisors can use this guide in a variety of ways, including:

- **Continuing education:** Providers can review the competencies to identify skills that are critical to the organization and that may need further development among specific personal care attendants or across the personal care attendant workforce as a whole. Continuing education can be tailored to address those learning needs.
- **Performance evaluations:** The competencies can be used as a foundation for a personal care attendant's performance review. Existing documents used in the performance review process can be updated to make them more competency-based.
- **On-the-job training:** Personal care attendants develop many of their skills "on the job," through experiences that are organized and monitored by a supervisor. The competency model can serve as a resource for frontline supervisors who want to craft learning activities that build the skills of personal care attendants. The behavioral descriptors contained in the guide can be used to instruct workers about desirable and undesirable behaviors related to a specific task.
- **Coaching/counseling:** Frontline supervisors can use the competencies in this guide to identify any gaps in the skill sets of individual personal care attendants. Supervisors can teach and motivate personal care attendants to improve their performance in these areas. The guide can also help supervisors identify and capitalize on teachable opportunities for staff.

## Caveats and Clarifications

Please keep the following caveats and clarifications in mind when reviewing and using the *Personal Care Attendant Competency Development Guide*.

- **Providers need to be realistic.** It is not realistic to expect the personal care attendant to possess every skill listed within the competency model. Working together, providers and personal care attendants can use this tool to identify and build up skills that are not currently present in the organization, either for a particular personal care attendant or across the organization's personal care attendant workforce.
- **"Individuals" receive services and supports.** The LeadingAge Workforce Cabinet understands that providers deliver long-term services and supports to a variety of individuals in a variety of settings.

Some providers refer to these individuals as “residents,” while other providers call them “clients.” Still others use additional terms to describe the people who receive services and supports. For clarity’s sake, this guide refers to all recipients of long-term services and supports as “individuals.”

- Family members and others support the individual. The LeadingAge Workforce Cabinet also recognizes that many individuals have a support network consisting of family members, friends, neighbors and/or other members of the community. This support network is an essential element of the long-term services and supports system and must be involved in designing, implementing and assessing an individual’s service plan. For clarity’s sake, this guide refers collectively to members of the individual’s support network as the “family/support network.”

# Technical Skills Core Competencies

Domain	Behaviors that Demonstrate Competency
<b>Assistance with Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) for individuals<sup>1</sup> as a way to maximize their independence and well-being.</li> <li>• Incorporates an understanding of the aging process and individual preferences into ADL and IADL support.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation and Observation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands formal and informal assessment practices in order to respond to the needs, desires and interests of individuals.</li> <li>• Knows the individual’s baseline and communicates changes to a supervisor or other appropriate person.</li> </ul>
<b>Infection Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies principles of infection control in all activities, and uses standard precautions as indicated.</li> <li>• Demonstrates consistent and appropriate hand-washing techniques, including use of hand-sanitizing agents.</li> </ul>
<b>Nutrition and Meal Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitates healthy nutrition by assisting the individual with meal planning, food preparation and serving, and food shopping and handling, in accordance with the individual’s preferences and plans. Ensures the individual is well nourished.</li> <li>• Understands and promotes the importance of good nutrition and hydration.</li> </ul>
<b>Providing Services and Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements and coordinates the plan of care to provide emotional and physical support to the individual.</li> <li>• Conducts outreach and engagement to address the individual’s basic needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Role of Direct Care Worker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the role of the direct care worker in relation to other team members and individuals receiving services in various long-term services and supports settings.</li> <li>• Understands how a personal care attendant’s approach can affect an individual’s behavior. Exhibits appropriate responses to the family/support networks.</li> <li>• Understands the boundaries of his/her job description and scope of practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and Emergency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that the environment promotes personal safety for individuals.</li> <li>• Adheres to procedures necessary to maintain a safe environment and minimize risks. Practices actions to take in response to emergencies.</li> <li>• Focuses on injury prevention by promptly identifying and reporting potential hazards that threaten an individual’s safety.</li> <li>• Recognizes and responds to common life-threatening injuries or illnesses by providing appropriate interventions, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> This guide refers to all recipients of long-term services and supports as “individuals.”

# Checklists

## Assistance with Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living

Supports activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living in a way that maximizes the individual's independence and well-being, reflects an understanding of the aging process, and respects individual preferences.

- Assists individuals in meeting their physical needs, including feeding, bathing, dressing, grooming, personal hygiene and toileting. Increases the individual's independence by assisting with activities of daily living that build on the individual's strengths and capabilities. Provides skills training when needed.
- Assists individuals in carrying out instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), as directed by the individual and his/her plan, to maximize independence, quality of life and community living. IADLs might include housework, shopping, meal preparation, transportation and laundry.

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## Evaluation and Observation

Understands and uses formal and informal assessment practices to respond to the needs, desires and interests of individuals, determine the individual's baseline, and communicate changes to a supervisor or other appropriate person.

- Initiates or assists in gathering and summarizing information from multiple sources, including formal and informal networks.
- Reviews and discusses findings from various assessments and evaluations that inform individualized services and plans.
- Periodically conducts a thorough review of the individual's progress and achievement of goals to inform modifications to the plan and services. Seeks input from the individual and the family/support network regarding their satisfaction with the individual's progress.
- Conducts observations from a culturally relevant perspective and uses the results to support the independence, health and wellness of individuals.
- Records information accurately.
- Reports observed changes in an individual.

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## Infection Control

Applies principles of infection control in all activities, including consistent and appropriate hand-washing techniques.

- Uses consistent and appropriate hand-washing procedures, as well as consistent and appropriate application, removal and disposal of gloves.
- Assists individuals in applying principles of infection control and prevention in all activities.
- Uses standard precautions and controls as indicated.
- Prepares soiled linen for laundry carefully to prevent personal contamination and transfer to other individuals.
- Identifies common infectious diseases.
- Understands and applies principles governing the spread of infection and the role of the personal care attendant in breaking the chain of infection.

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## Nutrition and Meal Preparation

Facilitates healthy nutrition in accordance with the individual's preferences and plans, while understanding and promoting the importance of good nutrition and hydration.

- Assists individuals with meal planning, food preparation and serving, food shopping and handling, in accordance with the individual's preferences and plans.
- Recognizes personal, cultural and religious variations in diet.
- Assists with preparation of simple modified diets.
- Supports individuals to eat and comply with a medically recommended diet.
- Facilitates use of assistive devices that could enable individuals to be more independent and feel more in control of the meal-planning and eating process.
- Identifies individuals at nutritional risk, and implements measures to minimize weight loss, as directed by the care plan.
- Complies with infection control procedures when preparing, handling and serving food.
- Provides for a pleasant dining experience.
- Assists individuals with hydration.
- Communicates to appropriate personnel the individual's eating-related difficulties, such as coughing or choking.

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## Providing Supports and Services

Implements and coordinates the individual's plan of care, while conducting outreach and engagement to address the individual's basic needs.

- Identifies issues and strategies to maximize health and wellness of individuals in the areas of physical, spiritual, emotional and social well-being, in accordance with their preferences and plan of care.
- Identifies and addresses concerns about services that are voiced by the individual or the family/support network.
- Equips the individual with the knowledge and skills needed to maintain his/her health and prevent diseases.
- Supports the individual in applying health and medical treatments, including assisting with the use of prescribed equipment, supplies and devices.
- Creates a comfortable and safe environment. Organizes and provides safety-related learning opportunities.
- Identifies potential risks, crisis situations and behaviors. Uses appropriate procedures to de-escalate the situation and minimize the potential for danger, using strategies specific to the environment and as outlined in the individual's plan.
- Organizes and conducts group activities.
- Preserves dignity and privacy while providing person-centered care.
- Assists individuals with self-administration of medications, in accordance with state regulations and organizational policies and procedures.
- Completes personal care for all individuals in a consistent manner, without rushing the individual and with a respectful and caring attitude.
- Documents care provided to the individual.

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## Role of Direct Care Worker

Understands the role of the direct care worker in relation to the scope of practice, to other team members, and to individuals receiving services in various long-term services and supports settings.

- Understands and can articulate the importance of the relationship between individuals, family caregivers and the direct care worker, and the impact of that relationship on quality of care.
- Understands and can articulate the role of the direct care worker in relation to other team members, the individual and the family/support network in various settings.
- Knows his/her job responsibilities in caring for the individual.
- Understands the structure and regulations of the organization.
- Understands and can articulate the purpose of the individual's service or care plan.
- Follows care plans.

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## Safety and Emergency

Helps to create a safe environment and minimize risks for individuals by adhering to necessary procedures, practicing actions to take in response to emergencies, promptly identifying and reporting potential hazards that threaten an individual's safety, and recognizing and responding to common life-threatening injuries or illnesses.

- Complies with relevant safety standards and regulations within the context of the individual's plan, as appropriate.
- Routinely identifies environmental safety hazards. Assesses risks and the methods used to prevent accidents, including falls, slips and tripping hazards. Uses safety precautions.
- Maintains the individual's health and safety in the event of emergency. Implements emergency procedures.
- Assists and educates individuals to develop and retain safe community living skills.
- Responds to emergencies by providing first aid, CPR and safety procedures based on the needs of individuals.
- Uses proper body mechanics, equipment and safe transfer techniques at all times.
- Understands and implements the role of the personal care attendant in an emergency.

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# Applied Understanding Core Competencies

Domain	Knowledge and Behaviors that Demonstrate Competency
<b>Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands his/her responsibility to identify, prevent and report types and indicators of abuse, according to state law.</li> </ul>
<b>Community and Service Networking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows about formal and informal supports that are available in the community.</li> <li>• Knows how to assist the individual<sup>2</sup> and the family/support network in identifying and accessing community resources.</li> <li>• Reports the needs of the individual and family/support network to the immediate supervisor or manager.</li> </ul>
<b>Dementia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands dementia disorders and behaviors associated with dementia.</li> </ul>
<b>Grief and End-of-Life Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the physical and emotional aspects of the dying process, as well as coping strategies relevant to grieving and/or dying.</li> <li>• Understands how cultural and family differences influence the death and dying process.</li> <li>• Understands advance directives and living wills.</li> </ul>
<b>Professionalism and Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respects individual rights in compliance with relevant laws, policies and regulations that impact the delivery of long-term services and supports.</li> <li>• Manages stress and personal health as it relates to effective service provision.</li> <li>• Understands how to take appropriate actions in a professional way.</li> <li>• Can identify, use, understand and manage emotions in a positive way to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and overcome challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>Results Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets organizational goals and expectations of the individual, and makes decisions that produce high-quality results.</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding and Application of Knowledge about Aging, Chronic Disease and Physical Disabilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the aging process, chronic disease and disabilities, and how they affect an individual's care.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> This guide refers to all recipients of long-term services and supports as "individuals."

# Checklists

## Abuse

Understands his/her responsibility to identify, prevent and report types and indicators of abuse, according to state law.

- Understands the types and indicators of abuse as determined by state law and organizational policies, and implements methods to prevent:
  - Physical abuse.
  - Psychological abuse.
  - Sexual abuse.
  - Involuntary seclusion.
  - Exploitation.
  - Neglect.
  - Improper use of physical and chemical restraints.
- Understands the rights of individuals to be free from abuse, mistreatment and neglect.
- Understands procedures for reporting instances of potential abuse, mistreatment or neglect to the appropriate supervisor.

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## Community and Service Networking

Knows about and helps individuals and family/support networks access formal and informal supports in the community, and reports their needs to an immediate supervisor or manager.

- Knows informal and formal support systems and where to access community resources.
- Knows how to coordinate and support the access of individuals to available community resources, based on their needs.
- Understands how to promote the use of informal supports (including family, friends, neighbors and coworkers) within an individual's neighborhood, community and workplace.
- Knows the importance of reporting the needs of individuals and their family/support networks to an immediate supervisor or manager.

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## Dementia

Understands dementia disorders and behaviors associated with dementia.

- Recognizes disorders associated with aging, including the types and stages of dementia.
- Understands and manages behaviors associated with dementia.
- Knows effective communication and intervention techniques for individuals with dementia.
- Understands the effects of psychoactive medications, and observes individuals for side-effects.

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## Grief and End-of-Life Care

Understands the physical and emotional aspects of the dying process, and coping strategies relevant to grieving and/or dying.

- Knows and recognizes the physical and emotional aspects of the dying process.
- Understands the coping strategies relevant to grieving and/or dying.
- Understands how cultural and family differences influence the death and dying process.
- Is familiar with community resources that can help the individual and family/support network during the death and dying process.
- Understands advance directives and living wills and their influence on the dying process.

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## Professionalism and Ethics

Strives for effective service provision using strategies to manage his/her stress and personal health, takes appropriate actions in a professional way, manages emotions in order to communicate effectively, empathizes with others, and overcomes challenges.

- Understands his/her responsibilities and commitments as a personal care attendant.
- Understands all professional activities in accordance with laws, regulations, policies, confidentiality issues and ethical codes.
- Understands how to act professionally and how to serve as a role model for peers, particularly relating to timeliness, attendance, accountability and appropriate appearance for the work environment.
- Understands how to promote overall independence. Supports independent and consumer-directed living.
- Understands how to promote an individual's rights to privacy, respect and dignity. Informs the individual of his/her rights.
- Respects the confidentiality of the individual's information in all verbal and written communication, including email and text messages. Educates colleagues about confidentiality rules and procedures.
- Interacts with individuals, coworkers, supervisors and all others in a professional manner.
- Understands work environment boundaries and scope of practice.
- Understands and uses emotional intelligence to better communicate and empathize with others, and overcomes challenges.

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## Results Orientation

Meets organizational goals and expectations of the individual, and makes decisions that produce high-quality results.

- Responds to the individual's needs in a timely, professional and respectful manner.
- Understands the link between what the organization is trying to achieve and his/her role in producing the outcome.
- Improves personal performance and results.
- Complies with quality of life, quality of care, and service standards.

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## Understanding and Application of Knowledge about Aging, Chronic Disease and Physical Disabilities

Understands the aging process, chronic disease and disabilities, and how they affect an individual's care.

- Understands basic anatomy and physiology of body systems and their functions.
- Can define and recognize signs and symptoms of aging, common disease and conditions of the body, cognitive impairment, and anxiety and depression.
- Can identify specific needs of individuals who are dying or who have:
  - Mental illness.
  - Intellectual and developmental disabilities.
  - Physical disabilities.
  - Sensory deprivation.

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<sup>3</sup> This guide refers to all recipients of long-term services and supports as "individuals."

# Interpersonal Skills Core Competencies

Domain	Behaviors that Demonstrate Competency
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes responsibility for all work activities and personal actions, and recognizes the impact of his/her behavior on others.</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the challenges facing individuals,<sup>3</sup> including human rights, legal, administrative and financial issues.</li> <li>• Identifies and uses effective advocacy strategies to secure needed supports and protect individual rights.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to establish a supportive and collaborative relationship with individuals and their family/support networks, as well as with coworkers.</li> <li>• Communicates in a nonjudgmental manner that minimizes assumptions or bias.</li> <li>• Communicates changes in an individual's condition to a supervisor or appropriate person.</li> </ul>
<b>Education, Training and Self-Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and seeks opportunities to improve his/her knowledge, skills and abilities through professional development and performance evaluations. These self-improvement activities are appropriate to the personal care attendant position and reflect emerging evidence-based practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Empathy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sympathizes with and shares the emotions or feelings of others.</li> </ul>
<b>Individual Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports individuals to lead self-determined lives by providing information to help them make informed decisions. Advocates on behalf of individuals.</li> <li>• Creates an environment in which individuals can be as independent as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Informed Action Based on Scope of Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solves problems by generating, evaluating and implementing solutions. Resolves conflicts.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can identify, use, understand and manage emotions in a positive way to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and overcome challenges.</li> <li>• Interacts effectively with individuals, their family/support networks, and staff members to support an individual's quality of life and care.</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands the importance of a team approach and collaborates with others to care for individuals.</li> </ul>

# Checklists

## Accountability

Takes responsibility for all work activities and personal actions, and recognizes the impact of his/her behavior on others.

- Accepts responsibility for the results of his/her work and follows through on commitments.
- Implements decisions that have been agreed upon by the team.
- Maintains confidentiality of sensitive information.
- Acknowledges and learns from mistakes without blaming others. Recognizes the impact of his/her behavior on others.

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## Advocacy

Understands the challenges facing individuals, and uses effective advocacy strategies to secure needed supports and protect individual rights.

- Helps individuals protect themselves, and keeps individuals safe.
- Uses laws, services and community resources to support and educate individuals so they can secure needed supports and protect their rights.
- Advocates on behalf of individuals and their family/support networks.
- Assists the individual, when appropriate, in overcoming barriers to services when the individual's service needs are not met.
- Anticipates the needs of individuals and maintains a safe environment.

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## Communication

Uses a range of effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to establish supportive, collaborative and nonjudgmental relationships, and communicates changes in an individual's condition to a supervisor or appropriate person.

- Uses effective, respectful and culturally appropriate communication skills to make connections with individuals and their family/support networks. Employs active listening skills that include paraphrasing, asking open-ended questions, and giving full attention to the individual. Uses the individual's and the family/support network's preferred language, when possible.
- Uses verbal and nonverbal communication appropriate to the communication abilities and preferences of individuals and their family/support networks.
- Uses and stays current with technical terms, as needed, for effective service delivery. Explains technical terms, as necessary, to ensure that individuals and their family/support networks understand those terms.
- Uses effective written communication to describe care interventions and observations of individuals.
- Communicates in a nonjudgmental manner that minimizes assumptions or bias.

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## Education, Training and Self-Development

Identifies and seeks opportunities to improve his/her knowledge, skills and abilities through evidence-based professional development and performance evaluations.

- Completes required training, education and certification. Seeks opportunities to improve knowledge, skills and abilities through continuing education and other strategies.
- Seeks feedback from individuals and their family/support networks, as appropriate. Uses performance evaluations and feedback to improve performance and shape professional development goals.
- Provides information and support to educate individuals, their family/support networks, coworkers and community members about issues affecting them.
- Learns about and uses evidence-based skills, as identified in his/her professional development plan.
- Learns and remains current with appropriate documentation protocols, tools and technologies. Follows policies and procedures.

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## Empathy

Sympathizes with and shares the emotions or feelings of others.

- Identifies his/her attitudes toward aging.
- Respectfully understands what others are experiencing and adjusts care or approach accordingly.
- Demonstrates empathy for individuals with mental and/or physical challenges.

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## Individual Empowerment

Supports individuals in leading a self-determined life by providing information, advocating on behalf of individuals, and creating an environment in which individuals can be as independent as possible.

- Supports individuals in identifying goals, developing strategies, making informed choices, and following through on responsibilities.
- Promotes and ensures that individuals and their family/support networks are involved in the design of support services. Makes inquiries about satisfaction with current services and follows through on recommendations.
- Supports individuals to advocate for themselves by increasing awareness of self-advocacy methods, providing information about peer support and self-advocacy groups, and helping individuals speak on their own behalf.
- Provides information about human, legal, civil rights and other resources. Supports access to information that allows individuals to make informed decisions about community living, work and social relationships.
- Assesses the influence of key characteristics of individuals, family/support networks and the community.
- Supports an individual's right to have decision-making authority.

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## Informed Action Based on Scope of Practice

Solves problems and resolves conflicts by generating, evaluating and implementing solutions.

- Effectively recognizes and resolves problems and conflicts. Uses resources to obtain information. Generates a variety of alternative approaches to resolving a problem or conflict. Knows when and who to ask for assistance in problem resolution.
- Engages in purposeful and organized thinking.

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## Relationship Skills

Can identify, use, understand and manage emotions in a positive way to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and overcome challenges.

- Understands and respects the leadership role of family/support networks in planning, guiding and supporting service delivery. Works with and for individuals, as appropriate, based on the individual's experience.
- Establishes and maintains appropriate social, emotional and physical boundaries with individuals and their family/support networks.
- Uses clear, effective and respectful communication and listening skills in all interactions with the individual's family/support network.
- Provides support that is informed by and respects the individual's right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Recognizes sources of conflict in interpersonal exchanges.

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## Teamwork

Understands the importance of a team approach, and collaborates with others to care for individuals.

- Identifies members of the care team in various long-term services and supports settings.
- Interacts effectively with others to achieve team goals, consistent with the team structure and lines of authority.
- Contributes as part of a multidisciplinary team and participates in team-building and group processes to meet the needs of coworkers and individuals.

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<sup>4</sup> This guide refers to all recipients of long-term services and supports as "individuals."

# Self-Directed Care Core Competencies

Domain	Knowledge and Behaviors that Demonstrate Competency
<p><b>Cultural Competency</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values diversity. Is sensitive and understands individuals<sup>4</sup> and staff from diverse backgrounds and situations.</li> <li>• Provides supports and services based on the unique needs of an individual in a culturally competent way.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Individual Rights and Choices</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures the legal rights and choices of individuals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Individualizing Care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses the influence of key individual, family and community characteristics, and provides the most appropriate, person-centered services to support the individual’s preferences, strengths, interests and goals.</li> <li>• Modifies the individual’s plan and services based on the characteristics and needs of the individual and on the experience of the family/support network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-Care</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies resources to maintain personal wellness, and strategies for responding to abusive behavior by individuals.</li> </ul>

# Checklists

## Cultural Competency

Values diversity and provides supports and services based on the unique needs of an individual in a culturally competent way.

- Exhibits sensitivity and respect for others who have different perspectives, customs and characteristics.
- Understands and works with individuals and staff who have different backgrounds and characteristics, including:
  - Ethnicity.
  - Religious and spiritual beliefs.
  - Cultural orientation.
  - Linguistics.
  - Physical appearance.
  - Gender.
  - Sexual orientation.
  - Disability.
  - Developmental level.
  - Age.
  - Health status.
- Recognizes his/her personal biases, stereotypes and prejudices, and does not allow them to interfere with interactions.
- Uses verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for an individual's language and cognitive limitations.
- Adapts supports and services, in a culturally competent way, to the characteristics of individuals and their family/support networks. Employs these adaptations in daily practices and interactions.

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## Individual Rights and Choices

Ensures the legal rights and choices of individuals.

- Interprets and explains the individual's rights and right to self-determination.
- Assists and supports the individual in balancing appropriate risks and choices with the right to be protected from harm.
- Facilitates the individual's right to make personal choices and accommodate his/her needs.
- Provides for an individual's privacy and dignity at all times.

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## Individualizing Care

Provides person-centered services that support the individual's preferences, strengths, interests and goals, and are tailored to the characteristics, needs and experiences of the individual and the family/support network.

- Assists in developing and implementing an individualized plan and services to achieve specific outcomes based on the individual's strengths, preferences, needs and goals.
- Involves the family/support network in developing and implementing an individualized plan and services, as directed by the individual receiving services.
- Reviews progress toward reaching the individual's specific outcomes. Modifies plans and services based on individual and family experience. Ensures services are person-centered.
- Fosters a supportive environment. Provides person-centered supports and services to help the individual develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve goals.
- Ensures effective service provision that is consistent with agency standards and in compliance with applicable administrative rules.
- Communicates to appropriate personnel when changes to the care plan are needed.

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## Self-Care

Identifies resources to maintain personal wellness, and strategies for responding to abusive behavior by individuals.

- Is familiar with resources for maintaining personal wellness.
- Understands the importance of managing stress, and uses strategies to maintain personal health.
- Identifies strategies to respond to abusive behavior by individuals.
- Uses organizational skills and time management techniques.

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# Resources

[Act WorkKeys Occupational Profile](#)

[Alaskan Core Competencies for Direct Care Workers in Health and Human Services](#)

[Arizona Direct Care Workforce Initiative: Competencies for Homemakers, Personal Care and Attendant Care Workers](#)

[Department of Labor \(DOL\): Long Term Care Supports and Services Competency Model \(LTCSS\)](#)

[Direct Care Alliance Personal Care and Support Credential](#)

[Good Samaritan Society Advanced CNA Training Series](#)

[Human Services Research Institute: Community Support Skill Standards](#)

[Iowa Direct Care Worker Advisory Council: Description of Training Modules](#)

[KANSASWORKS: Health Support Specialist](#)

[Michigan Dementia Coalition: Knowledge and Skills for Dementia Care – Guide for Direct Care Workers](#)

[National Alliance for Direct Support Professional Competencies](#)

[National Direct Service Workforce Resource Center: Core Competencies for the Direct Service Workforce](#)

[PHI Competencies for Personal Care Workers](#)

[University of Minnesota, Research and Training Center on Community Living: College of Direct Support Core Curriculum for Direct Support Professionals](#)

[University of Minnesota, Research and Training Center on Community Living: Community Residential Core Competencies](#)