



DSP Award Categories

Thomas Awards

NADSP Competency-Based Award Categories & Nomination Guidelines

1. Participant Empowerment Award

Recognizes: A DSP who actively empowers individuals to lead self-directed lives.

Criteria:

- Promotes choice and independence in everyday activities
 - Supports informed decision-making
 - Encourages and facilitates goal setting by the individual
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2. Assessment Award

Recognizes: A DSP who effectively uses formal and informal assessments to better understand and support individuals.

Criteria:

- Participates in assessment processes
 - Applies assessment findings to improve support plans
 - Shares observations that enhance individual outcomes
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3. Community & Service Networking Award

Recognizes: A DSP who excels at connecting individuals with community resources and networks.

Criteria:

- Actively facilitates inclusion in the community
 - Connects individuals with opportunities for involvement
 - Advocates for access to local services
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4. Community Living Skills & Supports Award



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Recognizes: A DSP who skillfully teaches and supports daily living and independence.

Criteria:

- Encourages personal growth in living skills
 - Promotes safety and dignity in personal routines
 - Tailors supports to individual preferences and needs
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5. Education, Training & Self-Development Award

Recognizes: A DSP committed to continuous learning and professional development.

Criteria:

- Participates in training and education opportunities
 - Seeks feedback and integrates it into practice
 - Serves as a role model for lifelong learning
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6. Advocacy Award

Recognizes: A DSP who actively defends and promotes the rights of individuals.

Criteria:

- Supports individuals in voicing their choices and concerns
 - Acts against discrimination or abuse
 - Encourages civic and social participation
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7. Vocational, Educational & Career Support Award

Recognizes: A DSP who helps individuals explore and achieve career and educational goals.

Criteria:

- Facilitates skill-building for employment or education



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- Supports job placement or retention
 - Encourages self-sufficiency through meaningful work
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8. Crisis Prevention & Intervention Award

Recognizes: A DSP who excels in preventing and responding to crisis situations.

Criteria:

- Maintains composure under stress
 - Uses de-escalation techniques effectively
 - Supports emotional recovery and safety planning
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9. Organizational Participation Award

Recognizes: A DSP who contributes positively to the organization's mission and teamwork.

Criteria:

- Participates in team meetings and initiatives
 - Models professionalism and dependability
 - Helps create a positive work environment
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10. Building and Maintaining Relationships Award

Recognizes: A DSP who fosters strong, respectful, and trusting relationships.

Criteria:

- Demonstrates empathy and genuine connection
- Encourages social development of the individual
- Supports and respects relationships important to the person



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