



AMSI STANDARD MCC1 - Managing Mid-Month Caseload Changes for Direct Support Workers (DSWs)

Purpose:

This guide addresses the challenge of mid-month caseload changes due to high staff turnover. It outlines recommended steps for support service organizations to minimize additional stress on Direct Support Workers (DSWs), especially when they are already underpaid and overloaded. This guide is developed in line with AMSI principles of quality, respect, and sustainability in employment support.

Scope:

Applies to all support service providers managing caseloads of DSWs who deliver employment and community-based services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

1. Advance Notification and Justification

1.1 Sudden mid-month caseload changes should be treated as emergency exceptions, not routine practice.

1.2 When unavoidable, written justification must be provided by management to the affected DSW and documented in the internal staffing log.

1.3 Organizations should commit to a minimum of **5 business days' notice** before reassigning caseloads, unless the change is due to an urgent client safety issue.

2. Orientation and Handoff Requirements

2.1 DSWs must be given a proper orientation before assuming responsibility for a new individual. This includes:

- Review of individual's support goals and behavior guidelines
- Overview of worksite conditions and supervisory contacts
- Briefing by the outgoing DSW or supervisor (if available)

2.2 New participants must be gradually introduced to the DSW whenever possible.

2.3 If Life Plan (LP) meetings are scheduled within the same month as reassignment, the DSW **should not be required to lead or report** in the meeting unless they have had at least **4 documented sessions** with the individual.

3. Workload Adjustment and Documentation Requirements

3.1 DSWs should not be expected to retroactively complete notes for participants they have not met.

3.2 When a caseload is changed mid-month, the required documentation count (e.g., OPWDD's 4 notes/month) must be adjusted proportionally unless the new DSW has had sufficient opportunity for visits.

3.3 Supervisors must support DSWs by:

- Rescheduling LP meetings as needed
- Providing backup coverage to meet documentation requirements

4. Emotional and Operational Support

4.1 Caseload changes must be discussed with the DSW in a private meeting (virtual or in-person) with the supervisor to:

- Explain the context of the change
- Offer scheduling flexibility or mental health support resources

4.2 Supervisors should check in with the affected DSW within one week to assess adjustment needs.

5. Compensation and Recognition

5.1 If DSWs are expected to absorb caseload changes mid-month without additional staffing, organizations **should provide one of the following**:

- Compensatory time
- Shift bonuses for extra documentation tasks

- Public recognition in team communications

5.2 AMSI recommends organizations track and report turnover-related caseload burdens as part of their internal quality assurance monitoring.

6. Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance

6.1 CQL-accredited organizations must comply with the Basic Assurances®, particularly:

- **Factor 8: Staff Resources and Support**, which requires that staff have the training, support, and resources needed to carry out their responsibilities.
- **Indicator 8b:** "Support staff have the required competencies, training, and support to carry out their job responsibilities."

6.2 In New York State, providers must follow OPWDD's service documentation and person-centered planning requirements, including:

- **ADM #2015-01** – Service Documentation Requirements for Community Habilitation Services. This ADM remains in effect in 2025 and outlines essential documentation needed to support billing and service verification.
- **ADM #2018-06R2** – Transition to People First Care Coordination and Life Plan Requirements. This version, effective through 2025, clarifies provider responsibilities in the person-centered planning process.
- **ADM #2025-01** – Pathway to Employment Program Requirements. This new ADM, effective April 1, 2025, sets updated standards for service delivery and billing under employment services.

6.3 Failing to follow these standards may result in:

- **Noncompliance citations** during audits
 - **Corrective action plans** being mandated
 - **Loss of accreditation status (CQL)**
 - **Financial penalties or disallowances (OPWDD)**
 - **Impact on Medicaid billing eligibility**
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Closing Note:

Sudden caseload changes caused by turnover must be managed responsibly. Direct Support Workers are critical to the stability and quality of services for individuals with

IDD. This guide calls on all providers to treat DSWs with the professional respect and operational care they deserve.

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