Developmental Educator Core Competencies

Introduction

The Core Competencies operate in conjunction with the Code of Ethics and Practice for Developmental Educators (2015) the Standards for Developmental Educator Practice in Australia (2018). These documents describe the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and ethical behaviour expected of DEAI members practising in Australia.

Developmental educators practicing within the scope of practice meet the DEAI Core Competencies via formal qualification at an AQF7 (4-year bachelor) or AQF9 (master's degree) level in a disability studies discipline.

Developmental educator competencies are grouped into 9 core competencies that reflect the general areas of skill and knowledge that are deemed necessary for developmental educators to function effectively in the provision of services to people with disability and their families, in a range of settings.

The values and attitudes that underpin the core competencies of developmental educators are:

- A genuine interest in people with disability, their families, and their support services
- An empathic approach to complex human service issues
- A belief in the empowerment of people with disability and their families/carers, and
- Enthusiasm for the disability profession

In Australia, developmental educators are guided by a human rights-based and holistic biopsychosocial approach to practice. Developmental educators have knowledge of and utilise the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007), and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001).

As developmental educators we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples as the First Nations Peoples and respect their relationship to the land, sea, and waters on which we reside.

Table of Competencies:

1 Professional practice and identity as a developmental educator

1.1 Hold a set of ethical beliefs and an underpinning value system that respects and promotes the worth, dignity and uniqueness of people with disability.

1.2 Think critically and apply ethical frameworks to address inequalities and ethical issues.

1.3 Work from a human rights framework to facilitate the rights of people with disability to live and participate in community life.

1.4 Apply positive disability and human diversity perspectives to professional practice.

1.5 Empower people with disability to maximise their self-determination through access to information, choice, informed consent and/or advocacy in all decision making.

1.6 Apply person centred practices to assist people with disability to achieve their goals.

1.7 Research, analyse, problem solve, evaluate, and apply evidence-based principles, and best practice.

1.8 Utilise critical and reflective thinking processes to realistically evaluate one's own professional practice and performance.

1.9 Apply developmental theories.

1.10 Apply counselling skills.

1.11 Utilise advocacy skills to achieve desired outcomes.

1.12 Collaborate effectively with families and other professionals and understand what the role of other professionals' entails.

1.13 Show enthusiasm for the profession and articulate professional knowledge.

1.14 Coordinate a project (e.g., research, analyse, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate).

2   Contemporary understanding of disability, theory, and human diversity

2.1   Definitions and social constructs of disability, and how beliefs, attitudes and values relate to different perspectives and practices, and the experience of quality of life of individuals with disability.

2.2   Contemporary legislation, human rights, service provision models, and principles to support people with disabilities in communities.

2.3   Understanding of what constitutes human diversity and what it means for individuals to be seen as 'different'.

2.4   The use of positive labels, language, images, and presentations of disability in literature and the media.

2.5   Understanding of mutual benefits of inclusive communities for individuals with disability, their families, and the community.

2.6   Practices and attitudes that facilitate meaningful community inclusion and participation.

2.7   Person centred and rights-based approaches.

2.8   Understanding of legislative requirements in relation to duty of care and reporting obligations.

2.9   Cultural diversity as it relates to disability.

2.10 Understanding of the interface of the construct of duty-of care and dignity of risk in order to facilitate the freedom of individuals with disability to make choices.

3   Interpersonal and communication skills

3.1   Work collaboratively with professionals from diverse backgrounds.

3.2   Apply understanding of system theory approach when supporting families who have a member with a disability.

3.3   Communicate effectively with people with diverse communication abilities.

3.4   Apply effective written communication skills to share information with a diverse audience (e.g., report writing, case noting, emails).

3.5   Present information effectively to diverse audiences, in both informal and formal settings.

3.6   Work collaboratively with people with disability along with their families / caregivers and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

3.7   Demonstrate advocacy, counselling, and negotiation skills.

3.8   Apply knowledge and understanding of the types of augmented communication system that may be used by individuals to promote communication.

4 Develop, monitor, and evaluate programs and interventions to build capacity across the lifespan

4.1 Apply understanding of various strategies in order to collect and interpret data.

4.2 Apply understanding of and skills in methods of observation, including analysis and interpreting of results in relation to developmental stages.

4.3 Apply understanding of the support needs across the lifespan of families with a member who has a disability.

4.4 Write educational goals and instructional objectives that specify individual skills and behaviours, conditions, and criteria for performance.

4.5 Construct task analyses in order to develop a skill development program.

4.6 Apply understanding of instructional methods to promote generalisation and maintenance of learned skills and behaviours across settings.

4.7 Identify and evaluate reinforcer preferences.

4.8 Apply understanding of ecological inventories and the skills to write meaningful and individualised goals.

4.9 Develop, implement, and evaluate individualised skill development programs underpinned by knowledge of best practice in the field.

4.10 Teach functional skills such as communication and language, activities of daily living, emotional and social skills, leisure and recreational skills, and employment skills.

4.11 Support transitions across the lifespan, and support access and participation in the community including education.

4.12 Apply understanding of the types of conditions that require the use of an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system and the range of systems available including potential issues arising in designing AAC.

4.13 Apply understanding of AAC assessment frameworks, intervention strategies and the critical role of communication partners to facilitate the participation of people with complex communication needs in everyday life.

4.14 Contribute to the design and implementation of an AAC system, including the use of strategies that facilitate the development of communication skills.

5 Learning and behaviour support

5.1 Apply understanding of how social, behavioural, and cognitive influences, and sensory perception impact the learning process and subsequent behaviours.

5.2 Apply understanding of the relationship between communication and behaviours of concern and to identify the communicative function served by behaviours of concern.

5.3 Apply understanding of the ethical and professional issues surrounding the use of behavioural interventions.

5.4 Conduct a comprehensive functional assessment/analysis of behaviours of concern and to develop/test a hypothesis about the function of the behaviour.

5.5 Develop and implement comprehensive behavioural support plans (and/or learning and lifestyle plans), comprising positive programming and reactive strategies, and including monitoring progress, making modifications, and evaluating effective outcomes.

5.6 Utilise various differential reinforcement procedures to reduce behaviours of concern.

5.7 Teach positive alternative behaviours to replace the behaviour of concern.

5.8 Develop and implement instructional methods to promote generalisation and maintenance of learned behaviours.

5.9 Deliver training and support in positive behaviour support principles and procedures to relevant community members (e.g., parents, caregivers, and support workers).

5.10 Understand and apply policies and procedures of regulated practices regarding the use and reduction of restrictive practices and a commitment to least-restrictive practices.

6 Human development across the life span

6.1 Apply understanding of developmental and chronological ages and stages (including early childhood, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and late adulthood) and how they relate to a person with a disability, in order to design age-appropriate developmental strategies.

6.2 Apply understanding of the developmental milestones across the life span, to the administration of assessment and implementation of interventions for people with disability.

6.3 Convey information about the significance of developmental milestones to the person with a disability and their families/caregivers, in relation to developmental programmes and interventions.

6.4 Apply holistic understanding of the physical, intellectual, communication, and social/emotional growth issues related to human development across the lifespan, and how disability impacts on development.

6.5 Apply holistic view of the person and family life across life domains and settings.

6.6 Apply understanding of the interacting effects of heredity and environmental influences on human development.

6.7 Apply understanding of the effects of disability upon the individual's functioning and progression, across the developmental stages on a person's lifespan.

6.8   Prepare for and support transition across the lifespan.

6.9   Apply understanding of the grieving processes involved in disability and relationship change and supporting the needs across the lifespan of families with a member who has a disability.

7   Formal and informal assessments

7.1   Apply understanding of qualitative and quantitative research and assessments methodologies and their application.

7.2   Apply understanding of the varied methods for assessing developmental skills and behaviour across the lifespan (i.e., informal, structured, and standardised assessments).

7.3   Apply understanding of how assessment is used to develop goals and promote changes in skills and behaviour.

7.4   Determine and administer relevant assessments to effectively assess a presenting issue (e.g., functional behaviour assessment/analysis, developmental assessment, or adaptive functioning assessment).

7.5   Interpret the results of assessments in order to make recommendations and/or to develop programs/interventions that target the presenting issue.

7.6   Apply effective basic counselling skills to support formal and informal assessment.

7.7   Report on the results of the assessment, in written or verbal form, to relevant stakeholders, including families.

8   Health and wellbeing

8.1   Apply understanding of basic aspects of human biology and the effects of difficulties associated with major bodily systems (e.g., central nervous and sensory systems) on the health, wellbeing, and daily functioning of a person with a disability.

8.2   Apply understanding of the common disability types and the health implications to inform individualised support provision.

8.3   Apply understanding of health care and lifestyle issues which may affect the care, support, and education of a person with a disability.

8.4   Apply understanding of the main psychological and psychiatric conditions prevalent today and awareness of general management/treatment strategies.

8.5   Apply understanding of relationship needs and challenges for people with disability and skills that assist with developing satisfactory personal outcomes (including sexuality).

8.6   Empower people with disability to make choices about their health and lifestyle.

8.7   Apply understanding of the psycho-social impacts on quality of life.

8.8 Apply understanding of the general principles of sensory and motor systems and their effects on functioning and learning, to guide development of intervention supports.

9 Case Management / Support Coordination

9.1 Understanding of the case management process, its central roles, and functions in order to support and empower individuals with disability and/or their families.

9.2 Understanding and appreciation of the diversity of families in structure and culture and how families who have a member with a disability may be impacted.

9.3 Understanding of local support and management programs designed to support an individual's skill development and wellbeing across developmental and life domains.

9.4 Person centred practices to enable the person to articulate their individual goals and aspirations.

9.5 Understanding of eligibility and referral requirements.

9.6 Understanding of the impact of personal values and cultural perspectives on one's practice.

9.7 Understanding of the importance of self-care in case management practice.

9.8 Knowledge and understanding of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and other schemes; processes and procedures to provide assistance to individuals with disability and their families.

9.9 Counselling, negotiation, and reporting skills in the case management process.

References

World Health Organisation. (2001). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: ICF.* https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/international-classification-of-functioning-disability-and-health

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. (2007, January 24). https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html