



## WHAT STUDENTS SAY

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

*The program has validated the work I do. It has been a personal uplift to my abilities as a human services worker.*

*The program has taken students on a journey through all aspects of our lives and work. This program is one of the best things I've seen!*

*The teachers are very supportive and the students are very friendly.*

***I've learned a lot from this program. Every week I've brought some new ideas to my work.***

### ABOUT THE PROFESSION

*The most significant thing I have learned about my profession is that this is not just a job. I realize how important I am in the lives of the people I support.*

*This program has helped me understand how the field of human services has changed and how I fit in.*

### ABOUT MYSELF

*I have learned that I am smart and determined and capable of getting A's in college. I have more self-confidence now.*

*I've adjusted to fitting college into my life, my family is very supportive, and my children are helping out more.*

*I have gained self-confidence both professionally and personally in the areas I need to grow. It has been a great learning experience!*



## The Direct Support Certificate Program is available at eight community colleges:

- BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MASSBAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE



For information about the program nearest you, call the Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office at 617-542-2911.

# DIRECT SUPPORT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM



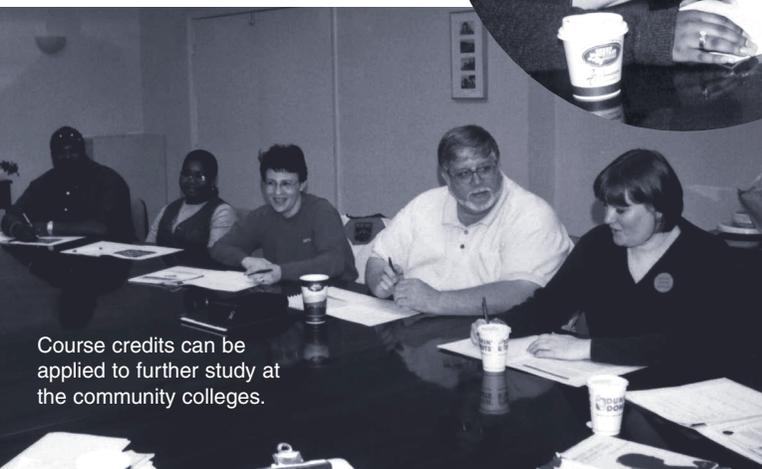
***A project of the  
Massachusetts  
Community Colleges and  
the Massachusetts  
Department of Mental  
Retardation***

# DIRECT SUPPORT Certificate Program

The Direct Support Certificate Program was created to support and enhance the careers of direct support staff in DMR-funded programs. The certificate program is a project of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) and the Massachusetts Community Colleges. This program includes community college courses in English, Human Services, Psychology, Developmental Disabilities, Counseling Methods, Group Dynamics, and Special Topics in Mental Retardation. Students also complete a Field Placement, usually focusing on a special project at their current place of employment.

The program includes 21-22 college credits and is completed in one year.

Students in the certificate program complete 21-22 credits in English, Human Services, Psychology and other subjects



Course credits can be applied to further study at the community colleges.



Courses are based on the National Community Support Skill Standards — the skills used by outstanding direct support workers in their work.

## CAREER FOCUSED

All of the courses in the Direct Support Certificate Program focus on skills used by direct support workers in their work — such as effective communication, facilitating community involvement, and supporting individuals in making choices and decisions. In the Special Topics course, students complete First Aid, CPR, and other DMR-required trainings, while exploring issues of health and safety, and supporting individuals in making healthy choices and decisions. In the Field Placement Seminar and other courses, faculty and students exchange ideas about issues that arise in their work, learn strategies to prevent burnout, and explore current trends in human services.

The entire program is based on the National Community Support Skill Standards, a set of skills and competencies used by outstanding direct support staff in their work. The National Community Support Skill Standards are woven into the academic courses so that each course provides an appropriate balance between academic and career skills.

## CHALLENGING ACCESSIBLE REWARDING

*The program is challenging:* All courses are college-level and students are expected to complete outside reading and assignments for each class. All course credits can be applied to further study at the Massachusetts Community Colleges if students wish to continue beyond the certificate level.

*The program is accessible:* Courses are scheduled in blocks of time, based on the needs of the students, to make it possible for direct support staff to fit the program into a busy week. This program is affordable because of support from DMR and its partnership with the community colleges. Many provider agencies offer assistance to their employees, including flexibility in scheduling, and, if possible, paid release time to allow them to attend classes.

***“This program has allowed me to discover myself as a human services professional. I have gained confidence in my approach and abilities.”***

– Middlesex Community College Student

*The program is very rewarding.* DMR recognizes the students who complete the program with a salary increase. Direct support workers enrolled in this program gain skills, knowledge and inspiration that enhance and energize their careers in human services.

***“The program gives employees self-confidence and renews their commitment to the people they serve. It provides an opportunity to network and share ideas with people from other agencies and instills within the students a sense of validation in their chosen profession.”***

– Western Massachusetts Employer