

# The Staffing Struggle Is Real



New Statistics on I/DD Agencies'  
Most Common Personnel Challenges  
**+5 Tips for Reducing Employee Turnover**



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# A Note About This eReport

Here at MediSked we're always looking for ways to improve our software. That means we spend a lot of time asking provider agencies about their biggest challenges.

Over the years, we've found that nearly every agency struggles with staffing – and the problem only seems to be getting worse.

We wanted to know more about these issues and their causes, so we put together a survey.

200 respondents from agencies all over the country replied.

We've compiled their answers in this candid eReport along with a few tips for reducing the rampant turnover that plagues the I/DD space.

As we continue to explore new ways to use technology to alleviate these staffing challenges, we hope you find these statistics useful!



# The Issues: By the Numbers

If your agency has a difficult time finding qualified and reliable employees, you are most definitely not alone.

According to our most recent staffing survey, **93% of respondents indicated that recruiting quality employees is definitely an issue for their I/DD agency.**



35% of those respondents said it is the biggest issue they're dealing with.

Just 1.84% of respondents indicated that recruiting quality employees is **not an issue** for their agency at all.



# The Issues: By the Numbers

Good help isn't only hard to find – it's hard to keep.

83%

of respondents indicated that **retaining** quality employees is definitely an issue for their I/DD agency

27%

of respondents say employee retention is the biggest issue they're dealing with

28.5%

of respondents reported that on average, **Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)** are employed with their agency for 1 year or less

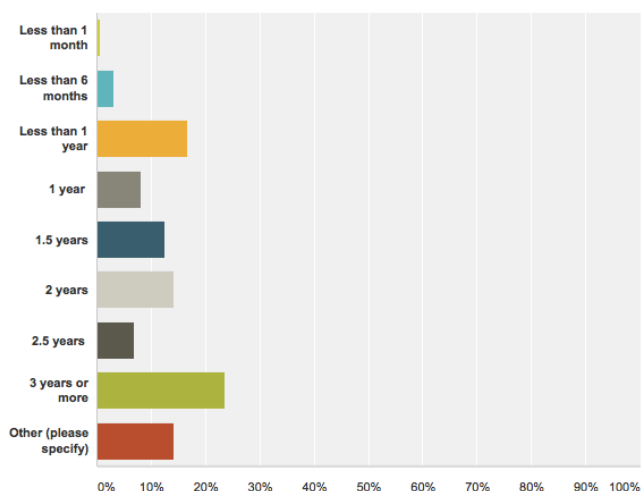
## Is it really just a DSP problem?

When asked about supervisor & management level positions, 99.4% of respondents reported an average employment tenure of 1 year or more.



# The Issues: By the Numbers

On average, how long are Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) employed by your agency?

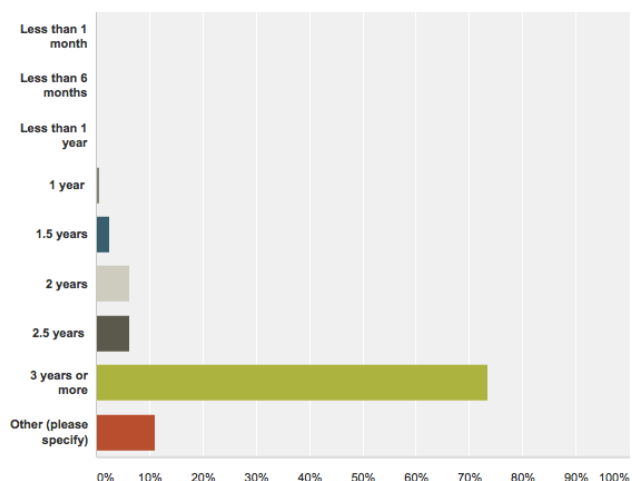


## Some of the “Others”

“Have DSPs that have been here years (15+), newer, younger DSP don't seem to have the same work mindset and move around a lot “

“We have a large number of employees with years of experience but the folks we are interviewing now are of a different caliber. Many drop out the first three to six months.”

On average, how long are supervisors and management level professionals employed by your agency?



“We lose 48% of new hires in the first 12 months.”

“Management staff tend to stay on. Supervisors seem to turn over more often due to higher stress with more work on their shoulders.”



# The Issues: By the Numbers

One review\* of studies reported **turnover rates for DSPs caring for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as:**

**65%**

turnover  
in-home workers

**50%**

turnover  
residential workers

**69%**

turnover  
employment services

\*Seavey, D. Caring in America: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Nation's Fastest-Growing Jobs: Home Health and Personal Care Aides (December 2011) pp. 69-72.  
[www.PHInational.org](http://www.PHInational.org).



Even as providers' budgets shrink, the need for direct support staff will increase with aging baby boomers.



Researchers have estimated if turnover remains at 50% nationally, nearly one million new caregivers will have to be hired in 2020.

## Direct costs

- Separation
- Vacancy
- Replacement
- Training and orientation
- Increased worker injuries

## Indirect costs

- Lost productivity
- Reduced service quality
- Lost client revenue
- Deterioration in organizational culture
- Employee morale

**\$4,200 - \$5,200**

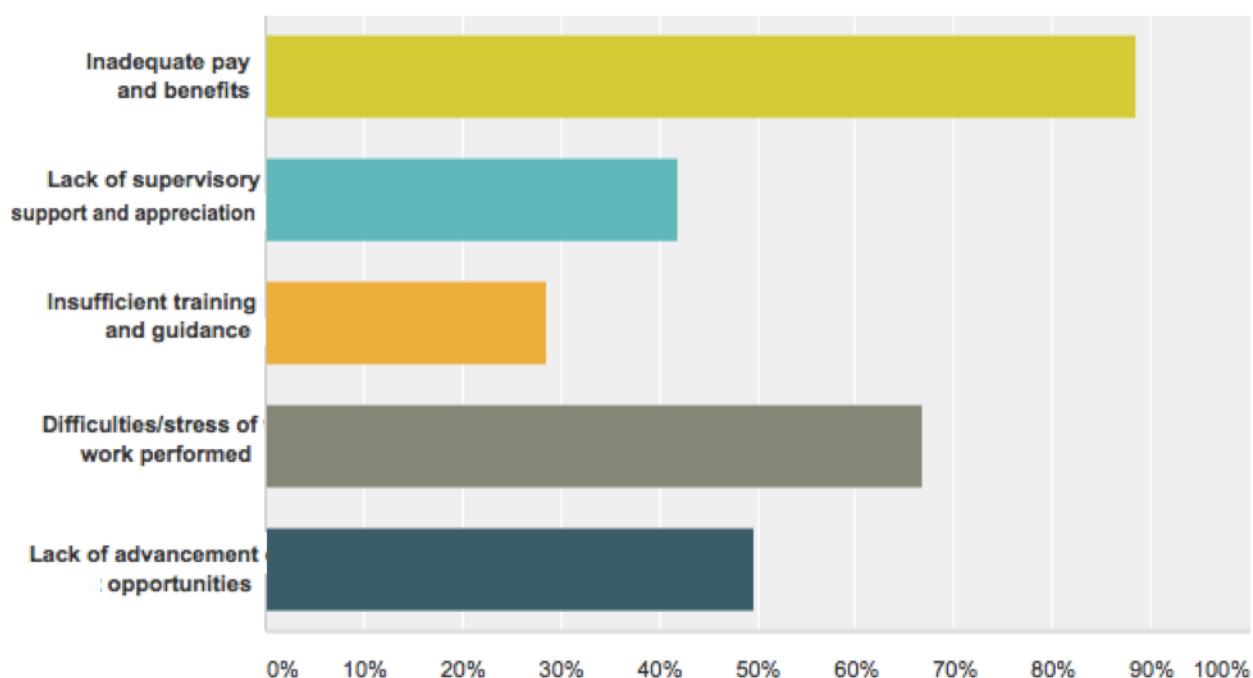
Estimated total cost of  
turnover per direct  
support employee



# Reasons Employees Leave

We asked survey respondents to tell us why turnover is so high.

**Which of the following factors contribute to employee turnover at your agency? (Check all that apply)**



Answer Choices	Responses
<input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate pay and benefits	88.54%
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of supervisory support and appreciation	42.04%
<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient training and guidance	28.66%
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties/stress of work performed	66.88%
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of advancement opportunities	49.68%





# Reasons Employees Leave

Below are a few select “Other” comments from our recent survey

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*“The 24/7/365 schedule seems to be the biggest barrier.”*

*“Competition is great in our area due to many providers and persons served.”*

*“Supervisors have too many duties to provide ideal supervision especially for new employees. They have good initial training but the supervisors are stretched thin making it difficult for them to give on-going support. Low pay and lack of raises is the most significant factor.”*

*“Really hard to beat fast food locations that pay more as a starting rate.”*

*“Inadequate pay is biggest factor (we have an excellent benefit package which is overshadowed by the pay issue).”*

*“All related to inadequate funding of program.”*

*“We are trying to train our supervisors better at coaching, mentoring and team building. Though we have promoted many DSPs to these positions, we are finding some are less suited to the supervisory role than we had hoped. They are not good at nurturing green employees.”*

*“Fired for lack of work ethic - not showing up for work, calling off at the last minute.”*

# 5 Tips for Reducing Employee Turnover



88% of respondents cited inadequate pay and benefits as a contributing factor to the high turnover rate of DSPs.

## Tip #1:

### **Make Better Healthcare & Better Wages a Top Priority**

While this may seem impossible to do when you consider funding difficulties, it is important to do everything you can, to find as much money as you can, wherever you can.

Studies have found that:

- Frontline care workers enrolled in employer health insurance plans have more than twice the tenure of those without employee coverage
- A 2008 study shows that when the wages of direct service providers doubled, the retention rates increased from 39% to 74%



## **Tip 2: Administer an Annual Staff Survey**

Let your team know that you want to increase retention and make it clear that you value their input. Honesty and transparency can go a long way.

## **Tip 3: Offer More Training Programs & Education**



A report by the National Direct Service Workforce Resource Center suggests that providing better access to quality educational experiences can increase retention. When employees feel that they are learning and growing, they are more likely to stay.

Keep in mind that lecturing and showing videos is not the most effective way to teach skills to individuals who are, for the most part, hands on learners. A training program curriculum that includes role-playing, case studies, small group discussions and other interactive lessons will be more successful.

## Tip 4: Hire a Full Time Retention Specialist

A 2008 study showed reduced turnover rates in facilities that had specially trained retention specialists taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the problem.

While increasing your agency's headcount may seem like a tough sell, high turnover rates and hiring/training new employees is far more costly.

Bringing on a person dedicated to tackling this problem can really make a difference.





## Tip 5: Increase Your Staff Recognition

People who feel appreciated and are recognized for the hard work that they do are typically happier than those who are not.

The happier and more accomplished someone feels in their role, the less likely they are to leave.

We've designed our MediSked Connect Agency Management Platform to track employee performance and provide visibility into DSPs' successes and shortcomings. This allows agencies to recognize good work and there are many benefits to regular positive recognition.

**“TREAT EMPLOYEES LIKE THEY MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE AND THEY WILL.”**

- JIM GOODNIGHT, CEO SAS



To learn more about our survey and how MediSked Connect can help manage the human resource functions at your agency to increase employee retention, contact us today.



[www.medisked.com](http://www.medisked.com)



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