

- DSP Spotlight -

January 2026

Tara Fout



What do you like to do in your free time? I enjoy spending time with my kids, family, and pets. I also enjoy kayaking, hiking, fishing, reading, and playing games on the computer.

How long have you worked as a Direct Support Professional? I've been working in the field for roughly 11-12 years.

How did you start in the field? I reconnected with an old friend I hadn't seen in years. Right around the same time, I needed a job after staying home to raise my kids for a number of years. She worked in the field and her company was hiring so I decided to give it a try.

Has there ever been anyone that has stood out to you as a mentor in this field? Kathi Good really helped me and taught me a lot when I very first started in the field. Stacie Kovach, the guardian of an individual I've served for years, has also been a mentor who I've learned a lot from. Heather Leffler from DODD, while less in person, has also been someone who I'd consider a mentor in the field through trainings she used to do and being an occasional resource over the years when I've had questions.

What is your favorite thing to do with the people you serve? One of my favorite things to do with the people I serve is to give them opportunities to do things they might not be able to do otherwise. I've taken clients to concerts, sporting events, camping, Summer Slam, and even a Bigfoot Convention in Tennessee one year. I think given the history of our field and some of the stigma our population faces, it can be easy for their options to become limited. Finding ways to expand their world while getting them to events and activities that mean a lot to them and seeing the joy that brings them is definitely up there on my list.

What is your favorite part of being a Direct Support Professional? Getting to see the individuals grow and develop is one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. I think back on where the person I currently primarily serve was when I first started working with them almost 10 years ago compared to where they are now and can see a tremendous amount of difference. While the work was hers in getting there, it's nice to know I played a part in helping to make her life better. I also love that the clients have helped me grow as well and taught me more over the years than I have probably taught them.

What makes Tara a great DSP? Tara has worked many years in the field. She has great insight in navigating difficult situations and great patience. She has worked with my daughter when no one else would, and has built a great relationship with my daughter of equal respect and friendship. She has been a godsend to our family, most importantly to my daughter.

