

DSP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if several family members are interested in becoming a DSP?

Due to COVID-19, it is important to limit the amount of people within hospital facilities. To balance the benefit between patient care and the risk of COVID-19, the overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

What if a patient would like a DSP but they don't have a family member or friend who is capable or available?

A referral can be made to Volunteer Resources. If a volunteer is available, they can visit as part of its Friendly Visiting Program.

Can patients request to change their DSP?

Yes, DSPs can be changed. The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

Define emotional/psychological support.

This type of support can simply include being present. A family member's presence can assist in calming and reassuring a patient who may be agitated and scared.

What are the differences between a DSP and a social visitor?

- DSPs are active partners in care and can provide additional support to the patient. This support can include physical or emotional care assistance and can be very specific to the patient's needs.
- DSPs also can provide key patient information and assist with decision making.
- DSPs are **not limited** to visiting during general visiting hours and **do not** have to maintain the 2M/6ft distance between themselves and the patient.
- Social visitors play an important role but do not participate as DSPs, who are active partners in care.
- A social visitor is not essential and is not involved in supporting the patient or assisting with emotional or physical support, patient care or decision making.
- Social visitors are only permitted to visit during specific visiting hours.
- Social visitors are required to wear a mask, practice hand hygiene and **maintain a 2M/6ft distance** from the patient and staff.

The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

Can a DSP who has completed their education begin acting as a DSP before the Support (visitation) plan is finalized?

The DSP may begin their role following the development of the Support (visitation) plan which will be completed in collaboration with the DSP, health care staff and patient or substitute decision maker.

What is a Support (visitation) plan?

A Support (visitation) plan outlines support details that will include confirmation of required education, hours and frequency of visits, and care/support that can be provided to the patient. These details will be determined in collaboration with the health care team, patient/substitute decision maker and the DSP.

Is there a limit to the number of DSPs/social visitors who can be present on a unit at one time?

The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

Are DSPs and social visitors allowed in various phases of the pandemic?

Yes, DSPs are allowed in various phases of the pandemic. Social visitors are permitted when the level of COVID-19 is low in our facilities and community. If a health care facility is in a crisis due to the level of COVID-19, Horizon may restrict social visitors and limit the numbers of DSPs due to increased risk for patients and health care workers. In these circumstances, arrangements for virtual partnerships in care with the DSPs will be supported so they can actively participate with the care team. This participation may occur through virtual means such as phone, video conference or email and should be considered a short term or interim measure.

Where can a DSP go if a social visitor arrives?

The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors. If the number of individuals is above the allowable number, individuals will be required to leave the facility as there are currently no places where groups can gather.

Where are DSPs allowed to visit with the patient?

DSPs are permitted to visit the patient in their room and when COVID-19 levels are low, outside the patient room. Please consult with the health care providers.

Can a DSP change the Support (visitation) plan if needed?

Any changes to the Support (visitation) plan will need to be completed in collaboration with the patient/substitute decision maker and the nurse manager.

Can an alternate DSP be identified in case the primary DSPs are unable to visit?

The overall number of DSPs permitted and number of DSPs who can be present at one time varies depending on the patient's condition and the COVID-19 activity levels within the hospital and community. Please see Horizon's current DSP and [visitor guidelines](#) for the number of allowable DSPs and social visitors.

Are DSPs and social visitors allowed to enter and exit the facility throughout the day?

It is recommended that DSPs and social visitors limit the number of times they enter and exit in one day.

How long does the DSP education take?

The online education takes approximately 30 minutes.

Are DSPs allowed to visit 24/7?

Based on a patient's needs, the best time to visit and frequency and length of time of the visit will be determined in collaboration with the DSP, patient/substitute decision maker and health care team.

Are DSPs and social visitors allowed to eat/drink in the patient's room?

No, DSPs and social visitors must eat/drink in designated locations such as the cafeteria.

How do DSPs make changes to the Support (visitation) plan?

DSPs can speak to the nurse manager to discuss this process. Any changes will require collaboration with the DSP, patient/substitute decision maker and the health care team.

Can a DSP/social visitor use the sink in the patient's room or bathroom?

No, due to infection prevention and control guidelines, DSPs and social visitors are required to use the public washroom.

Can any patient have a DSP?

Any patient who requires emotional or physical support, help with their care or assistance with decision making is eligible to have a DSP. Not all patients require additional support. If you feel your loved one is eligible to have a DSP, please speak to the patient's nurse manager.

Can I stay overnight in the ER with my loved one?

Please discuss this request with the patient's health care team. Physical space requirements will need to be considered.

Can I designate my pet as a DSP or have my pet brought in?

No, pets cannot be a DSP. Personal pet visitation is permitted. Please speak to your health care providers regarding the process.

How will potential DSPs who have technology and literacy barriers, i.e. no Internet access, lack of knowledge about online education, can't read complete the DSP education?

Horizon staff will assist you with your required education. Please call **1-833-625-1653** or email DSP-PSD@horizonnb.ca for assistance and to make an appointment.

Is the DSP program available at all Horizon facilities?

Yes, the DSP Program is implemented in all Horizon facilities.

Will the DSP program be extended to oncology patients, so they can accompany patients to appointments regarding their treatment options and care?

Yes, all outpatients can have one DSP accompany them to appointments based on physical space requirements. It is recommended you call ahead to ensure there are no physical space restrictions.

Will there be standardized education documents given to the DSP?

Yes, an education completion email will be provided to the DSP, which must be shown to the patient's nurse manager or designate to finalize the Support (visitation) plan.

For further information about the DSP Program please contact **1-833-625-1653** or email DSP-PSD@horizonnb.ca