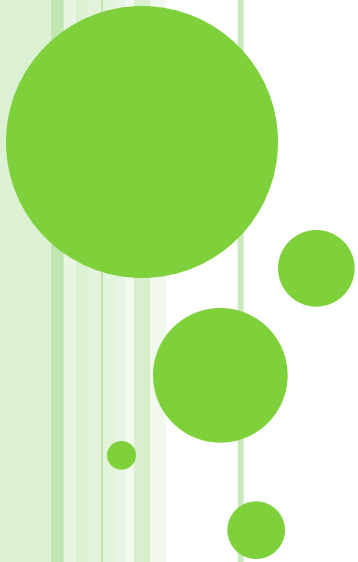


THE ART OF WRITING CASE NOTES



TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the purpose and function of case notes
- To examine the four primary components of case notes (facts, impressions, assessment and planning) and their relationship to each other

QUICK OVERVIEW OF CASE MANAGEMENT

Basic Goal of All Case Management Systems

- To deliver customer-focused, goal-directed services in a manner which is:
 - Service effective
 - Service efficient
 - Cost effective

WHAT IS CASE MANAGEMENT?

- Ongoing monitoring of services and service coordination.
- Ensures that quality service is being provided.
- Evaluating whether a service is effectively meeting the client's need.
- Identifies any changes in the client's condition or circumstances that would warrant an adjustment to the plan.

TWO LEVELS OF CASE MANAGEMENT

DEFINITION: CLIENT LEVEL

- Case Management is a customer-centered, goal-oriented process for assessing the need of an individual for particular services and assisting him/her to obtain those services, often across institutional boundaries.
- The Business Coach works as a professional partner with each customer to:
 - Identify and prioritize personal strengths and needs, and translate them into a set of realistic goals;
 - Develop a plan of action for achieving those goals;
 - Access, across institutions, the resources needed to pursue those goals;
 - Successfully complete a “customized” set of services among a variety of institutions
 - Help the customer learn to access services on his or her own and thereby reduce dependency upon the case manager.

DEFINITION: SYSTEMS LEVEL

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

- At the systems level, Case Management is defined as a strategy for coordinating the provision of services to customers within that system.
- Business Coaches need to be backed up by a group of institutions linked through formal inter-agency agreements in a way that:
 - Ensures that the broad selection of services commonly needed by customers are available to the Business Coach when the customers need them;
 - Enables Business Coaches to know, in advance, what they can and cannot promise to customers;
 - Empowers Business Coach to “requisition” services and resources
 - Revises traditional modes of operation (referral procedures, capacity, assessment methods, etc.) if those modes do not work in customers’ best interest.

THE LINKING PROCESS: KEY BUSINESS COACH FUNCTIONS AT THE CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVEL

- **Firming up what services are needed for each customer**
- Identifying which organizations or individuals can best provide those services in a timely fashion
- Identifying and contacting a key person at the organization(s) with which the customer will be linked
- Describing the customer and his/her needs to that contact person
- Confirming that the service offered is what is really needed by the customer
- Confirming that the service offered is what is really wanted by the customer
- **Making the referral and arranging the linkage**
- Providing pre-appointment reminders (as needed)
- Following up after the customer's appointment with customer and provider
- **Being a communicator, advocate, and broker across agencies and human service personnel**

THE LINKING FUNCTION: SYSTEMS LEVEL PREPARATION & RESOURCES

- **Developing a network of contracts across agencies**
- Convening the players across agencies (as needed)
- **Learning how other agencies work so that cross-agency linkages can be facilitated over the long-term**
- Identifying patterns of missing services and conveying this information to decision-makers
- Supporting and advocating for development of a system approach to networking
- Informing leaders about how agencies and systems are responding to the needs of customers

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COACHES

- Know what case management is, and what goals and objectives they are expected to fulfill;
- **Know how to produce trust and “relationship” with their customers;**
- Like their clientele, and customers like them;
- **Exhibit disciplined empathy;**
- Possess partnership skills;
- **Recognize and overcome personal and institutional barriers;**
- Exhibit entrepreneurial ingenuity;
- Know what the extent of their authority over other institutions is;
- Are prepared for resistance from customers;
- Expect and “handle” resistance from other professionals;
- Are supported by the institutions with which they are expected to interrelate.

REQUIREMENTS OF QUALITY CASE NOTES

- The participant record must reflect a frequency and intensity of contacts to support reported units of service and minimum contact requirements.
- Documentation/case notation of all contacts must reflect allowable activity and indicate that the activity is related to the participant's individual needs.

QUALITY CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

- Record keeping is an essential component of case management
- Good records are concise, specific, relevant, clear, logical, meaningful, useful, grounded in fact, well organized and well written.
- Poor records are unfocused, vague, aimless, biased, speculative, imprecise, inaccessible to the potential user, tardy, mistaken in fact, unorganized and poorly written.
- The record is a focal point for the case manager's accountability to the participant and to the organization.

PURPOSE

- Case notes record important details about services provided to the customers.
- Case notes should also record the customer's participation in activities and his or her progress.
- Sometimes case notes serve as documentation of factors affecting eligibility or other important information.
- Case noting is our way of letting the next reader know what is going on with the customer.
- Poor case notes cause confusion and potential lack of services to customers.

EFFECTIVE NOTES AND DOCUMENTATION

- Accurate and timely documentation in Salesforce is essential.
- Good Case Management never chases data.
- Follow through is not possible when case notes do not exist.
- Essentially, case notes are telling a story.
- The ISS/IDP/EDP provides an outline for the story.
- Case notes are written sequentially and as close to real time as possible.

PURPOSES FOR UPDATED AND CONCISE CASE NOTES

- Provide a “compass” for service delivery
- Provide a justification for intensity of all services
- Provide a focal point for internal and external monitoring of the case management function specifically and service delivery overall
- Provide evidence of how well we do our job
- Capture issues between the participant and the case manager and their resolution
- Protection of the case manager and the agency from potential legal problems

PRIMARY COMPONENTS OF CASE NOTES

- Statements of facts
- Professional Impressions (your sense of how the participant is doing based upon your observations and experiences with them)
- Analysis-driven component (Assessment) – combines facts and impressions and connects them with the strengths and challenges the participant faces that influence their situation
- Plan component – decisions and actions that map out the type, intensity, and range of services that are being provided.

SUBSTANCE

- Case notes should always include:
 - Date of the note
 - Method of contact (*face to face, e-mail, phone call*)
 - Name of the staff member making the note
 - Description of the event
 - Description of how the customer will benefit from the activities

WHO! WHAT! WHEN! WHERE! HOW

- **Who** did you speak with?
- **What** happened today? What is due next?
- **When** are actions due, when did you speak with the client?
- **Where** did the contact occur, where is the customer supposed to complete their activity?
- **How** are your services being provided? Referral?

TIMELINESS

- Update case notes frequently and promptly:
 - While the information is fresh in your mind.
 - Frequency makes it easier for someone else to pick up where you left off if you are called away from the case.
 - Case note any time there is interaction with customer (phone call, in person, etc.)

STRONG VERBS TO USE:

Advised

Assessed

Assisted

Clarified

Confronted

Counseled

Discussed

Directed

Encouraged

Focused

Identified

Recommended

Referred

Reflected

Structure

Summarized

Supported

Urged

WORDS TO AVOID:

Abnormal

Abusive

Anxious

Dangerous

Delusional

Demanding

Disturbed

Hysterical

Immature

Impulsive

Irrational

Overwhelmed

Resistant

Suicidal

Threatened

Troubled

Uncooperative

Unfit

PROFESSIONALISM

- Avoid using slang, street language, clichés or jargon. Use professional terminology as well as correct capitalization and punctuation.
- Avoid metaphors or similes; just say what you mean directly.
- Do not write so cryptically that no one knows what you are writing.
- Do not identify medical diagnosis
- Omit details of client's intimate lives that do not have an impact on the plan

WRITING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Write in a style that is:
 - Factual
 - Objective; unbiased
 - Specific
 - Clear and to the point

QUALITY CONTROL

- Supervisors might review your case notes to monitor progress.
- Auditors might review your case notes for compliance with state and federal policy and procedure.
- ▶ Remember, you never know who will be reading the case notes!

WARNING

○ Possible Liability Issue

- Recording a “to do” item in the case file and not following through
- Negative, biased or prejudicial language

SAMPLE CASE NOTE

- Customer will be attending a 16 hour CEU's for Certified C.N.A.'s. The program is designed to increase skills and understanding related to end of life care and communication. Upon successful completion of the three day classes the customer will receive a certificate.

This is a good case note however, it would be better to include the dates and location of the classes as well as a description of the certificate.

SAMPLE CASE NOTE

- Individual has obtained verified gainful employment with Aerotek as a Loan Officer for JP Chase Morgan. His dislocation was \$17.30/hr and his current wage obtained is \$18/hr, which is a 104% of his dislocation wage.

This case note is good, however, who is the individual? When did his employment start? What follow up will be planned?

SAMPLE CASE NOTE

- Customer, M. Smith stated that she has finished up all of her courses at CF and will be emailing me copies of the certifications she has obtained since her last visit with me. In addition, she stated that her unemployment benefits have exhausted. She will be leaving town today, 05/09/10, for a few weeks, but upon her return she will take my advice and register with staffing agencies and come in for resume assistance/ critiquing.

This case note is acceptable.