



Client Assessment and Goal-Setting: Developing Productive Case Management Plans

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What is the Role of Case Managers?

- Case Managers assist consumers in completing a strengths/needs assessment through relationship building, interviewing, and appropriate use of assessment instruments.
- Case Managers help consumers identify goals, determine action plans, and evaluate their progress.

Case Managers have an important role to help their consumers identify and set goals.

- **What is a goal?** A goal is anything that the consumer wants to do, learn, or change that will make their life or their family's life better. It should be something that anyone around them can see is different from before. A goal should tell what the consumer would like to get out of your work together. While some goals will take longer to reach than others, Case Managers should help consumers set a goal or two to start with so that they can see what progress they are making and how they can celebrate their accomplishments with you. This will help build trust with your consumers and help your consumers launch a great relationship with you.

Why is it important as a Case Manager to set goals with the consumer?

- **Why set goals?** This will help the Case Manager stay focused on helping their consumer make the changes that the consumer decides are important for them. Without goals, it is easy to get side-tracked by the day-to-day hassles that life throws at us. This also allows a consumer the opportunity to visualize the changes that they wish to make.

How often and when should the Case Manager set goals with the consumer?

Case Managers should set up a couple of “getting to know you” sessions and assessment sessions with the consumer. The Case Manager should set goals by the 3rd visit with the consumer and begin to work on those goals each time they see each other. When the consumer finishes one goal, they may want to work on a new goal. Sometimes, after a goal is set, things change and together the Case Manager and the Consumer decide that goal is not for them anymore. That’s okay. If that happens, the Case Manager can then talk with the consumer about what to do next.

Brainstorming with the Consumer

Case Managers should assist their consumers with setting goals but it is important to note that the goals should belong to the consumer and not be goals that the Case Manager sets for the consumer. Before the Case Manager writes anything down in the case file, the consumer should think of all the different things that they may be interested in working on with their Case Manager together. There are no wrong answers or bad ideas. Once you and the consumer come up with some ideas, then they can talk about them and pick one or two to get started with.

Set Goals with the Consumer

Using the Goal Form. Use a goal-setting form that helps your consumer identify the goals they want to work on. Once completed, it will become part of your consumer's service record and will guide your work together. Here are the things to write on the form:

Description of the Situation. What is going on with consumer now? What do they wish was different about their life? Is there a problem or concern that they have been struggling with?

Family Members' Strengths. Everyone has something good going for him or her. It may be a skill, an attitude, or even another person that they know they can count on when things are tough. For each person in the consumer's family who will be involved in your work together, list some things he or she has or can do that will help your consumer reach the goal you've set.

Goal Statement. What does your consumer want to do or change to make their life better? If the problem they have been struggling with was suddenly fixed, how would it make their life different? What does the consumer want to get out of your work together?

Steps. How will they reach their goal? What are some of the smaller things that need to be done before they get there?

Goal Rating. How much help will they need to reach their goal? How good or bad is their current situation?

Case Managers should help the consumer set goals that are behaviorally specific.

Goals should be behavioral: state what the person will DO (should be something we can all see or hear).

Goals should be focused on the outcome of the consumer's participation, not on the service that you offered. (What will they get out of the service?)

Goals should be specific: easily measurable, not vague improvement.

Goals should be realistic expectations for this particular person.

Goals should be achievable within the length of time you will work together.

Goals should be personal: use the consumer's own words and base all goals on the consumer's specific situation and needs, BUT help the consumer to create its own goals according to the above guidelines.

Case Managers should track the consumer's progress.

- Initial goal rating is set at the time goals are created
- Ratings should be updated at least quarterly and at closure, can be done more often.
- Best to do ratings in-person.
- Help consumers identify and celebrate progress, identify causes of any set-backs.
- Goals can be amended, added, or deleted - goals reflect the consumer's real life.

Case Managers should set SMART Goals with Consumers

SMART goals meet the following criteria. They are:

Specific

The goal is well-defined

The goal is clear to anyone

The goal addresses: who, what, when, where, how, and why

Measurable

Know if the goal is obtainable and how far away completion might be

Know when the goal has been achieved

Be able to see the results of any progress

Accessible

The goal is achievable based on the individual's capacities: physical, mental, financial, etc.

The goal is within reach through work and commitment

Realistic

The goal is reachable within the available resources, knowledge, and time

Do-able with a plan of action

Teachable

You can help the individual to achieve the goal through increasing their understanding of aspects of the goal

(e.g. small steps, resources)

Skills related to the goal can be learned through repetition or practice

*Effort and courage are not enough
without purpose and direction.*

John F. Kennedy

Questions and Answers

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