

DOCUMENTATION BEST PRACTICES

Madelyne Pfeiffer, MSW, CFRE
President | CEO

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Objectives

- Purpose
- Types of documents
- Writing effective case notes
 - Examples
- Review of risky words/phrases
- Documentation and litigation

Keep in mind...

- The Service Coordinator (SC) should maintain detailed notes regarding any assistance and services provided to the residents.
- The SC must keep the client files in a secured location and accessible ONLY to the SC
- Paper files need to be kept in a locked cabinet
- HUD will review files during an audit
 - Release of Information (ROI) must be signed by residents and in files for HUD to review

Keep in mind...

- Electronic files (ex. AASC) **MUST** be secured with a password
 - DO NOT save your password or allow your computer/browser/etc. auto-fill
 - Ensure you can easily access your electronic files – always know your password and username
 - AASC will automatically log out at 15 minutes of inactivity for privacy/confidentiality reasons

Documentation

- Official account of activities relating to a resident's progress and interactions with the SC
- Used to provide information about the resident as a vital source for the program in providing information to HUD and/or other oversight or funding entities
- Audit by HUD or QA, possibly used in legal cases (subpoena)
- Timely documentation significantly impacts credibility of SC as a professional and agency as a responsible organization

Purpose of Documentation

- Protect the resident, property, staff
- Provide continuity of care
- Have a history of resident behavior
- Protect resident confidentiality
- Have demographic and financial information available for making community referrals on behalf of the client
- Have record of services provided to the resident

Purpose of Documentation

- Complying to quality assurance standards
- Shows individual behavior and/or pattern of behavior
- Assist a SC new to the property by providing a historical account of the residents' needs and services provided
- Protect the service coordinator, the organization, and ownership from litigation

Audience

(those who will have access to resident documentation)

- New SCs or covering staff
- HUD
- Quality Assurance providers

Documents in Resident Files

Available in AASC

- Resident Intake
- Individual Assessment
- Resident ADL Status
- Resident Service Need
- Service Management Plan
- Service Log
- Progress Note
- Cost Savings
- Incidents Report
- Report on Violations

Signed Documents

- Confidentiality Agreement
- Consent to Release Info
- Refusal of Service
- Non-Participation

Progress Notes

- Written notes detailing what has taken place between the SC and resident, manager, community agencies, and family, etc.
- Vital/critical portion of the SC documentation process
- Remember, if you don't write it down, it didn't happen.

Progress Notes

- Progress notes are the only secure place that we are allowed to document activity with a resident.
- It is critical to be able to refer back to accurate information.
- HUD requires knowledge of case management process including what steps need to occur, who was contacted, who hasn't responded, etc.
- **REMEMBER** – Use quotes as needed and keep objective with no personal opinion stated

Progress Notes

DO INCLUDE...

- Date of entry
- Description of action taken
- Follow-up action

DO NOT INCLUDE...

- Opinions about the resident
- Judgments
- Small details that are irrelevant

Action Words

Encouraged Enabled Engaged
Established baseline
Evaluated Examined Explored
Extolled Feedback (sought / given)
Focused
Gave hints Gestured Identified
Illustrated Informed Initiated
Instructed Intervened Interviewed
Labeled Mediated Modeled
Negotiated Notified

Observed Offered Opposed
Pinpointed Planned Played
Practiced Praised
Problem-solved Produced
Promoted Prompted Provided
Qualified Quantified Questioned
Quizzed
Reached consensus Reaffirmed
Reassured Rebuffed
Recommended Referred
Reflected
Reframed

Rehearsed Reinforced Rejected
Relabeled
Relaxation techniques (offered /
provided) Renewed
Reported Required Respected
Rewarded Role-played Shaped
Stress inoculation (offered /
provided) Struggled Suggested
Supported
Taught Trained Urged Validated
Valued Vented Verbalized Verified

Progress Notes

- Resident need or request (problem stated)
- Action taken
 - Be specific, i.e. – if you are assisting with mail, what did you do translate a bill or document, read a personal letter?
 - If you sent documentation (what documents, by what method, and to whom calls made, messages, contact name or office.
- Outcome, resolution or plan of action if there is no resolution at the time
 - No follow-up required
 - SC will continue to monitor and assist resident as needed

Layout Example 1

Resident came to SC's office with a letter from his phone provider stating that he was late on his payment. Resident provided proof via a money order receipt for the bill and stated he had mailed it a few days ago. He also claimed that the bill amount was too much and he was thinking about cancelling. SC helped resident call his phone provider and spoke with a customer service representative along with resident explaining the situation. The representative stated that the payment had probably not been received yet and to not worry for the time being, waiving his late fees. When SC helped resident express his concern for the high bill amount, the representative helped resident change phone plans, saving resident \$10 per month on his bill. Resident left SC's office thanking SC for the help. SC will log a cost savings for this visit and continue to assist resident in the future as needed.

Layout Example 2

- **Problem:** Resident received letter stating phone payment is late. Resident says already paid it, has proof of money order, and claims bill too high.
- **Action:** SC helped call phone company. Representative said to not worry about the payment, waived the late fees, and helped select a cheaper plan, saving resident \$10 per month.
- **Follow-up:** SC will log cost savings for visit, no further action needed.

Risky Words/Phrases



Risky: Resident was drunk

Non-Judgmental / Observable
Behavior:

- Resident smelled of alcohol
- Resident's speech was slurred
- Resident staggered when walking

Risky Words/Phrases



Risky: Resident is angry

Non-Judgmental / Observable
Behavior:

- Resident yelled obscenities at SC
 - Use quotations
 - Provide incident report to management
- Resident pointed their finger at SC and raised their voice

Risky Words/Phrases



Risky: Resident smells or is dirty

Non-Judgmental / Observable
Behavior:

- SC noticed that resident smelled strongly of urine/feces/body odor
- SC noticed resident has worn the same clothes for the last three days and there is an odor of urine/feces/body odor

Could This Be Better?

Example of Progress Note

- Resident came to SC's office complaining about his rent being too high. He was obviously drunk so SC told him to go home and that he could come back for help when he was sober. SC will help resident with his rent complaint when he is not drunk.

Could This Be Better?

Example of Progress Note

- Resident came to SC's office and reported that he needed housekeeping assistance and gave SC examples of services he wanted, including laundry assistance and washing dishes. SC provided resident with a list of companies and resident told SC he wanted the first one and left. SC called Housekeepers Services and spoke with Joe Smith the intake coordinator about enrolling resident into the program. Joe told SC it could take up to two weeks for services to start. SC will notify resident of this.

Release of Information (ROI)

- ROI is required anytime SC releases information (verbal, written, fax or email) to an outside agency, individual, or family member without resident present
- **I authorize the Service Coordinator (SC) at this "Facility" to disclose the following information:**
 identifying information (Case number, Medicaid number, income, assets, bills) information related to benefits eligibility
- **To the following person or organization:**
 Larimer County Department of Human Services Benefits Division,
 Long Term Care
- **The purpose of this disclosure is to:**
 Benefits application assistance

Release of Information (ROI)

- ROI is not needed at the time of a call if the resident is present during the call
- Make it clear when a call is made that resident was in the office during the call if resident was present
 - EX: SC called Housekeeping Services with resident in the office

Documentation and Court

- Remember, documents are to be kept confidential
- **Exception:** if subpoenaed with a court order, you must provide the documentation requested at time of court
 - A separate subpoena needed for online/virtual documentation
- If subpoenaed, contact immediate supervisor

Defensive Documentation

- Will this hold up in court?
- Is my wording going to be used against me?
- Is my documentation accurate and updated?
- Is my documentation specific?
 - **For example:** “resident began to threaten SC” is vastly different from “resident told SC, ‘I’m going to kill you’ as she left the office.”

Litigation

- **Example:** A resident enrolled in the service coordinator program is up for eviction due to poor housekeeping. Management learns that the resident told their attorney that they asked the SC for help but was never provided services/assistance.
 - Does your documentation provide written evidence that you offered services/assistance but the resident refused?
 - Is a Refusal of Service form signed?
 - If there is no documentation that you offered assistance, the eviction could be denied. In a worst case scenario, a resident may try to sue you for personal harm.

Questions?

Madelyne Pfeiffer, MSW, CFRE

Founder & CEO

1286 University Ave, Suite 530

San Diego, CA 92103

(760) 696-0749

mpfeiffer@mjhousingandservices.com

www.mjhousingandservices.com



SERVICES PROVIDED

- ✓ **Service Coordinator Employment**
- ✓ **Quality Assurance**
- ✓ **Grant Administration**
- ✓ **HUD Budget-Based SC Applications and Supportive Services Grant Writing**
- ✓ **Trainings**
- ✓ **Community Needs Assessments**
- ✓ **Property Management Support**

- ▶ *Currently employ 25 Service Coordinators in Maine, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado and California (continuing to expand into other states).*
- ▶ *Provide Quality Assurance to 63 Service Coordinators across the nation.*
- ▶ *Work with each ownership and management agent to ensure our fee fits within the parameters of the existing budget(s).*
- ▶ *Clearly understand that grantees and owners/operators are often challenged by a limited resident services budgets authorized by HUD, LITC, AHP, SHRA, CHAFA and other Financial Institutions. We actively **fundraise** in order to find additional funding to subsidize those shortfalls. Our efforts contributed **over \$3 Million** in the past five years to fund service coordination programs.*
- ▶ *Provide expertise on how to apply for SC programs through rent increases, residual receipts, and surplus in operations. In the past two years, we have helped owners get funding for five Budget BasedSCs.*

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