



Providing Case Management and Referral with Appropriate Case Documentation

Hour Requirements 25

Case Management Definition

Case management is used with clients who have special treatment needs, such as mental illness, substance use conditions, chronic health problems, or social and developmental problems. In behavioral health services, “functioning” means a client’s ability to perform routine daily responsibilities. Case management addresses the overall functioning and maintenance of the client’s physical, social, and emotional wellbeing and how it impacts their physical survival, physical and mental health, personal growth, and community functioning. Case management may include the development of a comprehensive biopsychosocial treatment plan.

Case managers must view client treatment from a holistic perspective. For example, a case manager would understand that homelessness often results from multiple factors, such as untreated mental illness, substance use, domestic violence, natural disasters, unemployment, family disintegration, family conflict, or poor social skills. These factors rarely occur in isolation; the presence of multiple factors requires agencies to work together to address the various needs of each person.

Components of Case Management

- Determining a client’s physical, social, cognitive, and emotional needs.
- Utilizing a strength-based approach to resolve problems by highlighting the positive aspects of a client’s life that promote their mental wellbeing, rather than focusing on their problems or pathology. These are also called Protective Factors.
- Utilizing a client-focused approach that takes the client’s unique combination of situations and need into account to deliver “individualized care.”
 - Individualized care has unique treatment goals for each person. Case managers listen to their clients, doing their best to avoid biases that may inappropriately influence decisions related to care.
- Teaming with other community providers and resources to meet and achieve client service needs.
- Creating and documenting measurable indicators of success with the client, such as “fewer days spent in the hospital.”

Examples of Case Management Activities

- Facilitating services provided via telemedicine
- Gathering biopsychosocial information from client to aid in assessment process
- Assisting with applications for other services such as medical, financial, housing, etc.
- Coordinating referral and paperwork after appropriate Release of Information (ROI) is obtained.
- Motivating and helping the client to access supports
- Working with client to create a list of client strengths
- Reviewing the treatment plan at regular intervals and adjusting as needed
- Assisting the client and/or family with medication management, planning ways to track medication regiment, and monitoring for side effects.

Referral Definition

The referral process links a client with partner agencies to address physical, social, educational, vocational, legal, or mental health needs. Partners in a referral network may include various government departments, community organizations, medical institutions, and schools. Referrals should happen only with the consent of the client in most cases. However, it may be justified to refer without the client’s consent when service is court ordered or when a client’s life is at risk.



Components of the Referral Process

- Knowing about the local and regional referral networks and services available to clients before they are needed.
- Obtaining client consent before referring (unless there is proper justification for not having consent).
- Providing a "warm handoff" for the client and new agency by speaking with an agency contact person ahead of time and ensuring the client is comfortable with the new service.

Examples of Referral Activities

- Identifying services available within BHA's tribal health organization and tribal health system
- Identifying external services available for clients locally, regionally, statewide, and nationally (e.g. school system, substance abuse programs, food pantry, shelters, and churches)
- Assisting client in making phone calls and researching to find appropriate services
- Completing referrals for appropriate services either in or outside the community
- Developing a working relationship and trusted contacts with other agencies to facilitate a "warm handoff"
- Assisting client to coordinate appointments and/or travel for services with other agencies
- Helping to develop and implement a discharge plan
- Obtaining records for clients and reviewing them as needed
- Helping clients complete Release of Information forms
- Documenting contacts and activities related to the treatment goals
- Observing the supervising clinician doing any of above

Evidence-Based Practices and Resources

- Social Solutions: Three Behavioral Health Case Management Best Practices
<http://www.akchap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/01-Three-Behavioral-Health-Case-Management-Best-Practices.pdf>
- Joel Kanter (2010) - Clinical Case Management <http://www.akchap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/02-Clinical-Case-Management-Brandell.pdf>
- SAMHSA - Comprehensive Case Management Treatment for Substance Abuse
<http://www.akchap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/03-SAMHSA-Comprehensive-Case-Management-Treatment-for-Substance-Abuse.pdf>
- Care Coordination Services: A Description of Alternative Service Model for At-Risk Families
<http://www.akchap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/04-Care-Coordination-Services.pdf>
- A Four-Factor Outcome Model for Family Case Management Services with Children and Families Who Have Experienced Complex Trauma <https://www.akchap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/05-A-FourFactor-Outcome-Model-for-Family-Case-Management-Services-With-Children.pdf>