

EFFECTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management is the fundamental service that a WR affiliate office provides to pre-certified and certified trafficking victims through the NETS project and/or USCCB sub-contract. Defining 'case management,' however, presents a challenge as there are many distinct models of case management. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) recommends ten minimum standards for case management provision, which can be used to measure the quality of WR's case management services.

1. ***A case manager should have the knowledge, skills and experience needed for competent case management.*** Agencies should strive to hire individuals who have basic knowledge and skills relevant to providing case management. This may be demonstrated through previous formal training and/or professional experience. Agencies should seek out and/or provide training and professional development opportunities.
2. ***A case manager will make the client his/her first concern.*** All case management activity should center about a client's short-term and long-term self-sufficiency. Other objectives are *secondary* to those directly related to the client's becoming independent and self-supporting.
3. ***A case manager will involve clients in the management of their case whenever possible.*** While case managers should present the options available to his/her client for achieving self-sufficiency, clients should be involved in deciding which options are best for him/her. Case managers should involve clients in the process of identifying and addressing barriers to self-sufficiency. Relationships between case managers and clients will be stronger when decision-making is collaborative.
4. ***A case manager will respect client privacy and the confidentiality of client information at all times.*** Because case managers will have access to personal and sensitive information about clients, they should maintain policies and practices that will ensure the protection of such information. A case manager should clearly communicate to each client *what* information about him/her will be disclosed, *to whom* it will be disclosed, *why* it will be disclosed and *when* it will be disclosed. Each client should give his/her written consent for releasing information before it is released. NASW recommends that the five following things be addressed within case management policies and practices:
 - What information should be known about clients
 - What information should be maintained in records
 - Who should have access to client information and under what circumstances
 - How accuracy of records will be ensured
 - How records will be stored, protected and disposed
5. ***A case manager will provide and/or coordinate delivery of services to clients.*** NASW identifies eight basic components in social work case management:
 - ***Identification/screening.*** Potential cases must be screened to determine if they are eligible for services and/or if the services are appropriate for them.
 - ***Assessment.*** A case manager should identify a case's strengths, needs, and potential barriers to self-sufficiency through a standard evaluation process. This should include the client's own assessment of his/her strengths, needs and barriers.
 - ***Service plan.*** A case manager should work together with the client to develop an individual service plan. The plan should include needs, short and long-term goals, and recommended services. An explanation of roles and responsibilities of client and caseworker should be included.
 - ***Implementation.*** A case manager should arrange for the delivery of services and/or client's access to them and ensure that the services actually meet the client's needs. A case manager should also ensure that services and case activities help the client move toward self-sufficiency.

- *Coordination and monitoring.* A case manager should maintain clear communication with service providers and clients to determine if services are being delivered in a timely and effective manner. Client progress should be monitored in order to determine if there has been a change or new developments in the client's set of needs.
 - *Advocacy.* A case manager should advocate before the primary service agency (e.g. WR), other service agencies and public benefits agencies. This includes ensuring that these agencies understand and recognize the client's actual needs, that they make efforts to fill gaps in service and/or support, and that they stop services and/or support at the appropriate time.
 - *Reassessment.* A case manager should regularly reassess client needs and progress throughout the service period in light of service plan objectives and revise the service plan accordingly.
 - *Closure.* A case manager should ensure that a client understands when and why services will cease for the case and 'prepare for the effects' of closure, which may include referring or directing the client to other services/support programs and following up.
6. ***A case manager will ensure that service agencies and programs operate effectively and in the best interest the client.*** Agencies, service programs and networks should function for the benefit of the client. Each case worker should assess how well the policies and procedures of any program, organization or agency work for the improvement of clients and advocate on behalf of the client when policies and procedures prove to be barriers to client progress. Such advocacy may address improvement or development of important program/agency resources and processes (e.g. case file forms and data collection), easier and smoother access to needed support and services, and changes in program policy when certain policies have proved ineffective to client progress.
 7. ***A case manager will know the level of resource availability and limitation and act accordingly.*** Each case manager should understand what is available to clients in a program and what is not, both in terms of financial resources and service options. He/she should ensure that the client also understands such service and financial limitations when and where appropriate. Case managers should deliver or facilitate services within programmatic and financial parameters and communicate with agencies when limitations are unrealistic.
 8. ***A case manager will participate in evaluation and monitoring activities to ensure accountability.*** For the sake of improving effectiveness, a case manager should actively participate in formal evaluations of the quality of the agency's service and monitorings for compliance with external and internal requirements. A case manager should also evaluate service quality by obtaining feedback from clients regarding the services they received from the primary and other agencies. This can be accomplished through a simple exit interview.
 9. ***A case manager will carry a reasonable caseload, so that he/she can provide effective assessment, support and coordination to each case.*** A case manager's load should be sustainable, so that assessment, coordination follow-up, monitoring and reassessment are able to be accomplished adequately for each case. The number of cases that a case manager is responsible for at any given time should not prevent him/her from 'meaningful opportunities for face-to-face contact.'
 10. ***A case manager will work cooperatively with case managers from other agencies and other professionals assisting his/her case.*** A single case manager cannot address all the needs that a client has, so that collaboration with other service providers and case managers is necessary. However, the benefit of such collaboration to clients will be compromised if professional relationships with others also serving those clients are not as strong as they can be. Formal, written agreements (e.g. MOUs) among service and public benefits agencies may be helpful in establishing and maintaining strong, well-defined relationships. Programmatic and financial roles, responsibilities and arrangements should be clearly communicated among agencies.