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PA Child Welfare Resource Center

315 Remote: Writing Skills for Case Documentation

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

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Who Am I?

Position	County
NAME	
Number of Years with Agency	Personal Goal for the Course

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of clear written communication and relate at least one personal objective for the course.
- Identify the important components of a case record using a sample case note.
- Use the Basic Writing Skills Resource Guide to proof, improve, and correct a paragraph from a case note

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Learning Objectives (continued)


- Explain at least one advantage of a properly sequenced case note.
- Identify the importance of objectivity and the use of facts in a case note.
- Explain at least one advantage of a thoroughly documented case note.

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Competency

- 315-1: The child welfare professional can identify pertinent data for inclusion in case records and reports, and knows how to organize information in a clear, concise manner.




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Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Value of Good Case Records/Documentation
3. Basic Writing Skills
4. Advanced Writing Skills: Relevance and Thoroughness
5. Skill Building
6. Review and Evaluations




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Likes and Dislikes

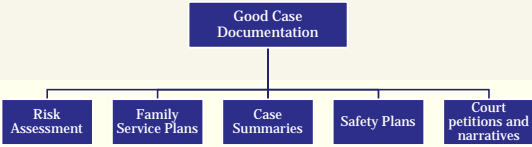
List three things you like best about your job and three things you like least about your job.



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The Importance of Good Case Documentation

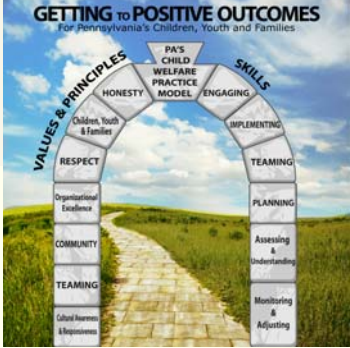


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GETTING to POSITIVE OUTCOMES

For Pennsylvania's Children, Youth and Families




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Reflect:



What are the main functions of a case record?

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Functions of a Case Record

- Provides a history of case activity for the future
- Documents how a family has responded in the past to agency intervention
- Documents decision making
- Measure client progress
- Means of communication to future service providers
- Evidence in court testimony
- Supports worker in the event of client challenges

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Functions of a Case Record (continued)

- Provides a means of supervision
- Allows worker opportunity to process case decisions
- Provides for cultural competence assurances
- Allows workers to look for patterns
- Provides information in the absence of a worker
- Provides background on the child/family, i.e. medical history, criminal history, mental health history, etc.
- Provides a timeline of events
- Allows for a smooth transfer of information from one child welfare professional to another

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Knouse Family Case Record


- You are taking over the Knouse family case record for the family.
- Create a list of what important information may be missing from the case record.
- Think not only of what may help you, but what information might also benefit supervisors, solicitors, or anyone else who might make use of the case record.

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When We Speak...

- Sentences tend to be
 - Complex
 - Convolutd
 - Qualified with adorning phrases
 - Conformed to the way we *listen*
 - Tone, voice quality, emphases, and facial expressions infer the speaker's intent




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When We Read...

- The mind expects sentences that are:
 - Simple
 - Declarative
 - Straightforward
- Do not write down your thoughts as you might express them verbally.



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Remember that...

Quality case documentation is a skill.

It takes practice to master thorough yet concise case documentation.

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Pronouns: Example #1

Stephanie and Layla were best friends until she began to spread rumors about her. She stated that she made going to school unbearable, which is why she became truant. Her mother, Anna, claims they were best friends. She is unaware of any falling out between them. She reported that she is always "upfront and honest" with her about everything.

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Sentence #1

Lori, Amanda, and Jen all live in the same house, but sometimes she spends the night with her father.

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Sentence #2

John spoke with William because he wants him to go to anger management classes.

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Sentence #3

Bobby and Glenn were both removed from their home on January 14, 2014, however he wants to go back.

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Writing Skills Exercise

- Participants will divide into four evenly sized groups who will be assigned one of the following writing topics:
 - Apostrophe
 - Number rules
 - Quotation Marks
 - Run-on sentences
- While in this small group, record a brief explanation, three helpful hints, and a sample sentence for your assigned writing topic on Participant Guide pages 8-9.

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Writing Skills Exercise (continued)

- Once your small group work is complete, you will teach the large group your assigned writing topic. As other writing topic "experts" teach their topics, complete the rest of Participant Guide pages 8-9.

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McAbee Case Scenario: Sequencing Activity


- Participants will go to page 10 of the Participant Guide.
- While watching the video, each person will record the sequence of the main events outlined in the interview.
- After the video, participants should create a sequence of events that could be used to write their case record.
- The larger group as a whole will compile an agreed upon sequence of events.

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What to Record Brainstorm

- Each participant will take five minutes to record in the chat box what they believe is important to include during a visit with the family.



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Case Fact from Opinion: Example #1

Mr. Brown was obviously drunk when he showed up for his visit.

What is the problem with this statement?



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Case Fact from Opinion: Example #1 (continued)


Mr. Brown showed up for his visit smelling like alcohol. He was unable to stand up on his own, leaning against the wall, and he fell as he walked away from the visiting room. Mr. Brown reported that he had been at the bar earlier today but denied that he drank any alcohol or that he was drunk.

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Avoid General Statements

- Why say, "He looked tired," when you could say, "He seemed to have trouble keeping his eyes open and yawned several times during our interview."
- Let's improve the following sentence together: "The house was dirty."



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Use of Language: The Martin Family

- [The Martin Family Case Vignettes: Scenes 4, 5, and 12](#)
- Directions
 - Divide into teams
 - Each group will be assigned one or two phrases
 - Identify the problem with your given phrase(s)
 - The teams will rewrite the provided phrases incorporating knowledge from this training
 - Place your revised phrases on a blank Word document to display

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Emilio Video Activity

- Participants will divide into six teams
- Each team will be assigned to take notes on a specific area
- After viewing, each team will work together to create a piece of the case record regarding their given area
- Write your piece of case record on a blank Word document
- Part One: Six Domains
 - Type of Maltreatment
 - Nature of Maltreatment
 - Adult Functioning
 - Child Functioning
 - General Parenting
 - Parenting Discipline

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Emilio Video Activity (continued)

- When teams finish with their case note, they will then be assigned a writing topic from today's training.
- Return to your piece of case record and review it with a focus on your assigned writing topic. Mark changes to your document, if needed.
- View the other case records and review and suggest changes as necessary. Repeat until you have reviewed each document.
- Return to your document and review your peers' suggestions.
- Part Two: Writing Topics
 - Relevance/Thoroughness
 - Grammar/language
 - Sequencing
 - Fact vs. Opinion
 - Avoiding too much information
 - Avoiding too little information

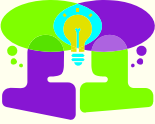
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Advice for New Case Workers

Imagine you are talking to a new case worker who is struggling with writing his or her case record. Write down three "tips" or "pointers" from this session that might be helpful to them. Post your best one in the chat box.



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Questions? Comments?



Thank You!

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