

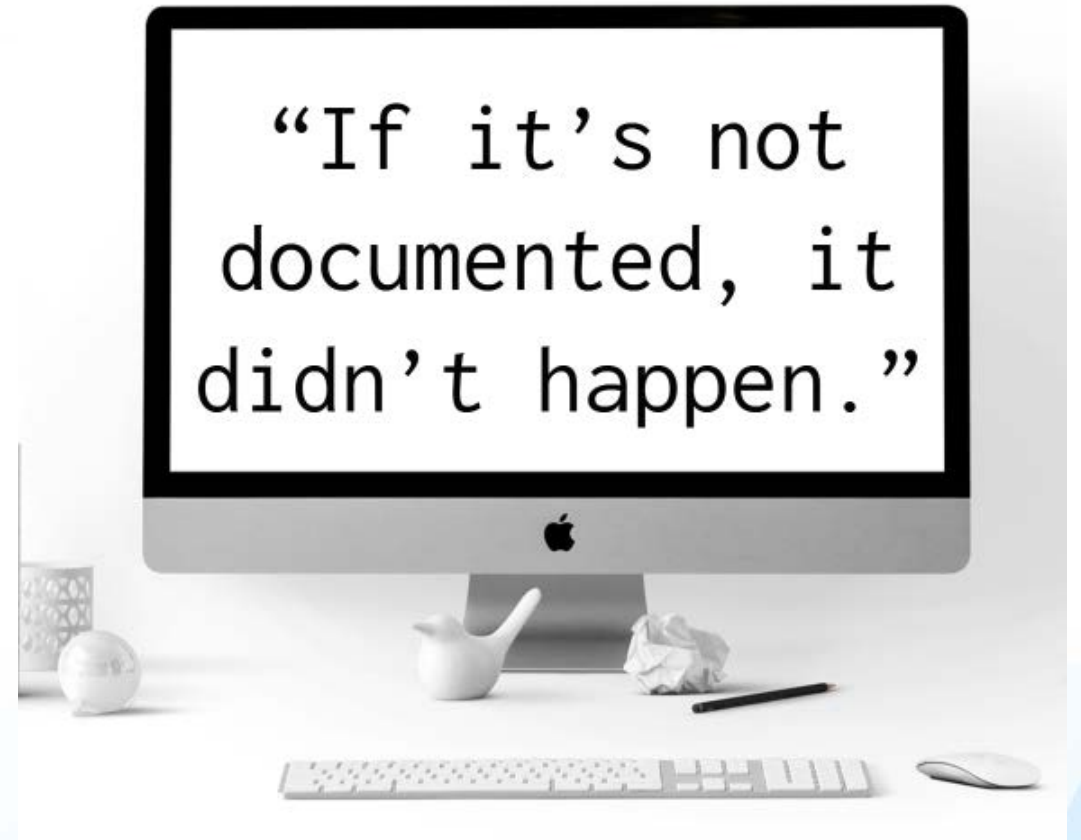
Telling the
Story in
Case Notes



February 14, 2018

Learning Objectives

- What are case notes?
- Why do we write them?
- How can we tell the story best?



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Case Notes
shouldn't be kept a
secret. They need
to tell a story that
any reader can
appreciate.



Defined

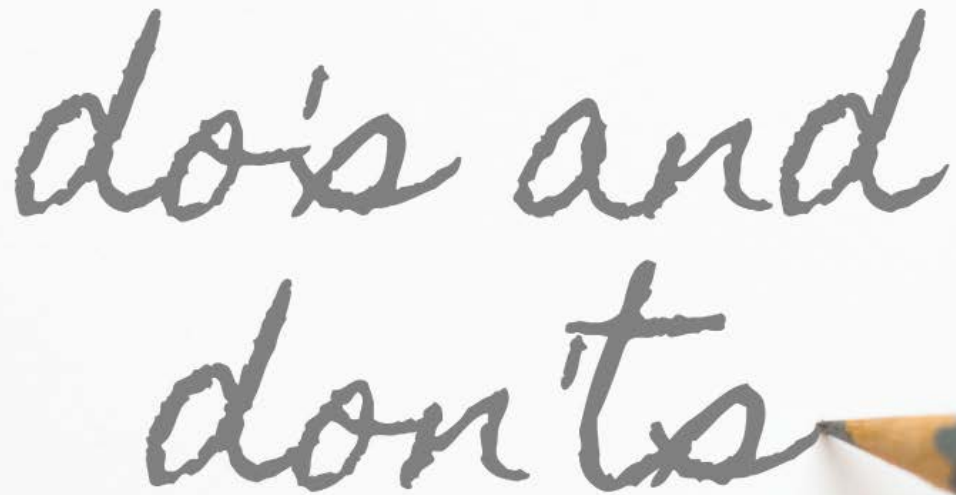
Case Notes are:

- a **note** recording the interaction with or progress of a customer/client.
- They can cover success or failure and may include:
 - Documentation
 - Service strategies
 - Recount of conversation or appointments
 - Requested follow-up by customer or partners

case notes

(keɪs nəʊts) *or* case papers (keɪs 'peɪpəz)

plural noun

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pencil, writing the words "do's and don'ts" in a cursive script on a white surface. The background is a light blue geometric pattern.

do's and
don'ts

Do:

- Use professional terminology as well as correct capitalization and punctuation.
- Address the circumstance with relevant details.
- Base notes on FACT. Observations are facts.
- Avoid bias by leaving out opinions and assumptions.
- Spell out acronyms at the beginning before using them.

Don't:

- Use slang, street language, clichés or jargon.
- Use metaphors or similes; say what you mean directly.
- Write in code so that no one understands.
- Write about personal details that don't impact the case.
- Include Personal Identifying Information.

Clear

- Any reader should be able to understand the content included in a Case Note. Who is speaking about whom? What is being said should not include acronyms, unless all readers will understand. If something happened is relevant, it should be included. Include the why, if an activity is not normally noted. Case Notes should be written in full sentences.
- Good Example: 1-18-18 3:15 PM This writer spoke with Mary Smith regarding her Paid Work Experience (PWE) activities at Senior Care Homes. Mary indicated that she is fitting in comfortably and refreshing all skills learned in training. *Submitted by Jane Smith, Case worker.*

Concise

- Brevity is advised, but relevant information should be included.
- Good Example:
 - Shilondra completed Adult Basic Education training today with a 97%.
- Poor Example:
 - She completed ABE today.

Useful

- Facts related to activity and interactions. Avoid including opinions, derogatory language or emotive language. Subjective opinions are qualified with relevant background information, theory or research.
 - Good Example: James confronted another case worker today with abusive language and physical threats. Police were called to the agency.
 - Poor Example: I was scared when James told MaryEllen that he was going to beat her up. He cussed at her and got up in her face.

Relevant

- Items recorded should be in direct relationship to the Case Note being entered. If a comment does not impact the activity being recorded in the Case Note, it should not be included.
 - Good Example: A family member called today to report that Mary was involved in a car accident and will be in the hospital for an extended period.
 - Poor Example: Mary's sister called to report that Mary was doing drugs and rammed into a semi-truck. She is going to be in rehab for 6 weeks after she recuperates from the surgery to repair the broken bone in her femur.

Timely

- Case Notes should be entered as close to the conversation, activity, or interaction as possible so that accuracy is not compromised.
 - Today, this writer spoke with James about starting the next class in welding. He will....

Identifiable

- If not automatically added, include date and time of Case Note for readers to follow a progression of activity.
- If not automatically added, include your name and position for clarification to other readers.

Frequency

Daily	Quick interactions like phone calls, texts, or emergencies.
Weekly	Review interactions and activities for the week. Daily items may be summarized in this note.
Monthly	Progress from the month either positive or negative.
Quarterly	Highlights of case activities for the previous quarter.
Initial	Highlight the conversation of an initial interview, orientation or assessment. This may be a lengthier Case Note.
Completion	Upon completion of activities and case is being closed out, recap the overall case compared to the initial Case Note.

Audience

Customer	Writing for customer follow-up and progress requires that the customer understand the actions required including due dates and specific tasks.
Co-Workers	Regular, thorough Case Notes allow co-workers to pick up a case and know what happened or needs to happen.
Administration	Tell a story so that anyone who deals with a multitude of cases can track progress, or lack of progress, to determine how to position or re-position a customer as necessary.
Partner Organizations	Wholistic case management with multiple agencies or organizations involved will need to tell a story so that all partners know what the other is doing with or providing for a customer.
Funders	Grantors will want to see that monies are being expended with positive results.

Like a press release



- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?
- Next Steps

Pull It All Together

Who:

- Who did the contact involve?
- If the information isn't included in a case record, include all information related to all parties involved.

When:

- When did the contact occur?
- When should it have occurred?
- When are you documenting the interaction?

What:

- What is the reason for the Case Note?
- What activity or lack of activity precipitated the Case Note?

Add The Details

Where:

- Did the activity occur at school, one-stop center, off-site?
- Is it relevant to note the location?
- Is it useful to note the location?

Why:

- Why is the Case Note being written?
- Is it relevant as to something is being noted?
- Is it useful to note the reasons for the Case Note being written?

How:

- How something is going to be executed could be included in a Case Note, especially if a partner is going to be responsible for the execution of the activity.

Good Examples

1-18-18 3:15 PM This writer spoke with Mary Smith by phone, regarding her Paid Work Experience (PWE) activities at Senior Care Homes for our **monthly follow-up**. Mary indicated that she is fitting in comfortably and refreshing all skills learned in training. **We scheduled an appointment for 2-15-18** as her PWE will be complete on 2-12-18 to discuss the next steps. *Submitted by Jane Smith, Case worker.*

3-15-17 2:20 PM This writer spoke with Mary Smith at orientation **this morning**. Mary and I completed the orientation packet in the office, where we **reviewed program parameters** with Mary. Mary signed the appropriate documents from the packet which are filed in her paper record. Mary took a TABE test - scored an 8.6 in reading and a 6.8 in Math. She **will be enrolled in Adult Basic Education (ABE)** since the program in which she wants to enroll requires a 9.0 minimum score in reading and math. Mary completed the background information section and indicated that a potential barrier to employment is a lack of transportation. There were no other self-identified barriers. **Next Steps for Mary include assigning a bus pass, and scheduling a start date for the next available ABE session.** **She will return to the office on 3-17-17,** as she had a doctors appointment on 3-16-17. *Submitted by Jane Smith, Case worker.*

Who

What

When

Where

Why

How

Next Steps

What type do I choose?

- Assessment
- Orientation
- Referral
- Background
- Placement/Employment/Exit
- Individual Employment Plan / ISTEP / Individual Service Strategy / Training Plan / Career Service
- Monthly Contact
- Two Way Communication
- Post-Exit Follow-up



Useful

Advised

Assessed

Assisted

Clarified

Confronted

Counseled

Discussed

Directed

Encouraged

Focused

Identified

Recommended

Referred

Reflected

Structure

Summarized

Supported

Urged

Avoid

Abnormal

Abusive

Anxious

Dangerous

Delusional

Demanding

Disturbed

Hysterical

Immature

Impulsive

Irrational

Overwhelmed

Resistant

Suicidal

Threatened

Troubled

Uncooperative

Unfit



Resources and Speakers

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Illinois workNet

www.illinoisworknet.com

Resources	
Intro to Case Notes for New Social Workers	https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/8157-intro-to-case-notes-for-new-social-workers/view
Australian Association for Case Workers	https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/2356
Experience Works	http://www.experienceworks.org/site/DocServer/Case_Management_Writing_Effective_Case_Notes.pdf?docID=23124
Cook County Workforce Board	http://www.workforceboard.org/Portals/0/ThePartnership/ProviderOrientation/Guidelines_for_writing_good_case_notes.pdf
Workforce GPS	https://ion.workforcegps.org/-/media/WorkforceGPS/ion/Files/Effective-CC-Case-Management/Case_Notes_Documentation.ashx
Career Source – Citrus Levy Marion	www.floridaobs.org/docs/workforce-professionals/art_of_case_notes.ppt