*The Principles, Functions and History of Records

Chapter 1

* Recording has both clinical and administrative function. Social Workers keep records:

  * To document and retrain information about client-need-situations

  * About the process and progress of services

  * Records are used in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating services to clients

  * Information from records is used to assess the quality appropriateness, and impact of services

*Record keeping is important component of social work practice

* Recording has both clinical and administrative function. Social Workers keep records:

  * Records are also used to case, caseload and personnel, and agency management

  * Records are a focal point of accountability

* Record keeping is important component of social work practice

* Principle 1: *Balanced valued goals*. Good records balance four valued but competing goals.
  * Accountability
  * Supporting
  * Improving practice
  * Efficiency
  * Client privacy

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

*Principle 2: *Mission focused*. Good records focus on content relevant to the mission of the agency and the goals of the service program.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 3: *Manage Risk*. Good records document compliance with or justify departure from agency policy, legal standards, practice guidelines, and professional ethics.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 4: *Accountability.* Good records focus on service delivery, documenting the purpose of service; service goals, plans, and activities; and indicators of progress, impact, and outcome.

  * Good records document the rationale for all service decisions and actions and compliance (or the reasons for failing to comply) with agency policy, legal standards, practice guidelines, and professional ethics.

    * Fifteen Principles of Good Records

*Principle 5: *Abridgment*. Good records include no more information about the client-need-situation than is pertinent to the purpose, goals, and outcomes of service.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 6: *Objectivity*. Good assessments are fair and impartial, and include four components:

  * Observation

  * Sources of information

  * Criteria used in judgment

  * Appraisal

* **Fifteen Principles of Good Records**

* Principle 7: *Client involvement*. Assessments, goals, plans, and activities should be tailored to the individual client-need-situation. Good records document the client's role in all aspects of the service process, including decision making and action taking.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

*Principle 8: *Sources*. Information in good records is attributed to its source. The Worker of records signs and dates each entry.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

*Principle 9: *Cultural context.* Good records document the cultural factors that influence the client-need-situation and service decisions, actions, and outcomes.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 10: *Access.* Good records are written as of the client, those acting on the client's behalf. Or those whose actions might oppose the client's wishes or interests were going to read them.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 11: *Usability.* Good records include all pertinent information, are well written, and form a coherent whole. The reader should be able to access important information about the client-need-situation and the service process over time. Good records are organized chronologically and by topic with cross references to minimize redundancy.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 12: *Currency.* Good records are living documents that are kept up-to-date. Records of long-term cases include periodic reviews and summaries.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

*Principle 13: *Rationale*. Good records provide the reasons behind and justifications for all service decisions and actions.

*Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 14: *Urgent situations.* Emergencies (e.g., hospitalization of a foster mother) and critical incidents (e.g., a client threatens a neighbor) are immediately and fully documented, with a report and plan of action signed by the worker and authorized by a supervisor or other administration.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Principle 15: *Exclusions.* Good records do not include detailed descriptions of interviews or group sessions ("process"); *speculation, unsupported opinions, judgmental language, gut reactions or intuitions; information about the client-need-situation that is unrelated to the purpose of service; or detailed descriptions of the worker's many activities on behalf of the client* (behold me busy" details). Good records exclude personal information about clients that is unrelated to the purpose, goals, or outcomes of service, as well as material that might be described as "inflammatory, demeaning or discriminatory.

* Fifteen Principles of Good Records

* Good social work records are useful

  * The primary functions of social work records are to satisfy the expectations of accountability. These are:

    * Identifying and describing the client-need- situation and the need for service

    * Describing and evaluating available resources

    * Articulating the rationale for service decisions and actions

    * Documenting compliance with standards

* Functions of Social Work Records

* Good social work records are useful

  * The primary functions of social work records are
    to satisfy the expectations of accountability.
    These are:

    * Monitoring the process and impact of services

    * And claiming reimbursement

* Functions of Social
Work Records

* Good social work records are useful

    * Secondary function

        * Support practice

        * Agency administration

        * Professional education and development

* Functions of Social Work Records

* Records contain information that identifies the client, describes the client-situation, and explains the need for service.

    * Descriptions and assessments of the client-situation (psychosocial diagnosis)

    * They describe the reasons for initiating service and the problems that are the focus of service

    * Records describe the relationship between the client-need-situation and the social environment

    * Eco-map to show visually the relationship between the client and various systems.

*Identifying and Describing the Client-Situation and the Need for Service

* Records document the match between the client-need-situation and the programs, services, interventions, and resources that are included in the service plan.

  * Public programs available

  * Community service

  * Interventions

  * Informal resources that might be suitable for the client-need-situation

*Describing and Evaluating Available Resources

* Records provide an explanation for the selection of service goals, plans, and interventions.
  * Agency policy
  * Client values and preference
  * Availability of resources
  * Evidence of effectiveness
  * Records make clear the client's role in decision making and action taking

* Articulating the Rational for Service Decisions and Actions

* Records provide an explanation for the selection of service goals, plans, and interventions.

   * Records document workers' judgments based on observation, knowledge of human behavior, policy and practice guidelines, and legal ethical constraints

   * Decisions of family, community members who influence the service process and outcome

* Articulating the Rational for Service Decisions and Actions

* An important component of accountability involves documenting compliance with agency policy, legal standards, practice guidelines, and professional ethics.

* Following proper procedure in dealing with…

  * Child or elder abuse cases

  * Working with a minor

  * Practitioner has followed accepted standards of care in response to the client-need-situation

*Document Compliance with Standards

* An important component of accountability involves documenting compliance with agency policy, legal standards, practice guidelines, and professional ethics.

* Following proper procedure in dealing with…

* Code of Ethics followed by the practitioner

* Document Compliance with Standards

* The social worker record is both a descriptive and an evaluating document

* It is used not just for reporting but also for monitoring progress and reflecting upon practice decisions and actions.

* Monitoring the Process and Impact of Service

* Records support request for funding and claims for reimbursement.
  * Records of client fees
  * Funding sources etc.

* Claiming Reibursement

* Records that are up to date, well organized, and clearly written assist the practitioner and others who are delivering services to tell the client in reviewing the case to date.

* Information about the purpose, plan, and progress of service, as well as the rationale for decisions and actions in the case, are essential to case continuity when another worker assumes responsibility for the case.

* Maintaining Case Continuity

*The record can be a direct means of communicating with the client

*Sharing Information with the client