Reporting and Documentation Requirement

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Module Overview

In order to identify all the services and investigative steps during an investigation, a PS worker must document all of his/her contacts and meetings. A PS worker must also complete an Investigation Summary and Assessment form on all completed investigations. This section will provide information on how to document all efforts in clear and concise language. Information is also provided on how to complete the Investigation Summary and Assessment form.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will

- Know how to write clear, concise and objective documentation.
- Know the basic information necessary to document the content and outcome of meetings, phone contact and/or interview.
- Know the difference between writing a fact and an opinion.
- Know where to find information on how to complete the Investigation Summary and Assessment form.

Study Steps

1. Review a completed case record. Note, the information that is included in each entry.
2. Review the content of this section.
3. Review recommended Acts, Laws and Regulations.
4. Complete the self-evaluation quiz and use the answer key to review your answers.
5. Review the content of any of the questions you answered incorrectly.
6. After conducting a visit, meeting and phone contact, complete a case entry. Show the completed entry to your supervisor for review.

Content

Read the module, Reporting and Documentation Requirement.

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Reporting and Documentation Requirement: Brief Introduction
All of your actions as a protective services worker must be clearly documented. Each step, action, service provision, and piece of information you gather may be an important piece of information that will assist you in determining the outcome of the investigation. Information gathered during the investigation may be used in the legal system to obtain court orders, guardianship and/or to determine if criminal charges are warranted. Your notes may become a part of a court record. Therefore, it is vital that you maintain up-to-date, clear documentation of all your actions.

Understandably, during a hectic week of unexpected emergencies you may get a few days behind on documentation. If this occurs you must schedule a "documentation" day as soon as possible so you can keep your records up-to-date. Also, you can let your supervisor know when you need support to update your records and the supervisor can develop a plan with you to insure you maintain up-to-date records.

Case Narration Samples can be found in Appendix B of this study guide. *Protective Services Investigations,* APD # 93-12-02.

A. Documentation in Case Files

a. Report of Need
b. Records of Investigative Activities (case notes)
c. Client Assessments and Reports
d. Informed Consent or Efforts to Gain Access
e. Notifications – client, alleged perpetrator, police etc.
f. Records of Court Interventions
g. Service Plan

B. Documentation Basics

a. There is no one prescribed way in which interviews, collateral contacts and meetings must be documented; however, the information recorded must be:
    i. Accurate
    ii. Complete and without investigator bias or subjectivity
        1. <u>Write</u>: Mrs. Jones repeated the same question over and over again – NOT, she seemed confused.
        2. <u>Write</u>: Mr. Smith would not open the door and he was yelling and screaming for me to leave. NOT, he was angry and would not open the door.
        3. <u>Write</u>: Mr. Smith stated that "sometimes my son scares me." NOT - Mr. Smith is afraid of his son.
    iii. Answer the basic questions of:
        1. Who
        2. What
        3. Where
        4. Why

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5. When

iv. Documentation must contain:
1. Time
2. Date
3. Place
4. Persons present at the interview
5. Key information obtained during the interaction

v. DO NOT
1. Omit information
2. Be inconsistent
3. Alter documentation

C. Documenting the Interview

a. The easiest documentation method is to take notes during the interview, if possible. If the interviewee objects to notes being taking during the interview, then the investigator must wait until after the interview to document what was provided. A distinct disadvantage to relying strictly on handwritten notes is that, over time, notes can be difficult to decipher especially if the note taker's handwriting is hard to read and/or the information was recorded quickly.

b. Another means of documenting the interview is to prepare a typed Memorandum of Interview recording the information received with the interviewer's notes as the source document. The Memorandum of Interview may be in paragraph or numbered format. The Memorandum of Interview must be prepared within a relatively short period from when the interview occurred. This way the information is still fresh in the investigator's mind and the loss of information obtained from the interview is minimal.

c. A third method of documenting the interview is to take a written statement. The written statement may be narrative, questions and answers, or a combination of both.

i. In the narrative format, the person relates the information in his/her own words. This is an extremely effective tool if the investigator believes that there is a high probability that the person being interviewed will retract or deny the statement made. However, this method will not work well if the person cannot express himself or herself concisely.

ii. The question and answer method allows the investigator to limit the statement to just the pertinent information. However, this method can be time-consuming too if the person cannot express himself or herself concisely or is intentionally attempting to evade the question.

iii. If a written statement is obtained, the preferred method is the combination approach. This allows the interviewee to state what occurred and lets the investigator cover any areas in which the

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statement does not fully answer the who, what, where, when, and why questions. Again, this method may be time consuming and may require the investigator to help prepare the statement for the interviewee.

iv. Regardless of whether the narrative, questions and answers, or the combination approach was used, the investigator will have to determine if the interviewee can read and will require the interviewee to sign the statement. If the statement is more than one page, then the interviewee should be required to initial each page. The interviewee should also be required to initial any errors on the statement.

1. One practice is for the investigator to intentionally misspell some words in the statement, if the investigator helped prepare the statement, to ensure that the interviewee reads and initials the statement. However, this may backfire if the interviewee is mentally challenged with spelling.

D. Investigation Summary and Assessment Form

This information is directly from the Aging Program Directive, Protective Services Report of Need and Investigation Summary and Assessment Form, APD # 97-24-01. Specific directions on how to complete each page and a sample form can be found in Appendix B of this study guide.

a. All sections of the Investigation Summary Assessment form must be completed unless otherwise indicated as optional.
b. The form is divided into 2 sections and several parts
   i. Summary and investigative activity
   ii. Assessment necessary on case substantiation
   iii. Part I
      1. Summary to be completed from the narrative notes after the investigation is concluded. The only exceptions are questions in part E-1 addressing financial exploitation. These questions are to be done during the course of the investigation.
   iv. Part II
      1. Includes the medical information and can be completed anytime during the investigative process.
   v. Part III
      1. Includes the portable Mental Status questionnaire, which is optional, and can be done anytime during the investigative process. There are also three questions in Part III-B addressing cognitive functioning which are to be completed during the course of the investigation.
   vi. Part IV
      1. Part of the investigative summary, and is completed after the investigation is concluded.

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vii. Part V

1. For substantiated cases ONLY. Can be done any time during the process.

c. Important Note: The attached Investigation Summary Assessment Form in Appendix B of this study guide represents the minimum requirements under the law and regulations. Local county AAA's may include additional information at their discretion.

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Self-Evaluation Quiz

Answer the following questions.

1. Documentation must always contain the date?
   T F

2. You only need to document in-person contacts?
   T F

3. You only need to do a Summary Assessment if the case is substantiated?
   T F

4. Documentation must be kept current?
   T F

5. It is ok to use your own writing style as long as you document all of the facts in a clear, concise manner?
   T F

<u>Review your answers with the answer key at the end of this section.</u>

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Transfer of Learning Activities

Review several case files:

1. Use the check list to determine if all of the necessary information is documented.

2. Note the writing style differences.
   a. Can the writing style differ and still contain the necessary information?

3. Ask your supervisor for feedback on your first few case notes, and Summary Assessments.

References

Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Aging Program Directive, *Protective Services Report of Need and Investigation Summary and Assessment Form*, APD # 97-24-01.

Pennsylvania Department of Aging, Aging Program Directive. *Protective Services Investigations*, APD # 93-12-02.

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ANSWER KEY
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1. Documentation must always contain the date? **True.**

2. You only need to document in-person contacts? **False.** *You must document all contacts, in-person or by phone, as many collateral contacts occur by phone.*

3. You only need to do a Summary Assessment if the case is substantiated? **False.** *A Summary Assessment must be completed upon completion of all investigations.*

4. Documentation must be kept current? **True.**

5. It is ok to use your own writing style as long as you document all of the facts in a clear, concise manner? **True**.

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