

Student Life Case Management

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Student Life Case Management

Faculty and staff on several campuses can turn to case management when they're concerned about a student in distress. The model supports them as well as students.

Case management is a relatively new field within student affairs. Managing student situations has always been part of the campus life job description, yet case management goes a step further to ensure that students of concern don't fall through the cracks so they can get the long-term care they need. At heart, case management seeks to:

- ▲ Link a student with the appropriate campus and community resources for his/her situation(s)
- ▲ Provide a student with the framework for practicing good self-care and self-advocacy
- ▲ Put in place and use a system for accountability / follow-up
- ▲ Help a student develop beyond the behavioral issues exhibited

Behavioral intervention strategies are a key component of the case management process. In the past few years, there has been a rise in Behavioral Intervention Teams (BITs) and Students of Concern (SOCs) committees on many campuses. Case management is often an offshoot of such efforts, as a designated person is tasked with putting together the puzzle pieces in situations involving high time, high touch students, providing support, accountability and advocacy in the process.

Whether you're contemplating the case management model or seeking to enhance your existing program, this ClipNotes publication will provide an overview of case management, along with examples and issues to consider. As we all seek to support our students in today's challenging climate, case management can be another tool for success.

Where to House Case Management?

Case managers may be housed and/or report to various campus departments, such as:

- ✓ Student affairs
- ✓ Residence life
- ✓ Judicial affairs
- ✓ Counseling
- ✓ Health services
- ✓ The Behavioral Intervention Team

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A Valuable Resource

Virginia Tech put together a comprehensive publication dealing with threat assessment that includes an entire chapter entitled “Implementing Case Management Services.” It can be found in *Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project* by Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D. and Ellen Plummer, Ph.D., Nov. 2009, www.threatassessment.vt.edu/Implementing_Behavioral_Threat_Assessment.pdf

Issues of Concern

Case management is a term known within social services. It typically involves taking a case from start to finish. On campus, case managers often help students with issues such as:

- ▲ Insurance—how to get help if uninsured or tapping into existing insurance to get assistance
- ▲ Mental health—from anxiety to depression to hospitalization
- ▲ Alcohol or other drugs—including detoxification and inpatient treatment programs
- ▲ Financial concerns—like prescription medication and immunization costs
- ▲ Eating disorders
- ▲ Academic concerns
- ▲ Stress
- ▲ Sexual, physical or emotional abuse
- ▲ Medical needs—including dental, pregnancy, etc.
- ▲ Community referrals—such as therapists and health care providers
- ▲ Family concerns—relationships, situations, etc.
- ▲ Basic needs—such as housing, food, etc.
- ▲ Developing a plan of action

Source: Some issues adapted from Penn State’s University Health Services,

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/services/clinicalServices/caseManagement.shtml> and Virginia Commonwealth University Counseling Services, www.students.vcu.edu/counseling/services/case_mgmt_referral_services.html

Connections

In dealing with a variety of student issues, case managers need to interface with both on- and off-campus resources. They can include:

- ✓ Disability support services
- ✓ Judicial affairs
- ✓ International student office
- ✓ Financial aid
- ✓ Residence life
- ✓ Athletic department
- ✓ Academic advising
- ✓ Health center
- ✓ Wellness programs
- ✓ Sexual assault response team
- ✓ Behavioral intervention team
- ✓ Counseling center
- ✓ Public safety/security
- ✓ Academic integrity committee
- ✓ Faculty & staff
- ✓ Learning support services
- ✓ The local hospital
- ✓ Psychiatric facilities
- ✓ Eating disorders specialists
- ✓ Domestic violence agencies
- ✓ Gambling prevention advocates
- ✓ Substance abuse counselors

Source: Some information from “Managing the Mosaic of Student Issues” presentation by Matt Lamsma, Associate Director of Residence Life & Jill Yashinsky-Wortman, Student Life Case Manager, Gonzaga University

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Job & Program Descriptions

Here is how case management is described within student life at several different institutions...

The University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Mission

“The UNCW case management model supports the university’s goal of creating a powerful learning environment which promotes the cognitive, affective, physical and social development of the student learner. Case management encourages interdisciplinary communication among university constituents to help create an environment where students are provided access and referral to resources designed to optimize their success. Case management balances the safety and security of the campus community while meeting the needs of the individual student. Behavioral intervention strategies are a key component of the case management process.

Objectives

- ▲ To serve as a resource for the University community in addressing student behavior that necessitates multiple responses with the UNCW community;
- ▲ To balance the educational needs of the student with the interests of the greater community;
- ▲ To identify frameworks for effectively addressing student behaviors that may negatively impact the university; and
- ▲ To serve as a resource for faculty, staff and students so that student issues are comprehensively being addressed.”

Source: <http://uncw.edu/stuaff/odos/casemanagement.html>

Duke University (NC)

“The Assistant Dean of Students/Case Manager oversees and directs case management for troubled students or students with complex psychosocial needs by providing student outreach, assessment, support, follow-up, and tracking. The Case Manager also coordinates student services and provides connections with campus departments as well as outside agencies and providers.”

- ▲ During Monday meetings to review the week’s incidents, situations requiring follow-up are transitioned to the case manager and incidents regarding student behaviors are entered into a tracking database.
- ▲ If a student is hospitalized, the case manager can help coordinate a plan for the student’s return to university life, including post hospitalization support, coordination of care and advocacy.

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- ▲ In the hospital, students may be encouraged to sign a Release of Information form so mental health providers can provide essential treatment plan and attendance information. The case manager may meet with the student in the hospital before discharge and then follow up to create a treatment plan.
- ▲ The case manager works closely with residential staff on student follow-up and intervention – and communicates about ongoing cases with on-call staff to ensure that the most up-to-date information is provided.

Source: www.studentaffairs.duke.edu/dukereach-counseling-resources

Penn State

“Case management is a free service offered to all Penn State students. This service is designed to enhance student care and help students manage their mental and physical health needs. Every individual has different needs and we are here to help with any issues that may be hampering the achievement of a student’s academic, social or long-term goals.

The goal of case management is to optimize student functioning by addressing concerns on an individual basis. We specialize in addressing issues pertaining to access to quality care, appropriate utilization of resources, and coordination of care. Our case manager is also available if you just need to talk about your concerns and formulate a plan of action.”

Source:

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/services/clinicalServices/caseManagement.shtml>

The Case Manager for Student Affairs at the University of California, Riverside

“Sarah Pemberton is the Case Manager for Student Affairs. If you’re struggling with a problem—whether it’s medical, psychological, psychiatric, social, financial or academic—Sarah is here to help you find the right resources, lend advice and even make sure you fill out your paperwork correctly. Sarah works closely with the Counseling Center, Health Center, Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, and the AVC Dean of Students office.

A Case Manager Helps in Many Ways:

- ✓ Medical
- ✓ Psychological
- ✓ Psychiatric
- ✓ Social
- ✓ Financial
- ✓ Academic”

Source: <http://well.ucr.edu/crisissupport/Pages/MeetOurCaseWorker.aspx>

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The University of South Florida

“The Student Affairs Case Manager works with students to help identify and overcome barriers to success at USF. The case manager can assist a student in assessing obstacles and challenges which may be interfering with his or her academic or social progress. The case manager can help a student get connected to campus and community resources that may provide additional support. The case manager can also serve as an advocate to help a student navigate the complex University system to access needed services. The case manager will work with students to develop an ‘Action Plan’ to help him or her focus on success.

What Does a Case Manager Do?

- ▲ Assesses the type of assistance and resources a student needs
- ▲ Assists students in accessing services, both on and off-campus
- ▲ Works with students to build or strengthen their support systems
- ▲ Removes obstacles to getting help
- ▲ Follows up with students to help them stay on track toward success as USF students”

Source: “Case Management Services: What? When? Why? How?” brochure,
www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu

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Case Management Issues & Concerns

In determining if a case management approach suits your institution, there are quite a few issues to consider. Here are a few...

Confidentiality. “Case management is not therapy or counseling so the rules of confidentiality that might apply to medical or mental health treatment don’t really fit,” says the University of South Florida’s “Case Management Services” brochure. How will confidentiality be treated within your system?

Continuum of Care. Case management can be attractive because one person is following through with a student, rather than requiring a student to jump from office to office. If you adapt this approach, how long will the case manager be involved in a student’s care? And what will precipitate the manager being “taken off the case” when it’s time?

Reporting Structures. Some case managers report to the vice president for student affairs, while others work with counseling, health services, judicial affairs, residence life and others. What makes the most sense for your system?

Relationship to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). Will the case manager be part of the BIT or a Student of Concern committee? Or will they oversee such a group? Determining the BIT relationship is a key piece of the case management puzzle.

Staffing. At Virginia Tech, there is one student case manager dedicated to responding to and managing cases that involve referrals for evaluation and/or hospitalization. Another student-focused case manager is dedicated to cases referred to the Student Care Team in the Office of the Dean of Students. They also have an employee-focused case manager. Colorado State uses both professionals and graduate interns/practicum students. What type of staffing is doable within your structure?

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Not Having It All on One Person's Shoulders. Designating a campus case manager could make other professionals less diligent, as they assume the case manager will “take care of things.” What can be done to ensure that this remains a collaborative effort, where other professionals serve as first-line case managers initially? What supervisory details can be put in place to help a case manager get the support he/she needs? Who will assess and be aware of burnout and compassion fatigue possibilities?

Assessing Students. Determining which high need students would benefit from case management takes careful assessment so the appropriate energy can be focused, students can get what they need and professional staff don't burn out due to unmanageable case loads. How will you make these determinations?

FERPA & HIPAA. Misunderstandings about these important campus issues can be a big deal. What does a case manager need to know in order to honor FERPA and HIPAA limitations in his/her approach?

Withdrawal Procedures. Will having a case manager change any of your current withdrawal procedures? If so, why is that?

Compassion Fatigue

A case manager who is always on the case could potentially develop compassion fatigue (CF), which refers to “a physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue or exhaustion that takes over a person and causes a decline in his or her ability to experience joy or to feel and care for others” (www.Intelihealth.com). The energy and compassion being doled out often outweighs the necessary nurturing and care most human beings require to stay balanced.

Signs and Symptoms

- ▲ An overused sense of compassion that leads to a lack of ability to feel or care for others
- ▲ An accumulated fatigue that can take months or years to surface
- ▲ Re-experiencing the trauma of a situation or a student's experience, even after the incident is over
- ▲ Avoiding any reminders of an event or numbing yourself to it
- ▲ Losing your sense of self to the students you serve—getting so wrapped up in their issues that you leave yourself behind
- ▲ Feeling devoid of physical and emotional energy

Keep this in mind as you employ a case management strategy and depend on one person in this role.

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Resource Networks. Case managers typically work with both on- and off-campus constituents to get students the care and resources that they need. What relationships are currently in place? What might need to be worked on? Will there be sufficient time within the case manager's job description to develop these relationships proactively before crisis situations occur?

Funding. Of course, adding another budget line is a major commitment. Think about what funding might be necessary beyond a case manager's salary and benefits, based on what you're hoping to get out of this position. There may be federal grants available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and more.

Communication & Information Sharing. Keeping up with the details involved with students of concern requires a collaborative effort. Does your institution have a database where updated information can be uploaded so it's available to certain staff members? How will on-call staff be kept in the know so they can respond appropriately? What can be shared with family members? Do students need to sign a consent form in order for a case manager to gather and share necessary information?

Letting Students Know. In order to seek help, students need to know about the availability of case management. How can it be described succinctly so students know what it is? What methods of contact are possible—email, Facebook, phone and in-person? What will help them feel comfortable seeking out a case manager if they are in need?

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Strategies & Best Practices

Here are some examples of what different institutions are doing when it comes to case management...

Database Management

A major component that can make or break the success of a case management approach is information sharing. Quite a few schools are putting information about student cases into online databases so the appropriate professionals can access it as they're working to help students. For instance, at Stanford University (CA), a case management system is coming soon that will allow professionals to:

- ▲ Enter new cases and search past cases
- ▲ Find all cases associated with a particular individual
- ▲ Write case notes and actions taken & attach relevant case documents
- ▲ Share case notes as appropriate
- ▲ Utilize PeopleSoft data so that information about case participants does not have to be entered
- ▲ Classify cases by type of case
- ▲ Support Clery reports
- ▲ Report statistics on types of cases

Source: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/sais/news/case>

Helping a Friend

Case management at the University of South Florida includes giving students resources to help a friend. They can call the case manager or go online to fill out a "Student of Concern" referral form (www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu/referralform.htm). Then, according to USF's brochure, "The Case Manager will gently reach out to your friend and offer help."

Continuity of Care

At Virginia Commonwealth University, Case Management Services/Referral Services outline on their website that their services are "available for students, graduates or individuals transitioning out of the VCU community."

They also stress, "Assistance is also provided in linking students with services in their hometown or moving destination to ensure continuity of care over the summer break or following graduation/exiting VCU."

A Community of Care

At Tulane University (LA), their TuLane Community of Care (TLC) focuses on individual behavior and well-being, as well as community well-being. Case management is part of a comprehensive approach within this Community of Care, which provides:

- ▲ 24 hours / 7 days a week a student affairs professional is on-call
- ▲ Process of care—tracking process for students in distress
- ▲ Case management—helping students with multiple issues from beginning to end
- ▲ Violence prevention and support services
- ▲ Counselor on-call/Counselor-in-residence
- ▲ Student health center physician on-call
- ▲ Tulane emergency medical service
- ▲ Initiatives focused on bystander intervention
- ▲ Behavioral Intervention Team

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Resources

- ❑ “Case Management Services: What? When? Why? How?” brochure and referral form from the University of South Florida • www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu • www.studentsofconcern.usf.edu/referralfom.htm
- ❑ “Case Management System Coming Soon!” Stanford University Student Affairs Information Services, 2/21/11 • <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/sais/news/case>
- ❑ Case Management at Penn State’s University Health Services • <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health/services/clinicalServices/caseManagement.shtml>
- ❑ DukeReach at Duke University • www.studentaffairs.duke.edu/dukereach-counseling-resources • www.studentaffairs.duke.edu/dukereach-resources-parents
- ❑ Case Management at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington • <http://uncw.edu/stuaff/odos/casemanagement.html>
- ❑ The Well at the University of California, Riverside • <http://well.ucr.edu/crisis-support/Pages/MeetOurCaseWorker.aspx>
- ❑ Case Management Services/Referral Services at Virginia Commonwealth University • www.students.vcu.edu/counseling/services/case_mgmt_referral_services.html
- ❑ “Case Management Teams: Early Intervention for At-Risk Students” presentation by Joanna Locke, Executive Director, Programming, The Jed Foundation • www.jedfoundation.org/assets/Slides_CaseManagement_ACPA2008.pdf
- ❑ Case Management Roundtable at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville • <http://studentaffairs.utk.edu/casemanagement/>
- ❑ “What is Compassion Fatigue?” at www.ace-network.com
- ❑ “Overcoming Compassion Fatigue” at www.InteliHealth.com
- ❑ “Managing the Mosaic of Student Issues” presentation by Matt Lamsma, Associate Director of Residence Life & Jill Yashinsky-Wortman, Student Life Case Manager, Gonzaga University (WA)
- ❑ Student Case Management at Colorado State University • <http://studentcasemanagement.colostate.edu/>
- ❑ Student Resources and Support Services at Tulane University • <http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/student-resources-and-support-services.cfm>
- ❑ *Implementing Behavioral Threat Assessment on Campus: A Virginia Tech Demonstration Project* by Marisa R. Randazzo, Ph.D. and Ellen Plummer, Ph.D., Nov. 2009, www.threatassessment.vt.edu/Implementing_Behavioral_Threat_Assessment.pdf