

INTRODUCTION:

A service plan is a document. A form of service plan is prescribed for all programs within Family Resources and the component entries of a service plan are to be entered in ISIS, the agency's computerized documentation and record system. This section of the practice manual deals with the service planning process that leads to the production of that document and its variations and revisions. Each service plan which is produced must be reflective of the benchmarks described for this process and must be sufficiently complete to document that the processes we describe took place in a meaningful way.

TIME FRAMES:

Services which are provided prior to the completion of a service plan are by nature random. Therefore the service planning step of the service delivery process should occur first. The time available for this planful approach may vary radically, however, from discipline to discipline. In programs which emphasize crisis or exigent circumstances response as part of their client service, the time for assessment and planning may be very short, in deed. Maybe minutes. To accommodate these needs, each program will develop a timetable for the service planning process suitable for the service needs being addressed. Each protocol, however, will require as its first step the identification of urgent safety and well being issues that require immediate intervention. In the absence of such issues, the agency establishes a minimum standard for the development of an initial service plan within two weeks of admission and a comprehensive service plan within the first thirty days of service.

PARTICIPATION:

Client focused service planning is a participatory process in which the client, and, as appropriate, the client's family and other individuals identified by the client are involved in the identification of strengths, needs, barriers, goals and objectives. Benchmarks of client focused service planning are:

- ✓ **Information Source:** The assessment upon which the plan is based relies upon the client as a primary source of information.
- ✓ **Service Options:** The plan demonstrates that the client, and, as appropriate, the client's family understand the available service options and the relationship they bear to supporting the achievement of the desired outcomes.
- ✓ **Risk/Benefit:** The plan demonstrates that the client and, when the client is a minor or incapacitated his or her parent or guardian, is fully informed prior to acceptance of service of the benefits, risks and alternatives to the planned services.
- ✓ **Signature:** A client, and/or a minor or incapacitated person's parent or legal guardian must signify their participation in the service planning process by signing the service plan. Any plan which does not contain the client's or other appropriate signature must document the acceptable reason for its absence.



The written service plan must document that all of these requirements are met. This is usually done in the collaboration/assessment section of the Family Resources prescribed form. The assigned caseworker is responsible for explaining these variables to the client, and the legal guardian of an incapacitated client.

CONTENT:

A client focused service plan should not be formula or service driven in content. It must nonetheless meet certain measures of best practice. Thus, a service plan developed in compliance with this practice procedure will:

- ✓ Be tied into the findings of the assessment.
- ✓ Identify client and, where appropriate, family strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ Identify service goals and objectives focused on the timely resolution of the issues presented.
- ✓ Identify service activities which are goal directed and strength based.
- ✓ Specify amount, duration, timing, and objective for each service element.

CHILD WELFARE/PERMANENCY ISSUES:

A significant number of clients and families served by Family Resources are involved in child welfare/juvenile justice issues where permanence consistent with safety and legal standards is an overriding issue. In any case which involves a child in out of home placement or at risk of out of home placement, a service plan must meet the following additional benchmarks:

- ✓ Identification of the least restrictive placement where safe permanence can be accomplished.
- ✓ Planning, in conjunction with governmental and legal authorities for the timely accomplishment of the least restrictive placement identified.
- ✓ Exploration of all reasonable alternatives which would allow a child to return to his or her family or origin or, if not possible, to retain family ties or contact.
- ✓ Approval, for any plan for which the agency has the authority to make a recommendation which may result in separation of a child from his or her family, of a Master's level clinician.

SAFETY PLANNING:

Safety planning is often considered a specialized function for the domestic violence or rape sexual assault programs. That is a mistake. Safety planning is essential for all clients in all programs. While the safety risks may differ in nature or intensity from program to program, they are likely to exist in some degree in all areas. Therefore it is a requirement of all service plans developed by Family Resources that social/environmental risks to the safety of each client be assessed and that the service plan contain service elements designed to assist the client in protecting themselves from the danger thus posed. Safety risks included those posed by the clients own actions. Programs that employ behavior management procedures must include a detailed individualized safety/behavior management plan which details the full array of interventions that will be utilized with the client prior to, and during, the imposition of restrictive interventions such as isolation and seclusion.

UPDATES

Service plans, to serve their purpose must reflect current circumstances. Whenever circumstances change, therefore, they must be updated and revised. A good benchmark for this is the quarterly progress summary required for all open cases (See Service Documentation). Any such note should address the need or lack of need to revise the service plan. Material changes in circumstances during that period, however, should also be reflected in service plan revision.