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## SUMMARY OF BRIEF

This issue brief provides examples of key elements and practices for effective case management in the workforce system. We share examples of state and local tools, processes, and policies designed to create or improve case management. An annotated list of additional resources is also included.

### ABOUT THIS BRIEF

This brief is one of a series of technical assistance tools developed under the Technical Assistance and Training initiative of the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The initiative involves development of information on a number of topics, and dissemination is geared toward state and local workforce administrators and practitioners.

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## INTRODUCTION

Case management is an essential component of a customer-centered workforce system. Case managers—sometimes known as career specialists or employment counselors—carry out a wide range of activities and play a critical role in helping guide, support, and motivate customers seeking training, employment, and advancement. To be effective guides, coaches, and mentors, case managers must employ a wide range of skills and tools, all of which must be supported by administrative practices and policies.

To provide workforce practitioners with information they can use to improve the services they provide to customers, this brief highlights key features and practices associated with effective case management practice. The information presented is drawn from several sources :

- a scan of online resources, including reports, policy documents, webinars, and tool kits;
- telephone interviews with subject-matter experts and state workforce development staff members; and
- regular guidance and feedback provided by a project Work Group made up of federal, regional, state, and local workforce development personnel.

## COMPONENTS OF CASE MANAGEMENT

In the context of workforce investment programs, case management guides and supports the customer on his or her path toward obtaining employment and career advancement. The order in which a customer receives specific case management services may vary depending on individual needs and goals and on program requirements and resources, but as illustrated in *Figure 1*, all case management contains four essential components:

1. Direct customer service activities (assessment, career planning, coordination of supportive services, and job matching, placement, and follow-up);
2. Monitoring and documenting services and outcomes on a case-by-case basis;
3. Skilled case managers; and
4. Administrative policies and practices and system infrastructures that support case managers and the case management function.

In the most effective case management, these components are optimized: direct customer service activities are comprehensive, well integrated, and supported by quality tools (e.g., assessment instruments and Individual Employment Plans) and resources (e.g., labor market information); tracking systems allow careful, ongoing monitoring and documentation of

services and outcomes; case managers possess strong interpersonal communication skills that enable them to develop supportive and productive relationships with customers; and administrative practices and policies truly support case managers in implementing the tasks associated with effective case management.

## MAXIMIZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CASE MANAGEMENT

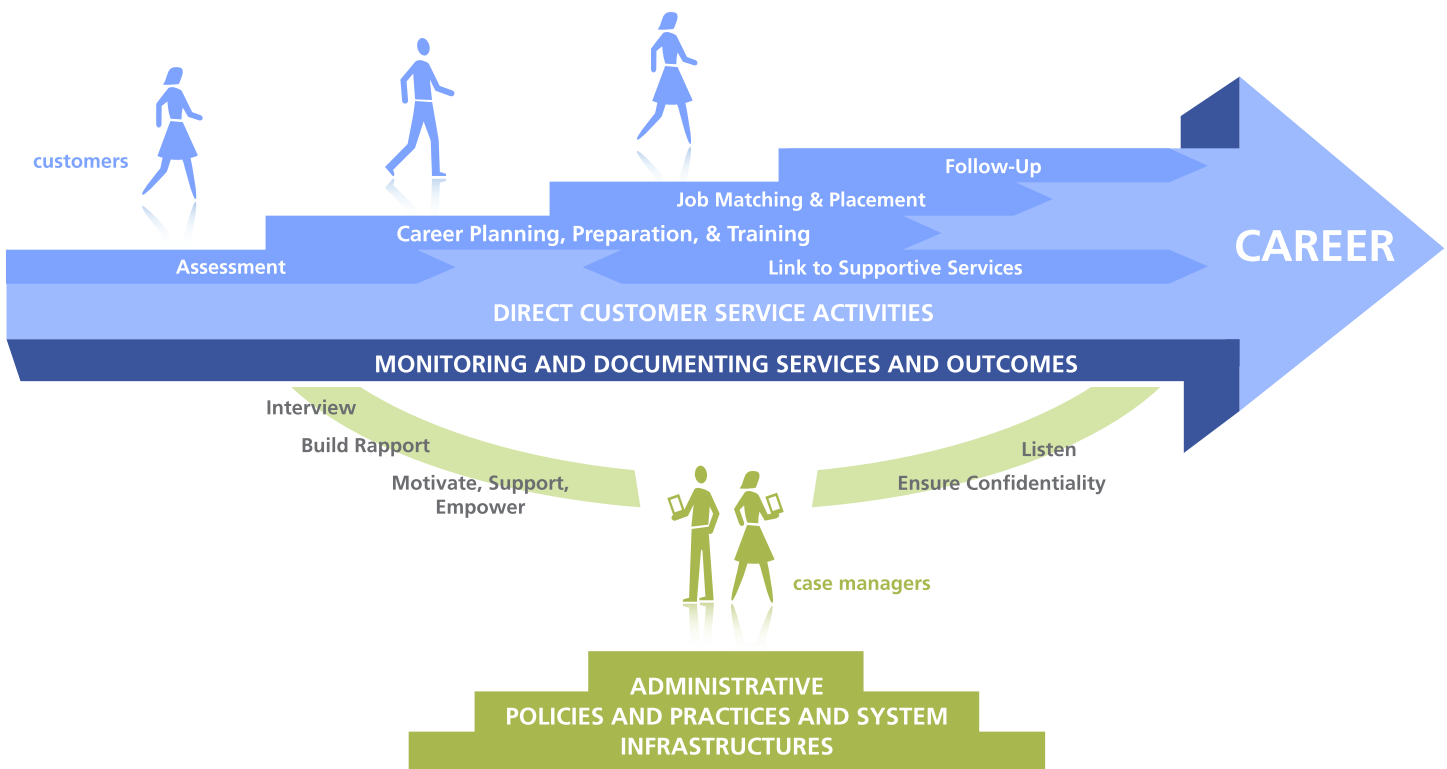
For each of the four components of case management, a variety of different strategies and tools have been shown to be effective for yielding good outcomes and meeting customers' needs most comprehensively.

### Direct Customer Service Activities

Case managers carry out four critical activities: assessment; career planning; coordination of supportive services, and job matching, placement, and follow-up. Suggestions for making these activities as effective as possible are discussed in detail below.

**Conducting Assessments** Assessment is a systematic approach to gathering information about the customer's strengths and assets, needs and challenges, interests and goals. This information, in turn, guides the development of

FIGURE 1: THE COMPONENTS OF CASE MANAGEMENT



<sup>1</sup> In addition to drawing from these three key sources, this brief highlights relevant promising practices identified through site visits conducted in five states under the auspices of the National Evaluation of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, funded by the Department of Labor.

## USING AN ASSESSMENT TOOL TO INFORM CAREER PATHS: MY NEXT MOVE

*My Next Move* is a new, no cost, user-friendly interactive online tool released in February 2011 by the Department of Labor. Using Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) information, *My Next Move* enables job seekers to complete an Interest Profiler assessment, review job zones, and explore occupation profiles.

The Interest Profiler assessment requires the job seeker to rate 60 work activities based on interest in performing the task. The tool then itemizes the interests into the six Holland career types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. From these career types, the Interest Profiler moves the job seeker into the job zones activity. The job zones describe the five levels of experience and education needed for different occupations—from little to no preparation to extensive preparation. The job seeker clicks through the different levels to identify the experience and education level and identifies the level he or she wishes to pursue. Based on the interest categorizations and job zone, the Profiler compiles a list of potential occupations to explore.

The job seeker can then select any occupation from a customized list to access information on that occupation's job outlook, its education and training requirements, and the typical personality traits, skills, and abilities of people in the occupation. *My Next Move* also notes if occupations are high-demand, high-growth, green, or part of a registered apprenticeship program.

To access the *My Next Move* assessment tool visit: <http://www.mynextmove.org/>

- Conduct a variety of tests to understand what is being assessed and for what purpose.
- Administer assessment instruments properly and under conditions that do not adversely affect performance.

A wide range of assessment tools are available to case managers, from informal interviews to standardized, nationally recognized tests:<sup>2</sup>

- Preliminary assessments (e.g., intake questionnaires)
- Interviews (e.g., unstructured and structured)
- Mental and physical ability tests (e.g., Candidate Physical Ability Test)
- Aptitude/abilities assessments (e.g., O\*NET Ability Profiler, Skillscan, WorkKeys)
- Interest measures (e.g., Campbell Interest and Skill Survey, Holland Self-Assessment Interest Survey, O\*NET Interest Profiler, *My Next Move*)
- Work and personal values measures (e.g., COPSsystem, CareerScope)
- Personality inventories (e.g., Human Metrics, Keirsey Temperament Sorter, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator)
- Occupation-specific assessments (e.g., Provelt!, JobFit)

## ADAPTING CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO MEET HIGH DEMAND

In the workforce system, case management services are primarily delivered to individuals rather than to groups. Although group case management is not a substitute for valuable one-on-one interactions between case managers and customers, it does offer certain benefits. For example, as a strategy for dealing with a significant increase in customers seeking employment services as a result of the recent recession, some local workforce areas in Massachusetts and New York have stretched service capacity by conducting initial assessments in a group setting. Case managers can also serve as group facilitators, guiding discussion and empowering customers to network, learn new strategies, and give and receive support and encouragement.

Additional information on group case management is available through ASM Associates at:

<http://www.nyatep.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=4531>.

the customer's employment plan and all other case management activities. As such, assessment is considered the foundation of effective case management. Case managers must understand and use the various assessments available, be able to interpret the results of multiple assessments, and translate the information obtained through the assessment process into a plan of action. The following guidelines outline the foundation for conducting productive, high-quality assessments:

- Use a comprehensive and exploratory approach that involves both informal and formal assessments.
- Make assessment an ongoing process, allowing multiple opportunities to reassess progress and barriers.
- Use assessment tools that are known to produce valid and reliable results.

<sup>2</sup> This is a list of common assessment tools and does not suggest endorsement for any particular tool.

Many assessment tools are proprietary software packages and must be purchased. The case manager should be aware of the tools available to him or her and understand how these tools, used in combination with each other, can provide comprehensive information to guide all other activities.<sup>3</sup>

If possible, formal assessments should be given in a quiet environment. Administering assessments in places with high traffic or other distractions can affect the customer's score and thus alter the reliability of the assessment. The case manager should clearly explain the purpose of each assessment and how to complete it. Some states and local areas have developed standardized scripts or manuals to assist the case manager in administering assessments. Standard instructions ensure that all customers receive the same information during the assessment, thereby increasing the reliability of the results.

**Career Planning** Career planning includes analyzing the customer's skills, interests, and other assessment results, examining current labor market information, and working with the customer to develop an employment plan that includes immediate steps to obtain employment and long-term strategies to advance in the labor market. Specifically, after multiple assessments are administered and interpreted, the case manager must work in close collaboration with the customer to develop a comprehensive service strategy or action plan. Involving the customer is essential, since assessments can help customers come to new understanding of their interests and resources, which may affect how they would like to proceed with their employment plans. Once the case manager informs the customer of available activities, training programs, and other services, the two should work as partners to develop a mutually agreed-upon service strategy or employment plan.

In WIA and TAA, the employment plan is referred to as an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP).<sup>4</sup> The IEP is an agreement between the customer and case manager about how the customer will progress through benchmarks on the way to meeting his or her goals. IEPs are most effective when tailored to the specific needs of the customer, referenced often, and updated regularly to chart and reflect any changes. The case manager needs proper training (discussed later in this brief) in how to work with customers to develop IEPs that set specific, measurable, obtainable goals and provide reasonable timeframes.

In *The IEP as a Case Management Tool* webinar, it is suggested that IEPs include the following content:<sup>5</sup>

- **Goals.** The stated goals should reflect what the customer wants to achieve. IEP goals are generally related to a specific employment goal, such as obtaining a particular type of job.

- **Objectives.** The specific steps the customer will take to realize a goal.
- **Services.** The services the customer will need to receive in order to meet objectives.

The case manager should use the content from the goals, objectives, and services sections of the IEP as a roadmap to help the customer achieve employment. When planning a course of action for an IEP, the case manager should consider the following:

- **The customer's vision.** Based on the customer's current situation, his or her vision is where he or she would like to be after the education, training, or other services are received.
- **Next steps.** These are the actions the customer needs to take at any point in the program or service strategy. This part of the IEP is dynamic and requires updating as customers complete steps.
- **Milestones.** Milestones denote when a step in the plan is complete or an objective has been achieved. They should be specific, measurable, and attainable within a designated timeframe.

#### Effective Career Planning:

### APPLYING IEP KEY COMPONENTS FOR A CUSTOMER INTERESTED IN A HEALTH CARE OCCUPATION

After the case manager analyzes the results of multiple assessments and determines the customer's strengths, interests, abilities, and potential areas for further development, the case manager and the customer work together to develop an IEP. The IEP identifies the short-term goal of "Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)" and the objective of attaining a CNA certificate. To meet this objective, the customer needs the service of attending a CNA training course.

When planning the course of action for this IEP, the case manager and the customer describe the customer's vision, which notes her current unemployment and that she would like to be employed as a CNA after training. For next steps, the customer needs to bring eligibility documentation and select a training course. Together, customer and case manager set a milestone of enrolling in a CNA training program.

<sup>3</sup> Some assessment tools, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, can only be used by licensed or certified practitioners.

<sup>4</sup> For convenience, the term IEP will be used hereafter to refer to all employment plans, including those going by other names or developed in workforce programs other than WIA and TAA.

<sup>5</sup> Lengel, Frank. *The IEP as a Case Management Tool* [Webinar]. Funded by U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Region 2, 2010. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011023045659295611/info>. Accessed on October 1, 2010.

## Examples from the Field:

### USING LABOR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI) TO INFORM CAREER PLANNING

**Alaska** The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has partnered with the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to develop career clusters and pathways using Labor Market Information (LMI) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) data. These career pathways ladders and lattices are used at local One-Stop Career Centers and by career counselors at the University of Alaska. Alaska has also developed an interactive online portal for exploring career options; students and adult job seekers can register for this portal at no cost.

More information is available at the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development: <http://www.jobs.state.ak.us/index.html>

**South Carolina** In South Carolina, for TAA participants, case managers include an analysis of LMI in the MIS. Case managers review current positions in the customer's commuting area to ensure a sufficient number of job openings and they connect the available openings to occupations the customer has held in the last three years. If the TAA participant does not have the work history to match the available occupations, the case manager refers the participant for more in-depth assessments.

More information is available at the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce: <http://dew.sc.gov>

**Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan** The Driving Change project is led by the Labor Market Information Offices of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, in collaboration with research institutions from each state and the state's workforce investment boards. Funded by the Recovery Act's 2009 State Labor Market Information Improvement grants, this project developed tools for assisting autoworkers in transitioning to other industries in which they could use their same skills sets. The project used LMI to develop a skills gap model that measures the time needed to change from one occupation to another. Using this model, the online tool provides job seekers and counselors information on the time it takes—referred to as "trip time"—to move from one occupation to another, based on the original and destination occupations, destination occupation demand, and difference in wage between the two occupations.

More information on the Driving Change project is available at: <http://drivingworkforcechange.org/index.asp>

The case manager should use information gathered during the assessment to understand the customer's current situation and how this affects his or her short- and long-term plans. Short-term plans—including goals, objectives, services, and milestones that are set for the period when services are rendered—should be included in the IEP. Likewise, long-term plans—including goals and milestones for 9 to 12 months after the customer exits the program—should also be included. Short-term plans might include such objectives as entering a training program, while long-term plans could include goals such as unsubsidized, sustained employment or enrollment in a community college course.

Labor market information (LMI) is another key resource for developing an IEP. LMI includes critical information on the local job market, such as short-term job openings and wages, high-growth or in-demand occupations and industries, employment trends, and projections of future supply and demand in the labor market. LMI is available at the national, state, and local levels, and many states and local workforce investment areas publish LMI on their websites.

LMI can be used to direct the customer toward careers in occupations or industries that are predicted to have relatively high demands for labor. If a customer initially identifies a career path for which there are not likely to be many job opportunities, the case manager can use LMI to guide the customer to make more forward-thinking decisions about his or her career path, taking into account not only his or her interests and goals, but also the current labor context. The case manager should therefore know how to access and interpret local LMI so that the customer's IEP reflects the predicted demand for labor in the occupations or industries the customer has targeted.

**Linking Customers to Supportive Services** The case manager plays an important role in coordinating access to other services that a customer may need to achieve his or her employment objectives. To be an effective broker, the case manager should know about all the workforce programs available at One-Stop Career Centers as well as the support services available from community partners and other agencies. This cross-organizational knowledge allows the case manager to link the customer with transportation assistance, child care assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

## Examples from the Field:

### AUGMENTING CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR HARD-TO-EMPLOY POPULATIONS

Some states and local workforce investment areas have adopted models that augment the resources available to case managers who serve customers with significant barriers to employment.

**Persons with Disabilities** The Disability Program Navigator Initiative, a joint project between ETA and the Social Security Administration (SSA), provided funding to establish trained specialists at One-Stop Career Centers devoted to connecting persons with disabilities to programs and services. These Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) served as resources for case managers who were helping customers with disabilities navigate the work force and supportive services systems. At the height of this initiative, 42 states had Disability Program Navigators. Although the DPN Initiative has ended, several states have continued similar programs using the same model.

Information on the DPN Initiative is available at: [http://www.doleta.gov/disability/new\\_dpn\\_grants.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/disability/new_dpn_grants.cfm)

**Older Workers** To retrain older workers in high-growth, high-demand occupations and industries, ETA has awarded Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) grants to ten local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and nonprofit agencies. Some grantees have applied the navigator model (as illustrated in the DPN Initiative described above) to older workers served through this initiative. For example, Maine has five AWI navigators across the state who work directly with older workers to link them with One-Stop Career Center services and also refer them to community-based organizations for additional work supports.

Information on the Maine Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. AWI is available at: [http://www.coastalcounties.org/workforce\\_dev/page.php?id=25](http://www.coastalcounties.org/workforce_dev/page.php?id=25)

**TANF Recipients** In Utah, the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) co-locates licensed clinical therapists in One-Stop Career Centers across the state to help TANF recipients obtain employment. These therapists conduct clinical and functional ability assessments; provide crisis intervention and clinical case management; and make referrals to mental health treatment providers.

For more information on the Utah DWS visit: <https://jobs.utah.gov/>

(SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), financial counseling, and other supportive services that enable all customers to find or maintain employment.

Developing relationships with staff members from human service agencies and community-based organizations can help case managers advocate more effectively for customers and enable them to receive needed support services. In addition, some workforce agencies have found it useful to assign specific case managers to work with special populations with multiple challenges to employment (e.g., homeless, ex-offenders, persons with disabilities) and help customers in these categories navigate the ancillary systems that serve these target populations.

**Job Matching, Placement, and Follow-Up** Job matching and placement require knowledge of the customer's skills, interests, and career goals, as well as familiarity with his or her employment plan and access to LMI. As part of the coaching role, the case manager may provide career planning, review resumes, help the customer develop interviewing skills, or provide links to related services. In some workforce develop-

ment environments, the case manager is not responsible for job placement but connects the customer to business specialists (or job developers) who perform job matching and placement. The business specialist should be able to determine the best placement for the customer based on case notes, assessment results, training, and any other services rendered.

Successful, sustained employment is often contingent upon the availability of continued contact with a case manager. Some programs (such as WIA Youth) require follow-up for 12 months after program exit. Regardless of any formal post-program requirements, the case manager should maintain frequent contact with the customer after placement and program exit to ensure that he or she is receiving any needed job retention assistance or services. Follow-up can also expose or re-introduce customers to new workforce programs and services from which they could benefit. Some local areas have found that using social media and other online communication methods—such as email blasts to social media sites (e.g., Twitter or Facebook), web pages, and blogs—offers a useful additional avenue for informing customers of new job openings or relevant workforce programs and services.

### Examples from the Field:

#### USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUTH FOLLOW-UP AND ENGAGEMENT

Social media offer a potentially promising and still relatively untapped means to stay connected with customers—particularly youth—both during and following their participation in WIA and other workforce programs. The Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas is finding Facebook to be an effective platform for connecting with and following up on youth. The Workforce Investment Board has contracted with a technology company to maintain a youth-focused Facebook page that WIA Youth staff members use to stay in touch with WIA Youth participants and track them for WIA follow-up reporting requirements. Staff members find that youth in particular identify electronic communication—such as email, texting, and social media—as the best means for maintaining contact. Although Facebook as a follow-up tool is used exclusively for youth, the page also contains posts on employment workshops and job search tips that are applicable to most job seekers.

To access the Workforce Solutions of Greater Dallas Facebook Page (“Jobz”) go to:  
<https://www.facebook.com/bajobz>

### Examples from the Field:

#### ELECTRONIC CASE NOTES AND TRACKING

Electronic case records can facilitate the creation of more precise case notes and more comprehensive tracking of a customer’s progress and service receipt across multiple programs.

Southwest Connecticut. In 2006, The WorkPlace, Inc. in Southwest Connecticut moved to electronic case records, which allowed for staff members of different programs to view customer information and determine future service strategies. Because customers use multiple entry points into the various workforce and social service programs, the case notes are housed in a single MIS and must provide enough information to inform other case managers of customers’ involvement in the multiple programs. This information is also used by greeters who guide customers to the appropriate services or to case managers for different programs.

More information about The WorkPlace, Inc. is available at: <http://www.workplace.org/>

Utah. Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) case managers using the state’s MIS, UWORKS, see specific prompts that help them create more precise and informative case notes and track their customers more efficiently. UWORKS is linked to the UI system and has the capability to extract information, visualize UI claims data, and check if customers are receiving UI payments. Changes in the UI system are updated in UWORKS with a maximum 24-hour delay. This function allows case managers to review and track up-to-date information on their customers.

For more information on the Utah DWS visit:  
<https://jobs.utah.gov/>

### Systems for Tracking and Documenting Services and Outcomes

Case notes tell the customer’s story; they should clearly show the customer’s progress toward his or her career goals at a level of detail such that any case manager would be able to understand the customer’s situation and services received without additional documentation. Thorough notes include data on the customer’s eligibility, as well as the services received, the outcomes of those services, and the results of both formal and informal conversations with the case manager.

Case notes should include detailed but concise information gathered directly from the customer or, in some cases, from the customer’s social system (for example, if a case manager has been unable to contact a customer but learns that the customer is employed through an informal conversation with a family member). These notes should also include the case manager’s observations of a customer’s behavior or descriptions of situations that indicate the existence of a challenge to employment that the customer has not disclosed.

Case notes also serve as a critical record of accountability for both the case manager and the customer. As such, they should include specific action items—for both the case manager and the customer—as well as a timeline for completion of these items. When the customer makes progress or reaches a goal, the case manager should record this, and the individual employment plan (IEP) should be reviewed and updated.

### Case Managers and Their Skills

If a case manager is to serve as a mentor, coach, and counselor, he or she needs to develop a successful relationship with the customer. Strong interpersonal communication skills are essential in this process.

**Interviewing Effectively** Interviews help the case manager understand the customer’s current situation, immediate needs, goals, strengths, and challenges. Use of the following methods can increase the effectiveness of interviewing:

- *Asking open-ended questions.* Engage the customer in a conversation, and invite him or her to share more information by asking questions that can’t be answered with just a simple “yes” or “no.”

- *Probing.* Ask questions designed to gather additional information about a topic or to follow up on customer statements.
- *Avoiding judgments.* Refrain from expressing judgment (verbally or nonverbally) during interviews and adopt a nonjudgmental attitude.
- *Being sensitive to body language.* Be sensitive to the customer's nonverbal responses, as a complement to careful listening to what the customer actually says.

**Developing Rapport** Strong rapport enables the case manager to connect with the customer and to understand his or her goals and challenges. Relating to the customer and encouraging him or her to share goals sets a positive, collaborative tone for all interaction. The following methods assist in establishing rapport:

- *Relating as partners.* Make collaboration and shared responsibility the basis of the relationship.
- *Mirroring.* Match speech and body language—such as tone, tempo, and inflection—during conversations.
- *Showing enthusiasm.* Show genuine interest and enthusiasm in the conversation by being present and attentive to what is being said.

**Ensuring Confidentiality** Assuring the customer that his or her statements will be kept confidential is an important part of building trust and open communication. To the extent possible, the case manager should do the following to ensure confidentiality:

- *Converse in a private environment.* Provide a physical space that invites the customer to share personal information without the possibility of others overhearing.
- *Protect documents.* Keep documentation confidential, ensuring that only authorized persons have access to customer information.
- *Maintain privacy.* Share customer information or discuss the customer's situation only with those involved in the customer's service strategy.

**Active Listening** By validating a customer's experiences and point of view, active listening during formal and informal conversations helps build the customer's self-esteem. And to the extent that it helps build trust and establish openness, active listening can also provide the case manager with useful information about the customer's goals, roadblocks, and social system (such as relatives, friends, neighbors). Active listening involves using the following techniques:

- *Restating and paraphrasing.* In your own words, feed the customer's statements back to him or her to assure both of you that the customer has been understood.
- *Clarifying.* Ask questions that help clarify what the customer has said.

- *Reflecting.* Use information provided by the customer to clarify links between stated goals and the intended course of action or career path.

**Motivating, Supporting, and Empowering** The case manager needs to be able to motivate, support, and empower the customer throughout his or her time in the program. The following strategies may help to accomplish this:

- *Leveraging motivators.* Identify the strengths, core values, and dreams that motivate the customer, and use these to generate optimism and keep the conversation positive.
- *Focusing on successes.* Praise successes, especially small ones, and re-define failures as partial successes and learning opportunities.
- *Providing incentives.* Use tangible rewards to motivate customers to act and reach goals.
- *Empowering the customer.* Help customers learn to see themselves as their own best resources.

#### Examples from the Field:

### CUSTOMER-CENTERED INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

In New York state, the Career Counseling and Advisory Academy offers One-Stop Career Center staff members training in Head, Heart and Soul (HHS) interviewing techniques. HHS is a training curriculum developed by Cal Crow, Ph.D, that teaches frontline staff how to talk with customers about career development in ways that relate directly to their feelings and values ("heart" and "soul") but also engage rational thought processes ("head"). For instance, staff members are trained to recognize different types and modes of emotional expression during the course of an interview and to follow up with a series of appropriate probes, such as "How do you feel when you are involved in that activity?" This approach helps establish rapport; it also motivates the customer.

For other examples of how frontline staff can be trained to more effectively mentor and coach their customers, see: <https://doors.workforce3one.org>



Opening Doors for Everyone



## Administrative and System Supports

It is important that administrative practices and policies and management information systems (MISs) support case managers and allow them to refine their skills and effectively complete their duties. Case management systems function most effectively when case managers are hired strategically and provided with opportunities for training and skill development, when their workloads are limited to manageable levels and they have strong networks of cross-organizational partners to tap in to, and when their management information systems incorporate helpful and efficiency-boosting features.

**Hiring high quality case managers** Hiring case managers with a diverse range of skills can help administrators ensure that a case management staff as a whole has the necessary skills to build relationships with customers and meet their needs. When an opening needs to be filled, this may mean filling in a skill gap—for example, an administrator of a rural area with a high degree of seasonal agricultural employment might hire a case manager who is bilingual and experienced in serving a migrant and seasonal farm worker population. On a smaller scale, individual case managers should each demonstrate a range of talents, including a willingness to relate to customers, collaborate with partners, and learn new skills.

### Examples from the Field:

#### HIRING HIGH QUALITY CASE MANAGERS IN MISSOURI

In Missouri, some local area leaders, such as those in at the Park Hills Career Center in the Southeast Missouri Local Workforce Investment Area, place particular emphasis on hiring staff members with highly developed helping skills. Further, local supervisors have developed relationships with human resources staff in charge of the state merit staff hiring process and with local WIA contractors in order to build the case management and TAA teams that can serve participants effectively.

To learn more about the Southeast Missouri Local Workforce Investment Area, visit:  
<http://www.job4you.org/>

**Training and Staff Development** Even highly-skilled case managers can benefit from specific, ongoing training and staff development activities to improve his or her performance and to hone the skills and qualities that foster supportive, productive relationships with customers. For example, case managers should receive training when workforce program policy changes, or in administering and interpreting a new assessment tool. Training methods vary, and include classroom training; interactive web-based sessions, with or without a live audio portion; and self-directed computer- or paper-based

modules or courses. Some states and local areas set aside time each week for staff training on policies and procedures, while others offer new case managers a biannual, intensive course in case management that lasts a couple of weeks.

### Examples from the Field:

#### PENNSYLVANIA CAREERLINK TRAINING

Since 2007, Pennsylvania has trained all staff members at its One-Stop Career Centers (called CareerLinks) using a standard statewide curriculum. This curriculum provides case managers with basic information on the workforce system and specific case management-related training on developing IEPs, understanding LMI, interviewing, taking case notes, and other related tasks.

Each staff member attends a weeklong course (CareerLink 101) that provides information on the foundations of workforce and career development, customer satisfaction, business etiquette, and performance measurement. Case managers then attend a weeklong 200-level course that provides job-level specific training on topics such as case management, interviewing, and data entry. For example, CareerLink 212 presents various customer scenarios to case managers, allowing them to identify challenges, develop IEPs and service strategies, and take clear, specific case notes. The trainings are scripted to ensure that staff members across the state receive a consistent message. All current program staff members—including those associated with TAA—have attended these trainings. They are now offered to all new hires who work at the CareerLinks, including those of partner organizations.

The Staff Development Coordination Services unit at the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership, also holds one-day classroom trainings on case management at various locations throughout the state. The unit has embraced technology, offering webinars for One-Stop Career Center staff members across the state on different workforce development topics. For example, this year the topics include basic LMI and O\*NET concepts, business LMI, and common measures. These one- to two-hour live webinars are conducted several times a year.

For more information about Pennsylvania's CareerLink Trainings, contact Jeanne Block at: [jblock@state.pa.us](mailto:jblock@state.pa.us)

**Workload Management** Within the limits set by customer volume and available resources, administrators should limit each case manager's workload to a reasonable number of

cases. When very large caseloads cause case managers to severely restrict the time spent with customers, it becomes difficult if not impossible to deliver services that meet the highest standards of quality. Ensuring manageable workloads for case managers, however, has proved difficult to accomplish even in the best of times. The increased demand for workforce system services stemming from the recent recession and slow recovery has made it even more difficult. Administrators and case managers, therefore, must work together to find innovative strategies to manage customer volume and staff workload with the resources and staff members available. A strategy used by some states and local areas is to conduct intake assessments and orientation in groups. As noted earlier, another strategy is to assign customers possessing significant barriers to employment (for example, homeless individuals, older workers, persons with disabilities, ex-offenders) to a designated specialist who has additional training and expertise in working with these populations or the kinds of barriers they present (see Linking to Supportive Services box). These designated specialists can be given reduced caseloads to help offset the increased intensity of case management services these customers may require. Other case managers benefit because they are relieved of the time-intensive responsibilities of serving these individuals.

#### Examples from the Field:

### SOUTH CAROLINA AND TAA CASE MANAGEMENT

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce has 23 mobile TAA case managers across the state, each of whom reports to two or three offices each week and provides TAA-specific case management. Since these case managers are mobile, they are able to respond to a mass influx of TAA participants, such as might occur after a major layoff, thus averting what would otherwise be a very challenging situation at the local office. These case managers have laptops, blackberries, and mobile printers, and are trained to conduct group intake in local offices. Two regional supervisors monitor their workloads and position them where they are most needed.

More information is available at the South Carolina of Employment and Workforce: <http://dew.sc.gov/>

### **Cross-Organization and Cross-Program Partnerships**

Collaboration between different systems, organizations, and programs can increase the capacity of case managers to coordinate and broker services on behalf of customers. Common cross-collaborative strategies include exchanging information about services, establishing formal customer referral and follow-up procedures, and leveraging resources. Some local areas hold case conferences, where different partner organizations can work as a team to coordinate services provided

#### Examples from the Field:

### ANOKA COUNTY'S PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY SUCCESS PROGRAM

Since 2003, the Partnership for Family Success (PFS) program in Anoka County, Minnesota, has provided family-based team case management to individuals served by multiple programs and departments. The PFS team is made up of workers from various Human Services Departments, including Corrections, Community Health and Environmental Health Services, Community Social Services and Mental Health, Income Maintenance, and the Workforce Center (which operates the Vocational Rehabilitation program and provides employment and training services to WIA job seekers and TANF recipients). During weekly two-hour meetings, the team discusses clients' service strategies, makes recommendations, and identifies ways to strengthen service delivery through integrated policies and procedures.

The team-based approach is supported by a designated intake worker who conducts an in-depth psychosocial assessment, using standard measures and screening tools to understand an individual's work history, educational background, social supports, employment barriers, strengths and weaknesses, and learning disabilities. The intake worker performs additional assessment and observations of the individual's home environment, personal relationships, and mental health. Individuals admitted into the program receive intensive family-based case management services via weekly home visits until they become more self-reliant (on average about 12 months). The intensive case manager assists the client with access to work supports; teaches life skills and work habits; and coordinates services from multiple departments. A job-ready client meets with a vocational rehabilitation counselor co-located at the One-Stop Career Center, who works on placing that individual in employment. The client continues to receive work-related support services from his or her intensive case manager after placement.

More information on the PFS program is available at: <http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/reexam/reexamdocs/Best%20Practice%20Anoka%20CO%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

by multiple systems. In the context of a single office, case managers can support customer job placement and facilitate positive outcomes by building strong relationships with the business specialists. Case managers can use business specialists' relationships with industry leaders and employers to assist customers or recommend the best placement given the customer's interest and skills. The goal of the UI-Workforce Con-

nectivity Workgroup provides another example of building cross-program partnerships. The UI-Workforce Connectivity Workgroup has identified the vision of building a workforce system “that is driven by a single workforce system registration (WSR) as the entry into the nation’s ‘reemployment system’—and offers a coordinated customer-centric focus with full partner access.”<sup>6</sup>

### **MISs that Help Support the Case Management Function**

Management information systems can facilitate more effective case management by guiding the case manager through data entry requirements. Some MISs have step-by-step screens or tabs that correspond to required customer information for each program; such features can reduce data-entry errors and inconsistencies. Other MISs, such as the UWORKS system in Utah and IWORKS in Iowa, keep track of the case manager’s tasks and provide pop-up reminders about those that are time

sensitive. These MISs analyze customer information and suggest additional programs or services for which the customer might be eligible. For example, the MIS might determine that the customer is eligible for transportation assistance and then prompt the case manager to provide information to the customer on that supportive service. MISs can also support case managers by producing the necessary reports used for program requirements, participant outcomes, and information on staff performance. Reports on participant outcomes and service histories can aid case managers in determining the best courses of action and areas in which customers may need to refocus efforts in order to achieve goals outlined in the IEP. When MISs can provide supervisors with data on their case managers’ productivity, they can use these data to better understand case managers’ workloads, strengths, and areas in need of improvement.

#### **Examples from the Field:**

### **MIS SUPPORT FOR CASE MANAGEMENT**

Utah has implemented a management information system called UWORKS that supports and facilitates case management activities and eases the administrative burden on case managers. The Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) uses UWORKS as the MIS for a wide range of employment and human service programs, including Workforce Investment Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Employment and Training Service, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Child Care subsidy, and Medicaid. UWORKS determines training eligibility by comparing similarities and differences across the multiple programs the system administers and can therefore determine eligibility for multiple programs at once. Other states in addition to Utah (such as New York, with its One-Stop Operating System) have also chosen to develop in-house MIS systems that guide case managers through the intake and record-keeping processes.

Other states have taken a different path toward realizing the same benefits, purchasing commercially available software packages that include integrated case management functions. For example, over a dozen states (Florida, California, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Carolina, Wyoming, Virginia, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Texas, New Hampshire, District of Columbia, Maryland, and Nebraska) have contracted with Geographic Solutions to use the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) case management system.<sup>†</sup> VOS allows case managers to enter and share information for customers receiving core, intensive, and/or training services through federal, state, or local workforce and human services programs, such as WIA, Wagner-Peyser, TAA, TANF, UI and other locally defined programs. VOS enables staff members to determine eligibility, conduct intake, record case notes, enter IEP information, provide referrals, and track placement and follow-up. Staff members are able to track services delivered at any location or by any staff member. This function also provides supervisors with data on their case managers’ performance. In South Carolina, for example, the coordinator can run ad hoc reports from VOS to examine each case manager’s productivity.

<sup>†</sup> This description is provided for illustrative purposes only and does not suggest endorsement for any particular commercially available case management software.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see *A National Call for Innovation: Rethinking Re-Employment Services for UI Claimants, A Report of the Unemployment Insurance and Workforce System Connectivity Workgroup*, at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011107031158575200/info>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following is a list of additional resources on various aspects of effective case management. These resources were selected from a more extensive list identified through the resource scan conducted for this project. The full array of resources can be accessed on the project's landing page on Workforce3One: <https://effectivecasemanagement.workforce3one.org>

### Case Manager Skills

*ETA Region 4 Career Consultation Training.* This document—developed for DOL and presented by Kip Stottlemeyer of Greg Newton and Associates—offers ideas related to the role of the case manager: how to help with career planning, what to include in case notes, and why case managers need to wear the hats of cop, coach, and consultant to get the best possible outcomes for customers. 2010. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/2001108736682030945/info>

### Direct Customer Service Activities

*The YouthBuild Manual for Counseling, Case Management, and Program Culture.* This manual provides an informative and detailed description of the nuts and bolts of effective case management—an integral part of YouthBuild—from program entry to post-program follow-up. While the primary focus of the manual is case management for disadvantaged youth, much of the information is nevertheless relevant for case managers working with any population. Published by the US Department of Labor in June 2010. Available at: [http://www.ybhandbooks.org/files/tools/Counseling\\_Case\\_Management\\_0610.pdf](http://www.ybhandbooks.org/files/tools/Counseling_Case_Management_0610.pdf)

*Assessment: Foundation for Effective Case Management Webinar.* This webinar is part of a series on case management. It outlines the basics of assessment, as well as formal and informal assessment tools (including interview and observation skills). It also addresses current trends in assessment as they relate to transferable work skills, discusses how to “green up” the process, and explains the value of continuous follow-up. Created by the Maryland Institute for Workforce Excellence in August 2010. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011023045487411162/info>

*Testing and Assessment: A Guide to Good Practices for Workforce Investment Professionals.* This guide presents information for workforce professionals to use when assessing their clients. It includes chapters on career counseling, training, and development; the legal context of assessment; test quality; assessment tools and uses; test selection and administration; scoring and interpreting assessment instruments; issues and concerns about assessment; and key principles of assessment. Published in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Available at: [http://www.onetcenter.org/dl\\_files/proTestAsse.pdf](http://www.onetcenter.org/dl_files/proTestAsse.pdf)

*Career Development Toolkit Series.* This series consists of five career development toolkits reflecting the Maryland Career Development Framework: (1) Helping Clients Assess and Improve Their Own Work Readiness; (2) Helping Clients Identify a Career Path; (3) Helping Clients Get the Job; (4) Helping Clients Keep the Job and Advance; and (5) Helping Clients Transition to Higher Education. Created in October 2006 by the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning. Available at: <http://docushare.msde.state.md.us/docushare/dsweb/View/Collection-11674>

*The IEP as a Case Management Tool Webinar.* This webinar, part of a series on case management, presents the basics of IEPs (including essential components of successful plans), “power planning,” and connecting career planning to the IEP. This webinar was developed by the Maryland Institute for Workforce Excellence for DOL ETA Region 2 in May 2010. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011023045659295611/info>

*How to Write an Effective Individual Employment Plan.* This document describes the reasons for completing an IEP, as well as practical dos and don'ts for preparation, writing, and follow-up. Funded by the Senior Community Service Employment Program and the National Council on the Aging, and published in July 2005. Available at: [http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/html\\_docs/Docs/Workshop%20Materials/3/Individual%20Employment%20Plan%20\(IEP\).pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/seniors/html_docs/Docs/Workshop%20Materials/3/Individual%20Employment%20Plan%20(IEP).pdf)

*The Road to Opportunity.* This report offers a range of information for professionals working with low-skilled, low-income workers, including best practices in basic education, supportive services, case management, labor market analysis, vocational skills, and follow-up services. Published in 2007 by the United Way of Massachusetts Bay. Relevant Pages 15–17. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/command/view.aspx?look=4731&mode=info&pparams=>

*Charting a Path: An Exploration of the Statewide Career Pathway Efforts in Arkansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin.* Drawing from examples in Arkansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin, this comprehensive report includes a chapter (pp. 23-29) on how to incorporate supportive services into a career pathways model. Published by the Seattle Jobs Initiative in May 2009. Available at:

[http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/documents/09May26\\_SJI\\_PolicyBrochure\\_in-housecopy.pdf](http://www.seattlejobsinitiative.com/policy/publications/documents/09May26_SJI_PolicyBrochure_in-housecopy.pdf)

*Employment Counseling.* This PowerPoint document, developed as a training tool for the State of Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, provides information on career counseling as mandated by the Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Acts. Created by Employ Florida and the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation in 2008. Available at:

<http://www.floridajobs.org/pdg/TrainingPresentations/EmploymentCounseling101205.pps>

*New Strategies to Promote Stable Employment and Career Progression: An Introduction to the Employment Retention and Advancement Project.* This report discusses MDRC's findings on the Employment Retention and Advancement Projects. In particular, pages 39-42 describe the job placement strategies used and the results of those efforts. Published by MDRC in 2002.

Available at: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/36/full.pdf>

*Letting Numbers Guide: Labor Market Information and Youth Services.* This is one of 12 training packets created for the Texas Workforce Board regions. This resource focuses on youth services and provides information on how to use labor market information in organized career clusters and skill pathways. Published by the Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative in 2003. Available at: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/youthinit/materials/lmiyouth1203.pdf>

## Tracking and Documentation

*Make a Note of It: Documenting Progress Through Case Notes.* This webinar describes the seven elements that should be included in every case note: a background statement, a reason statement, observations, content, results, impressions, and plan statements. The webinar is part of a series on case management developed by the Maryland Institute for Workforce Excellence for DOL ETA Region 2 in June 2010. Available at: <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011023045916809781/info>

## Administrative and MIS Supports

*Client Success Through Partnership: Best Use of Resources, Integrating the Work, How Systems Help.* This PowerPoint presentation describes the management information systems used by the State of Utah. These systems, which can share information with each other, determine funding streams while caseworkers develop service plans. Created by the Utah Department of Workforce Services in July 2010. Available at: <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/uploadedFiles/Integration%20and%20technology%20dallas%207-10%20%5BCompatibility%20Mode%5D.pdf>

*Managing Performance Through Training and Development.* This chapter of a textbook on managing performance through staff development discusses the benefits of staff training and how to measure its effectiveness. It also provides an overview of different types of training models. Published by Nelson Education Ltd. in 2010. Available at:

[https://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/content/saks01762\\_0176501762\\_02.01\\_chapter01.pdf](https://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/content/saks01762_0176501762_02.01_chapter01.pdf)

*Knowing How Your Program Is Doing – Sooner: Using Real-Time Measures to Manage for Quality.* This interactive session for local program managers, operators, and supervisors of WIA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs explores how to use real-time measures to strategically manage programs for quality outcomes in an integrated and demand-driven environment. Created by Social Policy Research Associates in 2007. Available at: [http://www.spra.com/PEP/ftf\\_indicators.shtml](http://www.spra.com/PEP/ftf_indicators.shtml)