

In Class Skill Building

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The in class skill building activity was beneficial in helping me to develop an understanding of what a case manager will experience in the profession. I was given the opportunity to play a client, an observer as well as the case manager over the weeks participating in this activity. It was wonderful to get to see all three different perspectives and form unique ideas of how to create a client. I was required to use multiple skills such as critical thinking, interpersonal skills, active listening, and having an open mind.

Playing the role of the client was quite entertaining. I was able to test one of my group members and enhance their case management skills while creating a new personality and issues that went along with my description. As a client I played Clair Feathers a schizophrenic who was trying to become pregnant. Two weeks into meeting I created a hic-up for my case manager as I claimed I just found out I was pregnant and I was off my medications. It was interesting to watch and see how my case manager accepted this change and tried to move on from it as best they could.

Seeing the activity from a client's perspective was quite different than I experienced from being the case manager. I understand better how quick an individual needs to be on their feet to understand and to accept changes a client can bring to a meeting. Even though a service plan may have been created that doesn't mean it will always work out and the client will choose to abide by it. It could be the case that circumstances change and the goals and objectives need to change with the meetings because of new information. Being able to play the client helped me to understand that clients are all different and can bring new information with each visit, it won't always be the same or easy to work with.

As the observer I was able to see some of these same things. With the other client and case manager issues came up that prevented the client from being able to follow through with the service plan that was originally created. This could be a problem for a case manager that isn't prepared. I learned it's important to be ready and open minded to anything that can happen because you cannot control what goes on in your client's life and you are there to help them, not to maintain control of the situation. Change is a part of life and this is something very important to understand as a case manager because otherwise clients aren't going to feel they aren't being treated with individuality and honesty.

I also noticed, as an observer, the case manager was excellent about conversing with the client in a more personal way that didn't sound as clinical as it looked during the intake assessment. I found this to be a good tactic. Flowing the questions and information into a conversation helped to build rapport and to keep a connection between the case manager and the client. This is an exceptionally important skill to help to keep the client involved in the assessment and learn more about them while gathering the required information to create a specific service plan. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, being open minded, and quick thinking skills were all essentials that I observed at play between case manager and the client throughout creating the services plan. I began to understand why these skills were so important when I had the opportunity to be the case manager.

As the case manager I got an entirely new perspective during this activity. It was refreshing to look at it and analyze the information I was being given to help a client rather than playing the role of the client or observing. This was the most beneficial part of the activity for

me. I really learned the necessity for having above exceptional interpersonal and communication skills, being open minded, critical thinking, and active listening. Listening to my client express their concerns and observing their behavior, expressions, and appearance helped me to really understand where they were coming from and what they wanted to get out of the service plan. I found it quite fun to be able to go through this activity as if we were really assessing the needs of an individual in the field. It was difficult at times to work with my client as a professional because I knew them and knew it was a classroom setting. This made it particularly difficult not to joke around and have fun with the assignment. However, even though we did goof around now and again I feel it was a nice way to get a feel for case management without the stress of jumping directly into it.

Over all this assignment was beneficial and really helped me to develop an understanding for what it requires to work within the field of human services as a case manager. There are a number of skills required and an individual definitely needs to be able to think on their feet and be willing to work with any number of possible challenges. To some I could see this as an intimidating career to follow but it could also be the most rewarding. This experience has helped to shape my views of working as a case manager and I for one am highly interested in it. I feel working through this activity in small groups was a great idea and provided me with feedback on what I did well and what I could work on. Through the peer reviews I gained insight that I am a good communicator and planner. I am great at coming up with service plans that are not only attainable but also creative and helpful for the client to improve. Having the opportunity to work in all three roles and to see different perspectives was a wonderful experience that really shaped how I viewed case management. I can now better

understand how the required skills come into play and why they are important. I really enjoyed this assignment and found it to be beneficial in many ways.