

Effective Writing Techniques:

Case Documentation for Professionals Serving Older Adults

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- How would you describe this injury verbally?
- Would you write your documentation the same way?



Purposes of Documentation

- Track contacts
- Demonstrate facts or evidence
- Establish policy compliance; collect aggregate data
- Comparative information life span of the case
- Collect cumulative and comprehensive information
- Demonstrate effective, quality casework that supports the case outcome

Style and Content

- Documentation is formal writing, not conversational or emotionally-driven.
- Your writing represents your professional self.
- Documentation is not a diary of events, emotions or thoughts.
- Fact-based evidence, indicators, observational, standard metric assessments.
- Observational, not interpretative statements. Cumulative and comprehensive data form the basis for your conclusions or disposition.
- Detail supported conclusions, opinions and interpretations with data, including photographs.

Style and Content



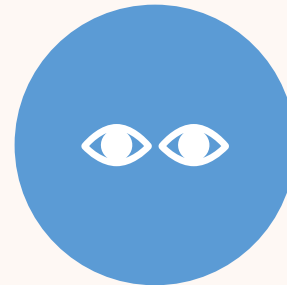
Use standard metrics to describe assessments: UAI, Mini-Mental; MoCA; ADLs, IADLs.



Writing is organized and understandable.



Information is detailed and specific.



Balanced in presenting information clearly.
State the perceptions of the client and collaterals.

Avoid Amplifiers!

- Very
- Extremely
- Exceedingly
- Enormous
- Awfully, terribly
- Exceptionally

Instead, use specific descriptions and observations.



Avoid Absolutes!

- Never
- Always
- Completely

Instead, use specific data, numbers, or dates.



Avoid Unsupported Statements

- Appears to be confused
- Should, could bathe
- “Hoarder”
- Judgement words: Words that imply a personal attribute (i.e., Obstinate, stubborn)

Instead, use descriptive, detailed statements. These statements should lead to your supported conclusions. Use photographs.

Tips of the Trade



KEEP UP WITH
DOCUMENTATION



RE-READ
WHAT YOU WRITE



HAVE SOMEONE ELSE
READ IT AND PROVIDE
FEEDBACK



READ OTHER
PROFESSIONAL
WRITING

Let's Practice...

1

Read the sample sentence of case documentation on your handout.

2

Improve the sentence by re-writing it.
Aim for clarity, correct grammar, and concise, relevant, and detailed information.