

CIL-NET Presents...

Effective Service Coordination: Engaging Consumers with a Holistic Approach to IL Services

Effective Information & Referral Services that are Responsive to Community Needs

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Why is I&R a Core Service?

- A primary means to promoting consumer empowerment
- Supports an individual's capacity for self-reliance and self determination
- "Education, affirmation, collaborative planning, and problem solving"—*AIRS*
- Provides a road map for navigating complex and confusing systems

I&R Core Service: The Human Approach –The First Point of Entry

Consumers contact I&R Specialist for:

- Programs and services offered by their CIL
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Advocacy
 - Peer Support

The First Point of Entry continued

Consumers contact I&R Specialist for:

- Resources offered within the community
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Financial Assistance
 - Healthcare

Customer Service

- For an I&R Specialist to succeed at providing relevant information, they must possess not only knowledge, but customer services skills as well
- Know what you can and cannot do for the consumer
- Know your boundaries/parameters—it's ok
- Let them down easy

Listening Skills

- Listen and understand the consumer's issues
- Let the consumer speak without interruptions
- Be nonbiased with your suggestions

Communication Skills

- Relay information clearly and concisely to consumers over the phone
- Have good written skills for consumers who choose to communicate by email or TTY
- When face-to-face with consumer, show proper body language that is consistent with the matter at hand

De-escalation / Crisis Management

- Do not take matters personally
- Let consumer vent without interruptions
- Make sure consumer knows that you are there to help
- Utilize other resources around you
- Offer to follow-up at a later date

Time Management & Prioritizing Responses



- Establish routines and stick to them as much as possible
- Get in the habit of setting time limits
- Utilize a day planner or Outlook Calendar to schedule events and follow-up calls
- Keep resources close at hand so you don't waste time searching

Prioritizing Responses

- Consider consumer's needs
- Look at their deadlines
- What resources are available at that moment?
- Is there another team member who can assist?
- Keep your day planner/calendar close by to avoid overlapping of tasks
- Don't forget your other consumers

Follow Up and Consumer Relationships

- Timely follow-up and call backs are simple ways to show you care and value them as a consumer
- Follow-up can earn you additional open consumers, which means additional agency revenue
- How do you feel when a business you solicited from follows-up with you?

Art and Science: Connecting People & Resources

The Nuts and Bolts of I&R Include...

- Record Keeping and Data Management
- Information Resource Management
- Policies and Procedures
- Shared Responsibility among Staff versus Dedicated Staff Position
- Community Collaborations

Record Keeping and Data Management

- Helps assure accountability
- Facilitates long-term planning and resource allocation
- Identifies possible systems advocacy issues

AND

- Can provide verifiable data for funding requests, grant proposals, and policy initiatives

Examples

- 23 referrals to Energy Assistance but only 6 received assistance (accountability)
- Increased contacts for transportation resources after the only accessible taxi is gone (planning & resource allocation)
- 10 calls regarding lack of effective communication for medical appointments (systems advocacy!)

LINC I&R Form

See LINC's Information and Referral form in your materials packet.

Information Resource Management

- Develop and maintain accurate resource lists
- Catalog documents, publications, DVDs, etc.
- Web-based resources—consumer desk with accessible work station and assistance available
- Accessible formats

Catalog Example

- ADA Title III
 - ADA Accessibility Guidelines
 - Common Problems in New Constructions (Hotels, for example)
 - Databases searchable alphabetically, type of service, geographic area, eligibility, etc. Cross-Referenced!

Another Catalog Example: Accessibility



- ADAAG
- Fair Housing Standards
- Visitability
- ANSI Standards
- Building Codes
- Universal Design

Policies and Procedures

- Information Provision
- Referral Provision
- Crisis Intervention
- Cooperative Relationships
- Promotion and Outreach
- Follow-up
- Disaster Preparedness

Shared versus Dedicated Staff Responsibility

Shared Approach

- Can be more flexible
- Empowers staff
- Can lead to inconsistent customer service

Individual Approach

- Can be more Specialized
- Can free up and support other staff
- When is an I&R *more* than an I&R?

Community Collaborations

- 211
 - General I&R versus I&R specific to disability issues
- ADRCs
 - Information and assistance on long-term support options
- Other I&R Providers
 - Other resources and databases

Questions & Answers

Got questions?

I&R Resources

- www.airs.org –Standards for I&R
- www.wnyil.org/compendium –Forms, Policies, Procedures
- Local and regional Alliances, 211

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