

## **Example of Best Practice: Care and Case Management**

Care and case management is currently developing successfully in many countries, because it is oriented towards patients with multiple health and social needs. When caring for these patients, several support systems – professional services and informal help – are involved. A case manager in the centre of these support systems can work in a solution-oriented manner within a network linking different kinds of support to save the client from having to undertake multiple contacts. Case managers in close collaboration with patients, their families, friends and neighbours, plan, co-ordinate, monitor and evaluate the required support with the aim of providing satisfactory care.

There are numerous definitions of case management in the literature. The following definitions highlight different aspects. “Case management is an established tool in integrating services around the needs of individuals with long-term conditions. It is a targeted, community-based and pro-active approach to care that involves case-finding, assessment, care planning, and care co-ordination” (Ross, Curry and Goodwin 2011). With this definition we learn to speak of case management as a pro-active approach in a community-based setting for individuals with long-term conditions and the need of several services. Case management is a procedure that incorporates the whole institution and all employees. It consists of five phases and can be applied to all kinds of target groups.

In “The Case Manager’s Survival guide” (1998) Cesta, Tahan and Fink speak to case managers working in hospitals and clinics. They define case management as “Patient care delivery system that focuses on meeting outcomes within identified time frames using appropriate resources” (p. 247). It is important to understand, that case management should start before the admission stage and does not end with the discharge.

"A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's and family's comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes" (Case Management Society of America (CMSA), 2010, p. 8). This definition has a broader perspective, names the phases of the management process – including evaluation – and addresses the issue of efficiency and promotes quality cost effective outcomes. Providing patient oriented care is more likely to be cost effective, as it answers the needs of a patient instead of providing all kinds of support that are available but might not be appropriate.

## Case management

- is a procedure that is pro-active and applicable in all kinds of settings with a defined target group
- crosses health settings and professional borders in the care for patients/clients to avoid disintegration and discontinuity
- has a holistic view of patients and their social environment
- is goal-oriented and focuses on patients' resources to meet their needs and to solve problems
- takes place in a network with all relevant people and organizations
- comprises the phases: intake, assessment, planning, carrying out and monitoring as well as evaluating
- assures quality through a secured supply of care that is monitored and evaluated by the case managers in close collaboration with patients

There are also different levels on which care and case management takes place. There is an individual's level (the case history and its unique conditions) and a system's level (the care or support and its conditions within a particular social and health care system).

A case manager is responsible for the whole care of a certain patient. She or he is responsible for the organization and coordination of all services as well as for the contacts between all the people involved. She or he is the only contact for the patient to get to all necessary support and advocates for the client/patient. A case manager works closely together with the patient to develop and establish a care network that provides all kinds of care. This network encompasses neighbors, family members, friends as informal and caregivers, providers and agencies as formal supporters. A case manager works in a defined time frame. Her or his tasks end when all the services have been set up and function well in a network. This goal needs to be addressed in the phase of evaluation.

(Based on G. Jaccarini, I. Kollak und S. Schmidt (2014): "Just in Case – Care and Case Management in Malta. Chapter 1)