

Directive, Non-Strength-based Supervisor/Worker Conference

Preparation:

The supervisor has reviewed the documentation statistics of the five workers in the unit and has determined that caseworker Brian Smith is behind in meeting the documentation time requirements on one-third of his caseload. Review of documentation statistics on the four other caseworkers in the unit indicates that Brian is the only worker that is presently failing to meet the standard.

Supervisor: Good morning Brian. How are you today?

Caseworker: Not bad. Traffic was pretty heavy this morning, but I got here on time.

Supervisor: I wanted to go over with you the issue of keeping up to date on case documentation. At present, you are behind on about a third of your cases.

Caseworker: It's hard to keep up when I keep getting more cases. The families I'm working with have a lot of problems. I think everyone would agree that the workload around here is way too heavy.

Supervisor: Everyone shares the same heavy workload Brian. That's the nature of things in child welfare.

Caseworker: Yeah, right. Does the county want me to do quality work with families or spend all my time with paperwork? No one seems to care about quality, just quantity of paperwork.

Supervisor: This job requires you to be able to manage your responsibilities with attention to quality of service and compliance with documentation requirements. Somehow others in the unit are managing. You can't decide on your own to pick the parts of your job that you like and ignore the parts that you don't like.

Caseworker: I'm not saying that. What I am saying is no one seems to care about what we do for clients, only paper.

Supervisor: When the feds and the state come in and audit our records your lack of documentation would result in a citation for lack of compliance. If enough people in the agency had your attitude, we wouldn't have a license to practice. That means no service to clients and no money to pay your salary. Do you understand that?

Caseworker: (Silence)

Supervisor: I've signed you up for a documentation training, "Documentation Challenges".

Caseworker: (under his breath) Documentation for Dummies.

Supervisor: What was that?

Caseworker: Nothing.

Supervisor: Here is the date for the training. I want you to clear your schedule so you can attend the training. Do you have any questions?

Caseworker: (Silence)

Supervisor: I know you aren't happy about me bringing this problem to your attention. You have a lot of positive qualities as a worker and I know you care about your clients. However, if you don't find a way to improve your documentation I will have to begin the progressive discipline process. Is that clear?

Caseworker: Yes.