

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

11/19/14

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Joyce Allen, Tracy Miller, Aundry Freeman, Pamalia Davis, Charlene Powell, Candice Chilton, Rachel Stern, Diamond Jenkins, Tara Jaworski, TJ Reynolds-Emwanta, Daphne Drew

Introductions and Updates

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Events coming up in December
- Joyce Allen, Disability Advocates, Raleigh- have a referral for a new case
- Tracy Miller, Cumberland County PATH Team- Working on several cases
- Aundry Freeman, WNCCHS, Asheville- 5 pending cases and 1 new client
- Pamalia Davis, Housing for New Hope, Durham- 1 denial, 2 approvals with one a presumptive decision
- Charlene Powell, ECBH- 3 pending cases
- Candice Chilton, LATCH, Durham- program received grant to do SOAR in 5 surrounding counties
- Rachel Stern, Freedom House, Chapel Hill- just completed first application
- Diamond Jenkins and Tara Jaworski, Southlight Healthcare, Raleigh- working on 9 applications
- TJ Reynolds-Emwanta, CenterPoint MCO- CenterPoint is hiring a second SOAR specialist, applicant who was in jail was released and was able to be approved for benefits
- Daphne Drew, ECBH- 1 new approval and 1 pending case

Announcement

- Next SOAR Training: December 3-4, 2014 in Greensboro
 - Please tell anyone who is interested in attending to apply for the training
 - Posted on ncceh.org on the calendar of events
- 3rd Annual SOAR Caseworker Meeting: December 9, 2014 in Winston-Salem
 - DDS and SSA are attending and will be presenting at the meeting
 - If you have not done so, be sure to register at ncceh.org on the calendar of events
- Other news included in the SOAR Newsletter:
 - New DDS worker assigned to assist Donna with initial applications
 - Cost of Living Adjustment announced for 2015 that will increase SSI amount, increase SGA, and increase the Trial Work Period amount

Discerning a SOAR case- What happens when issues arise while you are working on a SOAR application?

Possible concerns that could arise and how they affect your application

- Housing Status- SOAR caseworkers can uncover information about housing that would make an individual no longer homeless or at risk of homelessness
 - Clarification-
 - Are they at risk of losing their current housing due to volatile relationship or other issues?

- Is it not meant for human habitation (no running water, no electricity)?
 - Are they risking housing for others by being there (will the person who is letting them stay there lose their housing if it is discovered they have guests)?
 - If answer is yes to these questions, then still considered at risk of homelessness and still a SOAR case
 - Ways to Avoid Housing Questions
 - Require documentation from referring agencies about housing status (statement that describes housing, letter from shelter, etc)
 - Get a letter from the applicant or person they are staying with documenting the situation
 - Explain clearly to all referral sources what housing does and does not qualify for SOAR
 - Address inappropriate referrals with agencies through a meeting or phone call
- Employment Status- SOAR caseworkers find out that their applicant is working or just got a job
 - Clarification-
 - Are they earning SGA?
 - Are they receiving any special accommodations on the job that would reduce their income through SSA rules (subsidies, IRWEs)?
 - What is their history with working? Do they frequently get jobs and lose them?
 - If earning above SGA, explain to the applicant that this makes them ineligible for benefits
- Find out that the applicant has filed for benefits on their own
 - If you find out that your applicant filed for benefits on their own:
 - Turn in 1696 form to SSA
 - Call DDS to see who has been assigned/get reassigned to SOAR DDS examiner
 - Speed up the process of gathering medical records and writing the Medical Summary Report
- Find out the applicant is working with other caseworkers/agencies on the application
 - It is best to address these situations by having a meeting with all parties involved and the applicant
 - Clear up where the person is in the application process (is there an application submitted)
 - Discuss how all parties can work together on the application

What should a SOAR caseworker do if they feel that they no longer can represent an applicant?

- Prior to submission of the application
 - Be open and honest about why you are not taking on their case
 - Educate them about the listings and qualifications for the SSI/SSDI program
 - By educating people about the programs, it may help to decrease inappropriate cases
 - The person can always go apply on their own
 - Make sure to explain that to them

- May want to have a referral list of other advocates/lawyers in the community who they can talk to as well
- Provide them a referral for an employment program
 - Voc Rehab
 - Goodwill
 - Mental Health Agencies who do supported employment
 - Walmart also accommodates disabilities
 - Providing them a referral to an employment program means they have other options
 - If they do not do well in the program, then that provides you a strong record for a future application
- Make sure to have a face to face conversation about why you are not taking on the case in order to clarify information for the individual
- After application submitted to SSA
 - Have a conversation with the applicant about why you are no longer comfortable representing them during the application process
 - Let them know that they can continue the application process on their own or with the assistance of an advocate or attorney
 - Let the DDS examiner know that you are resigning as the 1696 Representative
 - Submit a letter resigning as the 1696 Representative to SSA

December SOAR caseworker meeting will take the place of the December SOAR Call. Next SOAR Dialogue Call is on Thursday January 15th at 10 AM.

Register for the call by following this link: <http://www.ncceh.org/events/802/>