

SOAR Dialogue Highlights

3/17/16

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Lisa Carter, Sioux Free, Sandra Johnson, Pamalia Davis, Joyce Allen

Introductions

- Emily Carmody, NCCEH, Raleigh- Getting ready for a SOAR training next week in Raleigh
- Lisa Carter, CenterPoint Human Services- Had 2 approvals and 2 pending cases this month
- Sioux Free/Sandra Johnson, Pisgah Legal Services, Asheville- no new updates this month
- Pamalia Davis, Housing for New Hope, Durham- 1 approval, 1 pending and 1 missing applicant
- Joyce Allen, Alliance of Disability Advocates, Raleigh- do not have a SOAR applicant right now

Announcements

- Lots of new participants in the SOAR Caseworker Certification process
 - Congratulations to Elizabeth Lewin!
 - Please check out the information about SOAR Certification on our website:
<http://www.ncceh.org/caseworkers/>

Work History and SOAR Cases

Work history information is vital to any SOAR case and should be included in the applicant's Medical Summary Report. SOAR caseworkers discussed why this information is important, what to be sure to include, and what to do if someone cannot remember or does not have a work history to report.

Why is work history important to include in the Medical Summary Report?

- Show history of work attempts
 - Can get a job but cannot keep a job because of functioning issues
 - Shows that they have attempted to work before applying for benefits
- Highlight where functional problems have interfered with work
- Highlight actual educational/skill levels
 - What are past tasks they can and cannot do
 - Can they read or write?
- Show what special accommodations have been made in the past
 - Allowed to do less work than other employees
 - Given breaks to rest
 - Reliant on co-workers or supervisor to help them get or keep the job
- Establish eligibility
 - Possibly eligible for SSDI if they have a work history
 - Show that they are not currently able to earn SGA
- Provide a description of past work to help the DDS examiner answer the question in step 4 of the Sequential Evaluation: Can the applicant perform past work duties?

- Provide contrast if someone has been able to keep a job before or perform well at a job but cannot now because they are not functioning as well

What information should you include in your Medical Summary Report?

- Job titles, company names, dates when worked
- Describe the work done on each job
- Include input from past supervisors if they are willing to speak to you
- Include how the applicant felt at the job
 - Did they feel like they were able to complete tasks?
 - How did they get along with supervisors or coworkers?
 - Often find that they could not get along with others, could not keep up on the job and felt bad about themselves
- Include information about what was particularly hard about the job and why
- Why did the job end?
 - Called in too many sick days
 - Prejudice or ignorance about the disabling condition
 - Just stopped going to work
 - Were told “you don’t have to come back”
 - Often the answer to this question can show functioning issues with the applicant

What if the applicant cannot remember their work history?

- Get a work history report from SSA to jog their memory
 - Can review with the applicant
 - The applicant can request this from SSA
- Take breaks throughout the interview- remembering and keeping focused can be tough for some applicants
- Talk to other sources to help fill in the blanks
- Invite another caseworker who they feel comfortable with to the interview to help keep them focused and calm
- Let them know you will be discussing work history at the next meeting to give them some time to try to remember
- Be on the lookout for work history information in all the interviews- you never know when another job will come up

What happens if the applicant never worked?

- Find out why they did not work
 - Write about unsuccessful attempts to find work
 - Did they not know how to find work so never tried?
 - Shows an inability to access resources to learn new skills
 - Are they disconnected from the reality of needing a job?
 - May have a delusion that they already have a job that they don’t

- May not understand the need to have a job to take care of themselves
- Look for and include information about other job-like duties
 - Do they volunteer at an organization?
 - Are they asked to do chores at a shelter?
 - What supports do they need to complete these tasks?

Next SOAR Dialogue Call will be on April 21, 2016 at 10 AM. Please register for the call here:

<http://www.ncceh.org/events/978/>