The University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare

SW 611 Case Management

Master Syllabus

Prerequisites: SW 510, 530, 532, 540, 541, 555
Credit hours: 3

I. Course rationale

This course focuses upon the practice of social work case management, a particular form of generalist social work practice. Case management requires the social worker to assume a managerial (or, in some practice models) a co-managerial role, with the client, in determining precisely what services/resources are needed. The case manager then assists the client in locating those resources, and ensuring their use.

In providing case management services to the client, the case manager will be required to assume the roles of advocate, mediator, linker, facilitator, and broker (Rothman, 1991), all of which are important in any social work endeavor. Further, the need for case management services is likely to expand in the future as managed care expands in the social service environment. Thus, by offering this course, the School is ensuring that its graduates are particularly well-trained for the future.

This course interweaves with the social policy course, taken concurrently, insofar as it covers federal and state policies that impact the delivery of case management services with various populations. It most obviously builds upon SW 510, which introduces the student to basic generalist practice skills, and SW 555, which explores human diversity in social work practice, and requires students to understand how race, sex, gender, class, etc. influence practice. The course relates to SW 540 and SW 541, the research courses, in that the student must consume and evaluate research on the efficacy of case management services. And it relates to SW 530 and SW 532, the Human Behavior sequence, because the influences of social, psychological, biological, political, and cultural forces upon communication, interaction, resource availability and acquisition, are explored as well.

II. Educational Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define social work case management—what it is, what a case manager does, and its place in the social work profession. (Relates to Objective 2).
- Understand the history of case management services in the U.S. (Relates to Objective 6).
• Define the target populations that have been the focus of state and federal efforts to improve and prioritize services, and demonstrate knowledge of state-of-the-art services for those populations. (Relates to Objective 7).
• Identify the purpose and principles inherent in the Strengths Model of Case Management, and link these precepts to social work ethics and values. (Rapp, 1997). (Relates to Objective 2, 3, 5).
• Identify and have developed knowledge and skills central to engagement with individuals receiving case management services. (Objective 1, 4).
• Identify cultural assumptions, barriers, and strategies in the provision of case management services with diverse populations in diverse settings. (Relates to Objectives 1, 9).
• Implement strategies for establishing relationships with clients. (Relates to Objective 4).
• Demonstrate skill in developing a Strengths Assessment and personal plan with consumers of case management services. (Objective 2).
• Contrast and critique different approaches to case management intervention through readings in current research reports and professional journals. (Relates to Objective 8).

III. Curriculum Themes: The following themes interweave through the curriculum and are addressed in SW 611:

Strengths perspective: The development of the knowledge, values, and skills central to the strengths perspective in case management practice, as developed by Rapp and his colleagues at the University of Kansas, is a major portion of this course. The model is discussed in detailed, applied, and critiqued.

Critical perspectives: As students develop their skills in working with client systems of different races, genders, classes, etc., they become better acquainted with the obstacles of oppression, racism, sexism, and ageism, and how these things have impacted clients’ lives and personal narratives. This is reinforced through readings, exercises, and guest lectures.

Social and economic justice: Students are exposed to the means by which clients of social welfare are empowered through the removal of the twin barriers of social and economic discrimination, and how good case management can skills can affect that. This is particularly reinforced in guest presentations.

Diversity: Respect for, and appreciation of human diversity is emphasized by the broad application of the case management model to a variety of client populations. Issues central to clients of different races, ethnicities, ages, etc. are illuminated in this class, particularly as students bring in their different case management experiences from their field placements.
IV. The Liberal Arts Perspective

Students are required to have a background in the liberal arts, including the humanities, the behavioral sciences, Biology, and economics. Coursework across these disciplines is necessary for students to make good biopsychosocial assessments of clients, and the barriers to their progress. Students must also be well-educated in grammar and composition, in order to write high-quality assessments. They must also be able to communicate with both the clients with whom they are implementing case management services, as well as their fellow students, who may serve as proxies for clients in class exercises, requiring communication skills. And finally, they must be able to advocate for their clients with various systems, also requiring good communication skills.

V. Professional Purposes and Values

The knowledge, values, and skills of case management are essential to the development of the generalist social worker. It is also important for social workers to understand how particular models of case management practice may be more or less syntonic with the values of the profession.

VI. Preparation for Practice with Diverse Populations

Commitment to diverse populations is an overarching theme of the School. Thus, this course covers case management services for diverse groups, and strategies for engaging clients of varying race, ethnicity, age, disability, class, etc. This is done through readings, tests, guest presentations, and student presentations.

VII. Topics

Topics that must be covered include:

- The historical development of case management services
- Federal and state policies that impact service delivery
- The range of case management interventions
- The philosophy and principles that guide case management services (with particular emphasis upon the strengths model of case management)
- The stages of strengths-based management, including assessment, goal-setting, personal planning, and graduated disengagement
- The means by which empowerment and social/economic justice are affected through case management services.
- The skills of case management
- The interface of social work values, the values inherent in various case management practice models
Recommended Topics:

- Instructor may use discretion in his/her selection of different models of case management, although the Strengths Model must always be one of these models.
- Instructor may further choose to emphasize different populations in guest presentations, based upon age, sex, disability, race, etc., but must always include content (readings and lecture material) on case management with persons of different abilities, races, ages, etc.

VIII. Recommended Readings

One of the following is recommended as a primary text:


Some combination of the following are recommended as supplemental readings:


**IX. Recommended Assignments**

Assignments (in no particular order) may include (but are not limited to):

- Classroom examinations
- Written assessments upon which case management interventions will be based (based either on field work, or a hypothetical case, using a variety of assessment models from the field.)
• A written strengths-based assessment, followed by goal identification, and an intervention plan for the client.
• Critical analyses of assigned readings
• Role-plays, either videotaped or in vivo of case management skills and behaviors
• Comparative analyses of case management practice with diverse populations

X. Special Considerations

If any member of this class feels that he/she has a disability, the instructor should be advised of such disability and desired accommodations made as soon as written documentation is provided. The instructor will work with the student and the Services for Students with Disabilities Office to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that the student has a fair opportunity to perform in this class.

Also, any student wishing to take time off from class for religious holidays not noted on the official University calendar may do so. Some documentation may be requested.

XI. Instructor Availability

Students must be provided with information on how to reach the instructor, and office hours held.

XII. Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, students should call the University (864-SNOW) to determine if classes are called off. If the University is operating, I am expected to hold class. However, accommodations will be made for students who are unable to attend. Students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class.