

Principle Aspects of Developing Performance Standards in Social Services:
A Case Illustration

The following case illustration describes a specific situation in Moldova that requires social services and how it relates to seven aspects of the process of the development of standards of quality services as outlined by the Czech Republic's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Planning

An elderly woman who lives alone in a rural community in Moldova depends on informal help from her relatives and friends. But, she is becoming less able to do daily tasks and chores. The first step in establishing a standard of care for her would be to conduct a needs assessment in her home. The social worker from the Social Assistance Department (SAD) conducting the needs assessment listens to the woman to find out what help is needed the most. This would include finding out who comes into the home on a regular basis and who might be available to help.

The social worker learns from the assessment that the woman does need help and that her greatest need is to have someone bring her a daily supply of fresh water. The worker learns that relatives and neighbors do help, but not everyday. She also learns that the woman does not like to ask for help too often.

Exercise: Participants meet in small groups to discuss appropriate services and examine these services in the context of relevant community-based standards based on a model from the Czech Republic. The small groups will report their ideas to the large group for further discussion.

Implementation/Action

The social worker gives the assessment information to a supervisor for discussion of what services and benefits are possible from SAD and the community. They agree with the recipient that the need for provision of a daily supply of fresh water is the highest priority. They also decide that some weekly contact needs to be made with the recipient. They develop a more detailed needs assessment plan that will examine daily needs such as cooking, getting dressed, hygiene, and minor house repairs. The plan will begin by assigning a social worker to bring in a daily supply of fresh water. The social worker will then complete a list of other services that are needed as she (the social worker) develops a working relationship with the woman. The social worker also clarifies with the recipient what services can and cannot be provided. Those needs that cannot be met by SAD may be referred to other agencies, such as an NGO.

Exercise: Participants will meet in small groups to review the first four components of the Czech model and determine which aspects of the performance standards are valid for this part of the process of developing standards. Participants will analyze the case illustration and develop a 2-3 page outline of the steps to be taken to implement the standards. Each small group will report to the large group for further discussion.

Evaluation/Feedback

The recipient has had three months of services. She is still in her home. She reports that she is better able to manage her activities of daily living because she has a fresh supply of water, she sees the social worker once a week, and her daughter-in-law comes by to see her once every other week. The social worker has helped to arrange it so that the woman now feels that she can ask her neighbor for help with some small tasks. The woman wishes to receive the services of SAD for another three months after that time, she agrees that the social worker needs to come only two times a month.

Exercise: Participants will meet in small groups and write a 2-3 page report that includes consideration of the following aspects of the development of standards process as they relate to SAD goals. The group may write the report based either on the case illustration presented during the workshop or compose their own case illustration.

1. Recipient's satisfaction with services.
2. Impact of the services on the recipient's ability to perform activities of daily living.
3. Recipient's feedback that is used to change the goals.
4. Referrals to other service agencies and informal care providers.
5. Social worker's satisfaction with the services.
6. Community services to be included in a social service directory.

Each group will briefly present their report to the large group for further discussion.

Comprehensive Exercise

The final exercise is designed to give participants an opportunity to review the stages involved in developing social service standards through design, use, and evaluation. Each small group will meet to prepare a 2-3 page outline of the steps that should be taken to establish services for a low-income single-parent family in a rural community. The steps should include: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Each group will briefly present their report to the large group for further discussion.