Introduction to Case Management

Welcome to the Case Management Distance course!

As a veterans representative you function in a very important role. Your goal is to help the veteran make a smooth transition into the civilian workforce and even discover new career paths for them.

This course is designed to introduce you to the Case Management process. You may already be case managing the veteran customers, but with this pre-case management resource, along with the in-class instruction at NVTI, you will learn to apply several effective skills and techniques to further assist the veteran customers.

Assignment 1 / The Case Management Process

While many of the veterans who come into your local one-stop center are able to make a successful transition on their own, you will be a critical resource for those who will require more intensive assistance. Working with these veterans, you will decide together the right treatment, at the right time, for the right reasons.

Subject Matter Expert - Cheri Siegrest

One of the first things you need to do as a case manager when you sit down with your customer... is establish good rapport with that individual. Ask questions. Find out what problems they are having. Follow up... Sometimes that's not so easy... and it doesn't happen in one visit. But you have to make the effort. If you don't, then you may make the wrong decision. If that happens, you'll either never see that person again or you get what's called the revolving door syndrome. Where you apply the wrong treatment and you keep seeing the same person again and again and again. Until it's done right or you lose the person.

STEVE
Mike, is it? My name is Steve. Have a seat. Thanks for coming in. Well, Mike, what can I do for you?

MIKE
Well, Steve, the problem is that I’ve had a lot of jobs in the past two years. Every boss I’ve had was a real jerk. I tried to work with them for a couple months and if they didn’t get any better, I’d lose my temper and quit. That or get fired. It’s starting to get real frustrating.

STEVE
Yeah, I can see from your application that you’ve had numerous jobs. Is there any one of them that you’ve liked better than the other?

MIKE
Well, I’ve done some driving, worked in a liquor store, in fact, I’ve done a lot of retail...

The goal of this module is to introduce you to the Case Management process utilized to assist a veteran client in becoming job ready. As a whole, Case Management is a process of facilitating and coordinating services that lead to helping the customer overcome barriers to employment and to achieve their goals.
Subject Matter Expert - Cheri Siegrest
Your primary role as a case manager is to successfully facilitate a case management process. The most important thing is taking the time to accurately diagnose your customer. The first step, as a case manager, is to conduct an assessment interview of your customer by gathering all the relevant information you can about the person sitting in front of you. Together, with that person, you then need to assist the customer in creating a plan of action, agree on the terms and then help them implement that plan to reach those goals. Next, track your customers’ progress. Follow up & make sure that they are following their plan and if they're not, advise them on how to get back on the right track. Finally, close the case when you have come to a successful plan completion. Following these steps can make or break the success of getting that person on the right track. When a step or two is missed along the way, the process is faulty. And once again, somebody else has fallen through the cracks.

The most important objective in case management is taking the time to accurately diagnose your customer. To do that you must have a step-by-step plan.

The following is the case management process in the correct order.

1. Conduct an assessment interview
2. Create an individual development plan
3. Help the customer implement the plan
4. Monitor/Follow-up the customer’s progress
5. Bring case to closure

Following these steps can make or break the success of getting the customer on the right track.

To just enroll someone into case management is not enough. The process is about developing a relationship with the veteran and preparing them for a job search, helping them figure out what career path to go after and then how to obtain that type of work. As a case manager, it is your role to take the veteran through several phases using a number of techniques and skills to assist the veteran.

Because the focus of your role is employment, you will need to help the veteran identify any barriers that are interfering with getting and keeping a job. Sometimes the veteran comes to you seeking your assistance with a problem they are having. Other times you provide feedback to the veteran about factors that may be interfering with their job search.

Let’s continue the conversation with our veteran, Mike. The case manager in this scenario will need to use the case management process to determine what barriers Steve has so he can assist him with his situation.

STEVE
Why do you feel you haven’t been able to get along with any of your previous supervisors’?

MIKE
Every time I get into a disagreement with any of my supervisors, they say I'm too argumentative.... Go figure!! So, I have a little bit of a temper.... No reason to lose your job.

STEVE
What do you think brings this on?

MIKE
I don't know. It's just that sometimes I have bad days...and sometimes I have even worse days.

**Barriers:**
A barrier is anything perceived by the veteran that affects their ability to attain gainful employment. For example, lack of reliable transportation to get to work, not having childcare needs met, and not having certification when it is a job requirement.
There are other barriers which could be more difficult to overcome, for example a disability, age, or education. However, if the veteran can receive assistance from you to manage the barriers they may have, you can still assist them in getting a job.
In fact, we may all have various barriers throughout our lives, but we still must maintain employment and move forward with our personal and professional lives. Case Management is about helping the customers by providing them with the referrals or resources they need to manage life's obstacles.

Let's take a barrier quiz. Try to correctly answer the questions on the following barrier situations.

Which of the following would not be considered a barrier to employment?
- a) Low Self-esteem
- b) No childcare
- c) Obsolete transferable skills
- d) Clearly defined goals

Which of the following items is a barrier and can be affected by the Case Management process?
- a) Unrealistic Job expectations
- b) Age
- c) Single parent
- d) 10% service connected knee injury

Which of the following barriers to employment would not need to be referred to another agency?
- a) Substance abuse
- b) Financial problems
- c) No resume
- d) No GED

**Answer to Quiz**
Which of the following would not be considered a barrier to employment?
- e) Low Self-esteem
- f) No childcare
- g) Obsolete transferable skills
h) Clearly defined goals
i) Correct answer is d. Having clearly defined goals could most definitely be considered a barrier to employment.

Which of the following items is a barrier and can be affected by the Case Management process?
e) Unrealistic Job expectations
f) Age
g) Single parent
h) 10% service connected knee injury
i) The answer is A. Unrealistic job expectations could most definitely be considered a barrier to employment. However, Case Management cannot change the existence of this type of barrier.

Which of the following barriers to employment would not need to be referred to another agency?
e) Substance abuse
f) Financial problems
g) No resume
h) No GED
Correct answer is c. This barrier may be outside the scope of the case manager role.

The Assessment:
The assessment generally begins when the case manager and veteran have identified that the individual has barriers to employment and needs additional assistance. The first step in the case management process is to conduct an assessment. Keep in mind this is an on-going process. There are a few important assessment techniques that a skilled case manager can use. The case manager needs to become effective at asking questions. The types of questions can be open or closed questions and the way the case manager communicates these questions is important.

Let’s see how our case manager uses this process in assessing Mike.

STEVE
You know, Mike, I'm kind of getting the feeling that you're really not telling me everything.

MIKE
What do you mean...! I told you I have a short fuse that I can't seem to control....

STEVE
You know, Mike...you may not believe this.. but I really do want to help you....but you've got to help me. What's going on?

MIKE
All right......all right. I've been on and off the wagon for the past few years. And when I'm off the wagon, I get moody...real moody...so I start drinking again.

STEVE
Have you seen anyone about counseling you on this problem that you have?
MIKE
Yeah...I've tried...but it just doesn't work...

**Assessment of the Client**
Doing an effective assessment of the veteran client requires three different sets of skills on the part of the case manager: Communication (or questioning), listening, and observation skills.

Step One – Communication skills. Case management requires good communication skills. Particularly in asking relevant and effective questions. Questions can be open or closed ended.

So what is an open or closed question? The following are examples of questions, both open ended and closed. To make sure you are on the right track, please identify which are open ended and which are closed questions.

Please take the Observation quiz

**Open vs. Closed Questions**

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9) What kind of careers might utilize your “highest” skills?
Closed

10) When did you decide to study medicine?
Closed

11) How could you overcome some of those obstacles?
Closed

12) Do you get along with your boss?
Closed

13) How can we work together to achieve your goals?
Closed

14) If you picture yourself 2 years from now, can you describe your ideal job?
Closed

15) What did you like the most about your last job?
Closed

Answers
1) What are your expectations/requirements?
Open – Correct
Closed – Incorrect. This answer prompts an answer about the individuals’ expectations/requirements beyond a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Questions are considered closed-ended questions when they can be answered with “one-word” responses, such as “yes” or “no”.

2) What process did you go through to determine your needs?
Open- Correct
Closed -- Incorrect – The answer is structured to get more than a yes or no response. In order to respond to this question, the individual must explain the process they used to determine their needs.

3) Is your current job/position meeting your values requirement?
Open – Incorrect. The question will be more likely to be answered with a simple yes or no. In order to make this an open ended question, the question has to allow for an explanation. For example, an open-ended question would be “how does your current position fit with your value requirements”?
Closed – Correct

4) What is it that you’d like to see accomplished?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This question will be most likely get an explanation or description because it does not allow it to be answered with a simple yes or no response.

5) Is your current job/position utilizing your skills?
Open - Incorrect. This is a closed question because the individual simply answers yes or no. A better question is to ask “how is your current job/position utilizing your skills?” This type of question allows the individual to give further details about on their skills and provides a depth of information to the case manager.
Closed – Correct

6) What other items should we discuss?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This question keeps the line of communication open and allows the individual to bring up other topics that they wish to discuss or need assistance with in the case management process.

7) What do you see as the next action steps?
Open - Correct
Closed - The question is asking for an explanation of the next steps and cannot be responded to in a yes or no fashion. The client will need to explore what they need to do next to make progress toward their goals.

8) How have you solved past problems?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This is a well structured open ended question that requires more explanation. This also provides the case manager with further information on issues the individual has experienced and also on resources the individual has utilized to overcome these issues.

9) What kind of careers might utilize your “highest” skills?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. The question asks for a name or description of skills and requires the individual to explore their career options and also the skills they wish to continue to develop.

10) When did you decide to study medicine?
Open - Incorrect. This question is a little tricky, but it really is a closed ended question. An open ended question would ask for more information: “Tell me about/can you describe...when you decided to study medicine?”
Closed-Correct

11) How could you overcome some of those obstacles?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. The question asks for an explanation and some self disclosure. It is an open ended question.

12) Do you get along with your boss?
Open - Incorrect. An example of an open ended question would be “can you tell me about the relationship you have with your boss?” Simply asking if they get along with their boss doesn’t really tell you anything about the relationship.
Closed-Correct
13) How can we work together to achieve your goals?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This is a good example of an open-ended question. This also reinforces the relationship between the case manager and the client.

14) If you picture yourself 2 years from now, can you describe your ideal job?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This is asking for the person to describe an ideal job in the future. It is a good question for a case manager to ask to determine goal setting steps, self-esteem and motivational factors.

15) What did you like the most about your last job?
Open - Correct
Closed - Incorrect. This is an excellent use of an open ended assessment question. This also provides information to the case manager on interests and motivation.

Step Two – Using Effective listening skills.

Another critical case management skill is listening. Listening effectively is difficult because people vary in the way they communicate and how clearly they express themselves. Sometimes when we are talking with friends or family, we are more interested in promoting our own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else’s. Using effective listening skills requires being genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means. As a case manager, you need to actively listen and be sure you understand the message before responding. You can restate or paraphrase the customers’ message for verification. This is considered active and effective listening.

Read this dialogue below and answer the questions which follow.

My name is Scott. I’ve lived in Montana for 12 years and joined the Air Force right out of high school. I served for four years before being discharged. I’ve had 3 jobs in the past year. I’ve worked retail, tire busting and welding – welding being my favorite.

The main thing I really didn’t like about retail was being out in the public so much. One of my friends got me that job and it wasn’t a good fit. But I stuck with it for as long as I could but I finally had to quit. I’ve been through counseling with the VA on my alcohol problem and I’ve been clean now for over 2 years. I’m looking for a job in the construction field, anything along the lines of what I was doing before.

Without referring back to the conversation, try to answer these questions:
What is the client’s name –
Steve
Scott
Sam
Sean

Where did he attend college –
Montana
Minnesota
Missouri
Did not attend college

What was his favorite job –
Construction
Retail
Welding
Tire Busting

What condition did he receive counseling for –
Did not have counseling
Drug
Alcohol
Depression

What does he want to do for work –
Retail
Welding
Construction
Tire busting

It is important to focus in on what the person is saying. There could be key issues or problems he to she is telling you and you have to key in on those, along with everything else they are telling you. Here are some additional tips to use when listing actively to your veteran clients.

1. Watch body language. A person’s facial expressions are a vital component of any communication.

2. Observe how the person is speaking. For example, does their rate of speech and inflection change? Is it changing too fast? People may stress on keywords or use a different tone to emphasize a particular statement.

3. Use questions to clarify. Rephrasing can help you understand better what a person is saying.

4. Avoid going to the advice mode. Sit back and listen, concentrate on what is being said rather than expressing your opinion or giving advice too soon. Let the person explain their situation and then offer feedback and advice once you have the whole story. Offer positive feedback while they’re talking, by nodding and smiling.

5. Be externally focused: Follow and understand the person by not only listening with only your ears, but with your eyes and other senses.

6. Avoid judgment and be flexible. Choose to listen, rather than judge and form counter arguments.

7. Demonstrate Interest. Show the person respect by listening and acknowledging what is being said.

Good case management requires active listening. Maintaining eye contact, paraphrasing, providing feedback, nodding, concentrating on the message, listening, observing, and asking open and closed questions are all skills of an active listener.
Step three – Using Observation skills.
Conducting an effective assessment also requires observation skills. This means paying attention to body language, the way the veteran expresses themselves, and any indications of their physical appearance. Let’s do an observation quiz.

**Observation Quiz**
The following 10 questions are about things we see every day or have known about all our lives. How many can you get right? What appear to be simple questions may be harder than you think. It shows how little we pay attention to the commonplace things of life.

LET’S JUST SEE HOW OBSERVANT YOU REALLY ARE.
Here we go!

1. On a standard traffic light, is the green on the top or bottom?
2. In which hand is the Statue of Liberty’s torch?
3. What two numbers on the telephone keypad don’t have letters by them?
4. On the United States flag is the top stripe red or white?
5. How many sides does a stop sign have?
6. Do books have even-numbered pages on the right or left side?
7. How many curves are there in the standard paper clip?

**Answers**
1. On a standard traffic light, is the green on the top or bottom?
   Answer: Middle

2. In which hand is the Statue of Liberty’s torch?
   Answer: Right

3. What two numbers on the telephone keypad don’t have letters by them?
   Answer: One and Zero

4. On the United States flag is the top stripe red or white?
   Answer: Red

5. How many sides does a stop sign have?
   Answer: Eight

6. Do books have even-numbered pages on the right or left side?
Answer: Left

7. How many curves are there in the standard paper clip?

Answer: Three

When the case manager uses these skills—asking open and closed ended questions, practicing effective listening, and utilizing observation skills—they are able to gather a lot of information about the veteran that could help add insight to who the veteran is as a whole person. It is better to take the time to do a thorough assessment because it affects every aspect of helping the veteran.

STEVE
You know, there's a counselor that we use all the time that is very good at sitting down with people who are having problems like you. She's helped a lot of people get right back up on their feet again and they're doing real well. I'd like to see if she can help you.

MIKE
Well, I've tried this before and I don't think it will work, but at this point I guess it couldn't hurt. So, how do we set this thing up?

STEVE
Let me write up this plan so we both know what our plan is. What I'll do is give you Karen Taylors' phone number... she's the counselor... You can call her right from here and set up a time that you can both get together. Does that sound all right to you?

MIKE
Yeah... it sounds okay.

STEVE
Mike, I know it’s not the most comfortable thing to do but I think it’s a positive step that you recognize your problem and you’re willing to work on it. It’s also important that you share with me any of the other issues that you feel may have interfered with you at work.

MIKE
Yes, well, I guess while we are on the subject, I might as well tell you a couple more things...

Referral and Follow up: Case Management may require referrals to a network of supportive resources in order to best assist the individual in overcoming some of their barriers. It may take several appointments with the veteran to assess how the plan is progressing and if the appropriate referrals have been utilized.

Here is a list of resources you may use to assist the customer:
Follow-up is an important part of keeping on track and monitoring progress with the veteran. This reduces the chance of the “revolving door syndrome – a veteran who returns again and again for a job placement rather than taking the time to make sure the job goals are the right fit.

Subject Matter Expert – Cheri Siegrest
Your customer will be the one doing the majority of the work. Your role as the case manager of the process will be to provide such things as support. Crisis intervention, and referral to other service providers. Follow up is done throughout the entire case management process. Without follow up, it could be counter productive. Your customer, for example, may not be following the plan or the plan is not completely accurate for them, and the plan may need to be modified.

**Documentation**: One of the key skills of case management is to develop a written plan. A plan will help clarify what the veteran wants and steps he or she will need to take to target their objective. The plan will be written in the form of goals. By writing things down, it solidifies each step it takes to reach a goal. Normally, each state or office has a prescribed document – this is usually called an “Individual Development Plan” or "Individual Employment Plan”. In addition to the specified plan, the case manager also needs to take case notes whenever they meet with the veteran.

**Setting Goals**: A critical part of the plan in case management is to assist the veteran in setting and achieving goals. The most common final goal for Case Management is gainful employment for the veteran client. To reach a final goal, the case manager needs to help the veteran identify short and intermediate steps to reach their goals. These need to be written down so that the veteran has a clear path before them. Many times the veteran needs help with the structure required to get to their final destination.
STEVE
You know Karen called me yesterday and she sounds real upbeat about the progress you’ve been making. What about you, how do you feel?

MIKE
I feel good! In fact, this is about the best I’ve felt in long time.

STEVE
Great! You’ve also been working with a vocational counselor. I understand you’ve identified a job area that you're interested in pursuing. So, when do you think you’ll be ready to begin the job search process?

MIKE
I think I’m ready now... Just as long I can still see my counselor. At least until I feel more comfortable on the job.

STEVE
Not a problem... We'll make sure that remains part of your plan.

Closure: The most successful outcome and reason for closure in case management is when the veteran has secured gainful employment and has maintained their employment for at least 90 days. Other typical reasons are that the goals have been met, even if they are not the final job. For example, the veteran decides to go to school and the length of schooling is over a year in length. This may be a very valid reason for closure. The veteran can always come back and their case file can be re-opened. There may be times when the veteran chooses not to continue with case management. In this instance, it’s a good idea to document the reasons with an explanation of why the case is closed.

Subject Matter Expert – Cheri Siegrest
Case management is so important. And the benefits are remarkable. You take what may appear to others as a lost cause, assess their problem, develop a plan of action, and, if the customer follows it, they should be job ready. You proceed with follow-up visits and help that individual get on the right track. That is successful case management. But not all situations have to be case managed. You have to determine what the seriousness of the situation is and move forward from there. If you work with your customer and invest more time from the beginning, it will more than likely save a lot more time in the long run and you can really help that individual!

Case management is an important process for you and your veteran clients. With effective case management you can help your veteran in achieving their goal of becoming gainfully employed and moving forward in their lives. Each veteran you serve will have an individual story and some cases may be difficult. You may also find that sometimes a veteran just needs someone to talk to. If there are instances where you feel you need further assistance, talk to your colleagues or supportive professionals in your office or state. Also your supervisor, state veterans coordinators or DVET can provide guidance. Please proceed to the quiz for this section on the assignment folder on the left hand side.
Good luck!
You will learn additional case management skills in the NVTI training course! We look forward to seeing you!

Please take the Exam for Assignment One
1. The two minimum duties that define case management are an initial assessment and creating a written plan.
   - True
   - False

2. What is the revolving door syndrome?
   - A. The veteran obtains a permanent job and stays in that job for the long term.
   - B. The veteran is unsuccessful in keeping a job and continues to come in on a regular basis due to losing one job after another.
   - C. The veteran enrolls in a training program that will ultimately lead to employability
   - D. All of the above

3. A strong network of services and support are critical to helping veterans with employment barriers.
   - True
   - False

4. A barrier is anything perceived by the veteran that affects their ability to attain gainful employment.
   - True
   - False

5. Which of the following is considered a barrier to employment?
   - A. Lack of transportation to get to work.
   - B. A felony conviction.
   - C. Not having the required license in reference to a job requirement.
   - D. All of the above.
6. The first step in the case management process is to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
- True
- False

7. Which of the following would NOT be considered a barrier to employment?
- A. Substance abuse.
- B. Financial problems.
- C. Clearly defined goals.
- D. Transportation.

8. Using the techniques of maintaining eye contact, paraphrasing what is being said, giving feedback are elements of what?
- A. Helping the veteran set goals.
- B. Assessing what the client wants or needs.
- C. Following up with the veteran.
- D. All of the above.

Feedback for Assignment One

1. The two minimum duties that define case management are an initial assessment and creating a written plan.
   The correct answer is: **True.** The directive from Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training is that there must be an assessment of the veteran client. Additionally, there must be a documented plan of action for each veteran that is enrolled in the case management process.

2. What is the revolving door syndrome?
   The correct answer is: **B: The veteran is unsuccessful in keeping a job and continues to come in on a regular basis due to losing one job after another.**

   When a veteran is not successful finding a job or keeps losing their job, it could be that there was not a thorough enough assessment with a plan. If these steps are missed, it may lead to a veteran that returns again and again to the ES. This is called the revolving door syndrome.
3. A strong network of services and support are critical to helping veterans with employment barriers.
   The correct answer is: True. It would be difficult to truly help most of the veterans a case manager sees without resources and services to refer to for help. Working on building a network is critical. The classroom training will emphasize the process of identifying barriers to employment and utilizing a strong network of supportive services that will assist the Case Manager and the veteran client in overcoming the veterans barriers.

4. A barrier is anything perceived by the veteran that affects their ability to attain gainful employment.
   The correct answer is: True. Barriers are the obstacles that get in the way to achieving a goal. They can also be those factors that the veteran thinks are a problem. It really matters how the veteran views what is stopping them from achieving their goals.

5. Which of the following is considered a barrier to employment?
   The correct answer is: D. All of the above. All of these would be considered a barrier. However, depending on the veterans resources they are all barriers which can be overcome. It is important to recognize that sometimes what a case manager perceives as a barrier, a veteran will not see as a barrier. For example, not having a personal vehicle/car or transportation, could be perceived as a barrier by a case manager, however the veteran may be very skilled at utilizing public transportation.

6. The first step in the case management process is to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP).
   The correct answer is: False. The first step in the case management process is to conduct an assessment, then develop a plan.

7. Which of the following would NOT be considered a barrier to employment?
   The correct answer is: C. Clearly defined goals. It has been shown that having a plan is one way to achieve goals faster and with more success. Goal setting is an important part of case management.

8. Using the techniques of maintaining eye contact, paraphrasing what is being said, giving feedback are elements of what?
   The correct answer is: D. All of the above. Whenever the case manager and veteran set goals, work on the assessment of veteran needs, and follow-up, the techniques of maintaining eye contact, paraphrasing, and giving feedback will most certainly strengthen communication.
Communication is the process of imparting information from one person to another to create shared understanding. There are auditory means such as speaking, singing, and even tone of voice. There are also nonverbal skills a person uses which helps convey the message to have more impact including body language, eye contact, touch, paralanguage or the use of sign language and writing.

But communicating effectively requires an even more extensive repertoire of skills in getting the message across. Listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating are all requirements of effective communication. Communication transfers to all areas of life: home, school, community, work, and beyond. It is through communication that collaboration and cooperation occur.

In this module there are several examples of communication skills and styles for you to analyze within the case management process. For each module, you will need to decide if it is a positive or negative representation of the communication technique.

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT
As a case manager, your ability to communicate is one of the most important skills you have when you’re working with the veteran customer. Establishing rapport is critical when meeting a veteran for the first time. It’s important that the case manager and veteran can comfortably talk to one another on a one-on-one basis. There needs to be some level of trust. The veteran will need to disclose information about themselves in order to get help with their needs, develop goals for themselves, and discuss how they’re doing at each stage of the process.

One rapport building technique the case manager can use is to look for similarities or shared interests. For example, you, as the case manager, are a veteran and the customers’ you work with have also served time in the military. This may help build trust in your relationship. Other examples include related interests in a favorite sports team, hobby’s your families have, or in an interest that you have in common. Whatever the topic, when you start a relationship with a veteran who you meet for the first time, these commonalities often help build rapport. The better the rapport, the more it will allow you to talk about more in-depth or personal subjects.

Let’s see if the case manager in the conversation below establishes rapport with his veteran client.

Client: Hi, “I’m Charlene.”
Case Manager: Charlene, “I’m Jim, sit down.”
Client: Yea, I thought I would come see you, because I just got fired from my job.
Case Manager: What job did you get fired from?
Client: Well, I was a retail clerk at Jack’s Hardware.
Case Manager: Retail, I loved it! You know when I was in college I was in retail. I worked in the clothing store down on the corner.
Client: I would really like to get out of retail.

Case Manager: Why? You meet such interesting people, one day his guy comes in and wants this pair of plaid pants. Now plaid pants are totally out of style at the time. This guy insists on plaid pants. I’m telling you.

Now answer the questions below.

Was rapport established in this scenario? (Yes/No)
Yes – Incorrect.
No – you are correct. The case manager was distracted and telling his own personal experiences rather than focusing on the customers’ interest.

Was the case manager listening to the customer? (Yes/No)
Yes -- Incorrect.
No -– you are correct. The case manager did not pay attention to the customers’ comments about retail occupations.

ACTIVE LISTENING
Active Listening requires the case manager to hear not only what the veteran is saying, but take into consideration how they are saying it. If a veteran were to display contradictory body language that didn’t match their words, you would have to decide which is more accurate. In reality, it’s usually the combination of both the way in which a person says something along with how they are saying it.

Research in the communication field continuously supports that we put more weight on the non-verbal messages we are seeing rather than the verbal message itself. From the perspective of listening, this means paying attention to what is being said. Giving the sender our full attention and focusing on the person directly during a conversation is what makes listening an active skill.

Please take the Active Listening Practice Quiz below.

1) Maintaining eye contact is an active listening skill
   True
   False

2) Leaning back in your chair is an active listening skill
   True
   False

3) Paraphrasing what was said is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

4) Giving feedback is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

5) Nodding is an active listening skill.
6) Concentrating on what is being said is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

7) Making early evaluations or judgments is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

8) Listening and observing for feelings is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

9) Asking questions is an active listening skill.
   True
   False

10) Being open to hearing the message is an active listening skill.
    True
    False

Answers
1) Maintaining eye contact is an active listening skill
   True – Correct. Eye contact is a powerful technique that demonstrates you are paying attention.
   False – Incorrect. You may be sending a negative message when you do not use eye contact.

2) Leaning back in your chair is an active listening skill
   True - Incorrect. In general, body language that demonstrates active listening includes a posture that is more forward in its style. Leaning forward typically displays an interest in the subject or conversation.
   False – Correct. While body language can vary throughout a conversation, in general, a more forward body posture is usually perceived as an active listening posture.

3) Paraphrasing what was said is an active listening skill.
   True – Correct. This technique helps clarify the message. The sender provides feedback and ensures understanding by utilizing this active listening technique.
   False - Incorrect. Paraphrasing is a very useful technique that clarifies what was said and what was heard.

4) Giving feedback is an active listening skill.
   True –Correct. Giving a person feedback is a very useful technique and ensures that the message is being understood.
   False - Incorrect. When a listener gives feedback it strengthens communication.

5) Nodding is an active listening skill.
   True – Correct. This body language confirms that the listener is hearing what is being said and is following along with the speaker.
False - Incorrect. Body language is a significant part of communication. This is a very useful technique to encourage the client to continue talking.

6) Concentrating on what is being said is an active listening skill.
True – Correct. It is important to stay focused on the message and use all of the techniques available to communication effective. Concentrating on the message is one method to increase awareness and interpretation of the message.
False - Incorrect. It is hard work to be a good listener sometimes. You sometimes have to practice staying focused.

7) Making early evaluations or judgments is an active listening skill.
True - Incorrect. The best listeners take in the message, ask good questions and do not make snap judgments or evaluate what is being said too soon.
False – Correct. Good listeners take time to hear the message before making a quick judgment or coming to an early evaluation. While evaluation and judgment is important, make sure to take the time to listen thoroughly first.

8) Listening and observing for feelings is an active listening skill.
True – Correct. A good listener takes all aspects of the message into account. This includes what is being said and how it is being said. Communication includes both verbal and nonverbal behaviors.
False - Incorrect. If a listener ignores observations and feelings they miss a significant part of the message.

9) Asking questions is an active listening skill.
True – Correct. This demonstrates that the listener is paying attention and is interested in the speaker and the topic.
False - Incorrect. Asking questions is a very useful technique used by good listeners.

10) Being open to hearing the message is an active listening skill.
True – Correct. The listener that works in a partner mindset will be much more effective as a listener. This does not mean agreeing with everything, but being willing to understand what is being said.
False - Incorrect. While the listener does not have to agree with everything being said, good listeners use techniques that will help them understand the message.

Now take a look at the conversation below and see if this case manager listens to what his client is saying.

Client: I had a job doing some manual labor in the oil fields, but the price of oil went down and they closed down a few wells. So many of us got laid off and I was one that lost their jobs and I didn’t have enough time in there to really stay on. And, so I came back here to Denver and have been in the city now for about eighteen months and I have had some intermittent type work-you know just washing some dishes not really finding anything good. I’m kind of interested in going back to school. What do you know about the schools in this area?

Case Manager: Huh?
Client: The schools.

This example portrayed a lack of concern for what the veteran was saying and was a poor demonstration of active listening skills. This action makes an individual feel ignored and unimportant.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK
As a case manager you provide the veteran customers you are working with encouragement and support about their ideas, plans and goals. Other times, you need to provide feedback that is based on negatives - a bad attitude, inappropriate behavior, lack of qualifications for the position they are pursuing, or anything which may not fit with making the plan successful. If you do not give this feedback, chances are you may be setting the veteran up for failure rather than success. Ask the veteran if they are aware of the issue so that they can respond and even solve the situation on their own. The best approach is to be straightforward, use clear language which addresses the specific issue, and deliver the message in a respectful tone of voice with matching body language. It is always helpful to explain to the veteran why you are giving feedback. Whatever the issue, it is necessary to give the veteran this feedback so they are successful in their job search efforts.

Now take a look at the conversation below and see if the case manager does a good job of providing feedback effectively with his veteran client.

Case Manager: I talked to Carol yesterday at the testing center and I got your test scores. You were pretty low in the math comprehension.

Client: Yeah, I've always have had problems with math, but I think if I got into a class it would help a lot.

Case Manager: Sure we'll work on that. You did a great job on the computers in fact you got an advance proficiency rating.

Client: Well good, I try to keep up with the latest computer technology.

Case Manager: Yeah...

Now answer the question below.

Did the case manager listen and provide feedback respectfully? (Yes/No)

Yes – Correct answer.
No – Incorrect. The case manager inquired about the test scores and listened to the customers’ response.

BEING NON-JUDGMENTAL
There are times when the veteran you are working with makes mistakes or choices that you disagree with. This could be based on your own experiences, values, morals, opinions, or biases. We all have them and we work with a diverse population of veterans. These are bound to come up at some point in your job as a case manager. When you find yourself disagreeing with the veteran about their choices, it is a good time to ask yourself why you disagree. Is there a realistic component as
to why the veteran’s choice may not be a good one? Diagnose your judgment and use this to give the veteran accurate feedback. If the judgment is one where your personal biases, morals or values are interfering with your relationship with the veteran, you may need to step back and reevaluate your response to the veteran. There needs to be a level of trust, rapport and suspension of judgment on your part to work with the issues that occur while case managing the veteran.

Now take a look at the conversation below and decide if you think the case manager is being non-judgmental with his client?

Case Manager: With your truck driving experience, you should be able to get a job driving truck long distance. How is your driving record?

Customer: Well, very recently I got a speeding ticket and I do have two convictions for drunken driving.

Case Manager: With that kind of driving record, there is no way you are going to be able to get a job driving long distance. How could you do that twice? “Don’t you realize how many people are killed by drunken drivers every year?

Now answer the question below.

Did the case manager judge the customers mistake? (Yes/No)

Yes – correct. He exclaimed, “How could you do that twice.” This is a very judgmental statement.
No – Incorrect, please review again.

A PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP
Case management requires a partnership relationship between you and the veteran customer. In this partnership, you will ultimately coach the veteran to take full control of his or her life. There are times when the veteran would like for the case manager to solve all of their problems. There are also times when it’s easy for the case manager to become too involved. The goal of case management is to help the veteran become self sufficient. The case manager needs to continuously monitor how much each partner needs to accomplish, along with evaluate when the veteran is able to take charge of their job search, solve or manage their life barriers and achieve success in their job.

Now take a look at the conversation below and see if the case manager handles the situation in a better manner.

Case Manager: With your truck driving experience, you may be well suited for driving a truck long distance. How is your driving record?

Client: Very recently I got a ticket for speeding and I do have two convictions for drunken driving.

Case Manager: Hmm! With that kind of driving record we may have to explore some other options. Let’s discuss what you enjoy about truck driving.

Client: Okay.
Case Manager: We will see if we can come up with some ideas that might help us in finding a program for you.

Client: Okay.

Now answer the question below.

Did the case manager judge the customer’s mistake? (Yes/No)

Yes – Incorrect.

No – Correct. The case manager was willing to explore other options with the customer.

QUESTIONING
There are a few common questioning techniques that are available to the case manager. These are especially useful when doing an assessment of the veteran customer. They can also be used to help the veteran brainstorm strategies, clarify goals and improve communication between the case manager and the veteran.

Asking open-ended questions is considered by most professionals to be the most powerful communication technique. This means asking questions that solicit a descriptive response rather than a plain “yes” or “no” response. Since case management requires time to get to know the veteran, the use of open-ended questions can help to gather assessment information needed to assist the veteran in achieving their goals.

Now take a look at the conversation below and see if the case manager is allowing his client to work with her situation in an effective manner.

Case Manager: So then I’ll call the VA and set up an appointment with you to see the doctor about that arm problem you have been having.

Client: Oh, I called them yesterday and I have an appointment tomorrow with a specialist.

Case Manager: You did. No! No! You see, as a case manager that’s my job to set up those appointments and take care of those problems. Okay?

Client: Okay.

Case Manager: So in the future I’ll set up the appointments.

Client: Alright.

Now answer the question below.

Is the case manager correct in wanting to handle the situation himself? (Yes/No)

Yes - Incorrect.

No - Correct. The case manager needs to allow the customer to do things on her own so she feels a sense of ownership of the process. The case manager in this example is taking too much control of the case and not allowing the veteran to have ownership of the process. It is key to make this a team effort and let the veteran do most of the work. If not, this may create more work for
the case manager but even more important, the veteran may not take any responsibility of his or her situation.

Open-Closed Ended Questions
Another common questioning technique is to ask closed ended questions. While these questions are useful as well, they tend to lead to closed ended “yes” or “no” responses. Sometimes a closed ended question can focus the information the veteran is providing and there may not be a need for a more descriptive answer. In general, the more open ended questions that a case manager can ask the better they will be in achieving success. Therefore, this is an important skill for the case manager to develop.

Now take a look at the conversation below and look for the techniques that the case manager used in questioning his client.

Case Manager: Okay, next I want to ask you some questions about your last job.

Client: Alright.

Case Manager: Okay, tell me about it. Did you enjoy it?

Client: It was okay.

Case Manager: Did you like the hours?

Client: They were alright.

Case Manager: Were they 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.?

Client: No, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Case Manager: How did you get along with your supervisor?

Client: He was okay. I just didn’t like it when he made me count receipts because he would stand over my shoulder and just made me very nervous.

Now answer the question below.

Were the questions the case manager asked an effective way to get valuable information? (Yes/ No)

Yes - Incorrect.
No - Correct. The case manager needed to ask better open-ended questions to get to the more in-depth information he needed from his client.

PROVIDING CLOSURE:
Closure in case management includes closure at the end of each appointment they have with the veteran customer along with closure at the end of the entire process. For each appointment, the case manager needs to clarify each next step. For example, “our next appointment is Tuesday the 10th at 9:00 a.m.” This builds structure into the case management process.
Now take a look at the conversation below and see how the case manager handles closure in this example.

Case Manager: Glad you stopped by. I tagged your individual development plan with the information we discussed at our last interview. Here look it over and sign that you agree.

Client: Alright. OK. OK. Alright. There you go.

Case Manager: Ok, thanks. We’re done. Bye. Next.

Now answer the question below.

Was this a proper way to conclude a session with a customer? (Yes/No)

Yes – incorrect.
No – correct. The case manager was abrupt and inconsiderate. The case manager should close the interview with “next steps...” or further appointment information.

Conclusion
It is important for the case manager to take responsibility to communicate effectively with the veteran, document the closure and let other service providers who have assisted this veteran in the referral process know when the case management process has come to a close. As always, the veteran is treated with respect.

In some cases the veteran is a valuable component of the case manager’s network and may be an excellent contact for future job openings pertaining to other veterans who come through the door.

As you work with each veteran customer it is imperative to continue to keep an open line of communication going throughout the entire process. This will assist you in getting those veterans who are in need of case management a path to a good career and even more important, taking ownership and pride in their lives. You are encouraged to use this information as a resource to assist you anytime in dealing with customers who are a bit more difficult to case manage than others.

You will learn additional case management skills in the NVTI training course! We look forward to seeing you!

Now, please proceed to the Exam 2 below.

CASE MANAGEMENT e-LEARNING
Assignment 2 Quiz

Please provide the following contact information:
1. 1) When giving feedback, a Case Manager should:
   - A. Avoid negative feedback.
   - B. Evaluate what has been said and tell the veteran what to do.
   - C. Ask the veteran if there are any issues which might interfere with them getting and keeping a job.
   - D. Only give positive feedback.

2. 1) Effective communication requires which of the following skills?
   - A. Listening.
   - B. Observing.
   - C. Speaking.
   - D. All of the above.

3. 1) Which of the following best describes an example of active listening?
   - A. Hearing what the veteran says and how they say it.
   - B. Being careful to avoid eye contact.
   - C. Thinking about the best plan for the veteran while they are telling you about their situation.
   - D. All of the above.

4. 1) If a veteran makes a choice the Case Manager doesn't agree with:
   - A. The case manager would tell the veteran they should not make that choice because it’s the wrong choice.
   - B. The case manager uses their own experience to judge what the veteran should do.
   - C. The case manager listens carefully, analyzes the information and then guides the veteran to make a decision.

5. The partnership relationship in case management is based on:
   - A. Telling the veteran what kind of job to apply for.
   - B. Trust based on clear communication.
   - C. The case manager doing everything for the veteran.
6. 1) Asking open ended questions is a communication technique that:
   - A. Encourages the veteran to provide descriptive answers.
   - B. Makes the goal setting process of case management confusing.
   - C. Interferes with the veterans ability to identify what is important to them.
   - D. All of the above.

7. 1) Closure in case management:
   - A. Only applies to a veteran that gets a job.
   - B. Includes closing at the end of each appointment.
   - C. When a veteran decides they do not want to continue with case management.
   - D. Successfully completes a plan, or for any reason they make it impossible to continue in the plan.

8. Which of the following is a rapport building technique?
   - A. Talking about (or discussing) things the veteran and case manager disagree on.
   - B. Talking about (or discussing) shared military experience.
   - C. Avoiding eye contact.

CM Distance Quiz Module 2 Feedback

1) When giving feedback the Case Manager should:
   a) Avoid negative feedback
      Incorrect. The best feedback includes supporting the positive as well as pointing out behavior or faulty thinking that is getting in the way of success.
   b) Evaluate what has been said and tell the veteran what to do
      Incorrect. The case manager should provide options and resources. The client must ultimately decide what to do for themselves.
   c) Ask the veteran if there are there any issues which might interfere with them getting and keeping a job?“ This answer is correct.
   d) Only give positive feedback
      Incorrect: Feedback includes observations and responses that may include giving a veteran honest feedback, both positive and negative.

2) Effective communication requires which of the following skills:
   a) Listening: Effective communication also involves observation and analyzing.
   b) Observing: Effective communication also involves listening and analyzing.
   c) Speaking: Effective communication also involves listening and also speaking.
d) All of the above. This answer is correct.

3) Which of the following best describes an example of active listening:
   a) Hearing what the veteran says and how they say it. This answer is correct.
   b) Being careful to avoid eye contact
   Eye contact is a powerful way to let someone know you are listening. It is important to maintain eye contact, not avoid it.
   c) Thinking about the best plan for the veteran while they are telling you about their situation.
   Active listening requires focusing on what the person is saying and not jumping to conclusions before you are aware of the complete situation facing the veteran.
   d) All of the above You should be listening to hear what a veteran says and how they convey their message, not avoiding eye contact and trying to solve the problems before you are aware of all the issues.

4) If a veteran makes a choice the Case Manager doesn’t agree with:
   a) The case manager would tell the veteran they should not make that choice because it’s the wrong choice.
   Case management is a partnership of mutual respect. The case manager should not tell a veteran that their choices are wrong. It’s up to the veteran to make their own choices.
   b) The case manager uses their own experience to judge what the veteran should do.
   Case management requires the case manager to recognize the unique characteristics and circumstances for each individual. The veteran is the one that ultimately is the best judge about what which decision is the right decision.
   c) The case manager listens carefully, analyzes the information and then guides the veteran to make decisions or actions. This is the correct answer.

5) The partnership relationship in case management is based on:
   a) Telling the veteran what kind of job to apply for.
   A true partnership relationship in case management is one where the case manager and veteran work together and the veteran then decides how to progress.
   b) Trust based on clear communication. This answer is correct.
   c) The case manager doing everything for the veteran
   The veteran needs to take responsibility for their own life. While the case manager may be more involved in helping the veteran at various points in the process, ultimately the veteran does most of the work and is responsible for their decisions.

6) Asking open ended questions is a communication technique that:
   a) Encourages the veteran to provide descriptive answers. This answer is correct.
   b) Makes the goal setting process of case management confusing
   Open ended questions are a technique to get the veteran involved in clarifying their own goals.
   c) Interferes with the veterans ability to identify what is important to them
   The goal of open ended questioning is to help the veteran describe what is most important.
d) All of the above. Goal setting and identifying priorities is easier if the veteran can expound on their needs, desires and skills.

7) Closure in case management:
   a) Only applies to a veteran that gets a job
       A veteran may end case management for other reasons such as going to school or relocating out of the area.
   b) Includes closing at the end of each appointment. Although this is partially correct, there are other definitions for case management closure.
   c) When a veteran decides they do not want to continue with case management. Incorrect, although this is partially correct, there is another type of case management closure.
   d) Successfully completes a plan, or for any reason they make it impossible to continue in the plan. This is the correct answer.

8) Which of the following is a rapport building technique:
   a) Talking about (or discussing) things the veteran and case manager disagree on
       Rapport is generally built on commonalities rather than differences.
   b) Talking about (or discussing) shared military experience. This is correct.
   c) Avoiding eye contact
       Rapport building is strengthened by eye contact.