

## **CORRECTIONS CENTER OF NORTHWEST OHIO INMATE CASE MANAGEMENT**

Case management has a variety of definitions depending on the institution, location, finances and other variables in a correctional setting. In a regional jail setting, case management takes on its own definition with the emphasis on teamwork.

The Corrections Center of Northwest Ohio is the first regional corrections center of its type in the United States, and the first regional jail to be built in the State of Ohio. CCNO is a 642-bed direct supervision corrections facility with approximately 189,000 square feet under roof. It serves as a model not only in terms of its correctional programming and design, but also in terms of the level of intergovernmental cooperation that has been achieved by the six member jurisdictions. As a result, the Corrections Center is one of the most cost-effective correctional facilities in the State of Ohio.

CCNO houses community, minimum, medium and maximum security inmates determined by a classification system. The structure has no bars or physical barriers separating staff and inmates with the exception of the maximum-security unit. Staff are in direct contact with the inmate population 24-hours per day.

Currently there are eleven case managers who assist the inmate population. There are 15 separate housing units. Each of the five minimum security 60-bed units, to include one female unit, are assigned one case manager whose office is located in each unit. A sixth case manager oversees a 48-bed male minimum-security unit. One case manager oversees the medium security units, one male and one female. Another case manager oversees three maximum-security units comprised of 48 male inmates. Two case managers oversee the community correction units comprised of up to 75 inmates each. The community correction units are in a separate building adjacent to the main facility. The eleventh case manager oversees a medium security unit of 30 newly incarcerated inmates, the six-bed medical unit as well as review commitment papers in booking for accuracy.

While assigned to an inmate unit, each case manager has a variety of different responsibilities. One case manager is responsible for assigning 60 to 75 inmates to work in the kitchen, laundry, maintenance and cleaning departments. Another case manager is responsible for assigning approximately 30 to 55 inmates depending on the season to work in the community through the public works program caring for parks, cemeteries, fairgrounds and other non-profit or governmental property. Other case managers may oversee inmates in a unit where there is emphasis on treatment programs.

All case managers have similar responsibilities to include inspecting and delivering inmate mail, receiving and delivering commissary, determining credit time, researching holders issued by one of 14 courts, providing counseling, reviewing and

updating the inmate's case file, working with the 14 courts, scheduling visits, helping with disciplinary procedures, accepting and releasing inmate property, referring an inmate to medical for psychological or medical needs, suicide review, providing information on the facility rules, assisting the inmate in obtaining clothing if indigent, making recommendations in regards to an inmate's classification, transport inmates to the library on a weekly basis and arranging for emergency furloughs in the event of the death in the family.

Case managers at CCNO conduct individual inmate orientations in which the inmate is advised of the charges that brought them to CCNO. Additionally, they are informed about facility rules, mail, commissary and earned credit. The inmate is encouraged to participate in various rehabilitation programs to include obtaining their GED, substance abuse education and treatment programs, library services, various religious services, self-help education programs, and works programs that are available. Case managers are also trained to conduct self-help programs to include anger control, parenting, smoking cessation and AA meetings.

At CCNO, the case manager basically is the inmate's liaison to other CCNO departments and the outside world. The emphasis is keeping inmates informed and working with CCNO staff to encourage change and proper behavior.

A typical day for a Case Manager begins with obtaining and reviewing the inmate roster. New inmates assigned to the unit are identified for the purpose of conducting inmate orientations. Case managers will meet, one-to-one, with an inmate to discuss their cases or any concerns they may have. Commissary orders, visitation requests and written requests to staff are then addressed. The afternoon involves mail inspection, deposit of any received money orders in the inmates' commissary accounts, mail delivery and meeting with inmates.

Case managers attend bi-monthly staff meetings as well as have an opportunity to attend work-related seminars. Case managers meet weekly with the classification officers, or as needed, to discuss re-classification of inmates based on charges and behavior. Some case managers assist in weekly banking for inmates in the community works program and work release. Case managers also assist in interviewing potential candidates for the in-house and community work programs. Each case manager has an additional duty that may involve contacting courts for clarification of court paperwork, flagging inmate workers in the computer system, determining restitution hours and double checking booking records.

Case managers report to the Manager of Inmate Programs who also oversees the education program, library, substance abuse programs and medical department. They are part of the support services department of the facility that is overseen by the Director of Support Services.

Case managers rotate units every 18 months to two years for cross training purposes. This has allowed case managers to have a better understanding of the

operations of the entire facility as well as better assist co-workers in the event of a call off or resignation.

The majority of the case managers were, at one time, employed as a corrections officers. In the event a case management position is available, it is posted and applications are received from corrections officers or supervisors, support services or administration personnel. Requirements include one-year employment at CCNO as well as an associate's degree in corrections, law enforcement, social work or a closely related field. Three years experience in case management may be substituted. Two years experience as a corrections officer may be submitted for the associate's degree. Also the candidate must demonstrate counseling experience, basic computer experience and completed 120 hours of corrections officer training.

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