

# Optimizing Client Follow up

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**<http://www.uclaisap.org/trackingmanual>**



# First Steps



# First step: Planning



- Articulate your reasons for re-contact and identify your goals
- Identify/hire and train staff
  - Establish regular staff meetings, identify coordinator
- Develop communication and tracking mechanisms
  - Filing system, database, phone line

# First step: Planning



- Make a follow-up task schedule (when to send letters, cards, do database checks, etc.)
- Make arrangements with agencies you expect to have info on clients for access to status information (sister treatment agencies, probation, parole, courts, schools, health system, department of family services, etc.)
- Arrange to get access to basic databases – agency databases, Masterfiles, Nexis, Haines directory, etc.

# First steps: Preparing clients

- Let clients know why follow up is important
- Let clients know that they need to bring address information with them to intake and follow-up appointments
- **Get extensive locator information at intake & follow-ups**
- Be sure your consent form informs clients of the follow up and the methods you will use
- Ask clients to sign release-of-information forms
- Let clients know when follow-ups will take place
- Let clients know what incentives they will receive
- Ask clients to let family and friends know that follow-ups will take place

# Protecting confidentiality

- Be sure project staff are up-to-date on confidentiality issues including HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)
- Let clients know what steps you are taking to ensure their confidentiality
- Use “Health Study,” or other neutral title
- Be sure letterhead, correspondence, caller ID used for follow up does not reveal participation in drug treatment
- Use a separate phone line just for follow up
- Get a Certificate of Confidentiality which protects your records from subpoena

The locator form:

How to make it work for you



# Locator form “must haves”

- Client’s full name, address, telephone number
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of three people who will know where client is in a year (especially the client’s mother!)
  - Check your locators to be sure they have as much contact information as possible
  - After rapport is established, try to obtain more
- Client’s message, pager, and/or cell phone number
- Client’s e-mail address
- Client’s aliases
- Client’s birth date

# “Must haves” for homeless clients

- A brief list of places client usually hangs out (street corner, park, bridge, etc.)
- Shelters, SRO hotels: which ones do they tend to use?
- What soup kitchen, restaurant, etc. do they like to use?
- Where do they like to buy their liquor or other necessities? (Store owners who give credit may know where the client tends to hang out.)
- Where do they cash their checks?
- Do they know any service workers in the area they usually hang out? Get agency and names.
- Do they stay in different places in the winter vs. summer? Get list.

# Locator form useful items

- A complete list of client's relatives and their addresses and phone numbers
- Address and phone number for client's place of work
- Client's driver's license number
- Client's social security number
- Client's physical description
- Probation officer contact information
- Client's photo

# Locator form walk through

- Who should fill it out?
- Note client's comments
- Include relatives such as “my baby's father/mother”
- Don't forget the “at least three” rule
- Verify addresses immediately using ZIP+4 website or thank you mailing



Maintaining Rapport with Clients

# Connect with Clients In Treatment

You are the experts

- Create an identity for your program
- Consistent logos, consistent staff
- Willingness to go the extra mile for participants
  - Provide referrals
  - Provide incentives
  - Provide a program-branded items with program phone number (notebook, refrigerator magnet, wallet card, pen, cloth bag, back pack, etc.)
  - Offer food, transit tokens, etc. during the course of treatment
- Stay in contact by mail and phone
- Prepare clients for alumni group participation
- Make interactions memorable and of value to clients

# Staying in Contact During Treatment

- Immediate address verification – ZIP+4
- Thank you cards
- Seasonal mailings (2-4 times per year)
  - Separate from scheduling letters
  - Thank them for their participation in the program
- Birthday cards
- Always include “Address Correction Requested” underneath address
- Check whether approval is needed for text of letters and postcards (Institutional Review Board)



Follow up



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# Follow-up steps

Seasonally:

- Send seasonal card and/or letters

Monthly:

- Send letters to best address listed for clients due the next month (e.g., on June 1<sup>st</sup> send scheduling letters to all clients due in July)
- Send birthday letters
- For all clients not located, call probation office and/or social service agency for the clients' current status
- For all clients not located, send letters out to all addresses

Weekly:

- Check sister treatment agencies, jail and prison lists for all clients not located

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# Follow-up tips



Tip: Be ready to complete the follow-up interview whenever you reach a participant.

Tip: Keep a running log of all the steps taken to contact the client.

# The tracking log

- Record dates, times, and descriptions of all actions taken
- Log in letters that are returned
- Log in new information on client



# Additional steps

On individual files:

- Call all phone numbers provided by the client
- Call 411 for phone number updates, use internet phone directory services
- Call service agencies listed by client
- Call a reverse directory service
- Obtain address information from address databases

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# Additional steps

- Send letters to all new addresses obtained
- Monitor letters that are returned
- Slate non-returned addresses for doorknocks
- Slate client's hang outs for visits or doorknocks

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# Practicum: Think like a tracker

- You have mailed letters and every one has been returned.
- You've called all the phone numbers on the locator and none are good.
- What next?



# Tips

- Friendliness and politeness count
  - be sure your tracker has these qualities
- Perseverance counts
  - don't give up on a hard-to-find client
- Be systematic
  - check the jail list (etc.) every week for every client
- Let files “rest”
- If possible, pay clients for follow up interviews
- Get permission for jail or prison interviews ahead of time



# Tips

- Keep your tracking log up-to-date
  - keeps you from repeating steps, provides a basis for additional leads
- Don't have the client's counselor do the follow up
  - clients who aren't doing well may not want to talk to their counselor
- Have referrals ready and be ready to counsel clients
  - have mental health, additional treatment, vocational services, shelter, and other referrals ready for clients who need them
- Younger clients are more likely to respond to text messages than phone calls

# Tips for Street Follow-up on Homeless Clients

- Have a good physical description or photo of client
- Wear identifying badges
- Walk or drive in the area, talk to the people who are there
- Check emergency shelters that are only open on very cold days
- Provide incentives for “buddies” to help you locate your client

# The ideal tracker

- Can work independently
- Knows technology (computer, cell phone, text messaging)
- Is friendly and polite
- Is street smart
- Can work with a wide variety of people
  - be sure your tracker will treat drug users, probation officers, “co-dependents,” etc., with respect
  - non-judgmental
  - culturally sensitive
- Is perseverant
- Is flexible
  - for instance, willing to go to a not-so-nice park to find a homeless client
  - can make calls during evenings and weekends

# Special considerations

- Street smarts about areas where clients congregate
  - trackers should be aware of places/situations that are unsafe (i.e., dealing areas, gang turf, turf wars, etc.)
- Street contact and doorknocking in pairs
- Social networks
  - some homeless have extensive social networks in the community
- Cultural issues
  - tracking needs to be sensitive to cultural variations



Using a Database  
to Keep Track of Clients

# Keeping track of tracking

Your tracking database should include:

- Date of intake
- Date of intake interview completion (if different)
- Date due for follow up
- Follow up completion status
  - Include appropriate categories such as, complete, refused follow up, dead, incarcerated, etc.
- Additional client contact information can be located on paper, in this database, or in another database
- Databases accessible only with password access to computer/network, separate password to database



form Ad... ▾

Records:  
5

Sorted



New

Delete

Find

List

Menu

**6 Month Locator**Sequence ID **2****Client Records**ID Number **99910**First Name **Joe**Intake Date **1/14/2003**Last Name **Bruin**Follow-up **Active**SS# **555-55-0000**

Group

Due Date **7/17/2003**

Last Result

**Demographics****Interview Info****Address****Program Info****Petty Cash****CJS**

Address

Phone # **310-555-5555**

Cell #

**1010 University Ln**

Who else lives there

Relationship

Street

**Los Angeles****CA****90099**

City

State

Zip Code

Best Mailing Address

Contact Person

Relationship

**700 Any Main Blvd****Josephine Bruin****Mother**

Street

Phone #

**310-555-5555****Los Angeles****CA****90024**

City

State

Zip Code

**Door Knock****Notes**

Enter data for Clients



Client Li... ▾

Records:  
5Found:  
4

Sorted

6 Month Follow-up

## CLIENT LIST BY LAST NAME

Page # ?

Last Name	First name	Date of Birth	ID#	Due Date	Last Result	Incarceration
Bruin	Joe	3/1/77	99910	7/17/2003		
Doe	Jane	10/12/80	99911	8/3/2004	Returned Locator	No
Smith	John Doe	1/18/75	99999	7/4/2003	Made Appt	No
United	Dee	11/1/69	99912	7/30/2003		

# How to keep costs down

A stylized illustration of a woman on the left and a man on the right, both holding a large, flowing green banner that stretches across the center of the image. The woman is wearing a teal dress, and the man is wearing a yellow shirt and a dark tie. The background is a dark, textured blue.

- Get good information at the very beginning
- Establish rapport and buy-in
- Stay-in-touch between contacts
- Do the cheap stuff first
  - letters
  - checking web sites
  - calls to sister agencies and criminal justice agencies
  - calls to local numbers

# How to keep costs down

A stylized illustration of a woman on the left and a man on the right, both holding a large, flowing green banner that stretches across the center of the image. The woman is wearing a teal dress, and the man is wearing a yellow shirt and a dark tie. The background is a dark blue gradient with horizontal lines.

- Take advantage of technology
  - data base programs and mail merge functions
  - search engines
  - social networking sites (Facebook, treatment center website)
  - text messaging
- Provide reasons for the clients to re-contact you
- Get additional locator information at each contact
- Be creative! You know your population!

# In Review

- Prepare for follow-up efforts
  - Locator form
  - Staffing
  - Phones
  - Database
  - Measures to protect client confidentiality
- Follow-up begins at first contact
  - Be sure clients understand the purpose and value of follow-up
  - Develop client trust, rapport, engagement, buy-in
  - Informed consent and release of information



# In Review

- Contact clients soon after first contact, frequently, and persistently
  - Use several different contact strategies
  - Monitor contact efforts
  - Combine treatment visits with follow-up interviews
  - Incremental rewards or incentives
  - Online search engines, government and other public service agencies
  - Fieldwork and in-person visits
- Staff
  - Culturally competent and bilingual as needed
  - Experienced and trained
  - Persistent, creative, flexible

# Useful resources

- UCLA Staying in Touch manual:
  - <http://www.uclaisap.org/trackingmanual/>
- Web whitepage directories:
  - [http://peoplesearch.net/peoplesearch/peoplesearch\\_deluxe.html](http://peoplesearch.net/peoplesearch/peoplesearch_deluxe.html)
  - <http://www.theultimates.com/white/>
  - <http://find.person.superpages.com/>
- Database search services:
  - <http://www.nexis.com/>
  - <http://www.masterfiles.com/>
  - <http://www.haines.com/>
- The Social Security Death Index:
  - <http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/ssdi.cgi>
- Federal and state inmate information:
  - <http://www.bop.gov/iloc2/LocateInmate.jsp>
  - <http://www.theinmatelocator.com/>

# Thank you!

- Questions? Comments?
- This presentation will be available on the CALDAR website <http://www.caldar.org/>

