

Web based software

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Web-Based Software for Human Services Presentation Team BSHS 352

Technology in Human Services November 21, 2011 Donna Zeh Web-Based

Software for Human Services Presentation In the human service field

technology is becoming one of the same. When dealing with clients it is

important that human service professionals understand what the clients

need and how the services can be offered to them successfully. One of the

most effective ways to ensure that the client is receiving the necessary

services is to collect as much data on resources as possible and computer

software is an effective place to house all of this data. Team C has chosen to

analyze the how computer software can enhance the client service sector.

FamCare, Harmony Information Systems and Client Services Manager-Mental

Health 4. 0 are three software programs there are used in the human service

field to help facilitate human service professionals with a plethora of services

for the clients. Team C will explain how the software enhances the use of

client services, describe how to use these programs, describe the advantage

and disadvantage of the software, and explain how an organization will

determine how to choose a software program. How Software Can Enhance

Client Services FamCare, Harmony Information Systems, and Client Services

Manager- Mental Health 4. 0 allows professionals to directly insert

information into the system and reduce the costs associated in the human

service sector while providing better care with improved solutions. The

programs allow users to track clients, monitor programs and offer services in

addition to understanding trends. The software enhances the client service

sector of human services by allowing the professional to react in real time

from any location because each program is web-based. The system also

allows for accessibility and flexibility in the working environment. Files such as documents, voice notes, and videos can be uploaded instantly to a client's file electronically from any secure location. The programs allow for easier and immediate access to clients files while also assisting in the billing processes and advanced reporting. In addition, these three programs allow for accessibility of information to the caregivers and clients. These programs offer access to client management while tracking client intakes, notes, service plans, scheduling, and reporting. These programs can also be accessed by computers on secure networks or they can be accessed with mobile handheld devices, such as smart phones or iPads. The mobility of these programs allows for professionals to focus on the patient rather than on the paperwork.

How Software Can Be Used in Client Services Human service organizations consists of many functional areas including human resources, client services, operations, finance marketing, administration, and IT support, which handles such technological areas as computer networking, software applications, and the Internet. One primary sector of a human service organization is client services. Client services can use software to help keep a record of a client's personal data and referrals as well as organize any reports or pertinent notes (Davenport, 1998). Specialized software would help a human services provider obtain a better understanding of exactly what services are best suited for a client, what areas are proving to be most beneficial and in what areas a client may need additional services. The use of specialized software would also prove helpful in keeping track of a human services provider's hours as they are paid by the amount of time they spend directly helping a client. Specialized software

would also make it more convenient when filing reports as many software packages offer applications that compile reports from the data that has been entered. This is a time saving convenience because human services providers will not have to spend that time tracing the services provided and writing the report themselves. In larger organizations, this would almost require the need to hire extra secretarial employees just to compile and write the reports. In addition, these software applications would allow more time to be spent with clients (Davenport, 1998). The Advantages and Disadvantages of Software Programs Adapting a new software program can be extremely beneficial to an organization in many aspects. The FamCare software is customizable and can be tailored to child services, juvenile justice programs, and family service programs (FamCare, 2011). The Harmony Information System software, which serves the elderly population, is linked to local resources and adult protection agencies for faster convenience and assistance to clients (Harmony Information Systems, 2010). The CSM/MH software program offers specific options vital to the mental health field such as treatment programs and meds management while complying to HIPAA regulations (Human Services Group: AdvanTec Information Systems, LLC, 2009). Additional advantages include a streamlined communication system, information that can be shared throughout the organization and with donors, and an organized, up-to-date system. Some disadvantages to using such software programs can occur when the organization does not research the software before implementing it, when the software is not taken through a trial run, and when the program does not meet all of the needs of the organization. These issues can cause

major problems if they are not addressed immediately. The software an organization chooses should be thoroughly researched and meet every need of the organization. If there is no current software to fit, the organization can find a programmer to create new software; however, this can become time consuming and expensive (FamCare, 2011). Additionally, completing a thorough trial run can help the organization work out any glitches before problems arise when staff members are actively working with clients.

Additional Issues When Using Software Programs When choosing to work with a system-wide software program, user issues are not the only problems that can arise. Additional issues could include problems with the organization's server, Internet connection errors, or failures in the software program (Mulhauser, 2011). If the organization's server crashes, the IT department is responsible for fixing it in a timely manner; however, some smaller organizations do not have an internal IT department and have to rely on outside services to fix the problem. This often takes time and if the clients' information is not available until the server is fixed needs can go unmet. Internet connection errors are not common, but do happen. This issue can take time to solve but if it is an area-wide problem, nothing significant can be done until the Internet provider finds a solution. Last, if the software program itself begins to have issues, the organization will have to wait until the distributor is available for troubleshooting assistance. Each of these issues can cause conflicts between clients' scheduled appointments, viewing important file information, and adding new information into the system.

How the Size of the Organization Affects the Software Chosen The size of the organization may determine if a program is appropriate for

certain organizations. The listed programs- FamCare, Harmony Information systems, and Client Services Manager- are user friendly services that offer a 24-hour support service online and toll free phone number. Another beneficial aspect of the programs is that these programs generally are linked to external professional facilities such as welfare agencies, child protective services, adult protective services, and court systems. The programs are considered decision engines as new information is documented decisions can be made faster (Famcare, 2011). The programs are set up to be user friendly so the average person can access them through simplified data. Information is simplified so individuals with different computer skill levels can read and understand the data; the provider, caregiver, and consumer. As many programs are user friendly, the size of an organization should not be judged, but rather judged on the need of the organization, meeting those needs, and the effectiveness of the program. In the human service field technology has certainly found its place. When an organization begins to implement a program it is important to outline some areas of concern. When dealing with client services, computer software can enhance particular areas; for example, it can help reduce cost and it can track a client's success as well as make it easier to access files. The system can be used to hold clients' personal information, organize the proper services that may be available to the client, and even file reports as needed. As with anything new there may be some advantages and disadvantages to a software program. FamCare can be fixed to be used for what population is receiving services. Harmony Information System makes it easier to link services to other resources and CSM/MH is able hold legally mandated documentation, such as the HIPAA

information. There are some disadvantages to these systems as well but the most prevalent can be software problems, which could affect the entire system. Often, organizations look to see if the size of the organization is a factor for using the service, and it usually doesn't matter. The important factor is that the software programs are user friendly and easily accessible. The programs being created for human service professionals are very helpful in making the client's success attainable and the job of the human service professional easy. References Davenport, T. H., (1998). Putting the Enterprise into the Enterprise System, Harvard Business Review. pp. 121-31. Retrieved November 19, 2011 from [http://bcc.aucegypt.edu/Who/dr_rateb/syst549/ERP%20Articels/Karim%20Adham%20Soliman%20Hasan%20Aguib%20\(900960001\)/ERP%20II%20-%20a%20conceptual%20framework%20for%20next-generation%20enterprise%20systems.pdf](http://bcc.aucegypt.edu/Who/dr_rateb/syst549/ERP%20Articels/Karim%20Adham%20Soliman%20Hasan%20Aguib%20(900960001)/ERP%20II%20-%20a%20conceptual%20framework%20for%20next-generation%20enterprise%20systems.pdf) FamCare. (2011). Human Services Software. Retrieved from <http://www.famcare.net/> Harmony Information Systems. (2010). Integrated Health and Human Services Management. Retrieved from <http://www.harmonyis.com/> Human Services Group: AdvanTec Information Systems, LLC. (2009). CSM/MH- Client Services Manager- Mental Health v4. 0. Retrieved from <http://www.findsocialservicesoftware.com/CSM-MH.aspx> Mulhauser, G. (2011). Disadvantages of Counseling or Therapy by Email. Retrieved from <http://www.counselingresource.com/lib/therapy/service/online-disadvantages/>