BEST PRACTICES

IN CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

EMPLOY MILWAUKEE
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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AGENDA

- Purpose and Importance of Case Notes

- Fundamentals of a Well-Defined Case Note

- Do's and Don'ts of Case Noting

- Disability or Medically Sensitive Information

- Late Notes and Corrections

- RAPP Note Format

- Case Note Examples

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE

THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF CASE NOTE

Case notes capture engagement with participant:

- Sequentially tracks a participant's progress, services provided, presents the current situation of an individual, and identify emergent barriers

- Provides the story behind revised service plans

THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF CASE NOTE

Case notes are essential for case load management:

- Ongoing staff can easily pick up where conversations left off.

- More effective back-up coverage

- Supervisors and monitoring staff to understand the participant's story.

THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF CASE NOTE

Case notes reflect participant engagement. Connect with a participant surrounding key events such as:

- Service start/end dates

- Employment changes

  - Termination

  - Hiring

- Status update on services

- Significant life events

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

TRUE OR FALSE

It is essential for case notes to be written concisely, and factually so ongoing staff can easily pick up where conversations left off.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

TRUE

It is essential for case notes to be written concisely, and factually so ongoing staff can easily pick up where conversations left off.

This is particularly key for staff who provide back-up coverage during planned and unplanned absences, supervisors, and monitoring staff to understand the participant's story.

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

FUNDAMENTALS OF A WELL-DEFINED CASE NOTE

FUNDAMENTALS OF A WELL-DEFINED CASE NOTE

Clear – Case notes must be clear and easily understood by the reader. Someone with no contact with the participant should be able to read the case note entries and get an accurate picture of what services are being provided, the date the services are provided and the justification for these services.

Concise – Ensure that all relevant information included is in as brief of a format as possible.
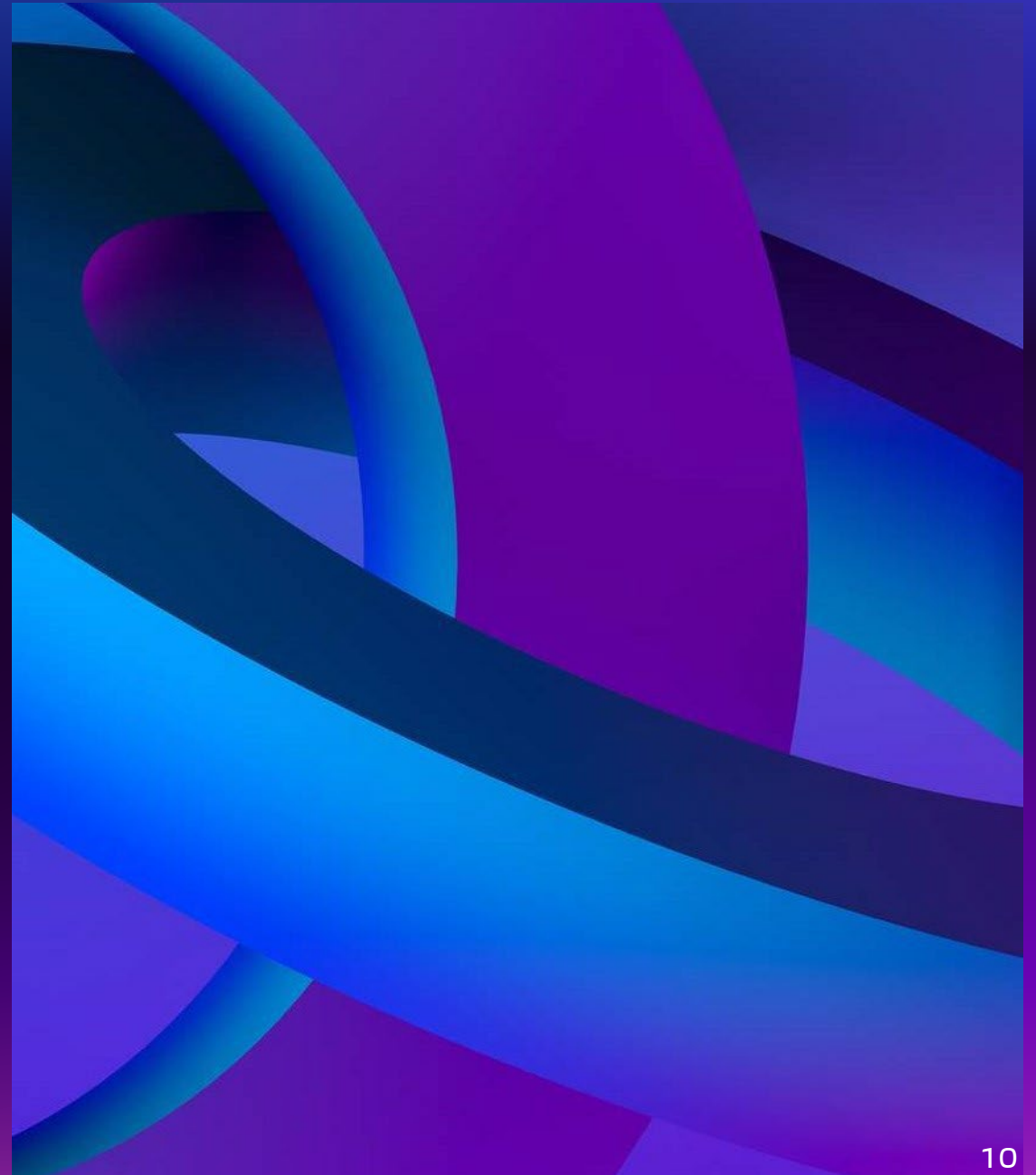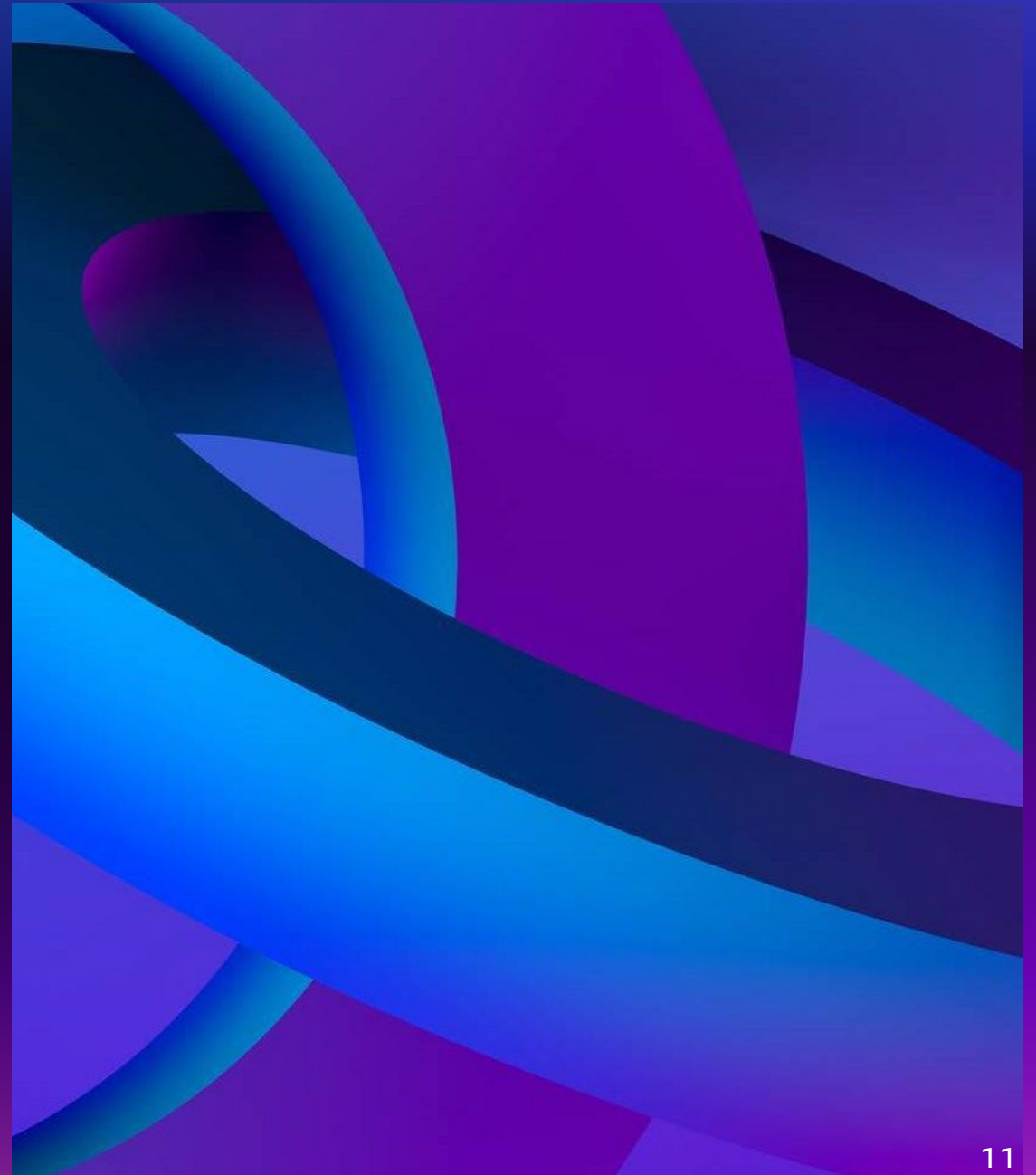
FUNDAMENTALS OF A WELL-DEFINED CASE NOTE

Useful – The relevant facts as we know them or have been told to include:

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How
- Next steps

FUNDAMENTALS OF A WELL-DEFINED CASE NOTE

- Relevant – If something is mentioned in passing, it should not be recorded in a case note unless it is relevant to the situation at hand.

- Timely – Case note should be written quickly or within a reasonable amount of time after the activity took place.

Requirements for timeliness vary. See your supervisor for your specific requirements.
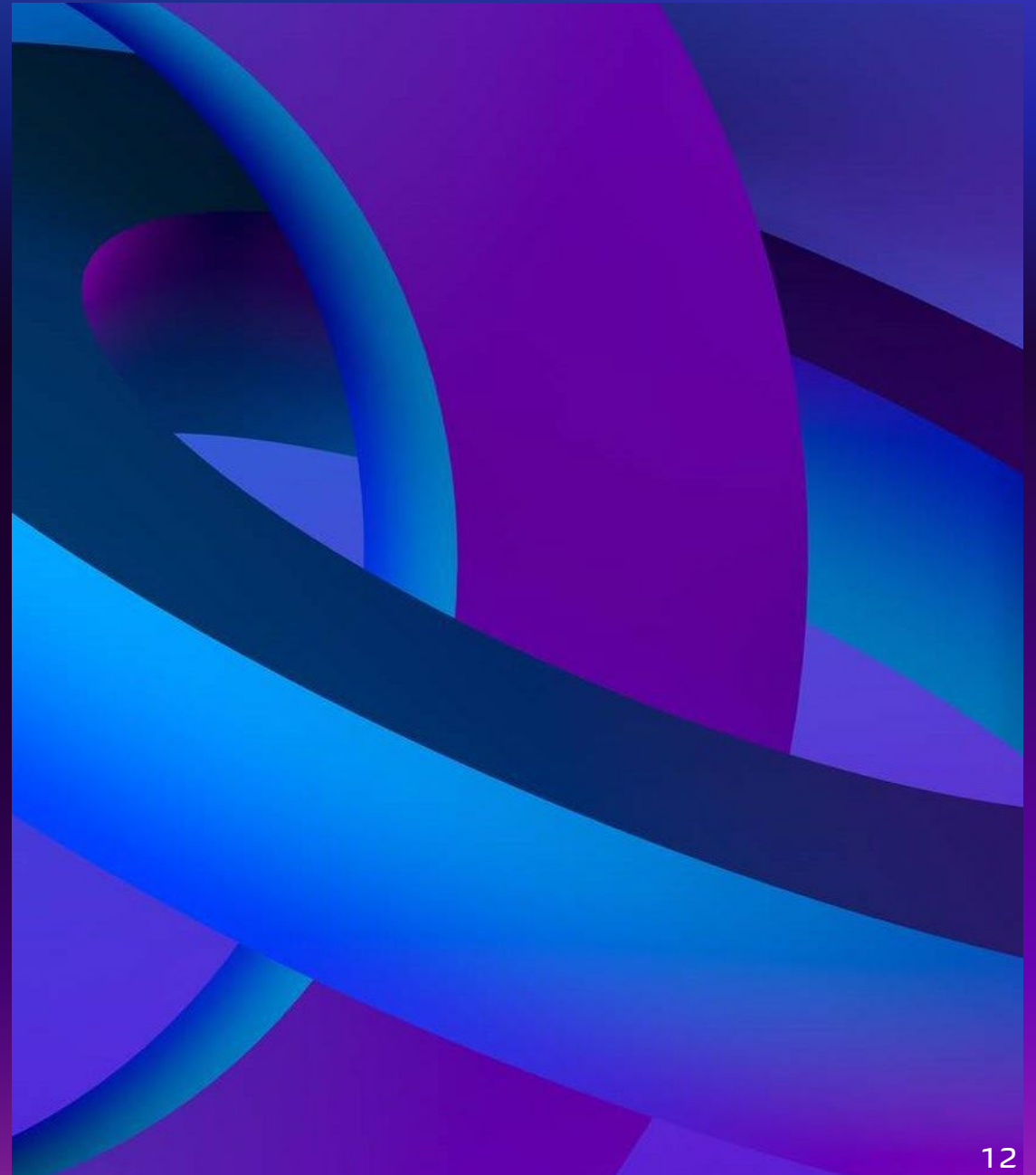
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

QUESTION

Case Notes are important because, in part, they help:

A. Ongoing staff to easily pick up where conversations left off

B. Back up staff provide effective coverage

C. Supervisors and monitoring staff to understand the participant's story

D. All of the above

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

ANSWER

D. All of the above

Ongoing staff, back up staff, supervisors and monitors are all better able to ensure quality services are provided to participants thanks to well written case notes.

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CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

DO'S AND DON'TS OF CASE NOTING

Do's and DON'TS of Case Noting

- Write in first person saying "I"

- Write informally or use slang

- Use abbreviations or acronyms.

- Use jargon

- Extraneous details

- Include opinions; if you must include an opinion relevant to services, label the statement as an opinion (e.g.: It is this writer's opinion that …)

Do's and Don'ts of Case Noting

- Write in third person perspective. "The writer".

- Write with a formal tone.

- Complete as soon as possible after the event.

- Record relevant facts accurately and completely including observed behaviors, statements heard.

Do's and Don'ts of Case Noting

- Focus on events in the participant's life will affect their progress toward goals and objectives.

- Document attempted contact, even if it was not successful.

- Document collateral contacts.

Do's and Don'ts of Case Noting

- Utilize strong verbs: advised, assessed, assisted, clarified, discussed, directed, encouraged, focused, identified, recommended, referred.

- Proofread

  - Spelling

  - Grammar

  - Dates

  - Templates customized

    - Names
    - Pronouns

Do's and Don'ts of Case Noting

- Review content

  - Were all essential concepts captured

  - Does it tell the story

  - Would someone unfamiliar with case, understand what happened

- Spend approximately 10 mins to write a case note about a typical participant interaction or collateral contact

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KNOWLEDGE CHECK

QUESTION

When writing case notes, do not:

A. Document attempted contact, even if it was not successful.

B. Include opinions

C. Write so someone unfamiliar with case, understand what happened

D. Customize templates to the specific participant served

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

ANSWER

B. Include opinions

In general, this practice should be avoided. If you must include an opinion relevant to services, label the statement as an opinion (e.g.: It is this writer's opinion that …)
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CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

DISABILITY OR MEDICALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION

DISABILITY OR MEDICALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN CASE NOTING

Generally, information that could lead to the disclosure of the specific medical condition or disability of a participant should not be entered into case notes or comment sections. Examples include but are not limited to: pregnancy, depression, ADHD, diabetes, etc.

Instead, summarize pertinent information that are barriers to planned goals instead of listing the specific sensitive information like a treatment or a diagnosis.

DISABILITY OR MEDICALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN CASE NOTING

Case Note Examples

Don't write:

Participant indicated he has a disability and told me that he is blind in his left eye, has ADHD, and chronic migraines. These conditions will need to be considered when finding a job.

Instead, do write:

Participant prefers to work in an environment without bright lighting and strong smells. He will also need employment that does not require 20/20 vision. He may have a hard time staying focused on one task at a time.

DISABILITY OR MEDICALLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION IN CASE NOTING

Programs use different, and sometimes multiple, participant databases and repositories.

Seek out training specific to the tools you use.

If you are uncertain how to proceed with sensitive documentation, consult with your supervisor and seek out additional program specific technical assistance.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

TRUE OR FALSE

Generally, information that could lead to the disclosure of the specific medical condition or disability of a participant should not be entered into case notes or comment sections.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

TRUE

Information that could lead to the disclosure of the specific medical condition or disability of a participant should not be entered into case notes or comment sections.

Instead, summarize pertinent information that are barriers to planned goals instead of listing the specific sensitive information like a treatment or a diagnosis

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

LATE NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

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Late notes are better than missing notes.

- Begin the entry with "Late note"

- Identify the date the activity being referenced occurred

- Example: "Late note for Feb. 14, met with participant to discuss…."
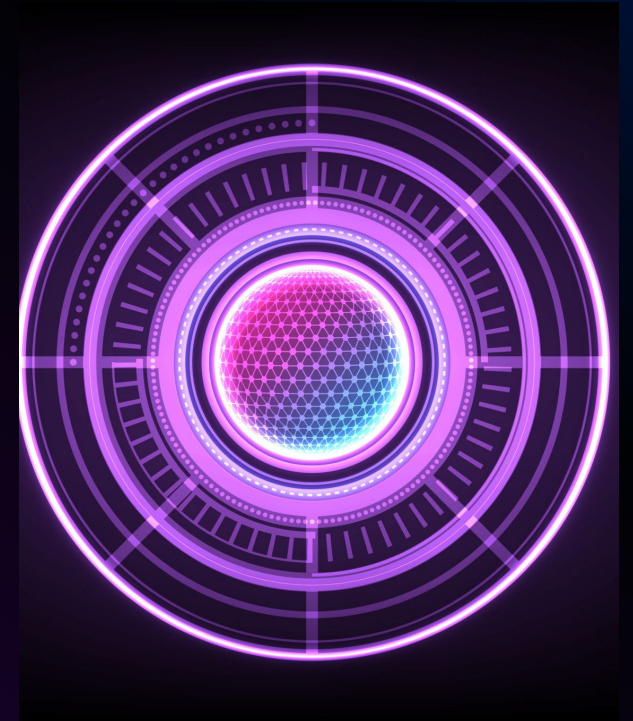
LATE NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

Mistakes happen. When you find them, fix them!

Making corrections

- Begin with a reference to any previous notes by date (and number if available)

- State the correct information.

- Example: "Correction to case note Jan 6, 2025, note ID 676854
The participant would like to purse a CDL, not a CNA as previously stated."

LATE NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

When correcting errors on handwritten documents do not use white out, black out/scribble or erase errors.

To make changes or corrections:

- Use a one-line strikethrough to keep original information legible

- Provide the correct information

- Initial the change

- Case note the change: how (by phone, virtual, other), what, when and why the change was needed.
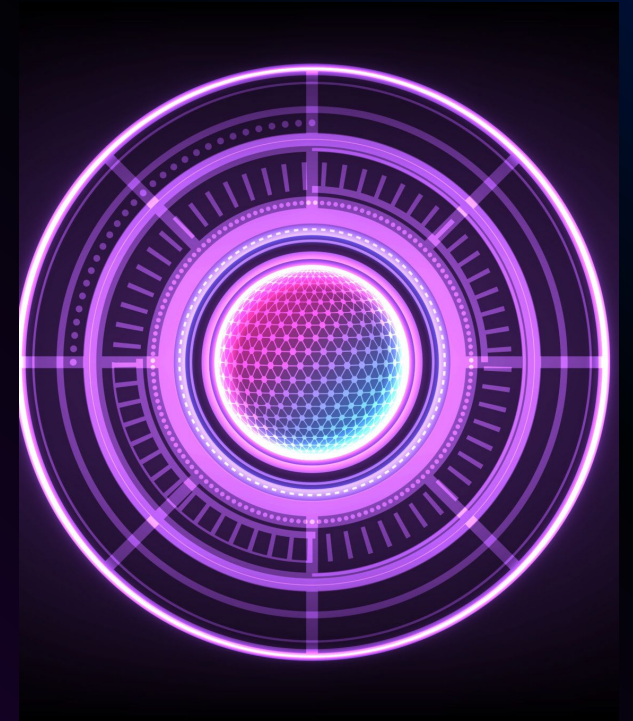
KNOWLEDGE CHECK

QUESTION

If a tree falls in the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

ANSWER

Only if it was documented!

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION
RAPP NOTE FORMAT

RAPP NOTE FORMAT

R	REASON	Briefly provide a reason for contact.
A	ACTION	State the actions completed since last contact, include services provided and services needed.
P	PROGRESS	State the progress or lack of progress made towards the plan's goal and objectives.
P	PLAN	Indicate the plan or next steps to accomplish goals and objectives.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

TRUE OF FALSE

The first letter in the note format is W for write things down

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

FALSE

There is no letter W in the RAPP note format.

The first letter is an R which stands for Reason - briefly provide a reason for contact.

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

CASE NOTE EXAMPLES

CASE NOTE EXAMPLE 1

Original: I had "a come to Jesus" meeting with Sean today. He needs to communicate. He needs to provide me with an update by the end of the week.

Concerns: Written in first person. Includes personal feelings and religious content not relevant to services. Lacks objective statement of activity, expectations, progress and specific action plan.

Preferred: Writer met with Sean today and discussed concerns regarding delays in completing this training program within the planned timeframe. Sean reported a recent death of a close relative and new responsibilities that prevented him from attending classes. We discussed options to continue with the training or stop until his family issues have been resolved and he is better able to dedicate the time to attend the required classes. Writer will research grief support groups near participant and contact Sean with available resources within 48 hours. Sean will consider how he wants to proceed and call me at 3 PM on June 1st with his decision.
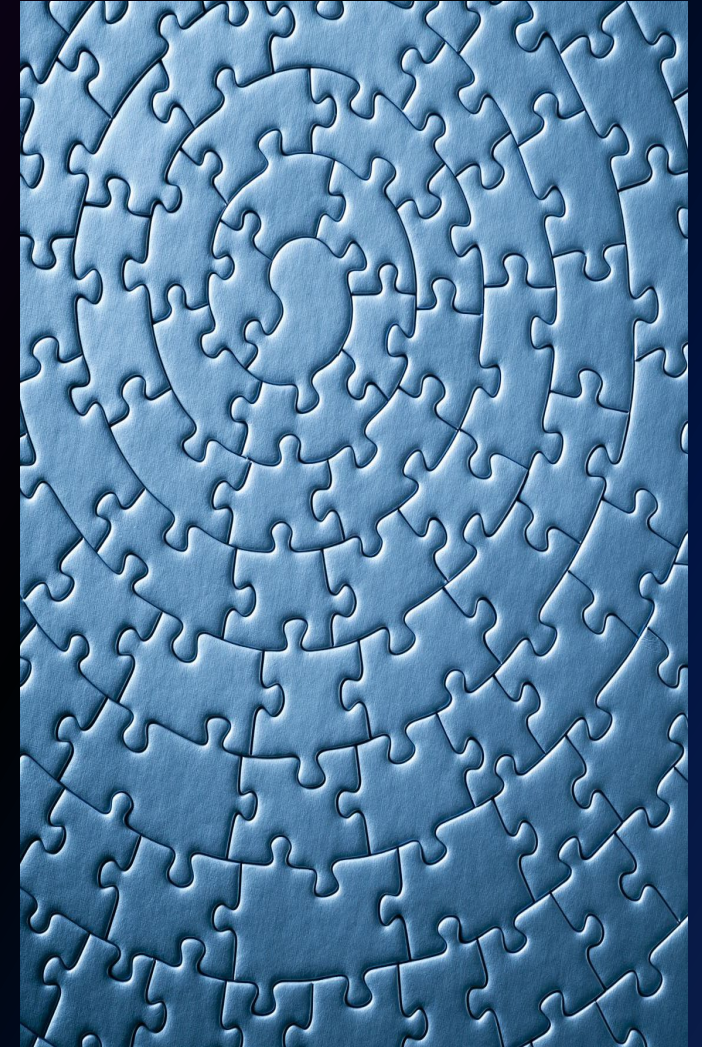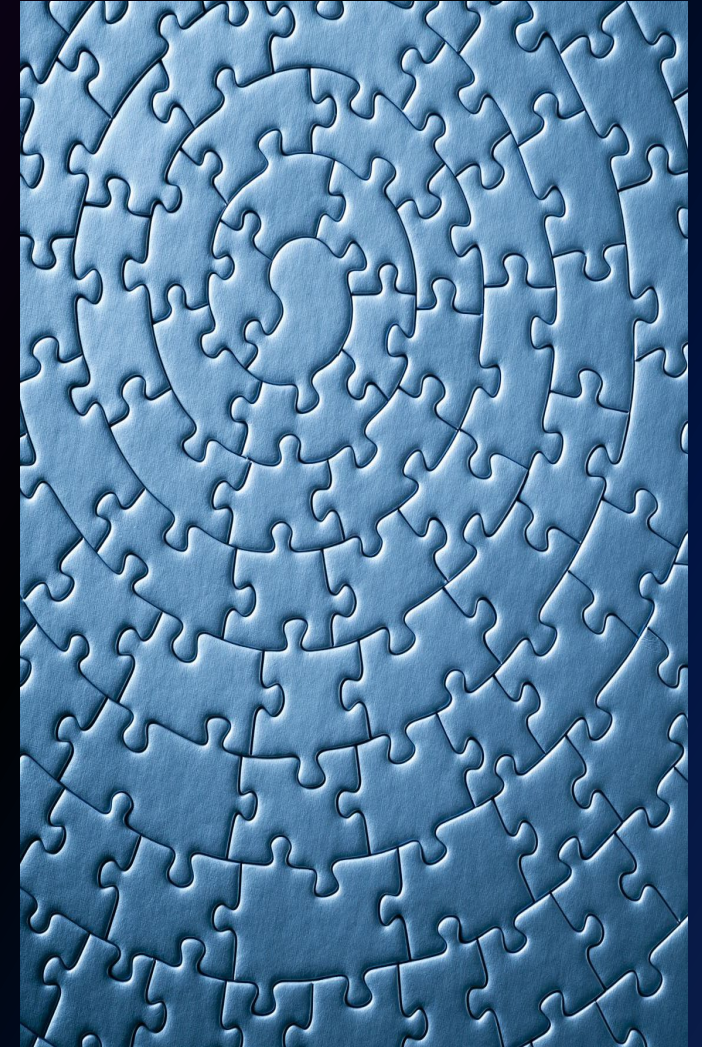
CASE NOTE EXAMPLE 2

Original: He was not following though, so I dropped him. I would not recommend providing funding for him the future or proceed very cautiously.

Concerns: Missing relevant facts and action steps. Provides opinion.

Preferred: Writer left message with Sean including details of a free grief support group near him. Sean did not reply to message. Sean has not attended training sessions and did not call to report his decision whether or not to continue with training as planned on June 1st. Writer mailed letter to Sean notifying him that he has been exited from the program and can call me or the One Stop Job Center if he wants to resume a training program at a later date. Writer contacted trainer with exit information.

CASE NOTE EXAMPLE 3

Original: Cntcd for INTKE docs. Recvd email. Assmt tmrw. INTKE docs tmrw. Participant is slow so I hope these docs will be cmpltd.

Concerns: Difficult to follow, abbreviations, unclear about conversation, didn't indicate that email was updated in file, doesn't indicate what type of assessment, doesn't clearly identify the outcome, plan is not specific and includes an opinion.

Preferred: Contacted participant to follow-up regarding completion of intake documents. Participant provided writer with new email address. Updated this in ETO. Participant agreed to have the intake documents completed prior to the meeting tomorrow. We scheduled a phone meeting for tomorrow at 1 PM to complete the employment assessment.
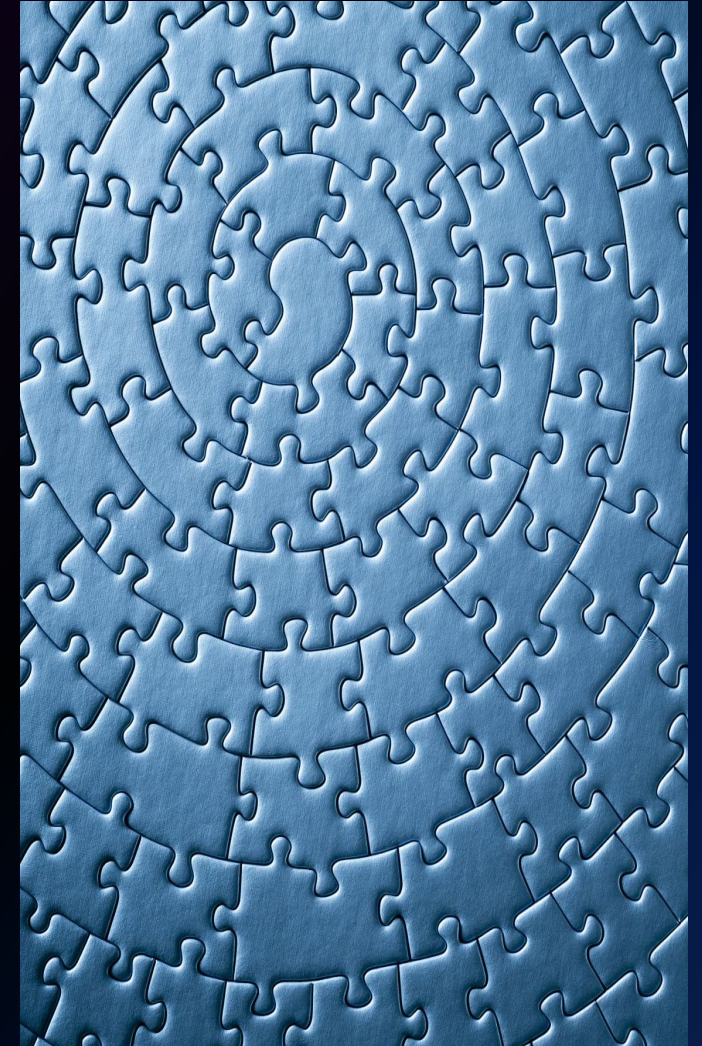
- This presentation provided an overview in best practices in case note documentation.

- There may be additional program specific requirements that must be met.

- Contact your supervisor regarding program specific documentation training.

- Program specific information appears next. Skip those that don't apply!

CASE NOTE DOCUMENTATION

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

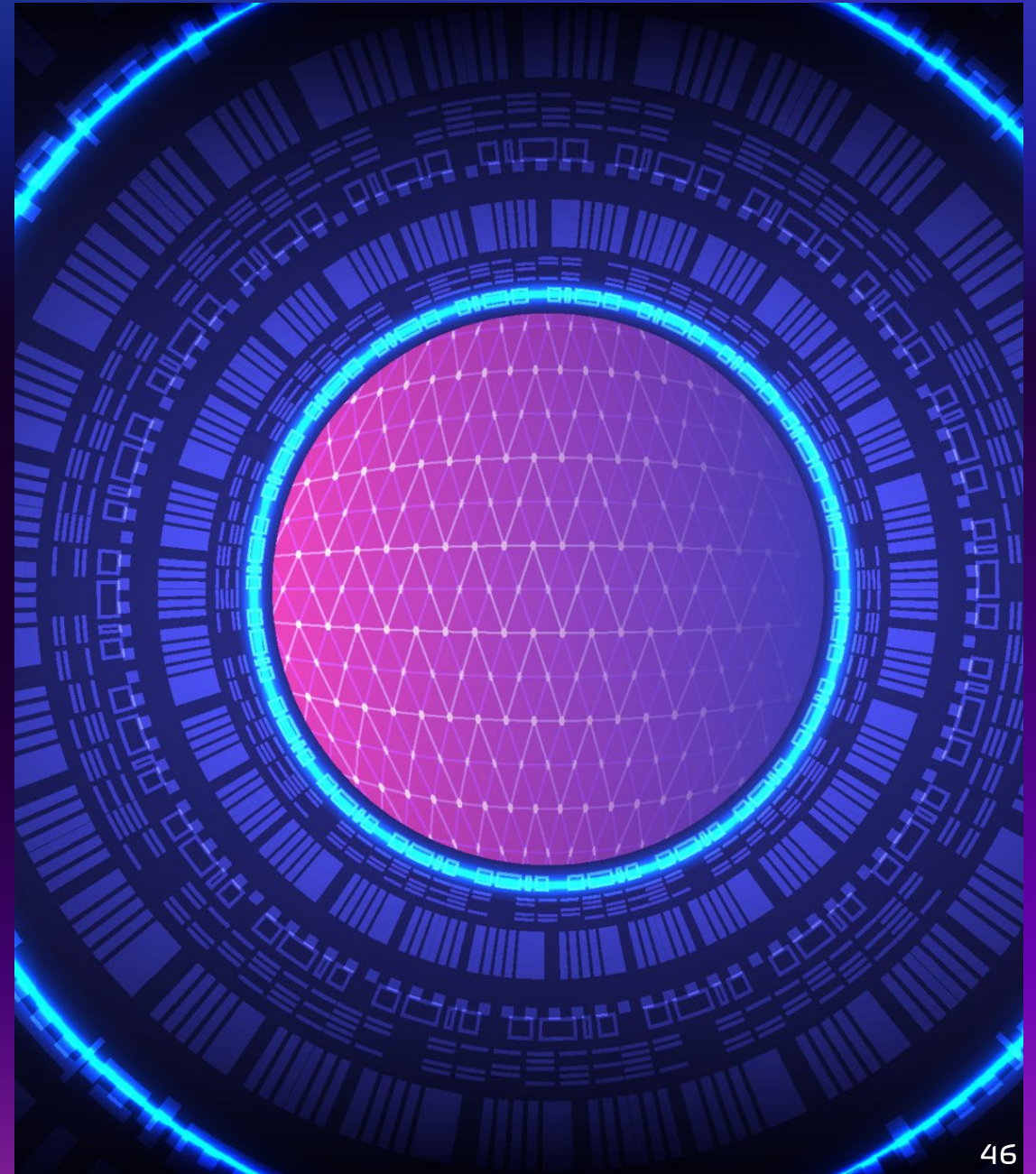# PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WIOA

- DWD-DET defines the timely entry of case notes as occurring within 10 calendar days from the date of interaction.

- Case notes must be added on a regular and frequent basis.

- Note date reflects the date the activity or interaction occurred.
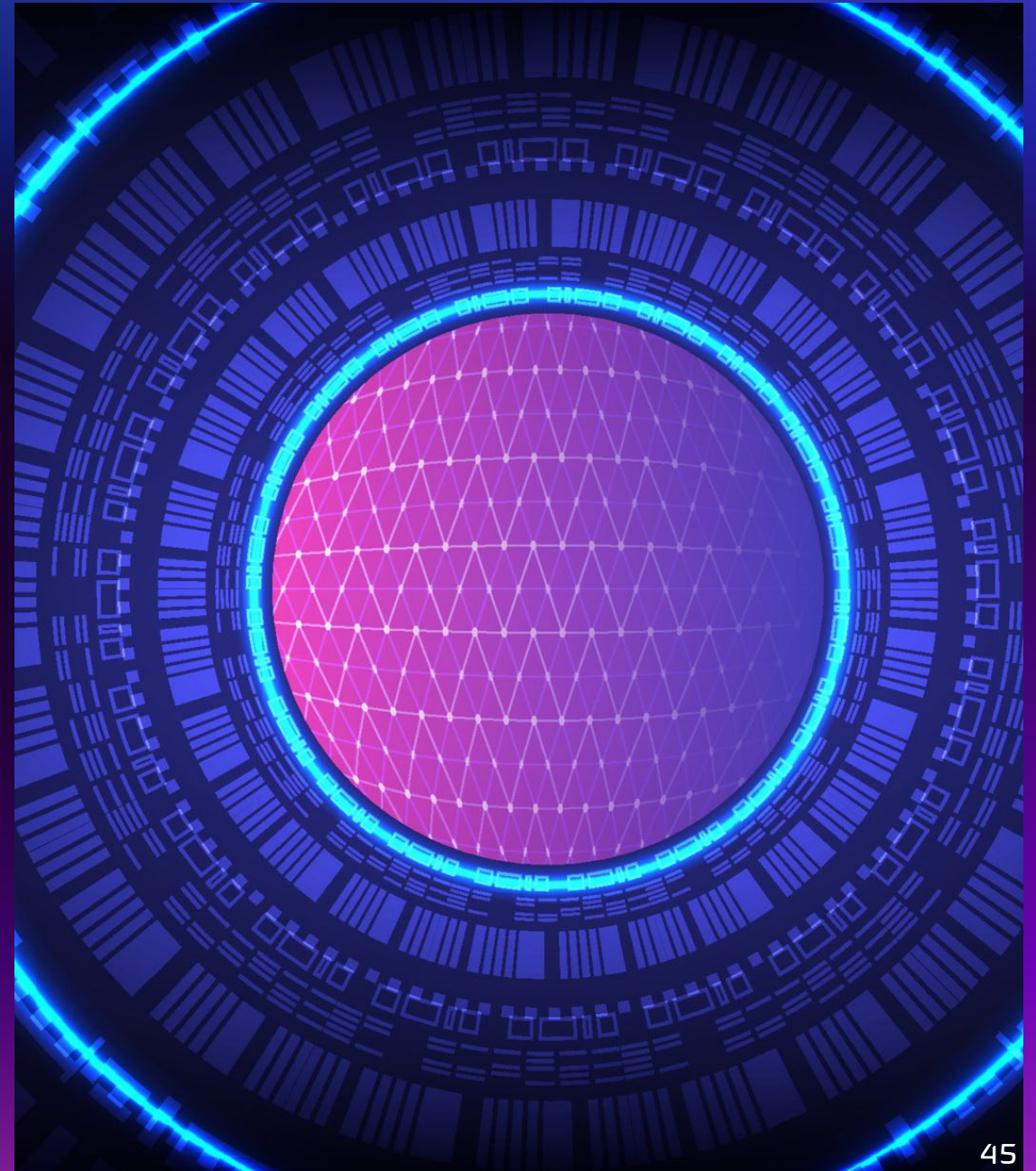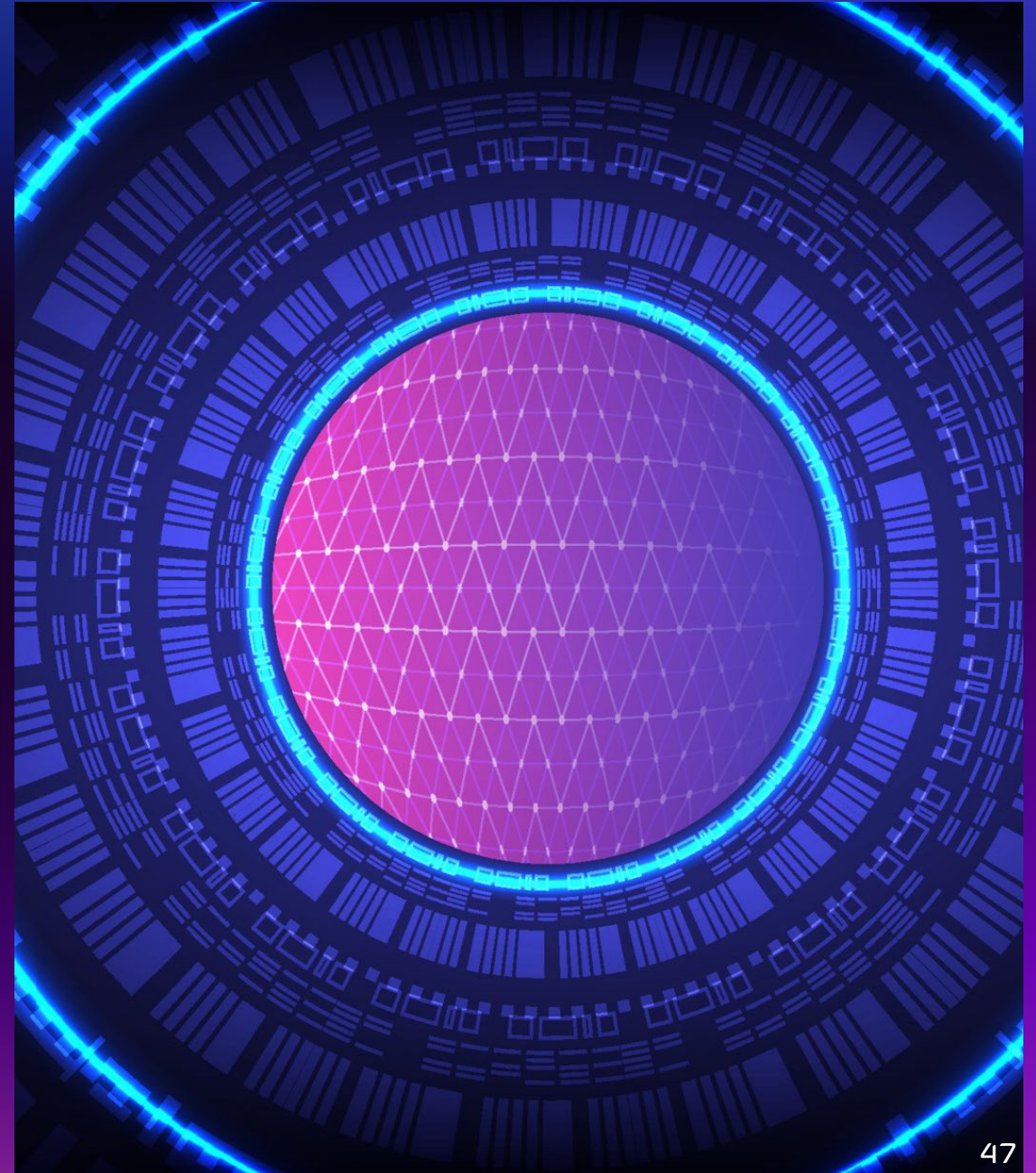
PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WIOA

- In cases where a late entry case note must be added, the note summary must show "Late Entry" with a summary of the interaction or activity.

  - "Note Date" reflects the original date of the interaction/activity.

  - Example: Late Entry – Notice of Eligibility Determination

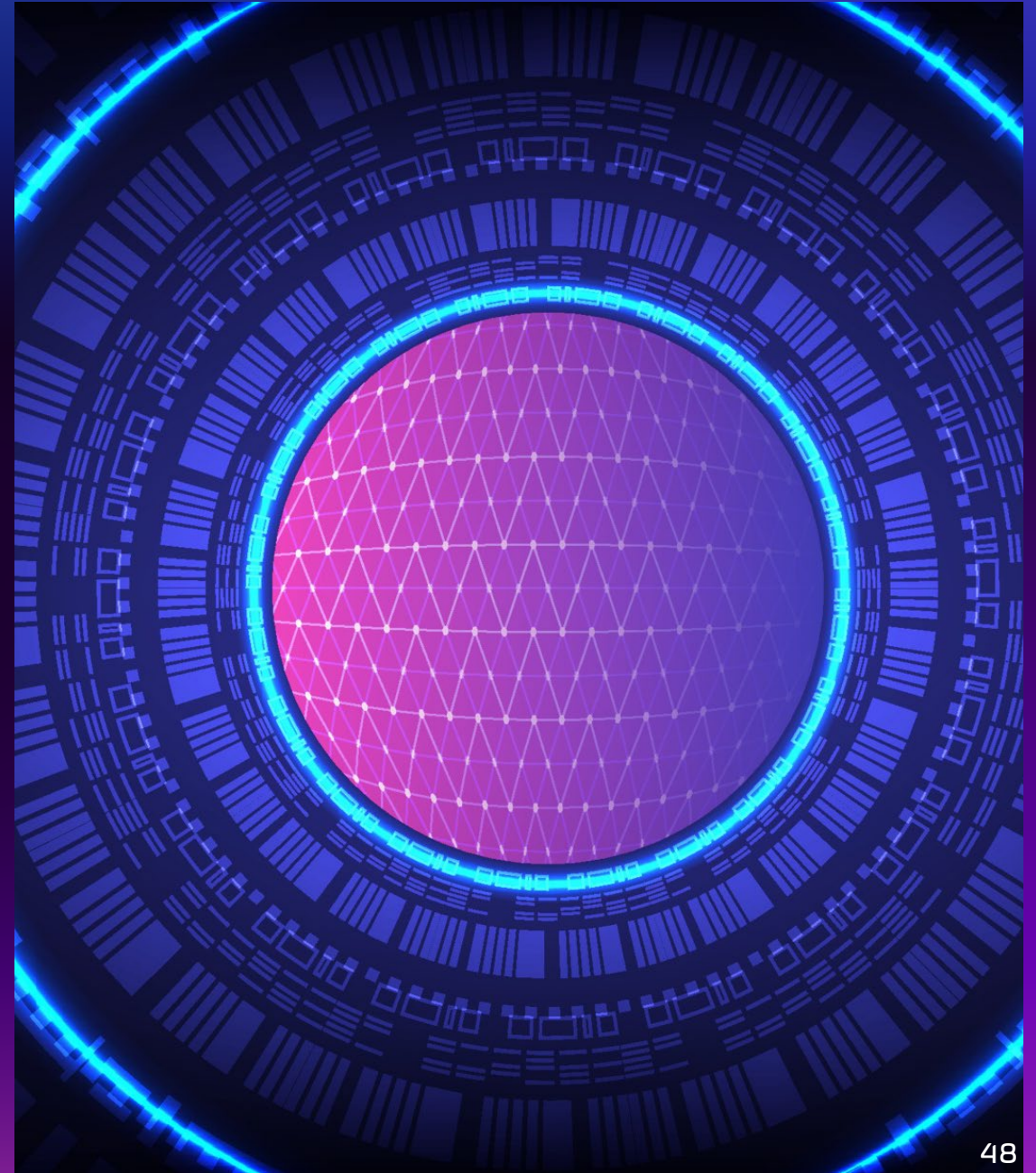# PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WIOA

- Any case notes regarding medical information or a disability or information that could lead to a disclosure of a disability should not be placed as a visible case note.

- The case manager should create a confidential case note in ASSET or other data collection system.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WIOA

- Non-medical or disability information should be documented independently to maintain the integrity and continuity of the case narrative for team understanding and service coordination.

See EMI Policy 20.08 Medical & Disability Information Collection & Storage.

REFERENCES

https://www.powerdiary.com/blog/soap-notes-vs-dap-notes/

https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Work%20with%20Ramsey/Case%20Note%20Guidance.pdf

WIOA

Video version: https://youtu.be/YgqKxADVwxI?si=9Bvg3pyecsBu0n1Y

PDF version: https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Resources/Documents/WWW-Case-Note-Webinar.pdf

South Dakota DLR WIOA – Section 5.3 Case