



**Case Management: An Introduction to Concepts and Skills by Arthur J. Frankel and Sheldon R. Gelman**

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## Case Management: An Introduction to Concepts and Skills

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Arthur J. Frankel and Sheldon R. Gelman. Chicago: Lyceum Books, Inc., 1998.

Case management's utility as a helping strategy since the late 1960's has gained significant acceptance among social service organizations. With its popularity, case management programs can be found in practically every sector of human services as well as in many businesses. Much of what contributes to its popularity can also be associated with its weaknesses. Case management, most frequently defined by its functions, has not received much support with respect to its full potential in the provision of services. It is the lack of definition and professional status, despite efforts to organize, that creates the perceptions of the "para-professional" nature of case management practice. The organizing efforts in case management have taken place outside of the mainstream of existing professions. Case Managers and their advocates are seeking to make Case Management a profession unto itself. In part, this can be attributed to the failure of many disciplines, including social work, to acknowledge it as a professional endeavor.

In their book, *Case Management: An Introduction to Concepts and Skills*, the authors, Frankel and Gelman, provide a compelling articulation of the requisite skills and knowledge essential to the successful functioning of the case manager. The conceptualization of case management is presented in the first part of the book and provides direction for the further discussion of case management, what it is and what it ought to be. The terminology of the authors at times takes on the tone of research. This is most apparent with the notion of "developing hypotheses concerning why the problem is occurring." While this terminology may not bode well with the direct service

practitioner, it does cause the reader to ponder just how well practitioners are prepared to address the issue of "why."

The authors develop a cogent and well-developed articulation of the complexity of the role of case management. This is particularly relevant as persons with fewer skills are recruited into case management positions – often to provide services to those persons with the most critical needs. Because case management has been so closely associated with cost containment efforts, and most recently with managed care entities, it is highly unlikely that the resourcing of case management positions will become more closely aligned with any specific discipline.

Overall, the authors do an excellent job of identifying the practice of case management as a professional and skillful intervention strategy. It is highly recommended for those who teach practice classes as a way of helping students understand that case management is a legitimate model of social work practice. For those who train personnel who are not social workers, it is an excellent resource to enhance knowledge and skills in case management. The book should serve as an excellent aid in the continuing education of current practitioners.

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