
Ohio Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

Data Collection and You: Turn This Horror Movie into a Romance

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Hey everyone, today we would really like to talk to you about data collection.....

.....Hello? Hello? Is this mic on? <echo>

We know, we know, this seems like a dull topic, but please don't let your eyes glaze over. This is an issue that can really benefit you, your clients and our profession. Think of data collection, done consistently and thoroughly, as a professional lifeline for Team You.

Still not convinced? Here is a little more food for thought:

- If you don't accurately record the details of your services ----- parent conversations, therapy dates and times, cancellations, recommendations-----then it is as if they didn't happen. If any issue arises with parents, administrators or, yikes, the state board, it's critical that there is a record. We often, unfortunately, see cases where a good practitioner is called into question and his own lax record-keeping shoots him in the foot. If a complainant is the only one with detailed documentation, guess whose version now becomes the truth?
- Not only does record-keeping cover your bottom, it also protects your bottom line. You don't want pesky Mr. Insurance or stern Ms. Medicaid to come knocking on your door with questions and for which you have no answers. "Why yes I, um, did see little Johnny on, uh, well, I'll get right back to you with that time and date." While most of us think of our profession as a calling, it doesn't mean the financial aspect is unimportant. Sloppy documentation leads to sloppy billing, which can cost you money and erode your professional integrity.
- We need to be our own best cheerleaders for the important professions of speech-language pathology and audiology (don't worry, no skimpy skirts required). We are great at changing people's lives through our work, but we are not so great at advocating for our profession and continually elevating our public perception. How can we expect a parent, principal, hospital administrator or government sanctioning body to make reasonable demands on us when we only give them a bare-bones idea of what's on our plates? If a realistic caseload is 25 people and you are being asked to see 75, maybe this documentation thing is important after all?

Obviously, there are other reasons to document well, and we realize this is not a comprehensive list. Our hope is to start a conversation. Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists have an expansive list of roles and responsibilities. Why not use every tool in our arsenal-----including top-notch data collection-----to protect and insure the integrity of our professions?

Special Note: Dr. Froehlich is a speech-language pathologist currently serving on the Board with more than 25 years of experience as a clinician.