
Service episode

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Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NCSDD
Knowledgebase ID: 000590 Version number: 1
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT CONCEPT
Admin status: SUPERSEDED Effective date: 01-MAR-05
Definition: A period of time during which a client receives assistance from an agency.
Context: Service provision and planning:
The concept of a Service episode (and associated data elements) is necessary for the analysis, of the length of provision of assistance to clients. In conjunction with information about the amount and type of assistance received by clients, information about the length of Service episode also gives some indication of the intensity of assistance provided by agencies.
A client's Service episode always begins and ends with dates that mark the first and last time that the person received assistance from the agency. That is, a Service episode will always begin and end with Service event (see data element concept Service event). The pathway or process followed by a person entering or exiting from a Service episode varies from one agency to another and from one type of assistance to another. It cannot be assumed, for example, that every client has undergone an assessment (or the same type of assessment) before entering a Service episode. At times, a client may receive services from an agency on the basis of a referral from an established source with which the agency has well-developed referral protocols. At other times, a client who has been previously assisted by the agency may begin to receive services again without undergoing the same level of assessment on entry into a subsequent Service episode.
The definition of Service episode has not assumed that any standard sequence of events applies to all Service episodes for all clients across all types of agencies and across all programs. Rather, the definition of a Service episode allows for the receipt of any of the types of assistance to serve as a trigger for the beginning of a Service episode. That is, the service activity associated with the beginning of a Service episode (ie the first Service event) will vary across agencies.

