



SMP Counselor Training Kit Handouts

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| About SMP Counselor Training..... | Handout 1 |
| Counseling Experience..... | Handout 2 |
| State and Local Considerations | Handout 3 |
| Identifying Types of SMP Questions | Handout 4 |
| SMP Partners..... | Handout 5 |
| Check Your Understanding..... | Handout 6 |
| Your Script | Handout 7 |
| Identifying Fraud and Abuse | Handout 8 |
| Personal Health Care Journal..... | Handout 9 |
| What Type of Question Is It? | Handout 10 |

Handout 1: About the SMP Counselor Training

Chapter 1: Types of SMP Questions consists of five main sections:

- 1) SMP vs. Other Counseling Programs,
- 2) Simple Inquiries,
- 3) One-on-One Counseling Sessions,
- 4) Complex Issues, and
- 5) Identifying Types of SMP Questions.

Chapter 2: Determining the Appropriate Response consists of two main sections:

- 1) Answer the Question Yourself, and
- 2) Have Someone Else Answer the Question.

Chapter 3: SMP Counseling Skills consists of six main sections:

- 1) Steps to Effective Counseling,
- 2) Step 1: Set the Stage,
- 3) Step 2: Listen Actively,
- 4) Step 3: Respond Appropriately,
- 5) Tips for Effective Counseling, and
- 6) What to Say, What Not to Say.

Chapter 4: Handling SMP Questions consists of three main sections:

- 1) Before You Start... Be Prepared!
- 2) During the Session, and
- 3) After the Session: Tracking and More.

Handout 2: Counseling Experience

Round 1:

At your table, introduce yourself and share 1) how you have become involved with the SMP, and 2) whether you are new to answering SMP questions, have some experience answering SMP questions, or are an expert SMP counselor.

Round 2:

After everyone has introduced themselves, go around again. If you said you were new to answering SMP questions, or have some experience answering SMP questions, share a question or concern you have in terms of SMP counseling. If you said you were an expert SMP counselor, share a method you have discovered to help provide good counseling. In the boxes below, write down the question or concerns you hear as well as good counseling methods.

Questions/Concerns

Use this space to take notes on questions or concern you have in terms of SMP counseling and what you might do to ease these concerns.

Methods to providing good counseling

Use this space to take notes on some of the experienced counselor's good methods.

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations



Consideration #1: What Can I Expect as an SMP Counselor?

As an SMP counselor, you will handle both simple inquiries and one-on-one counseling sessions. In doing so, you will be providing a valuable service to Medicare beneficiaries in your state by helping them become better health care consumers, and helping identify potential areas of Medicare fraud, error, and abuse.

You will also be helping your SMP achieve their goals related to one-on-one counseling sessions and simple inquiries. For more information about expectations for SMP counselors in your state, see your SMP's job description and/or talk to your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers.

What can you expect as an SMP counselor, and what is expected of you? Use this space to make note of this and any additional information provided by your SMP.

Consideration #2: SMPs vs. Other Counseling Programs... How Many Hats Do YOU Wear?

In some states, staff and volunteers assigned to SMP counseling may also “wear other hats.” Put another way, this means individual staff and volunteers may perform work for multiple programs, sometimes concurrently. If you wear multiple “hats”, consider which “hat” you are wearing when you are conducting **and** reporting your activities. Know the difference between work done by the SMP versus work done by other counseling programs in your state.



Is your SMP also a SHIP, ADRC, and/or other counseling service? _____

Will you be expected to do other types of counseling, in addition to your work as an SMP counselor? _____

If your answers are “yes”, this will affect the way you report your efforts to your agency. Many agencies juggle multiple reporting requirements. Ask your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers for guidance, and take notes here:

Handout 3 State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #3: Simple Inquiries at your SMP

Even though simple inquiries are not as detailed and time-consuming as other types of questions, they are still an important part of the SMP program!

- Simple inquiries are included on the Office of the Inspector General report as the number of “simple inquiries received” and “simple inquiries resolved”.
- Since the SMP program’s inception in 1997 through the end of 2010, SMP project efforts nationwide have resulted in 261,878 simple inquiries received and 249,007 simple inquiries resolved!

At a local level, your SMP makes a difference! The efforts of each state contribute to the national totals. Use the information provided by your SMP to fill in the chart with the number of simple inquiries received and resolved in your state last year, and your state SMP’s goal for this year (if applicable).

| | Last Year’s Total | This Year’s Goal |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Simple Inquiries Received | | |
| Simple Inquiries Resolved | | |

Consideration #4: One-on-One Counseling at your SMP

One-on-one counseling sessions are an important part of the SMP program. The total number of one-on-one counseling sessions is included on the Office of the Inspector General report. Since the SMP program’s inception in 1997 through the end of 2010, SMP project efforts nationwide have resulted in 1,112,887 one-on-one counseling sessions!

At a local level, your SMP makes a difference! The efforts of each state contribute to the national totals. Use the information provided by your SMP to fill in the chart with the number of one-on-one counseling sessions in your state last year, as well as your state SMP’s goal for this year (if applicable).

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Last Year’s Total | |
| This Year’s Goal | |

Consideration #5: Complex Issues and You

Complex issues require extensive training. A significant amount of subject matter education, training, and experience is necessary for staff or volunteers to address complex issues. Separate Complex Issues and Referrals Training must be completed prior to handling complex issues.

In your role at the SMP, will you be expected to handle complex issues? _____

If so, when will your training take place? _____

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #6: Clarifying Documentation

The beneficiary may bring their Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) and/or other clarifying documentation with them to a one-on-one counseling session. During a one-on-one counseling session, you can help educate them about how to read their MSNs and answer their questions. However, if you suspect fraud, error, or abuse, copies of these documents may be needed for complex issues cases.

How does your SMP handle collection and transfer of documents in these situations? Ask your SMP director and/or coordinator of volunteers and make notes here:

Consideration #7: What to Say (Disclaimers)

Some SMPs have disclaimer language you should say during any counseling session.

Does your SMP use any type of disclaimer when holding counseling sessions? If so, make note of it here.

Consideration #8: Homework

At a national level, a variety of training materials are available to SMP programs. Your local SMP may also have additional training materials.

Is there any extra “homework” or other training materials you should be familiar with in your local area prior to holding an SMP session? Ask your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers and make notes here as needed:

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #9: FAQs

Some questions can be answered the same across the country, while others vary based on state or local resources. The questions and answers provided in the FAQ document are based on national SMP work. Individual SMPs are encouraged to update the information for local responses as needed.

Ask your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers if the FAQs have been customized for your state or local area. If not, make notes below or make changes directly to the FAQs, as needed.

Are there additional state specific questions that should be added to the FAQ? Make note of them here and follow up with your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers to see about customizing the FAQ document for your state.

Consideration #10: The Process at your SMP

Key concepts for handling SMP questions are the same across the country. However, the process will often vary by state or region.

Ask your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers if *Appendix D: Process Checklist* has already been customized for your SMP to include details regarding the process in your area, or if there are any changes you should make to this document. If there are changes that you know of, note them below and follow up with your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers to make the changes to the Process Checklist.

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #11: SMP Counseling Locations

In order to adequately prepare, you should know how and where you will handle SMP questions.

How and where will you handle SMP questions in your area?
Check all that apply.

- Over the phone
- Walk-ins at the SMP office
- Scheduled appointments at the SMP office
- Scheduled appointments away from the SMP office
- At community outreach / education events
- Individual Q&A following group education sessions
- Sent to me by someone inside the SMP
- Sent to me by someone outside the SMP
- Other _____

Consideration #12: State and Local Resources

On a national level, the SMP Brochure, Personal Health Care Journal, Fact Sheets and other resources are available on the SMP Resource Center Website (www.smpresource.org). On a local level, many SMPs also develop their own state-specific printed reference materials to use as handouts.

Which state and/or local resources are available to you during counseling sessions, including printed materials and resource people?

| Resource | Description |
|----------|-------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #13: Inside your SMP

In some cases, you may receive specific types of questions, complaints and concerns that should be sent directly to someone at your SMP who specializes in that area. For example, if you receive a request for information about volunteering with the SMP, you may be asked to send the person to your coordinator of volunteers.

Who handles complex issues inside your SMP? Are there any questions other than complex issues which are sent to someone else inside your SMP?

Ask your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers, and take notes here or directly in *Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions*.

| Type of question | Who to send it to inside your SMP |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Complex Issue | |
| Request to become an SMP volunteer | |
| | |
| | |

Consideration #14: Information and Assistance

Some SMPs have state or local resources and/or contacts for information and assistance services (i.e. an internal non-SMP staff person or other local AAA contact), in addition to the ADRC and/or Eldercare Locator.

Does your SMP have any local information and assistance services?

Which resources does your SMP prefer that you contact first?

Write the information in the chart below or in your FAQ document.

| Resource / Contact | Contact Information | Who to contact first? |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| ADRC | | |
| AAA | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Handout 3: State and Local Considerations, continued

Consideration #15: Paperwork

SMPs use an online database called SMART FACTS to capture and report data to the OIG. Additional reporting data may also be required by your SMP for other reporting purposes (i.e. AoA reporting, grant reporting). Talk with your SMP director or coordinator of volunteers about expectations related to paperwork, and use this chart to take notes.

| Question | Answer |
|---|--------|
| Does my SMP use <i>Appendix E</i> to track simple inquiries and one-on-one counseling sessions? If not, which form(s) should I use to track one-on-one counseling sessions and/or simple inquiries, and how do I get the form(s)? | |
| Which form(s) should I use to track my hours working as an SMP volunteer, and how do I get the form(s)? | |
| How and when should I turn in my completed form(s) for tracking simple inquiries and/or one-on-one counseling sessions? | |
| How and when should I turn in my completed form(s) for tracking my volunteer hours? | |
| Is there any additional paperwork that I must complete for my SMP? If so, how and when should I turn it in? | |
| Will I enter any data in SMART FACTS? If so, when will I receive my SMART FACTS training? | |
| | |

Handout 4: Identifying Types of SMP Questions

Now that we have learned about the three types of SMP questions, let's review some of the highlights which will help you determine whether a question is a simple inquiry, a one-on-one counseling session, or a complex issue.

Read each statement. Determine if it is referring to a **Simple Inquiry (SI)**, a **One-on-One Counseling Session (OCS)**, or a **Complex Issue (CI)** and write what you think it is in the right side column. Review the information provided in Chapter 1 as needed. *Some statements may refer to more than one type of question.*

| | Statement | SI, OCS, and/or CI |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1 | A single contact with the beneficiary | |
| 2 | May or may not be related to the SMP mission | |
| 3 | A meeting between the SMP and a beneficiary or caregiver to educate or provide information related to the SMP program and/or potential healthcare fraud, error or abuse | |
| 4 | Must be related to the SMP mission | |
| 5 | Cannot be resolved by providing education or information alone; additional actions must be taken by the SMP to resolve a problem | |
| 6 | <i>Beyond</i> brief contact, resolved with more time, research and/or review than a simple inquiry, but less time, research and/or review than a complex issue. | |

Handout 4: Identifying Types of SMP Questions, continued

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 7 | An issue, complaint, or allegation which requires detailed information in order to conduct further investigation or referral | |
| 8 | Does not require review of personal identifying information and/or documentation | |
| 9 | Multiple contacts with the beneficiary and others are required | |
| 10 | Can be resolved by providing education or information to answer a question | |
| 11 | Almost always requires review and collection of personal identifying information and/or documentation | |
| 12 | Brief contact, resolved with minimal time, research, or review | |
| 13 | Well beyond brief contact, resolved with the most amount of time, research and/or review | |
| 14 | A question that has a short and simple answer | |
| 15 | Sometimes requires review of personal identifying information and/or documentation | |

Handout 5: SMP Partners

Look at **Appendix B: Summary of SMP Partners**. Research the partner organizations you are assigned. Make up a question that a beneficiary might ask where the answer would be to send them to that agency.



SMP vs. Other Counseling Programs

Remember: If you are an SMP staff person or volunteer who wears multiple “hats”, consider which “hat” you are wearing when handling questions (see the SMP Counselor Manual, Chapter 1, Page 2).

SMP Partner Organization:

What the organization does:

A question a beneficiary might ask where the answer would be to send them to this agency:

SMP Partner Organization:

What the organization does:

A question a beneficiary might ask where the answer would be to send them to this agency:

Handout 5: SMP Partners, continued

SMP Partner Organization:

What the organization does:

A question a beneficiary might ask where the answer would be to send them to this agency:

SMP Partner Organization:

What the organization does:

A question a beneficiary might ask where the answer would be to send them to this agency:

Handout 6: Check Your Understanding

Each question will be read aloud by the presenter. Raise your hand to answer how the question should be handled. Write the correct answers in the answer box on the right.

Your choices include:

- A. Answer the question yourself, now;
- B. Get an answer and call the person back;
- C. Send the person to someone else **inside** the SMP;
- D. Send the person to someone else **outside** of the SMP.
 - Bonus question: If you send the person outside of the SMP, where will you send them?

| | Question | Answer |
|---|--|--------|
| 1 | Which Medicare plan is best for me? | |
| 2 | I don't understand how to read my MSN. Can you help? | |
| 3 | I want to report identity theft. | |
| 4 | I received a Personal Health Care Journal, but I'm not sure what to do with it. Can you help? | |
| 5 | I want to report Medicare fraud or abuse. | |
| 6 | What are the consequences of Medicare fraud? | |
| 7 | I want to file a complaint about the quality of medical services received. | |
| 8 | A representative from a senior housing complex reports residents are being offered money or gifts as incentives to utilize specific providers or services. | |

Handout 8: Identifying Fraud and Abuse

Define Fraud and Abuse

Draw a line from the word to the correct definition. One of the words will have two parts to its definition.

Fraud Occurs when an individual or organization deliberately deceives others in order to gain unauthorized benefit.

Abuse Occurs when providers supply services or products that are not medically necessary or that do not meet professional standards.

Generally involves deliberately billing for services that were not received, or billing for a service at a higher rate than is actually justified.

Examples of Fraud and Abuse

Read each sentence. Determine which word from the list will best fill in the blank. Write the word in the blank provided.

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| coding | equipment |
| Medicare card | “free” |
| billing | medically |
| supplies | excessive |

1. Billing for services and _____ that were not provided.
2. Obtaining Medicare number for _____ services.
3. Billing for _____ not delivered.
4. “Upcoding” – improper _____ to obtain a higher payment.
5. Unneeded or _____ x-rays and lab tests; claims for services that are not _____ necessary.
6. _____ for excessive medical supplies.
7. Using another person’s _____ to obtain medical care, supplies or equipment.

Handout 9: Personal Health Care Journal (PHCJ)

With the people at your table, review the sections of a PHCJ and discuss what should be written, or could be learned, in each section. Make notes as needed.

| Sections of a PHCJ: | What should be written or learned in this section: |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Directions | |
| Contacts | |
| Personal Information | |
| Calendar | |
| List of Appointments | |
| Personal Habits | |
| Allergies | |
| Family History | |
| Medications | |
| Medical Equipment | |
| Notes from Doctor Visits | |
| Description of Tests and Screenings | |
| Notes | |
| Your Local SMP | |

How can the information in the PHCJ help prevent fraud or abuse?

Handout 10: What Type of Question Is It?

Consider the correct type of question for each of the following scenarios. Remember that in some situations, more than one type of question may apply!

| | Scenario | Type of Question |
|----------|--|-------------------------|
| 1 | <p>Medical Identity Theft</p> <p>I'm afraid that someone has stolen my Medicare card and is using it to get medications that are not for me.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Identity Theft?</p> <p>I have identified charges on my credit card that I don't recognize. I'm afraid someone is using my credit card to purchase things.</p> | |
| 3 | <p>Benefits Counseling</p> <p>I need help choosing which Medicare plan is right for me. Right now is the enrollment period. Can you help me?</p> | |
| 4 | <p>Benefits Counseling?</p> <p>I need help choosing which Medicare plan is right for me. Right now is the enrollment period. I feel like under my current plan, I am getting cheated. Can you help me?</p> | |
| 5 | <p>Medicare Appeals</p> <p>I was denied a Medicare claim and I want to file an appeal.</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Medicare Appeals?</p> <p>I was denied a Medicare claim and I want to file an appeal. I think this is because of that funny MSN I received a while back that said I had been given a wheelchair, but that was not true.</p> | |

Handout 10: What Type of Question Is It? continued

| | Scenario | Type of Question |
|-----------|--|-------------------------|
| 7 | <p>Quality of Care</p> <p>I have been to see the same doctor three times now. I just don't feel like she is listening to my concerns and is not giving me the best care possible.</p> | |
| 8 | <p>Quality of Care?</p> <p>I have been to see the same doctor three times now. I just don't feel like she is listening to my concerns and is not giving me the best care possible. And to make it worse, I think I am being double-charged!</p> | |
| 9 | <p>Customer Service Issues</p> <p>I have tried contacting my insurance company to resolve an issue with my Medicare bill, but I can't get anyone to call me back.</p> | |
| 10 | <p>Customer Service Issues?</p> <p>I have tried contacting my insurance company because I think there are charges going through that don't belong to me. But I can't get anyone to call me back. What should I do?</p> | |
| 11 | <p>Suspicious Mailings</p> <p>I received this postcard in the mail asking me to sign up for a new health care program.</p> | |
| 12 | <p>"Other" information and assistance questions (not related to the SMP mission)</p> | |
| 13 | <p>"Other" information and assistance questions which are related to the SMP mission</p> | |