

The Role of Case Management in Navigating Jury Service: A Reflective Journey



Unite
Professionals
Case Management
Your Rehabilitation, Our Priority

Recently, when called for jury duty, I experienced a mix of privilege and apprehension. The weight of responsibility to contribute to the judicial process was significant; I understood that my role was to help ensure that any eventual verdict would be based on objective information presented within the courtroom, derived from evidence that had been observed, discussed, and evaluated by a randomly selected group of twelve individuals. While this responsibility felt daunting, it also represented one of the most vital roles I have been entrusted to fulfil, and I asked myself “how can I effectively prepare for such a monumental task?”.

My natural position was to leverage the experience and insights gained from my daily responsibilities as an Occupational Therapist and Case Manager and by reflecting on the components of the case management definition, our role entails assessing, planning, and evaluating in a collaborative manner I came to realise this approach aligns seamlessly with the framework and rules established for the jury's responsibilities and remind us of the importance of:

- The therapeutic relationship: Understanding the dynamics of the relationship and how to maintain therapeutic boundaries.
- Applying objective, professional judgment: The importance of keeping external aspects that adversely affect this relationship to a minimum.
- Using professional experience, skills, and competencies: Tuning into timelines and detailed information while listening over prolonged periods to subject matter that is emotive, processing information from various sources, and cross-referencing factual details, organising complex information, timelines, and facts, without allowing emotional biases to impede.

Elements of the therapeutic relationship include:

- Power: The relationship is often one of unequal power and access to privileged information. Awareness of the appropriate use of power within the therapeutic relationship to protect the service user's vulnerability.

- Trust: This is critical to establish with the service user but also with those you are working alongside. Communicating clearly and openly to avoid misunderstanding.
- Respect: Respect for the dignity and humanity of the service user.
- Empathy: This is a potent process, not based on mechanistic skills, but deeply human processes.

The juror group dynamic was complex and mobile despite the time we spent together. However, by the time of deliberation, there was a gradual unity that evolved. Forming a relationship with 11 other people from unknown backgrounds, respecting that each of us within the jury was thrown together with our own footprint of beliefs, informed by professional and personal experiences, evolved complex and intense dynamics. My reflection was that it was respectful and supportive. Case management helped prepare me for the expectation of the role, the formality of the surroundings, and to explore an approach that would facilitate the group considering the specifics and factual evidence against which each indictment needed to be considered, informed in this instance by the defendant, prosecution, and witness evidence.

Over the next five days, culminating in our final deliberation, this diverse range of personalities, skills, and experiences gradually coalesced into a cohesive group. We became increasingly aware of the significant impact our collective role would have on the lives of the individuals involved in our trial. The group naturally evolved roles to review each indictment in turn, organise and review factual material against each indictment, and consider timelines, facts, and gaps through repetitive viewing of evidence. There was a system of voting and ensuring that each member of the group was adequately heard. The process of decision-making was repetitive, stressful, occasionally exposing, cognitively tiring, and sometimes lonely. We took our time as a group to reach unanimous decisions with care not to bring pressure on those members of the group who were unsure.

As a case manager, I have encountered a range of emotions throughout my journey in advocating for the optimal rehabilitation environment for clients. I am grateful for my professional background, which has equipped me with a foundation of skills and standards that I was able to integrate into this experience."

For questions and enquiries, reach out to us!

Unite 
Professionals
Case Management
Your Rehabilitation, Our Priority

admin@uniteprofessionals.co.uk

01704 508777