

Stories from a Representative Payee

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6-24-15



Two Basic Questions:

What Does Money Mean?

- Control
- Independence
- Effectiveness
- Freedom
- Exercise of the will

Whose Money is it Anyway?

- The government's?
- Social Security's?
- The client's?
- The payee's
- The citizenry?

Standard SSA Expectations

- When a person is unable to manage benefits on their own behalf
- When benefits are not used for basic needs like food and housing
- When a person is addicted
- When a doctor indicates a payee is necessary
- When SSA determines a payee is necessary

Standard Payees

- Family members
- Guardians
- Programs

Demands on Family Payees

- Families preferred by SSA, but...
- Expectations are intense
- Accounting practices
- Record keeping
- Annual reporting
- Family tensions and frustrations
- Tolerance for tension, criticism, accusations
- Special issues going from parents to siblings as payee

Payeeship at CC

- 3500 clients all told
- Payee for 600+ clients
- Complex relationship – case management, housing, payee
- 300 checks on Monday
- 2500 checks/month or more
- Annual budgets for 600
- Case managers manage the budgets
- Supervisor provide a second signature on requests of \$25.00
- Receipts required for requests over \$250.00

Standard Problems

- Desire to micromanage – 7 checks a week
- Desire to control drug use
- Desire to meet the client's needs and requests?
- Desire to solve practical problems (like how do you cash a check for someone who is homebound?)
- Struggles with power and control
- Back-up from SSA?
- What, exactly, is the role?

Strategies for Independence

- Increasing autonomy
- Staged over time
- Evolving budget
- Effort with a six stage model – too complex
- Three stage model? Doable
- Maintaining focus c challenge

Big Problems

- “I Will Kill You”
- Forget about words...destruction and assault
- “You Stole my Money”
- Unfriendly and unsympathetic auditors
- “You paid my rent late and I have a 10.00 late fine”

Evolving Solutions

- Debit Cards
- Evolving relationship with the bank
- Money has meaning trainings
- Budgeting for young staff