

Specialization within APS

Evaluating the Benefits and Addressing the Challenges

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28th Annual NAPSA Conference

August 29, 2017

Introductions

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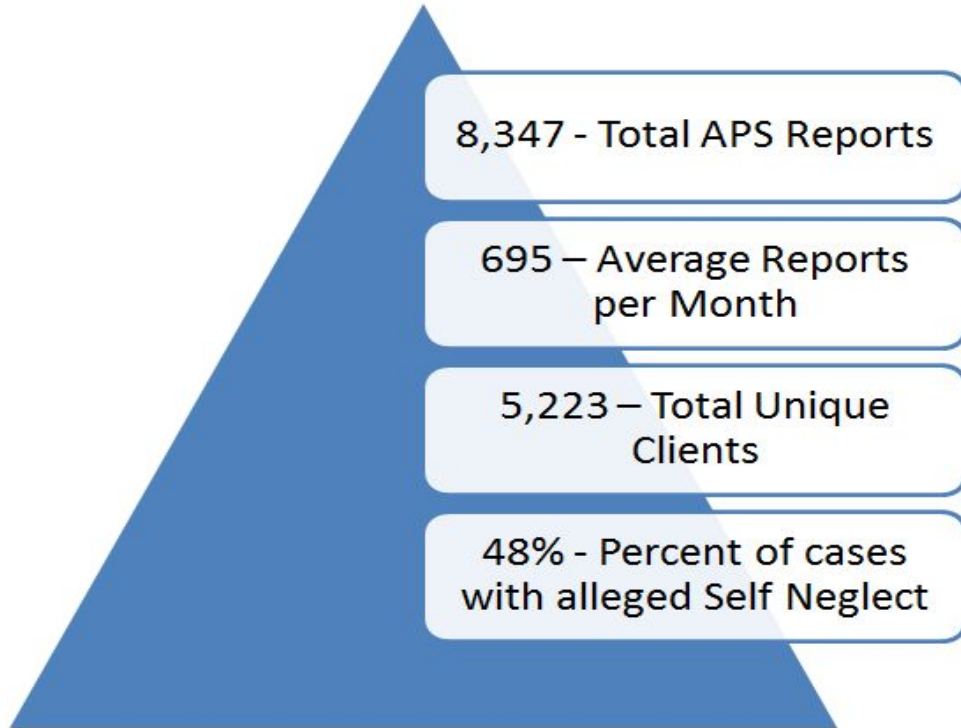


Objectives for Today

1. Review the findings of a national survey regarding unit specialization in APS.
2. Discuss findings from San Francisco's case-level study.
3. Learn about Sonoma County's Elder Financial Protection Team.
4. Discuss San Francisco's newly formed High Risk Self-neglect and Eviction Prevention Unit.
5. Hear from other APS jurisdictions regarding specialization.



SF APS Dashboard



Data from FY16-17

Setting the Stage

San Francisco's motivation

- *Revolving Door* concept with High Needs Clients
- APS Worker Satisfaction ↓
- Community Providers Feeling Frustrated



The Self-Neglect Equation

Cognitive impairment + Mental Health Issues + Multiple Medical Issues +
Housing Issue + Co-Occurring Substance Abuse + Hoarding Conditions

 Reliable Support System

 **Very challenging APS Case**

Hoarding Intervention and Tenancy Preservation Pilot Project

2014-2015 Pilot Project

Who: APS clients at risk for eviction due to hoarding and cluttering behaviors.

What: Long-term APS Worker implemented a specialized intervention model with subject matter consultation and guidance.

Where: Frequent visits to the client's home to provide hands-on skills training and coaching.

Why: To evaluate a different way of approaching this client population.

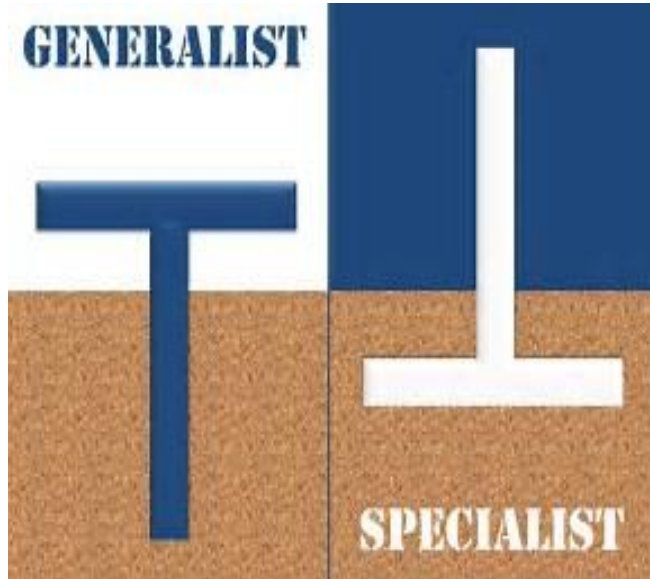
Outcomes

Eviction risk was resolved within 4.5 months, on average.

Motivation and Insight are key to assisting clients to develop decluttering skills. Both can increase through regular visits with a trained APS Worker.

Client centered service models are key to addressing self neglect.

In Search of More Information



Prior experience with specialization made some staff skeptical.

Program needed to gather more information before making a structural change.

Partnership with the Controller's office to gather data.

City and County of San Francisco

National Peer Survey &
Analyzing Case Data



SF Controller, City Performance



City Performance (CP) serves as an **internal consulting unit** to other City departments, whose goals are to:

- support City departments in making **transparent, data-driven decisions** in policy development and operational management
- guide City department in **aligning programming with resources** for greater **efficiency** and **impact**, and
- provide City departments with the **tools to innovate, test, and learn.**

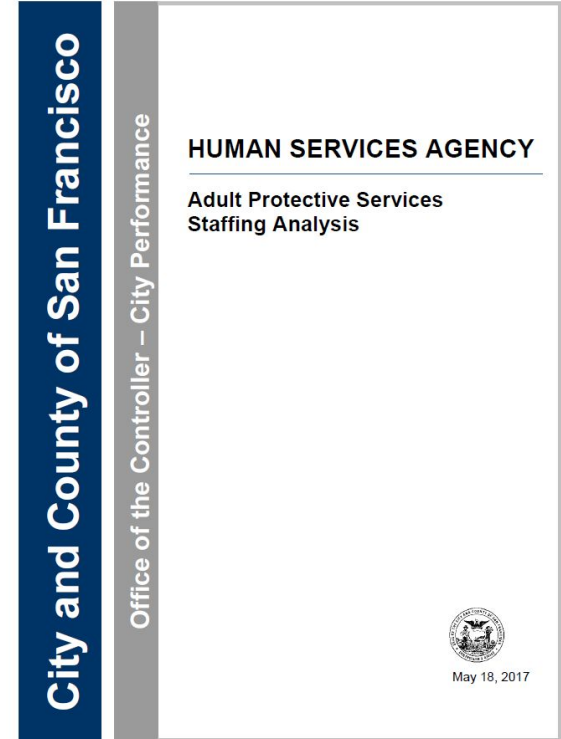


SF Controller, APS Staffing Analysis

This report documents CP's analysis and findings from:

- job shadows and a social worker focus group,
- a national peer survey, and
- an analysis of case data from more than 22,000 APS cases from 2012-2015.

The analysis highlights the key drivers of case complexity and informs business decisions around unit organization and caseload management.



Job Shadows and Focus Group

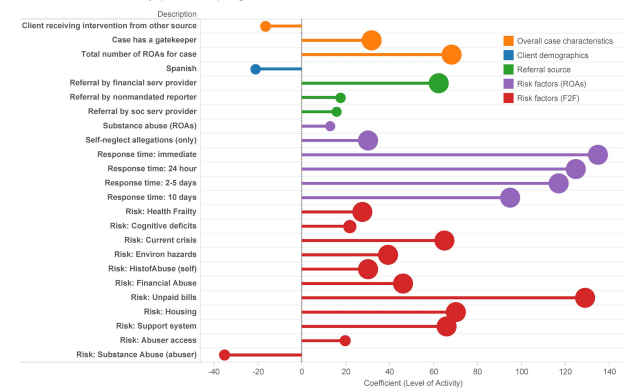
Before any analysis, CP did two full days of **job shadows**.

- SWs serve clients with complex & often multiple needs
- SWs face challenges to their safety & emotional health
- Clients often refuse services, which makes it difficult to reduce risk and can lead to recurring cases
- SWs' time is very fragmented; the largest segment of time is spent on the phone connecting with collateral agencies, clients, and service providers
- SWs rely heavily on external resources in reducing client risk. These resources are scarce & have their own timelines & eligibility criteria.

After initial data analysis, CP led a **focus group** to: get insights from social workers, share preliminary data analysis results, and get their interpretations.



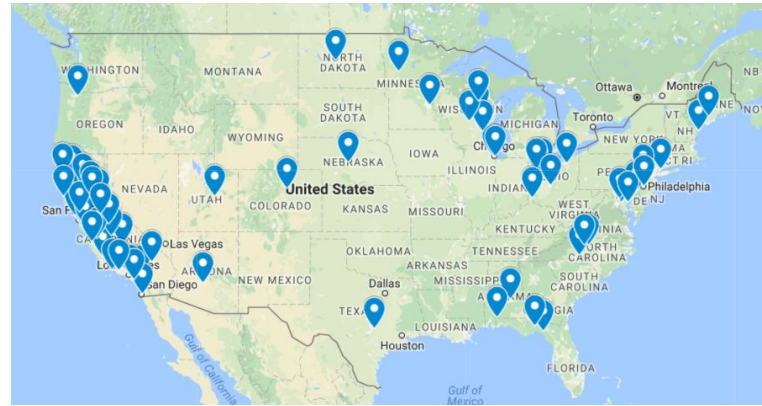
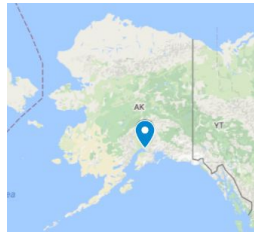
Relative Level of Activity (ROC Index) Regression



APS National Peer Survey

We drafted a survey because we did not find many resources specific to APS about unit organization, specialization, and caseload management. We received **74 responses** (34 from CA, 40 from elsewhere). The survey included questions about:

- Social worker/investigator specialization,
- Case assignment,
- Caseload management (including weighted caseloads),
- Tangible & intangible services provided,
- Number of staff,
- Case closure statistics, and
- Type(s) of abuse/self-neglect

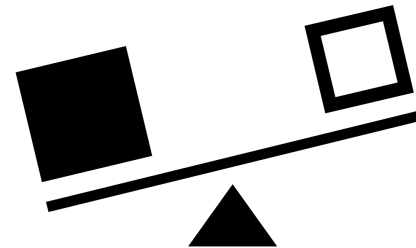
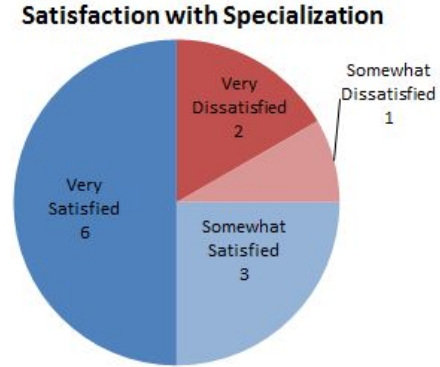
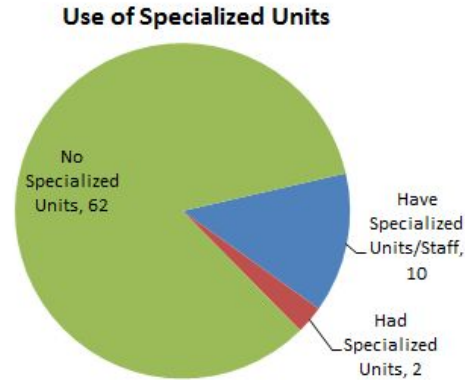


Survey Findings - Specialization

While most APS programs do not have specialized units, **those that do tend to be satisfied** with them.

Among programs that were dissatisfied with specialization, the key challenges are around **balancing resources and caseloads across units**.

Financial abuse units are much more common than any other type of specialized unit.



Survey Findings - Caseload Management

Weighted caseloads (where programs assign specific “weights” to different cases) have rarely been attempted (2 of 74 programs), and were unsuccessful among both programs in the survey.

For these programs, weighted caseloads were **difficult to administer** and had **limited impact**.

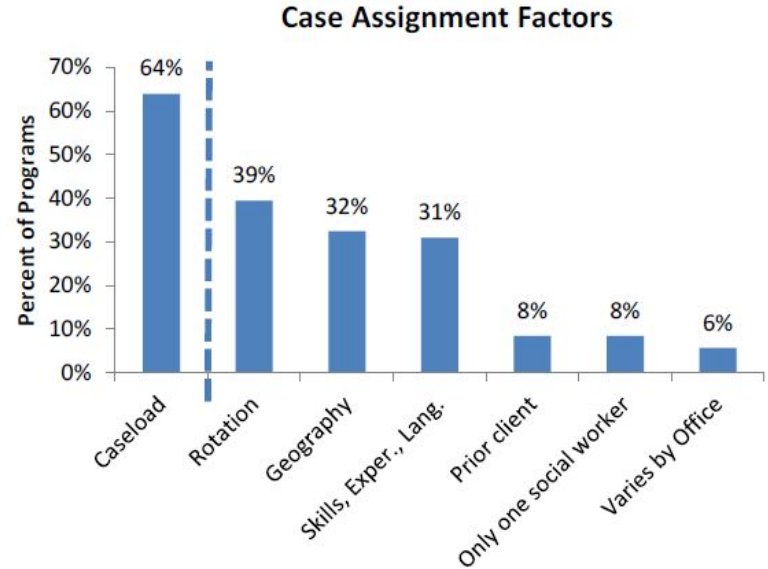
Other mechanisms exist for caseload management, such as caps or other modifications to a pure rotation system (e.g., counting a distinct set of cases as being “two” cases).



Survey Findings - Case Assignment

A majority of programs do however **consider current caseload** when assigning cases, either formally or informally.

About a third of programs reported considering social worker skills, expertise, or language capabilities in case assignment.

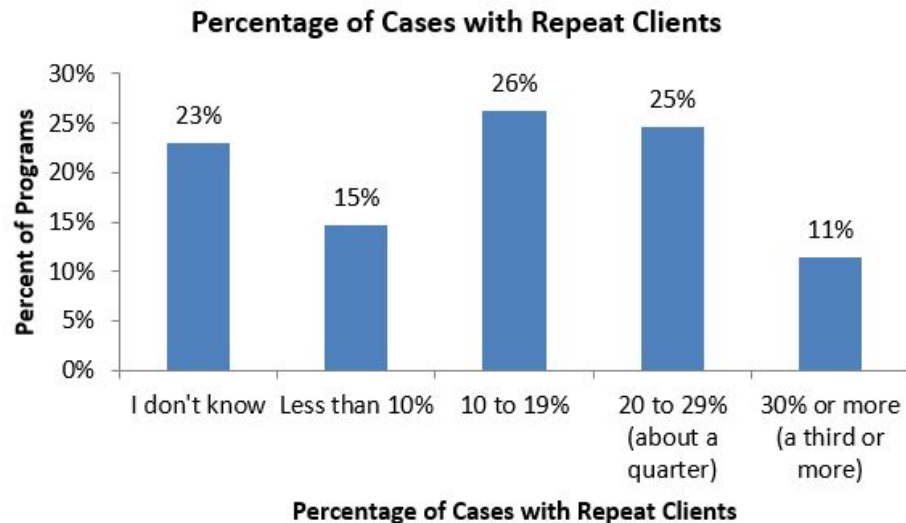


Survey Findings - Repeat Clients

There is a wide range of rates of repeat clients.

More than a third of programs said that at least a fifth of their clients are repeat clients.

Almost a quarter of programs said they did not know how many of their clients are repeat clients.

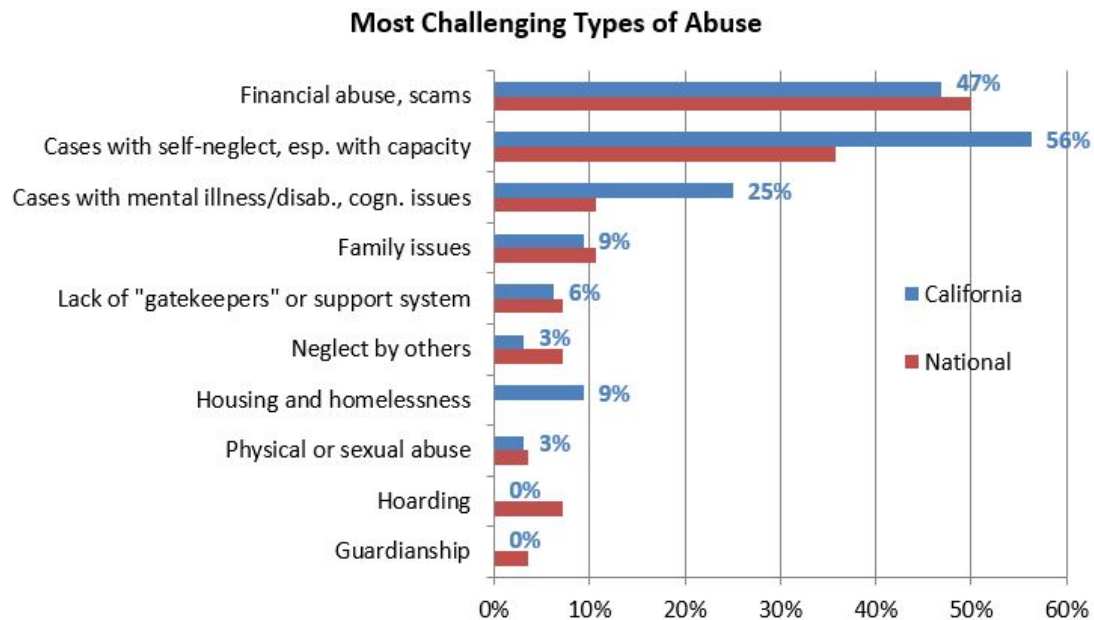


Survey Findings - Most Challenging Cases

Programs reported that the most challenging cases to resolve are **financial abuse/scams** and cases with **self-neglect**, especially when there are questions of **capacity**.

There are many other survey findings, including about the types of tangible/intangible services provided, staffing ratios, and average caseloads that we didn't have time to discuss here. To see the full survey analysis, go to

www.tinyurl.com/SFControllerAPS.



Controller's Analysis of Case Data

CP also analyzed **22,514 cases** from 2012-2015, including all of their **224,506 records of contact** associated with those cases.

CP combined the time measurements from job shadows and a survey of social workers to assign average numbers of minutes that corresponded to each activity in the records of contact. The result was an **activity index** to measure the relative level of effort on past cases.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Add Record of Contact". The window contains several input fields and a dropdown menu. The "Date of Contact" field is set to "07/06/2016". The "Type of Contact" dropdown menu is open, showing a list of options: "Initial Face-to-Face (Initial F2F)", "Face-to-Face (F2F)", "Attempted Face-to-Face", "NTD/NIFFI (Supervisor only)", "Telephone Call - Client", "Collateral Call (CC)", "Office Visit Other (OO)", and "Visitation Collateral". The "Mileage" field is empty. The "by on-call Worker" checkbox is checked. The "Summary" field is empty. At the bottom of the window, there are several checkboxes and buttons. The "Complete Assessment before 21 days?" checkbox is unchecked. The "Interpretive services offered [MPP Sec. 21-107; 21-115.15; 21-115.16; 21-116.22-.24]" checkbox is also unchecked. The "Interpretive Services used" field is empty. The "Name of interpreter" field is empty. At the bottom, there are navigation buttons: "<< | < | Add Mode | > | >>", "Add", "Final Save & Post", "Delete", "Cancel", and "Save to Complete Later".

Controller's Analysis of Case Data

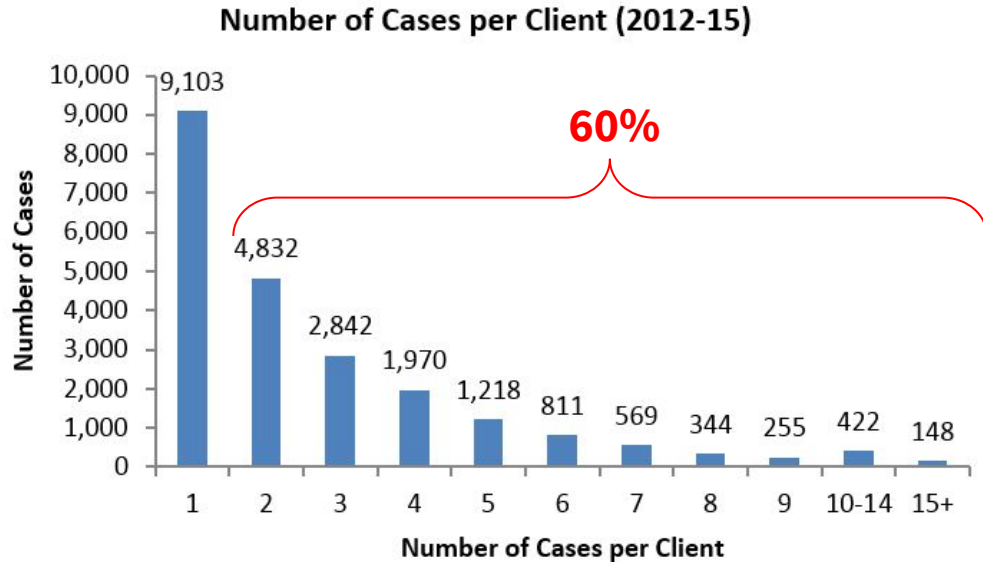
Self-neglect cases are more resource-intensive than cases of abuse by others, but the most intensive cases on average are ones where both types of abuse occur.

Average Case Length and Activity Index by Type of Abuser

Type of Abuser	Average Case Length		Average Activity Index	
	Alleged Abuser	Confirmed Abuser	Alleged Abuser	Confirmed Abuser
No Abuse Found	---	20.8	---	156.5
Abuse by Others	28.2	43.6	206.1	322.1
Self-Neglect	33.1	48.3	264.6	390.4
Combination	41.4	70.9	327.9	547.6

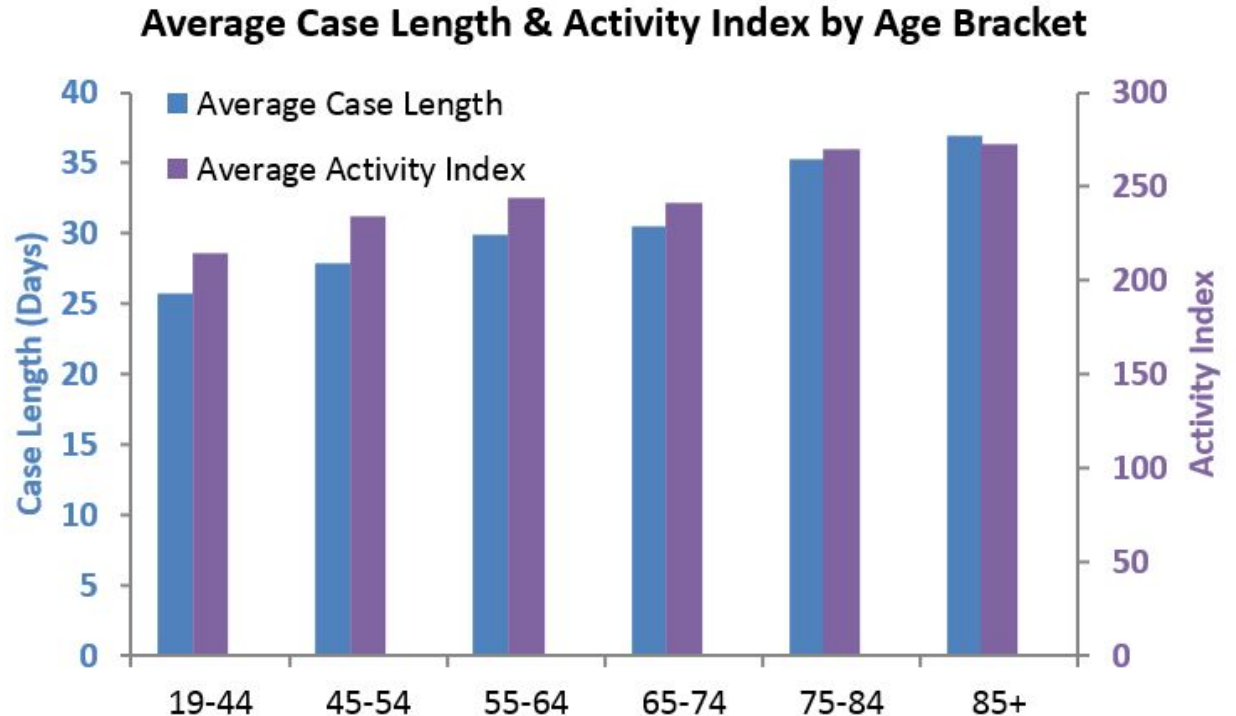
Controller's Analysis of Case Data

Sixty percent of cases from 2012-2015 corresponded to clients who had more than one case in that time period.



Controller's Analysis of Case Data

Case length and level of activity **increase with each age bracket.**



Controller's Analysis of Case Data

The required **response time** (immediate, 24-hour, 2-5 days, or 10 days) have the greatest impact of any variable on case length and level of activity.

The **shorter the required response time**, the **shorter the case** but also the **greater the intensity of activity**.



Controller's Analysis of Case Data

Housing-related and **financial abuse** variables have some of the strongest upward impacts on case length and level of activity.

Substance abuse and **homelessness** were both negatively correlated with case length and levels of activity.

In this data, physical, mental, and developmental issues and disabilities, as well as age, were not strong drivers of case complexity.

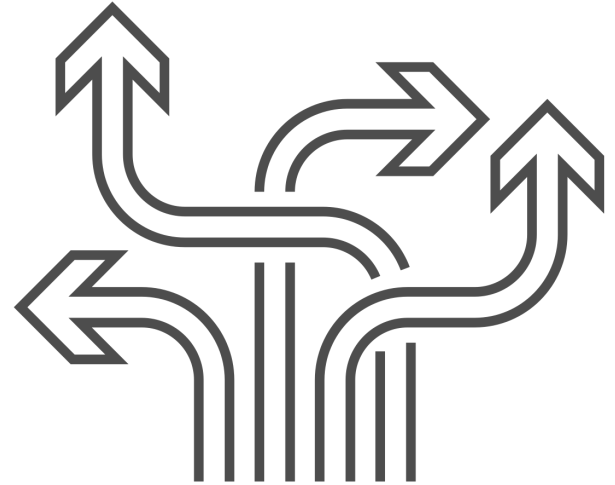


Controller's Analysis of Case Data

While we can learn a lot about the drivers of case complexity by examining past cases, a key takeaway is that **it is very difficult to predict case intensity** even once we know the types of abuse, risk factors, and many other variables.

Before the first client visit, available information only explains 25% of the variation in case length and level of activity.

These findings underscore the challenge of caseload management.



Integrating the Findings . . .

Overarching Objective:

Effectively use program resources to meet diverse client needs.



What stood out?

Cases involving substance abuse = Short Duration

Cases involving a housing issue = Longer Duration

Likely due to:

- Insufficient Training.
- Ineffective connections to community resources.
- APS Worker Assumptions.
- High Caseload Pressures.
- The APS Service Model

High Risk Self-Neglect and Eviction Prevention Unit

- Six licensed (LCSW and MFT) APS Workers.
- A licensed (LCSW) APS Supervisor overseeing the unit.
- Lower Caseload than rest of the unit (6-8 new cases per month).
- Intensive training for APS Workers.
- Working with APS clients but taking a different approach.

Goals for the Unit

1. Maintain housing and prevent evictions.
2. Reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and use of emergency services.
3. Resolve complex cases of self-neglect including those with co-occurring abuse by others.
4. Collaborate with other city departments to address service needs.
5. Reduce likelihood of re-referral to APS.

What types of cases?

Client is at high risk for eviction.

Client's home is an extreme health and safety hazard.

Frequently re-referred to APS.

Acute vulnerability due to cognitive impairment and mental illness.

Intervention Approaches

Engaging the clients takes time.

- Specialized Self-Neglect APS Workers are required to conduct two face to face visits within a week after the initial home visit.
- Twice monthly visits required once a service plan is established.
- Follow up post closure.



Clinical Approaches

- Motivational Interviewing
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapies
- Harm Reduction Strategies
- Trauma Informed
- Collaboration with department's nursing team to address chronic medical conditions.

Tracking Outcomes

- Cognitive Status - Mini-Cog
- Depression - Phq-9
- Health Service Utilization -
 - Hospitals, Emergency Rooms, Outpatient Visits
- APS Outcomes Matrix



How is it going?

Challenges

- Equity among staff
- Identifying appropriate cases
- Determining when to close the case

Benefits

- Strengths based
- New opportunity for staff
- Meeting the needs of our clients

Sonoma County Adult Protective Services

An Evolving Model of Financial Specialization



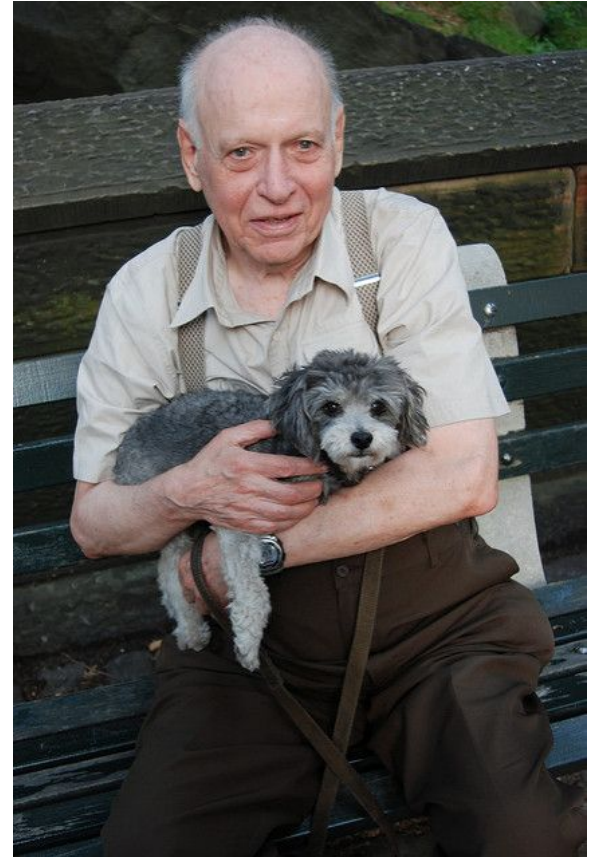
Sonoma County, California

- 60 minutes north of San Francisco
- 500,000 population
- 9 cities (mostly rural and suburban)
- Large geographic area
- 60+ white and under 18 Latino populations are the fastest growing
- Santa Rosa is the County seat and has the 2nd fastest growing 85+ population in the US



Sonoma County Adult Protective Services

- County based with minimal State oversight in California
- 4 units that include 27 Social Workers (3 Investigations units, 1 Intake unit)
- 2 Public Health Nurses, 1 Community Liaison Social Worker
- 4 Supervisors and an APS Program Manager
- Counties mandated to operate APS in California since 1999
- Investigate elderly (65+) and dependent adult (18-64)



Financial Abuse in Sonoma County

Why Specialize?

Case complexity

- Higher rate law enforcement involvement
- Family dynamics/discord
- Financial and legal concepts
- Time consuming



Elder Financial Protection Team (EFPT)

- Pilot July 2013 - June 2014
- Cross-program collaboration between APS, Public Guardian & Linkages (*a short term case management program*)
- Team comprised of: 4 APS Social Workers, 1 APS Supervisor, 1 Deputy Public Guardian, 1 Supervising Public Guardian, 1 Linkages Social Worker and 1 Linkages Supervisor
- Weekly meetings
- Criteria for APS Referral to EFPT established

EFPT Lessons Learned

- Portrait of a typical client
- Goal to provide financial abuse case management to reduce on going risk was successful!
- Limited resources and legal constraints of the PG prevented real collaboration from taking place.



Current Financial Team Structure

- Each APS unit has 1 to 2 financial specialists assigned to it
- Weekly financial team meetings facilitated by a supervisor
- Public Guardian and Linkages attend once a month for consults
- Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) is an available resource

Benefits of Financial Abuse Specialization

- Increased social worker confidence
- Enhanced investigation skills & knowledge
- Improved client outcomes
- Increased law enforcement investigations/prosecutions



Challenges of Specialization

- Unable to keep up with the increases in financial abuse cases
- Decrease in the skill set/knowledge among generalists when financial abuse issues arise in investigations
- Maintaining balanced caseloads
- Overall staff cohesion *Us/Them attitude*

Proposed New Model

- Complex Cases vs. Simple Financial Abuses Cases
- All SWers will investigate financial abuse cases
- Financial specialist will investigate complex financial cases, act as secondary worker or “money buddy” with Generalists as needed.



What is your experience with Specialization?



Thank you!

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*Link to the Controller's Office report,
including national survey results:*

www.tinyurl.com/SFControllerAPS