

To-do List Charts (staying organized)

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Overview: Organizing tasks, delegating to others, and keeping organized so that necessary follow-up consistently occurs, are key managerial skills for overseeing the daily, weekly, and monthly running of a residential treatment unit. There are so many tasks involved in professionally and competently caring for the children and youth, that every member of the residential team needs to contribute to the routine running of the unit. This is, of course, in addition to the constant and significant needs of the children and youth for immediate attention from the direct-care staff.

In order to carve out time for individual supervision to be provided, it's essential that Unit Supervisors delegate as many routine tasks as possible. In addition to freeing up time for providing quality supervision, this approach helps train direct-care staff in the necessary skills should they be promoted. It also promotes staff teamwork.

One of the most common, and effective, tools for keeping track of and managing all these tasks is the to-do list. A basic to-do list for managing your own tasks and for keeping track of what's been delegated to others, might look something like this:

Date	Task	Person	Deadline	Completed

It's certainly possible to include other columns or change the order of columns. Likewise, the chart can fill an entire sheet of paper, or there can be room left for other types of information. Managers are encouraged to experiment with creating their own to-do list form that works for them.

Other Considerations for Staying Organized:

All of your tasks, plus all the tasks of the Unit Coordinators that you oversee, will quickly fill up many rows. As various tasks get completed, don't let your To-do List become too many pages. Instead, once enough tasks have been completed, take the time to rewrite your list on a fresh form. This allows you to re-order the rows in a way that works best for you.

When you have an overwhelming number of tasks on your list, it can become very tempting to just immediately launch into your list, as soon as your shift starts. You might feel a great deal of pressure to just immediately start working on some specific tasks. However, it is almost always worth taking five to ten minutes to first organize your day. Try to figure out which tasks are the priority for that day. Taking the time up front to get organized makes your brain work much more efficiently and more than makes up for the amount of time it took you to be organized for the day.

You can add structure to your efforts to stay organized by using a daily planner. In addition to recording various meetings that you plan on attending that day, you can write-in specifically when you hope to tackle various tasks on your To-do List. Planners that have a row for every fifteen minutes of the day can work well for this.