

Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP)

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STRATEGIES FOR TRACING CLIENTS

Clients may go missing for many reasons. They may be wary at the start of PCAP because they don't know what to expect; they may have relapsed and are ashamed or are afraid they'll be dropped from the program; they may have boyfriends who don't want them to begin or stay on the road to recovery.

Successfully locating a missing client starts on the day the client enrolls in PCAP, when we begin to take steps to build rapport and trust. If we wait until a client is missing to start developing tracing strategies, we've waited too long.

At the intake interview, the clinical supervisor

- Collects as many tracing sources as they woman is willing to divulge, which is rarely more than two or three (e.g., names and contact information for relatives, friends, service providers; locations where the client likes to 'hang out'); and
- Asks the woman for any other names she may go by (street names, online aliases).

The supervisor emphasizes that we're requesting this information so we can stay in contact with the client, and also so we'll know who to contact in the event of an emergency (e.g., if the client is in an accident who should we call to take the baby?). She explains that if we lose contact with the client, the case manager will be persistent in doing outreach and continuing to search for her, wherever she might be, until the case manager locates her. PCAP does this because:

The client is worth it; and

We know how to help and we're ready to help whenever the client is ready to accept it.

Case managers who have missing clients often spend months in intensive, creative tracing efforts. Outreach is not intensive if a case manager has simply made repeated phone calls to the same numbers or gone repeatedly to the same address to find her not there.

Continually Document and Update Contact Information about the Client's Acquaintances on the "Tracing Information" pages in Section 1 of the Client File.

- At PCAP intake, and regularly throughout a client's three years in PCAP, document all available contact information for people involved in the client's life, including (but not limited to):
 - Father of the baby (FOB), boyfriends, and other men the client may be involved with either licitly or illicitly;
 - Relatives, friends, and neighbors.
- After a client calls you, use *69 to get the number the client calls from if she can't or won't disclose the number she is calling from.
- Document all numbers the client calls you from.
- Document all numbers the client gives you to call her.
- Document all phone and texting numbers; clients often use two or three different phones and numbers.
- Always let the client use your cell phone if she asks. Then later document the number that she called.

Use These Basic Strategies

- Set up and use Community Voice Mail (or a service like it) to keep in touch with clients.
- When giving clients rides, keep track of addresses and locations where they ask you to drop them off.
- Know when and where the client's regular appointments are (e.g., WIC, methadone clinics, probation appointments, etc.). Go to those places at the times you would expect her to be there. In addition, check for her whereabouts at the nearest fast food places.
- If the client receives checks in the mail on a regular basis (e.g., Social Security checks), know which day of the month the check arrives. Do a drop-by visit on that day as she is likely to be there.
- On holidays and birthdays, call likely client references or stop by in person and leave a note. Clients often go to their mother's or grandmother's homes, or return to former households at holiday times.
- Actively listen while transporting clients; during long drives they often give you tips for tracing by talking about who they know, where they've been, how they got there, etc.
- Learn as much information as possible about the client's children: who has custody, names of relatives and caregivers in-state and out-of-state, where do the children go to school, what time do they leave for and arrive home from school, medical providers, their DCFS and other social workers. Where and when are the drop-offs/ pick-ups for childcare. Find out dates for supervised visitations.
- Take a photo of the client in case a missing person report needs to be filed or in case another PCAP staff person is assigned to her case.
- Know her Protective Payee if she has one, and offer to help the client with budgeting.
- For clients affiliated with a Native American tribe, the tribal enrollment number may help in tracing.
- Periodically call phone numbers documented in the client file to make sure they're up to date.
- **Keep all Releases of Information current!**

Send Notes, Letters and Gifts

- Send a card for client and child birthdays, special occasions, or a "missing you" card.
- Send a handmade "gift certificate" offering lunch or special activity with the advocate.
- Send a copy of a PCAP newsletter to addresses where she might be or where she might visit.
- Write "Address Service" on the front of all envelopes you mail out to clients and their contacts.
- If client has a PO Box, you can request the physical address from the post office.

Use the Network of Family, Friends, Contacts, and Word-of-Mouth

- Drop by the residences of families, friends and other contacts you've met.
- Drive to last known address and ask neighbors about client's whereabouts. Let them know who you are without revealing confidential information.
- Park in your car across the street from the client's home and do paperwork while you wait until she returns.
- Visit the children's school at the end of the day; a client without custody may be there just to see her child.
- Know what time the children come home from school and go to the home then with an after school snack.
- Make impromptu visits to places where the client is known (motels, specific neighborhoods, etc.). It's helpful for two advocates to team up and search for missing clients, both for safety reasons and for moral support.
- Go to shelters the client may go to, at 'line up' times and discharge times.

Trace the Client through her Service Providers

Keep all of the client's service provider information up to date on the Service Coordination Form in the client's file.

- **Contact current and former service providers when you are attempting to trace and locate missing clients.** Even former service providers may have seen her in their offices, or she may have turned to them for services or resources.
- Keep Releases of Information up to date, file them in the Services Coordination section of the client file; and check frequently to ensure that they haven't expired;
- Continually update the Service Coordination form so that another advocate or supervisor could pick up the file and make important contacts if necessary.

Search Community Services, Neighborhoods, Word on the Street

- Visit the client's local food banks.
- Talk to the staff at homeless programs and shelters in the area.
- Search in public libraries, public restrooms, other public places.
- Check Labor Ready or other Temporary Labor Employment Services office locations.
- Check bars and the client's other known hangouts.
- Listen to information from others.
- Alert hospital social workers for pregnant women ready to deliver and/or high utilizers of emergency rooms.
- Ask law enforcement to do a home check on the welfare of the children.
- If you think perhaps the client has died, you can search for this information through the County Medical Examiner's office. Tell them who you are, who you're searching for and why. They'll need the client's name, and her date of birth is helpful.
- If you have a release of information, ask the DSHS worker at the CSO to track the client's EBT card (food stamps) use.

Do Legal System Searches

- Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC): <http://www.doc.wa.gov/>
A client's DOC ID # will help you to efficiently trace through the DOC. Often clients use different names, but their DOC ID# never changes. Contact the DOC Parole & Probation office in your county (in the government blue pages of the phone book) or look it up at: <http://www.doc.wa.gov/facilities/fieldoffice/>
If the client has a probation officer, the officer may be able to give you the client's last known address. Ask the probation officer to give you the client's DOC number, so you can more efficiently search for this client through the DOC in the future.
- Washington Courts: <http://dw.courts.wa.gov/?fa=home.fmcdterms> "Find my court date." This can be used to search for not only client court dates and times, but also for this information for the FOB, siblings, parents. This is helpful because the client is often in the courtroom with family.
- Washington Jail Rosters: [www.co.\(your county name\).wa.us](http://www.co.(your county name).wa.us) (e.g. www.co.pierce.wa.us)
- Or use <http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/Washington.htm> , a public records website that includes jail records by county.
- The Judicial Information System (JIS-Link) can be accessed *on computers inside courthouses* that link to the following systems:
 - ACORDS - Appellate Court System
 - DISCIS - the District and Municipal Court Information System
 - JASS - Judicial Accounting Sub System
 - SCOMIS - Superior Court Management Information SystemThese systems can help you locate current addresses through tickets, court cases, or charges, or if the client is currently in jail, these systems will have record of it. You can purchase a subscription to JIS-link for a fee: <https://www.courts.wa.gov/jislink/> .

- Victim Information and Notification Everyday “Vinelink”:
<https://www.vinelink.com/vinelink/initMap.do>
- Washington State Patrol (WSP): <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/information/links.htm> (has links to other search systems)
- Talk to downtown security and police beat patrols; they know the identity of many people.
- Check with local Bail Bonds agencies.

Use Facebook and Other Social Media Searches

- Check to see if the client uses Facebook. Scan ‘Friends’ names to see if there is anyone there we can use to trace. Clients don’t always use their real names so try to discreetly figure out what their Facebook user name is.
- Check other social networks like MySpace, Instagram, Twitter and Tumbler, which may provide information for where they are and who they’re talking to.

Due to the increasing number of clients that use Facebook as their primary means of communication, PCAP has established guidelines and standards for using it, and other social networking sites and modes of electronic communication, for work purposes, in accordance with University of Washington (UW) social media policies. Due to the nature of our work it is essential that we all proceed carefully and with vigilance, with the goal of protecting the privacy of PCAP clients and staff.

Maintaining boundaries between our personal and professional lives is crucial to our work in PCAP. At hire and annually we train all staff to not use their personal cell phones or email addresses to communicate with clients or to conduct PCAP business. We hold the use of personal social networking sites to the same professional standard. The fact is Facebook has a habit of changing its privacy settings, so no one can be sure that staff and client privacy will remain protected – especially over time. Facebook records can be subpoenaed, leaving PCAP staff and clients open to scrutiny and legal liability. As such we have standardized the PCAP use of Facebook communications. Account set-up, use, administration and maintenance needs to be done consistently statewide, as described below.

Use Other Web/Internet Searches

- For clients who may do sex work, check:
 - Craigslist
 - www.backpages.com (look under “Dating”)
- Try each of these web resources because each has a different database (some charge a fee):
 - Social Security Death Index: <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=3693>
 - Dex White Pages: <http://dexknows.whitepages.com/>
 - <http://www.anywho.com/> (includes free reverse phone lookup)
 - <http://www.peoplesearch.com/>
 - <http://www.allonsearch.com/>
 - <http://www.switchboard.com/>
 - <http://www.zabasearch.com/>
 - <http://www.infospace.com/>
 - <http://www.555-1212.com/>
 - <http://www.google.com/>