



## SOAR Webinar Series: Strengthening SOAR Applications Through Strong Collaborations

### Case Development: The Ultimate DDS Experience!

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**PRESENTED BY:**

SAMHSA SOAR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER  
POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.

**UNDER CONTRACT TO:**

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## Welcome!

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Robert Grace, SOAR Project Officer, Homeless Programs Branch,  
Center for Mental Health Services, Rockville, MD

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## Disclaimer

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- This training is supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
- The contents of this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of SAMHSA or DHHS.
- The training should not be considered substitutes for individualized care and treatment decisions.

## Webinar Instructions

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- Muting
- Recording availability
- Downloading documents
- Evaluation
- Question instructions



## Learning Objectives

- Learn case development best practice strategies for strengthening SOAR claims.
- Learn how to begin and ‘sustain’ a strong relationship with DDS through submitting quality SOAR applications.
- Gain a better understanding, through sharing success stories, on how strong relationships with your DDS can lead to positive outcomes for SOAR applicants.



## Agenda

### **Introduction to ‘Strengthening SOAR Applications’ Webinar Series**

- Pam Heine, Senior Project Associate, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, Policy Research Associates, Inc., Delmar, New York

### **Developing Strong Case Development Strategies with DDS Partnership**

- Loren Gallegly, SOAR Specialist and SOAR State Lead, Lodestar Day Resource Center, Phoenix, Arizona

### **Submitting Quality SOAR Applications: DDS Dedicated Unit Collaboration**

- Jack Keane, Public Relations Officer and Tracy Jordan, DDS Adjudicator, Division of Disability Services, Phoenix, Arizona

### **Questions & Answers**

- Facilitated by SOAR TA Center Staff



## Introduction to Webinar Series: Strengthening SOAR Applications Through Strong Collaborations

Pam Heine, Senior Project Associate, SAMHSA SOAR TA Center,  
Policy Research Associates, Inc.



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## Reason for Bringing Back 2011 Webinar Series

- Post webinar evaluations - 80% want more webinars on these topics:
  - Completing quality SOAR applications
  - Writing quality MSRs
  - Medical case development
- You'll hear from best practice SOAR providers, SSA and DDS specialists, and medical providers.
- Learn how they got to where they are today, and replicate in your communities!

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## Where We've Been, and What We've Learned Along the Way

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- SOAR Critical Components
  - SSA/DDS Collaboration
- SOAR is more than a training program
  - Building state and local relationships
- SOAR is about people, not forms!
  - We help the applicant tell their story
- SOAR is one tool in your toolbox to ending chronic homelessness
- SOAR is a Community! (jobs, peer to peer networking, leveraging resources)



## Case Development: The Ultimate DDS Experience!

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Loren Gallegly, SOAR Specialist and SOAR State Lead, Lodestar Day Resource Center, Phoenix, Arizona



## The Journey Begins: Identifying SOAR Clients

- Know the population you are trying to assist
  - Develop a pre-screening tool
  - Educate service providers about SOAR basics and proper referral into program
- Establish relationships with community providers for referrals



## The Journey Begins: Identifying SOAR Clients (cont'd)

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- Go where your people go
  - Jails/Prisons/Problem-Solving Courts
  - Hospitals
  - Outpatient providers
  - Outreach programs

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## Medical Records: Follow the Paper Trail

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- Know how your local behavioral health system operates
  - This helps to screen new clients and anticipate quality of existing evidence
    - SMI Determination process
    - Petitioning process
    - Court-ordered treatment
    - Hospitals with psychiatric units
    - Criminal justice system

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## Medical Records: Follow the Paper Trail (cont'd)

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- Medical Evidence of Record (MER)
  - Where are the acceptable medical sources likely to be?
  - Use public record searches for third party collateral or discovered sources
  - Create an MER log to track record requests and measure response time

## Medical Records: Follow the Paper Trail (cont'd)

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- Medical Evidence of Record (MER)
  - Establish relationships with service providers and MER departments
    - Expedited requests
    - Ease of sending new requests
    - Recognition for how much they too can help others even if just behind the scenes



## Medical Summary Report

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- Create or utilize an assessment worksheet to “paint picture” and fill in gaps missing in the MER
- Develop an MSR “skeleton” to outline important parts of assessment/ MER/third party evidence to write your psychosocial

## Medical Summary Report (cont'd)

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- Now you have an outline with quotes and significant clinical findings in MER
  - Mimics disability examiner notes in Disability Determination Explanations
  - Easy to read and in a format disability examiners are already familiar with

## Medical Summary Report (cont'd)

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- Get your MSR co-signed by an acceptable medical source
  - Intended to take the place of a consultative exam (CE) which can then expedite claims
  - If a provider will not co-sign, send them a residual functional capacity (RFC) form

## Proactive Case Development

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- Things a case manager can consider to ensure quality claim submission
  - Quality of the evidence
    - Acceptable medical sources?
    - Length and reason of hospitalizations
    - Frequency of service utilization and longitudinal evidence

## Proactive Case Development (cont'd)

- Consistency across MER/MSR/RFC/CE
  - Do the diagnoses, functional info, symptoms, mental status exams, and service utilizations support your claim's argument?
- Credibility
  - Rule out malingering
  - 1st and 3rd party evidence
  - Is your client a poor or unreliable historian?
  - DAA vs mental illness

## Is Drug & Alcohol Abuse “Material?”

Checklist to consider when screening clients or writing MSR:

- ✓ History of mental health dx documented to have lasted the past 12 months.
- ✓ Mental health condition has not been diagnosed only as drug-induced.
- ✓ Primary diagnosis from psychiatric providers are not substance use.
- ✓ Currently on an ACT Team or described by clinic as low functioning.

## Is Drug & Alcohol Abuse “Material?” (cont’d)

Checklist to consider when screening clients or writing MSR:

- ✓ Extensive use of psychiatric services during the past 5 years.
- ✓ History of COT or multiple court-ordered evaluations for PAD/GD.
- ✓ Has been determined criminally incompetent to stand trial (in jail system).
- ✓ Has been determined ‘unrestorable’ to competency (in jail system).
- ✓ History of psychiatric symptoms during periods of sobriety.
- ✓ Periods of negative UDS on file from hospitals/outpatient providers.

## Arizona Collaboration with DDS

- Strategies used to involve DDS in local SOAR program
  - Demonstrate success to SSA/DDS
    - Track and report your data
    - Present on SOAR at SSA field offices
    - Humanize your data through success stories
  - Contact Public Relations Officer!!



## Arizona Collaboration with DDS (cont'd)

- Include SSA/community stakeholders in program buy-in
  - Provide resource information for the SSA to refer claimants to in the community
  - Identify what supports SSA/DDS might need to assist homeless claimants
- Make life easier for disability examiners
  - Electronic Records Express (ERE)
  - Coordinate with SSA SOAR liaison
  - Obtain additional records/update disability examiner as needed

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## DDS-SOAR Collaboration: Getting to a SOAR Dedicated DDS Examiner and Medical Consultant

John "Jack" Keane, Professional Relations Officer (PRO) and  
Tracy Jordan, DDS Adjudicator (SOAR Dedicated), Phoenix, AZ

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## DDS-SOAR Collaboration

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- SSA field office notifies DDS when a claim has been transferred
- DDS assigns claim to dedicated examiners who can communicate directly with SOAR case managers
- DDS assigns claims to specific Medical Consultants familiar with SOAR and pre-release claims

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## DDS-SOAR Collaboration (cont'd)

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- DDS assigns claims to specific Medical Consultants familiar with SOAR and pre-release claims
- DDS Examiner, in consultation with MC and SOAR CM, may order Consultative Examination (CE)
  - CE physician may perform CE at the Lodestar campus!

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## DDS-SOAR Collaboration (cont'd)

- PRO plays key role on SOAR state steering committee
  - Attends quarterly meetings
  - Works together with local lead to maintain quality SOAR applications
  - Provides SSA policy updates to SOAR providers and leads
  - Addresses challenges and pro

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## DDS/LDRC SOAR Success Stories

- Quality of Evidence
- Claims approved in as little as 6 and 10 days (including weekends!)
- Retroactive SSI (yes, SSI) back payment in excess of \$15k!!
- Medical consultants quoting MSR/SOAR specialist in Psychiatric Review Technique (PRT) Explanation!!!



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## DDS/LDRC SOAR Success Stories

### Relationship with DDS:

- Hall of Mirrors
- Using SOAR case manager's office to conduct exam
- Special considerations for high risk or low-functioning applicants



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## Questions and Answers

### Facilitated By:

SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center  
Policy Research Associates, Inc.

- Please type your question into the Q&A panel located underneath the participant tab, or
- To ask a question by phone, please raise your hand by clicking the hand icon in the participant pod. We will unmute you so you can ask your question.

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Next webinar in this series:  
"Writing Winning MSRs"  
Thursday, January 26, 3:00-4:30pm EST

See you next week!! Thanks for your Participation!

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Rescheduled Webinar (originally Jan. 12):  
SSA and the SOAR Process  
January 30, 3:00-4:30pm EST

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For More Information on SOAR

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