# Title: "The Next Generation in Human Services And The Emerging Challenges For Case Management".

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## Introduction

It is quite a risk to attempt to predict the future, so I will sensibly stay clear of this task entirely. It is a much more prudent exercise to try to assess possible futures on the basis of events and conditions that are already in place. This effort at speculative extrapolation is much more of an analytic challenge than an intuitive one, but there is still a need to be as clear as possible what the assumptions are that orient the extrapolation, as these will be decisive. Many "paradigm shifting" changes of great importance to how we live and work, begin as small changes at the edges. If one can pay attention to these early enough on in the process, then it is possible for these to serve as harbingers of what is slowly emerging.

The future of case management will be very influenced by how well its practitioners position themselves in regards to a variety of service user and systems related issues of this kind that are already at play in the present. Only some of these have been selected for presentation in this paper, but they can provide key formative reference points for making the kinds of directional decisions that guide our theories, conduct and investments. It may not matter as much what the future actually holds, as does what engages our hearts and minds in the present, as these become the "*de facto*" ethos of a field or profession in any event. It is a credit to any field when it approaches its role and responsibilities with an attitude of reflection and sober evaluation.

## The Challenge Of Establishing And Upholding "Right Relationship" Between Service Users And Services

In examining some of these factors in greater detail, it is important to first look at the present character of the modern human service systems that have been the home of case management since its inception. These systems have been in constant turmoil throughout their tenure, and have been subjected to an endless parade of theories, reforms, dissent and disquiet. Many people may not fully appreciate that our present technocratic service systems really only go back in history less than two generations. Their tenure is remarkably brief, such that in broad historical terms, our modern human services are largely a social experiment of the late twentieth century, and conceivably may be gone as quickly as they have come.

The experimental and improvisational nature of these systems is more than a matter of their tiny longevity in historical terms, it is also a consequence of a lack of coherent theory that has guided their evolution and ensured their perpetuity. Despite all the talk of evidence based practice, and other suggestions designed to convey the impression that professionals and

managers are operating solely on the basis of rationality and science, the sheer instability of practice over these past decades ought to be a clue that there is more that is driving human service policy and decision-making than the elegant models we see in textbooks.

It is certainly true that the rhetoric of human services would normally convey the sense that *services exist entirely to benefit the persons placed in the client/patient/recipient role*. Such a sentiment quite naturally reflects rather well on those of us involved in services, because it conveys an admirable fidelity to people and their needs that may even approach, on occasion, the standard of a kind of nobility of service. In almost all cases, it does reflect a quite valid underlying idealism that is not without substance. Nonetheless, despite this piety, it is important to recognize the actual way that human services operate, as this would be a better test of the consistency between rhetoric and reality than would be our fondness for ourselves.

Perhaps the most significant observation that can be made would be that human services quite commonly meet some of the needs and provide benefits to all manner of vested interests other than those of clients. These include staff, professionals, consultants, unions, board members, public servants, agencies, families, politicians, evaluators, academics, funders, managers and so on. In this regard, humans services are invariably awash in vested interests, and these interests exert their own independent influence on how service is rendered. These interests are often in conflict with each other and with those of service users, and they vary considerably as to their comparative strength and ability to project their influence on events. At any given moment, these interests may compete for dominion, with the net result being the momentary architecture of human services.

These vested interests are often quite valid, as opposed to being solely sinister, but that does not mean that the rhetorical assertion that *services only exist to benefit clients* should be adopted uncritically. A more measured conclusion would be to recognize that human services are essentially *societal* in character, given that they benefit many parties, as opposed to only one party exclusively. In fact, it is quite common in many systems that the people who exert the least influence on services are actually the people who are in the client role. Their comparative powerlessness in the face of the power of professionals and managers makes assertions that their needs will always inexorably prevail over that of better positioned parties an exercise in naïve social and political fantasy. The truth of the matter is that the needs, priorities and interests of service users often must struggle to be heard and noted in the face of much more powerful voices. Consequently, if other parties genuinely align themselves with service users, the prospects for services to be of benefit increases substantially.

Notwithstanding the presence of vested interests, it would still be fair to say that services can often be beneficial for service users if an ethical alignment or relationship between service users and other key players or interest groups in services is in place. Under such conditions of "right relationship", there is sufficient ethical authenticity that an abuse of service users' best interests is unlikely. The term "right relationship", as used here, is borrowed from Buddhism, and it refers to a rigorously ethical relationship between people. All that has been done in this instance is simply to use this standard in respect to human service relationships and ethics.

For case managers, as well as for many others in human service roles, the challenge is whether they are seen to be allies of service users or principally agents of other interests in the service system. Case managers are often employed by people other than service users, and may possibly be required to have greater ultimate loyalty to such organizations, and to their continued employment, than to the people they serve. If so, then it is quite possible that case managers may be seen as ambiguous in their ethics, dependability and loyalty. None of this might matter as long as service users have no choice but to accept what is prescribed for them by the service system. However, if service users were given the choice of an ambiguous ally or one that was more resolute, then it is conceivable that case managers might be abandoned in favour of others who are perceived as more trustworthy.

## Professional Dominance Or Sharing Power And Authority?

Though it has been slow in coming, we are now seeing, quite broadly, the assertion by service users and others aligned with them, that they no longer want to be as beholden to professional control and dominance as has been the case in years past. The widely heard phrase "nothing about us without us" captures this sentiment. This assertion naturally collides with the pattern of most services being designed and controlled by professionals long before the service user even arrives. One version of this has taken the form of creating completely service user controlled and managed services, whilst others have taken the route of service user governed services. In other instances, it has taken the form of various varieties of portable individualized funding as well as various other versions of increased authority resting with service users and/or their families. In all of these instances, governments have ultimately sided with service users in the expansion of their use of delegated authority, thereby substantially overthrowing the pattern of professional dominance, and instead creating various new emergent patterns of relating between service users and professionals.

Except for the most radically anti-professional examples, where professionals have been jettisoned entirely by service users, the majority of these new working arrangements tend to keep professionals as part of the mix, but simply create situations where the use of power and authority are not so

one-sided. In many instances, the rhetoric of power equalization and sharing may be present, but not followed though very rigorously in practice. This would be very common in strategies of "user involvement" that create the impression of instances significant user influence, but without much alteration of the underlying professional monopoly on power.

All of these system configuration experiments will continue into the future, and undoubtedly expand in ambition and sophistication. It is predictable that we will also see a marked growth in astuteness in the ability of people in service user roles, as well as their many professional allies, to sort out the extent to which measures are *actually* empowering, as opposed to simply talking of empowerment. For case managers, as well as people in other similar human service roles, the question of whether service users are in relationships with them where they share a meaningful amount of decision-making authority will become more and more acute. There is nothing specifically in the assumptions of the case management role that prohibit such empowerment, either at the level of structural or interactive ethics, but case management will nevertheless, like many others, have to increasingly persuade much more aggressive and informed advocates that they are authentically interested in power sharing, and will be dependable about this in practice.

What makes the matter all the more decisive, is that such service users, in an increasing number of locations, now have models of service available to them where they can simply abandon system generated, compulsory, and imposed case management if they find it lacking. The ability of service users to "opt out" of case management programs that they find unattractive, while still a minority option in many systems, will nevertheless present a challenge to case management to consider whether its habits of operation will be able to pass muster. Given the increasingly stringent empowerment tests that many service users now employ, it is useful to take stock of how case management might do from this perspective. If not, then case management as a social institution will most certainly find itself outdated, irrelevant and unwanted.

Naturally, specific individuals in conventional case management roles may pass muster because of what they are like personally, but this ought not to be seen as being the same issue as that of the survival of case management itself. The real test is whether service users are so enamoured of case management that they see it as the preferred alternative to professional control. Undoubtedly, if a poll were taken today of service user's view of case management, there would not be that kind of unreserved endorsement of case management as being an agent of empowerment, notwithstanding the many efforts by individual case managers to be empowering. In all likelihood, many service users would see at least some case managers as being an impediment to their empowerment. Consequently, the overall case management profession faces some significant tests, in both perception and substance, as it relates to

dealing with increasingly empowerment oriented service users, advocates, professionals and governments.


## Agent Of The Person Or Agent Of Others?

An aspect of the structures that many case managers currently work in is that they are often named as being *responsible for* the person served, but not *responsible to* the person served. In this regard, case managers may find themselves in a conflict of interest, in that they are actually the agent of others, yet they are expected to be, to some degree, the agent of the best interests of the person served. What may make the case manager the agent of others is that it is others who commission case management, pay for it, and oversee and evaluate its implementation. Who these "others" may be can vary, but they can usually be distinguished from the instance where the service user hires and fires the case manager, thereby making the case manager the agent of the person. Case management that is directly the tool of others cannot be equated with case management that is undisputedly the tool of the person being served.

An argument has often been made for case managers to be relieved of this conflict of interest by the establishment of "independent" case managers in the direct or indirect employ of the people being served. Often, this was accepted in principle as being desirable and feasible, but without taking it to its fullest possible effect in practice. Case managers themselves often feared the perceived insecurity of being employed by service users directly, and therefore saw their employment interests as better addressed by remaining as employees of the larger system. Nonetheless, these conditions are now starting to pass, as service users can increasingly directly create their own agents to represent their needs, negotiate issues and coordinate options. Such "consumer agents", labelled with various titles these days, now have many working names that do not involve the title "case managers", nor are they bound by the same role expectations as might have been conventional for case managers in other periods.

Whether such service user guided "case management" will become a dominant feature of the next generation of services is difficult to know at this point. There appears to be many forms of service available to individuals today that go well beyond being altered or modified "case management" variants, into forms of individualized support that are resolutely not "case management" in their own self definitions. A good example of this in Australia would be "local area coordinators", whose orientation is that they are person centred agents of the people they serve, despite the fact that they are exclusively hired and supervised by others. Nonetheless, it is only a matter of time before even this constraint will be lifted, given the growing power of the movement

towards service users becoming decision-makers in their own services gains confidence and momentum.

## The Challenge Of Individualization: "Person Centred" Versus "Person Designed and Guided Service Options"

It is most certainly true that almost all professionals and agencies consider themselves "person centred", though their language to describe this has varied over the years, and has included vocabulary such as "client/patient driven", "needs based", "consumer focussed" and suchlike. What these buzzwords capture is the intent on the part of the professional to both take account of the real needs of people, and to be guided by them in the design and negotiation of services. Normally, there would be an expectation that the professional would then utilize their various competencies and skills to fashion a way to meet these needs, thereby leaving the professional as being the essential designer and provider of services. As the modern service systems have become increasingly technocratic, this discretion and authority to design services that had historically rested with clinical professionals, has become increasingly shared with managers and bureaucrats of all kinds, such that it now seems to many clinical professionals that it is bureaucracies that have the final word on matters that used to be theirs to decide.

Nonetheless, there has historically been no doubt, in either the minds of service users or professionals that the design and control of services has largely rested with professionals. In the technocratic systems that now dominate service delivery, this has transformed itself into a professional/bureaucratic management monopoly on service design and control. Professionals, and now managers of various kinds, have been largely granted a claim of possessing the needed "expertise" to carry out such roles. Some undiscerning service users, as well as professionals, might tacitly expect that "expertise" would even be infallible, and they are quite disillusioned when such "experts" are found to be lacking. Nevertheless, few people would doubt that professionals and managers do potentially bring many valuable competencies, notwithstanding their evident shortcomings.

The difficulty begins with the fact that many service users and professionals alike reject the idea that satisfactory answers to people's needs can exclusively come from "rented strangers" irrespective of their competencies. Instead they posit the ethic that people themselves should ultimately guide life and service decisions. This "person centred" ethic is usually non-controversial for many professionals and managers providing that the matter is left to professionals to resolve. In the best of instances,

"enlightened" professionals often create solutions *for* people that are commendable.

There is, as has already been mentioned, another strain of both professionals and service users that firmly believe that services ought to be crafted entirely *with* the people served in which decisions are shared or joint decisions, and where the service user is not in an advisory role to the professional, but is a full collaborator in decisions about service. Thus, practitioners in the field, such as case managers will be confronted not only with the power sharing in service design question, but a further challenge that the service be personalized or individualized entirely in concert with the person.

This latter question is compounded by the fact that the service options that most service users will ultimately receive, in the present period, are largely pre-designed for service recipients well before they even arrive to be served. That is because most systems at present rely on very highly standardized models of care in which a great deal of prescriptive uniformity is "built in", irrespective of who the individual is that is being served. In fact, it is quite common that these service models may have been designed years before by people who will never have met today's service users. By the time that practitioners like case managers come along, very little is left of substance that can be negotiated in light of the person's unique needs. This is why there is so much disquiet with the practice of "filling vacancies", "slotting people in", "getting people a bed" and so on. While such practices do ensure that a person gets into a service, it does not at all meet the test for person centred service design done *with* people rather than *for* people.

Case managers and others working with individuals in systems that exclusively rely on standardized models of care, essentially can do little to change all of this through their own practice, as the crucial service design decisions are not open for negotiation and alteration to better suit people's needs. On the other hand, there are increasingly systems that are sponsoring practices that do open up part or all of the key decisions on service design to negotiation with the person and their allies, thereby empowering not only service recipients to pursue a more satisfactory level of individualization, it also means that case managers and others close to the person can effect important changes in concert with the person.

In addition to the empowerment and individualization benefits of winding down the widespread use of prescriptive standardized service models in favour of negotiable service models and patterns of support, there are the further advantages of the increased ability of both systems and the people working in them to give greater weight to flexibility and responsiveness in regards to persons as an integral part of practice. Case managers, and many others, have long valued such practices, but their ability to uphold them in the

face of "top down" prescriptive directions to the contrary, has left many practitioners with little choice but to become the gatekeepers to standardized service options, no matter what their personal inclinations were to the contrary.

Unfortunately, case management is presently deeply implicated in the upholding of standardized service models simply due to its presence as a routine fixture of such systems. This is unfortunate, as the deeper problem is more that few service users, professionals or managers are currently familiar enough with how to offer services that are negotiable at the individual level in terms of service models. This may open up the possibility of case management to reposition itself in the future by being more prominently seen as being an articulate advocate of flexible service models. Naturally, this would bring about a collision of a sort with systems that still rely on rigid service models, but that may be survivable if carried forward responsibly.

**The Challenge Of Grass Roots, "Bottom Up", Natural Supports Alternatives To "Top Down" Technocratic Approaches**

The modern service systems are increasingly technocratic in their ethos, and much of this has come about due to the need to find some way to manage the explosive growth of formal services throughout all aspects of everyday life. Naturally enough, technocratic models of management have been imported rather extensively from the corporate world to meet this need, on the premise that their presence in human services would not have any deleterious effects. The reality is that there are many solutions to people's needs that might be broadly described as falling into the category of "self-help" methodologies. These are simply solutions to getting through life that do not necessarily require the active presence of professionals or service bureaucracies, as the emphasis is on what people can do for themselves. In fact, professionalized services may have drawbacks to them that do not exist in "natural supports" solutions as we can see in the empowerment discussion earlier.

In this respect, "self-help" solutions can vary from individual initiatives to all manner of collective and mutual forms of social support that aid in the betterment of life conditions. In fact, for most people, it is their "natural" support systems that are the core of their lives, not their use of formal systems of services. The research on these modes of intervention has been consistently supportive of their role and utility, though much of this insight has not penetrated into the thinking of many technocratic managers and professionals, who are understandably more familiar with "systems" solutions than "grass roots" or "people based" solutions.

Yet, as any long term manager of public systems knows, there are simply not enough resources available in anyone's budget to pursue the strategy that all needs should be met by an expansion of professionalized formal services.

Obviously, many needs could and should be met in the domain of natural and informal supports. As obvious as this point is, it is still difficult for many people to envision precisely how this might be best accomplished, particularly if they lack experience with grass roots strategies, and have become unconsciously habituated to largely bureaucratic ways of solving problems. If this is accompanied by an attitude of scepticism about solutions that do not essentially originate from managers and professionals, then it may be near impossible for them to partner properly with indigenous efforts at meeting needs, even if these are effective.

Grass roots, people based solutions often take the form of participatory member cooperatives of various kinds in which decision-making is often quite democratic in character, and solutions arise not solely from expertise, but from relationship, dialogue and consensus building. Thus position, hierarchy, budgets and other sources of power in technocratic formulations have to yield to the more communal ways of operating that are the staple of grass roots mutual support and the many small informal organizations and projects that sustain this.

People who have had experience with service user and family governed service models are quite familiar with their ingenuity at making scarce resources stretch, their ability to respond uniquely and relevantly to people's needs and their comparative empowerment of "small" people. These are admirable accomplishments, and quite consistent with the rhetoric and long-term necessities of public systems of various kinds. Nonetheless, these systems may still operate as if all solutions should emerge solely from the technocratic mode, thereby inhibiting mutually beneficial partnerships with civil society and its many "people", moral and political resources. What may be absent in their vision is that it is actually quite possible to marry "bottom up" solutions with "top down" authority and resources in an adaptive way.

By the time all of these policy questions get translated to the level in systems that case management operates, it may be case managers that find themselves having to reconcile the disparate demands of technocratic bureaucracies and the practical need to generate alternatives which best meet the unique needs of a given person. More specifically, sometimes the answers generated by formal systems are simply much too unsuitable for many people, and there is a need for something to be generated that arises from people themselves. At such junctures, many people may feel stifled if the system does not step forward and create these solutions, as the expectation is that that is only the system that can be the source of viable solutions.

This belief that it is only systems generated solutions that will work is understandable since the "community" or civil society is now an acutely separate realm from systems bureaucracies. Nonetheless, community based solutions to people's needs are, in fact, the most long term and traditional way

in which people have had their needs met over the millenniums. It is only in this brief reign of technocratic culture in the latter part of the twentieth century that this has yielded to any degree. Still, the point should not be lost that ordinary people have a great deal of potential to create their own answers to their needs, and will do so if the means to do this have not been withdrawn or denied them. The obvious implication for case managers and others is that there is a place or role for community based solutions to complement what the official bureaucracies do not do well.

The challenge for case managers might be thought of as being able to both perceive this potential and to urge its proper use. If case managers let themselves be restricted only to the limited range of solutions to people's needs that systems generate internally, then they will most decidedly be denying their clients the full range of what is actually possible and beneficial. This is contrary to the expressed ethics of not only most case managers, but the majority of professionals who routinely present themselves as being in favour of "choice". Clearly, functionaries of systems that advocate only for what is available within those systems, cannot possibly be credible exponents of "choice". It is also clear that case managers who do hold out for strategies of cooperation with "natural" resources and community based and controlled entities, will definitely tip the balance in favour of offering people more and better solutions. This will undoubtedly, help case management be perceived as being relevant and helpful, thus securing it a future role.

## The Challenge of Countering "Invasive" And Dysfunctional Bureaucracy Particularly As It Affects Service Users

It is an unintended effect of the growth of systems of all kinds that they then create some manner of bureaucracy to manage their affairs. Much of that bureaucracy may have a quite valid logic to it, so it is important to recognize that bureaucracy can have many adaptive and beneficial features. Even so, most commonsensical people also recognize that not all bureaucracy is equally beneficial to people and that many forms of bureaucracy can be both distracting and even toxic in their impact. Consequently, it becomes very important to begin to make a distinction between advantageous bureaucracy and variants that are much less desirable. It also becomes important to see which groups function to uphold useful bureaucracy, and which align themselves with the more toxic and undesirable forms of bureaucracy.

Many people may assume that bureaucracy is an immutable "given" that cannot be amended, even in the face of compelling reasons of rationality, relevance to people and functionality. This is mistaken, as bureaucracy can be governed by positive values and ethics, just as all other human creations and activities can be. However, bureaucracy cannot be astutely managed by people who are already enslaved to the idea that either one cannot challenge the authority wielded by bureaucracies or the rationality used by such authorities.

This too is false, as people have been influencing bureaucracies for the better for eons. Admittedly, it is possible to lose such battles, but that is a different matter than the assumption that something is beyond influence and change.

The fact of the matter is that few service users, and their friends and families, long for ever more extensive encounters with bureaucracy. On the contrary, while they would like the benefits that many bureaucracies may eventually yield, they are almost always interested in the bureaucratic solutions that have the following features. First, that contact with bureaucracy is minimal and undemanding. Secondly, that the eventual solutions offered be responsive to their needs and flexible. Third, that the process be simple and "people friendly" by way of process. Fourth, that the attitude of the officials be respectful and helpful. Lastly, that the bureaucracy be effective and dependable in the results it obtains.

The challenge for case management, in this regard, can be quite formidable, as case management is often the principal means by which bureaucracies relate to the individuals being served, thus placing case managers right in the middle of this quandary. Though most case managers would share their service users antipathy to bureaucracy, after all they have to contend with vast amounts of it themselves, it is quite a different matter as to whether they can or will do much to shield their clients from all this. This is because the person in the case manager's role is normally so poorly positioned to alter the demands of bureaucracies, that they often feel defeated before they start.

It will be heartening to many people trapped in this conjunction of these demands, to know that the broad goals of most bureaucracies can be better met by cooperating with service users on designing and modifying the bureaucracy, rather than relying simply on the uncritical imposition of rules, regulations, prescriptions and presumptions, simply because they have been handed down from above. It is most certainly true that good sense of this kind will often prevail, but that is a different matter from seeing that it is possible to do things differently. Almost always, changes of the kind that lead to the creation of "people friendly" bureaucracies most certainly require the exercise of imagination, resoluteness, clarity and perseverance.

Even so, it would be most unfortunate to suggest that case managers do not possess these needed capacities, as many most certainly do. It would also be wrong to suggest that they would not willingly harness these in the interests of creating better conditions for "right relationship" between services and the people they serve. What may be most true is that the harder it gets to do this, the more case management as an institution of the present system will have to confront its choices and decide what values it can really uphold in practice. Naturally, if it sides with the advancement of the more poisonous versions of bureaucracies, it will lose its credibility and moral authority, much like others

in the system who must confront similar dilemmas. On the other hand, if they persevere, and are both practical and imaginative in their proposals for a "people friendly" bureaucracy, then we will most certainly see progress of a kind that matters.

**The Challenge Of "Vision Building" Or "Vision Destroying" In People's Lives**

The whole question of vision is ephemeral to many people, largely because they equate it with delusional fantasy, or some form of either romantic or utopian whimsy. Such reflexes are helpful, as they force people to be realistic and questioning, all of which is for the good. Nevertheless, as the ancients have observed, "without vision the people will perish". Vision, is ultimately a very practical matter, as it is the quintessential way in which people fashion their sense of their own human possibilities. Where vision languishes, so does the potential and the promise of each life affected. Vision is an essential ingredient in linking people to their ultimate capacities, and the exploration of these is empowered and nurtured whenever vision is encouraged.

It is also true that when vision is discouraged, then so are the many fruits of it in people's lives diminished. When vision is deflated, then so is hope and the anticipation of what might yet be. Often this "vision-making" is referred to as "dreaming". It is clear that many people can survive the fact of their dreams not coming true quite easily. It is quite another matter to have no dreams, and to have one's dreams destroyed and defamed. It is important, if we are care about people, to be willing to dream along with them, and to help them gain confidence in asserting and pursuing these hopes. The reason for this is that many dreams can be uncannily prescient, and they so deeply link into what are people's most fundamental longings and callings, that we have no choice but to see the process of assisting people include this very important part of their soul.

The difficulty is not principally that many people's dreams may at times be unrealistic, or that they may be deceiving themselves, as these kinds of matters can be addressed quite responsibly by conscientious practitioners. Rather the real difficulty is that we can rather casually slide into the role of being dream "un-makers" and vision destroyers, by our use of a negative realism that may actually not be very realistic at all, just flattering to our sense that people ought to conform to the status quo, no matter what. So much that is considered "realistic" is proven in later times to not be so, that the only sensible practice is to get more comfortable with careful "vision building" so that we do not become the unwitting agents of "vision destroying" in people's lives.

We become "vision destroyer" whenever we redirect people back into conformity with what is possible today, or in today's system rather than to

encourage them to question the assumptions of that compliance and conformity in light of the yet unfulfilled potential of their lives. Whenever our reflex becomes "no", then how is "yes" to be born deep in the recesses of what is the unknown and un-revealed capacities of people. We can give life through our posture and practice, or we can wilt it by the line we take in the simplest of encounters.

Case managers routinely find themselves immersed in the "dream" content of people's lives, and may often be puzzled as to what to do or say. Many may feel threatened by how much of this content is so at variance to the operational preoccupations of bureaucracy and its many minions. Nonetheless, many case managers are both excited by, and inspired by, the people they support, such that they help embolden these people to hold onto their dreams, and stand alongside them as these are pursued over the course of their lives.

In this process of the quality of support to the building of vision in people's lives, lies the future of the case management ethos, as well as that of the many other quasi-specialty roles in the present system that interact with people and their potential. There can hardly be a future for a profession that does not enliven and defend people's ultimate potential, even if this is justified by them as a necessary recourse to the immediate practicalities of conformity. There will, however, be much scope and promise in any profession that strives to build people up rather than bring them down. Case management has got to be on the right side of "vision building", or it has no future except for a role as the spoiler of what might have been. Few case managers would want this and they should be strengthened to hold steady with this conviction.

**The Challenge of Leadership And The Fate Of What Is Now Called "Case Management"**

It should be apparent from this rather brief excursion into what might be thought of as the fundamentals of the case management project relative to the futures of its clients, that what might some day be the future or demise of case management, will revolve to a considerable degree around whether the profession as a whole properly orientates itself to what is increasingly becoming possible in our human service systems, albeit often still in its infancy, and seizing the moment to make these beneficial prospects draw closer. This question is often called the challenge of leadership, and it is always a crucial, if not fundamental factor in whether people make a difference that is decisive or simply become ineffectual.

"Case management" does not have a long lineage, perhaps a matter of one to two generations at most, and will likely promptly pass from history as quickly as these present day service systems will. After all, what conceit is it that we might imagine that we somehow have a license to a kind of occupational immortality that has not been there for so many others. Its

passing or longevity cannot be the central question, as much as we have made it so for this discussion. After all, is case management an "ends" or a "means". If it is an end in itself, then it has already become what George Bernard Shaw had humorously captured in his phrase "that all professions are, in one manner or another, a conspiracy against the public". If it is one of the many means by which we labour to leave human beings, and human life, better than we found it, then it is indeed an inspired and fruitful means, that we should all be grateful for, whether its product in terms of human well-being is modest or not.

Such an uplifting legacy is likely to be illusory unless, of course, case management, and the many people associated with it, take the leadership that is needed in people's lives. Any route to the benefit of people that does not earn its way through the exercise of judicious and principled leadership, will simply not make the difference that is necessary. Leadership is not brought to bear simply though the admiration of the right goals and values, it asks a price to be paid at the level of the substance of people's lives. So, there is no way to leadership, relevance and enduring accomplishment except by leaving people's lives and the prospects of their existence better than they would otherwise be. Admittedly, we cannot always easily or quickly change these, but we can stand by people in solidarity and right relationship, so that no hope be extinguished that might bring life more abundantly to people.

We need not only practical strategic leadership, we also need moral leadership on the most vital aspects of human life in order to make a difference that endures. Case management cannot, nor should not, provide all of this, as this too would be a kind of misguided arrogance. Nonetheless, we should remain open to the many places where case management and case managers can help unwrap the potential of people's lives, as that is the heart of service to others, and should be the soul of whatever might yet eventually come from today's way of serving others. If case management disappears through its own actions, but service to others thrives in its wake, then case management has added great value to our lives. The question we should now take forward is whether it is a force for leadership when it was needed, and not unduly focus what we will call our work in future generations. Let legacy triumph over self interest, and let people's lives be the living fruits of our modest contribution.