Reasons for Documenting

Nancy B. Swigert, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-S

PURPOSES OF DOCUMENTATION

Graduate students learn how to evaluate and treat a variety of communication and swallowing disorders, both in the classroom and in clinic and practicum settings. At each step of the way, they also learn how to document the services they are providing. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA's) Scope of Practice for Speech-Language Pathology specifically lists documenting as an important part of the eight service delivery domains of speech-language pathology. For example, the domain of assessment includes the following:

- “Document assessment and trial results for selecting AAC interventions and technology, including speech-generating devices (SGDs)”
- “Document assessment results, including discharge”

The domain of treatment includes the following:

- “Design, implement, and document delivery of service in accordance with best available practice appropriate to the practice setting” (ASHA, 2016, p. 12)

There are many reasons to document client care, including the following (Table 2-1):

- Client management
- Accurately record the client’s performance at specific points in time in order to plan and implement the client’s care
  - Intake information
  - Evaluation results
  - Treatment notes
  - Progress updates
  - Re-evaluations
  - Determine when the client is ready for discharge
  - Discharge status
- Share information with other health care and educational professionals about the client’s communication and swallowing disorder
  - This might include another speech-language pathologist who has to take over the client’s care on a short-term basis, or when the client moves to another facility or setting or changes schools.
- Serve as the basis for review of medical/educational record by any number of individuals, third-party payers, or regulatory agencies:
  - To assess quality of care
  - To make decisions about utilization of services
  - To obtain data for research
  - To determine whether regulatory requirements were met