

Blueberry Harbor Software, Inc.
Put Some Time and Energy Back in Your Day!

9 Gilman Avenue
Brunswick, Maine 04011
E-mail: cstewart@suscom-maine.net

Web site: <http://www.clinicalrecordkeeper.com>

Why Keep Computer Records?

An E-article for clinicians by
Charles M. Stewart, M.D.

Electronic Mental Health Records are helpful because they are:

LEGIBLE

- Computer records are more legible than hand written notes.
- Legible records protect you better than hand written ones.

FILEABLE

- When you create a computer record it is already filed.
- You don't have to pull or put away charts. These programs decrease the chore of filing in a big way.

PRINTABLE

- If desired the record can be easily printed for a paper chart or other purposes.

NETWORKABLE

- Some computer programs can be networked.

PORTABLE

- Created in a laptop, clinical records can be taken anywhere.
- Phone calls can be documented.
- Letters and reports can be done at a time and place of your choosing.

FAXABLE

- Any file in the program can be faxed if you have fax software in your computer.

SAVEABLE

- Computer records can be saved quickly. With the easy and fast backups now available multiple copies can be made which provides redundant safety for your valuable records.
- Off site storage becomes a reality. **HIPAA** thinks this is wonderful. You can either save your records on USB drives or use an online service like Carbonite.

- They are actually **safer** than paper records.

COMPACT

- Your entire records are in a computer and backed up on drives or servers.
- Practitioners find they need fewer filing cabinets because paper files are dramatically reduced in amount.
- Printing, copying, paper and toner usage decrease substantially as well.

EFFICIENT AND EASY TO USE

- Typing is much faster and easier than handwriting. Think about that for a minute.
 - Clinicians can type at 40-50 words per minute all day long. Very few can handwrite at any where near that speed for long.
- Time is of the essence when it comes to the mechanical and administrative parts of our practices.
- Anything that saves small amounts of time or energy repeatedly adds greatly to overall efficiency.
- Clinicians tell me that the documentation needed in their practices improves when they type their progress notes even though they are using less energy to create them.

ADAPTED FOR TEMPLATE USE

- Templates of various sorts are big time savers.
- Use my templates of letterheads, fax sheets, clinical outlines, managed care reports, visit and receipt records, and Super bills.
- Templates are easy to adapt to your practice. You don't have to use them but they help your efficiency.
- Each of these templates saves time each and every time they are used. Cumulatively they make a big difference in the effort expended to manage your practice.
- Templates in the CRK Series are modifiable by anyone easily and quickly. No special knowledge is needed. If you type you can modify the templates I include, create templates you need, or use templates you have already created.
- It is important not to hem practitioners in. They all have different needs. If you are going to create software that can be used widely, there has to be some flexibility in how the program is organized and used. Editable templates are a great way to provide flexibility. The large programs don't permit much of that.

In addition, initial evaluations and progress notes can be created using free text i.e. without a template. Your Choice.

EASY TO NAVIGATE

- A good computer program should make it easy to move around in. It should make good visual sense. There should be a minimum of steps to create a new record.
- A major beef I have with most larger software programs is that they don't permit you to skip steps. You have to go from field to field using the tab key. In my programs you can skip any step. This permits flexibility in how you work.
- A second complaint I have about big programs are that they can't be changed much. What you buy is what you get.
- The screens you view should be large sized, and easily visible. You shouldn't have to squint to get your work done.
- File management should be fast and easy. My programs keep all the file names out in the open so you can find them fast without a search field. You have to move between files a lot in any program. I estimate that navigation in my programs is 40% faster than the larger office management software.

ORGANIZED

- Electronic clinical records are organized inherently. You just want the organization to be one **you** understand and can use. Corporate software is much too much for most of us. We only use a fifth of its capacity. The rest is unneeded and gets in the way. CRK removed 4/5^{ths} leaving the essential 1/5th.

DICTATING SOFTWARE

- Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred (obtained separately) can be used to dictate into all version of CRK at a high rate of speed.
- Speeds up to 100 wpm are not unusual.
- Your efficiency skyrockets!

Barriers to Keeping Computer Records

TECHNICAL FACTORS

- Computers take some getting used to.
- There is much more functionality than you need.
- Clinical Record Keeper programs are oriented to practitioners.
 - I designed them that way.
 - I simplified all of my programs and removed unnecessary complexities.
 - Simple graphics, a simple filing system, and file management make these software programs a joy to use.
 - I wanted a good system for practitioners and I got it.
 - You spend a lot of time using your computer to create records. Why not make it a pleasant experience?

- A number of clinicians have converted from the large office programs and have found CRK, CRK Plus, and now CRK-Mac a simpler solution for their work. Enough said!

INERTIA

- We often don't want to change a method we have been using or go into unfamiliar territory.
- We rationalize that it may not be necessary for us to go through the adjustment needed to make a successful change. So much is asked of us already that we don't want to add to the pile.
- After the switch practitioners tell me that they are glad they made the effort.
- Electronic records are easy to use, fast to create, safe, reliable and efficient.
- It is a fallacy that there will be a better time than now to implement something that can help you be more efficient and less stressed.
- Use any available off the shelf technology to help you get efficient. We learned to use telephones, answering machines, faxes, copiers, pagers, and cell phones over the years. Computer software is in the same category.

FEAR OF COMPUTERS

- Software doesn't have to be hard to use, especially if it is organized in a way that makes sense and extra unneeded features are removed.
- Others master their concerns and with the complete directions I include you can too.
- I go to great lengths to provide you with basic, advanced, and comprehensive written directions. I also have Windows media movies of slide shots of the sequences in the programs that are helpful to know. For the Mac version I have a PDF documents with screen shots showing sequences in the program. Thus you get written **and** visual instructions.
- **Novices** Please see the PDF called "Novices" for some information for you.
- After years of talking with clinicians my programs circumvent the kinds of difficulties that are often problematic and provide an easy-to-use solution for mental health professionals.

TYPING

- Unless you type easily you may not have thought it was possible to use a computer for records. It is surprising how much improvement there is when you type regularly.
- Please see my PDF on "Typing for Clinicians".

Solutions to the Barriers

CONSIDER YOUR NEEDS

- Typing is more efficient than handwriting, especially with practice. If you want to be more efficient in your record keeping, electronic records are a helpful technology.
- Choose a program that is easy to use, and you will have achieved a big leap forward in your efficiency.

DEFINE YOUR GOALS

- If you want to keep records more easily, using less mental and physical energy, then choose a technology that can help you achieve that goal.

Typical buyers of my programs want a simple, basic system that is foolproof and reliable. They want it to be easy, safe, and streamlined. They just want some help.

In Summary

The Clinical Record Keeper series of programs have a well deserved reputation because of their simplicity, ease-of-use, and efficiency. They were designed so that practitioners could use them easily, (including me!) and you can too!

Charles M. Stewart, M.D.

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