Centre for Newcomers

What We Heard, What We Learned: Highlights from October 2026 Case Management Mentorship Conversations

ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

This mentorship initiative is part of the IRCC funded National Case Management Project, which supports learning, peer mentoring, and knowledge sharing among case management practitioners across Canada.





WHAT WE ARE HEARING

October discussions focused on managing complex client needs beyond immediate settlement concerns. Practitioners explored service planning, client independence, and effective referrals, emphasizing that successful case management equips clients to navigate systems, make informed decisions, and build confidence in achieving their goals

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

One message emerged consistently across the mentorship conversations: effective case management empowers clients rather than creating dependency. By coaching clients through processes and building their skills, confidence, and knowledge, case management supports greater independence.

Centering clients' strengths, goals, and choices leads to more sustainable outcomes and lasting self-sufficiency.

PROMISING PRACTICES

INSIGHTS FROM OCTOBER 2026 MENTORSHIP CONVERSATIONS | 01–05

01

Build Trust Before Deep Assessment

Meaningful assessment begins with trust. For clients who have experienced trauma, conflict, discrimination, or other significant challenges, important needs may not be disclosed during an initial meeting and often emerge only through ongoing engagement. See assessment as a continuous process and use open-ended questions, active listening, and a culturally safe, trauma-informed approach to create the conditions for deeper understanding.

02

Focus on Strengths, Not Just Needs

Explore needs and barriers alongside skills, experience, family and household circumstances, community connections, and other strengths. Consider factors such as health, employment, language, transportation, digital access, caregiving, children's schooling, income, and available supports.

03

Do With, Not For

Effective case management builds independence by involving clients directly in the tasks and decisions that affect their lives. Rather than completing tasks on a client's behalf, practitioners help clients develop the skills and confidence to navigate systems independently. The goal is to accompany and coach clients initially, then gradually transition responsibility to them as their confidence and capacity grow.

04

Make SMART Goals

Effective case management translates broad aspirations into SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals. SMART goals turn broad aspirations into concrete actions. For example, "becoming independent" can be reframed as independently planning and using the bus route to health appointments within four weeks.

05

Follow-Up Is Part of the Service

Effective case management does not end with a referral. Providing information alone does not guarantee that clients can access or benefit from a service. Follow-up helps confirm that appointments were attended, supports were appropriate, and barriers to access were addressed. When referrals do not lead to the desired outcomes, plans can be adjusted to ensure clients receive the support they need.

PROMISING PRACTICES

INSIGHTS FROM OCTOBER 2026 MENTORSHIP CONVERSATIONS | 06–10

06

Leverage Community Connections

Community connections play an important role in supporting positive settlement outcomes. Connecting clients to cultural communities, volunteer opportunities, and other social networks can strengthen their sense of belonging, build confidence, and expand informal support systems. When an exact cultural match is not available, nearby or culturally related communities can still provide meaningful connection and support. Viewing community networks as valuable settlement assets helps create pathways to greater independence and long-term integration.

07

Use Team-Based and Integrated Service Delivery

Integrated service delivery strengthens client outcomes by coordinating support across settlement, language, housing, mental health, and case management services. Through collaboration, warm referrals, and appropriate information sharing, clients can be connected to needed services more quickly, reducing barriers and creating a more seamless service experience.

08

Prioritize Safety and Stabilization First

When clients face urgent situations such as domestic violence, homelessness, or mental health crises, immediate safety and stabilization take priority over longer-term planning. Effective case management focuses first on addressing urgent risks and connecting clients to appropriate crisis, shelter, medical, or mental health supports before developing longer-term goals.

09

Document Early, Accurately, and Consistently

Strong documentation supports continuity, accountability, and effective service delivery. Recording information promptly helps ensure details remain accurate, while documenting outcomes, not just referrals, provides a clearer picture of client progress. Consistent, objective, and strengths-based case notes enable more effective follow-up, collaboration, and service planning, particularly when managing complex or high-volume caseloads.

10

Use Practical Reminders and Technology

Practical tools and technology can help clients stay engaged and follow through on appointments and action plans. Calendars, messaging apps, email reminders, and automated notifications can improve attendance, strengthen follow-through, and support better access to services.

WHAT NEXT?

Continue the conversation with fellow Case Management practitioners. Join upcoming mentorship sessions to exchange ideas, explore promising practices, and learn from peers across the sector.

Interested in participating as a **mentor** or **mentee**? Contact ncmp@centrefornewcomers.ca.

THANKS TO OUR MENTORS

We gratefully acknowledge the mentors who facilitated the October 2026 Case Management cohort sessions and supported thoughtful discussion, peer learning, and the exchange of practical experience:

- **Murshed Hussain**, Regina Open Door Society, Saskatchewan
- **Maryam Baiza**, Centre for Newcomers, Alberta
- **Israa Abdulrahem**, Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services, Ontario

Their contributions helped create the conversations from which the practices and insights highlighted in this report emerged.