

FIFTH EDITION

A CASE MANAGER'S STUDY GUIDE

Preparing for Certification

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PASADENA, CA



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 www.jblearning.com

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13403-2

Production Credits

VP, Executive Publisher: David D. Cella
 Executive Editor: Amanda Martin
 Acquisitions Editor: Teresa Reilly
 Editorial Assistant: Christina Freitas
 Editorial Assistant: Anna Maria Forger
 Senior Vendor Manager: Sara Kelly
 Marketing Communications Manager: Katie Hennessy
 Product Fulfillment Manager: Wendy Kilborn

Composition and Project Management: S4Carlisle Publishing Services
 Cover Design: Michael O'Donnell
 Rights & Media Specialist: Wes DeShano
 Media Development Editor: Troy Liston
 Cover Image (Title Page): ©
 Printing and Binding: Edwards Brothers Malloy
 Cover Printing: Edwards Brothers Malloy

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Skinner, Nancy (Nancy E.), author. | Almaden, Stefany, author. |
 Preceded by (work): Fattorusso, Denise. Case manager's study guide.

Title: A case manager's study guide : preparing for certification / Nancy
 Skinner and Stefany Almaden.

Description: Fifth edition. | Burlington, Massachusetts : Jones & Bartlett
 Learning, [2019] | Preceded by A case manager's study guide / Denise
 Fattorusso, Campion Quin. 4th ed. c2013. | Includes bibliographical
 references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018001233 | ISBN 9781284114881 (paperback : alk. paper)

Subjects: | MESH: Case Management--organization & administration | Health
 Services Administration | Managed Care Programs--organization &
 administration | Examination Questions

Classification: LCC RA440.6 | NLM W 18.2 | DDC 362.1076--dc23 LC record
 available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018001233>

6048

Printed in the United States of America
 22 21 20 19 18 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the nurses, social workers, and other allied health personnel who commit their hearts and souls to helping individuals navigate the health system, master self-care management, and feel empowered to maintain a level of health and well-being. The authors enjoyed writing this study guide and hope the book not only has been enlightening to read but has also empowered the reader to earn the case management certification credentials as an affirmation of the convergence of passion and skill to better serve patient populations, families, and communities.

The authors hope to inspire readers and certification exam candidates to take the content to heart not only for personal success, which we are confident will be achieved, but also to elevate the specialty of care management and carve the “certification” in care management practice as a *niche* for appropriately credentialed care/case managers who are continually engaged in advancing the specialty, quality of care, and population health management. Care/Case management certification is ongoing altruistic care and ethical practices that create pathways beyond those traveled by many others.

Here’s to soaring future successes.

This book is dedicated to every student, staff member, and professional who I mentored and hopefully instilled seeds of passion and caring to help recipients of case management services and to role-model the value of case management specialty beyond personal gains. Leave a deep imprint—our patients count on us to do the right thing. I also dedicate this book to my sons, Mike (Rams) and Daniel: May your heart always be your guide toward great deeds in life.

—*Stefany H. Almaden, PhD, RN, MSN, CCM, CPUM, CMCN, PAHM*

For the past thirty years, my professional passion has been focused on case management. At each step along my professional pathway, colleagues have assisted me in learning more and doing more within the scope of my professional practice. I sincerely thank the true case management leaders who dared to dream of a health care delivery system that balances quality and cost while assisting the patient to navigate the sometimes turbulent waters of disease and injury management. To my greatest mentor and dearest friend, B. K. Kizziar, thank you for grounding me with your knowledge, understanding, and sage advice. To my family, without you, there is no me. And, finally, to the case managers who have heard my words through the years and told me I helped you find your way, you make my heart sing. Thank you.

—*Nancy E. Skinner, RN-BC, CCM, ACM-RN, CMCN*

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Certification in Case Management—An Introduction

Nancy E. Skinner

Professionalism in the practice of case management is not achieved based on a job description or title. A professional case manager functions within an established scope of practice that has been developed and honed based on the efforts of case management professionals who have not only established standards of practice, but also served as architects for a validated certification process that advances recognition of the knowledge and expertise required to serve as a professional case manager.

The ability to sit for certification is defined and quantified by the certification body that promotes a specific pathway to certification as well as the knowledge, skill, and abilities of the case manager who seeks that particular certification. This study guide has been developed to assist case management professionals in attaining certification as offered by the Commission for Case Management Certification (CCMC).

The initial certification examination was developed by CCMC in 1992 and since that initial offering of the examination, an estimated 60,000 case managers have achieved the Certified Case Manager (CCM) credential. Over the years, the content of this research-based examination has been revised and enhanced to reflect the roles and functions that are integral to the practice of case management. The most recent revision to the certification process occurred in 2016. This refinement of the certification examination was based on research regarding the role and functions of case management professionals across all settings of practice and environments for health care delivery. According to CCMC, the examination accurately reflects a contemporary practice of case management as well as the knowledge and essential activities that serve as the framework for that practice.

According to CCMC and as detailed within the *Certification Guide*, eligibility to sit for the examination is founded on both the definition of and the philosophy inherent to the practice of case management. CCMC defines case management as a “collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet the client’s health and human services needs. It is characterized by advocacy, communication, and resource management and promotes

quality and cost-effective interventions and outcomes”. The philosophy of case management as provided by CCMC includes the following:

“Case management is an area of specialty practice within one’s health and human services profession. Its underlying premise is that everyone benefits when clients reach their optimum level of wellness, self-management, and functional capability: the clients being served; their support systems; the healthcare delivery systems; and the various payer sources (the term *client* is utilized to refer to the individual recipient of case management services).

Case management facilitates the achievement of client wellness and autonomy through advocacy, assessment, planning, communication, education, resource management, and service facilitation. Based on the needs and values of the client, and in collaboration with all service providers, the case manager links clients with appropriate providers and resources throughout the continuum of health and human services and care settings, while ensuring that the care provided is safe, effective, client-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. This approach achieves optimum value and desirable outcomes for all—the clients, their support systems, the providers, and the payers.

Case management services are optimized best if offered in a climate that allows direct communication among the case manager, the client, the payer, the primary care provider, caregivers, and other service delivery professionals. The case manager is able to enhance these services by maintaining the client’s privacy, confidentiality, health, and safety through advocacy and adherence to ethical, legal, accreditation, certification, and regulatory standards or guidelines.

Certification determines that the case manager possesses the education, skills, knowledge, and experience required to render appropriate services delivered according to sound principles of practice.”

The specific qualifications necessary to sit for the CCM certification currently include:

1. “Current, active, and unrestricted licensure or certification in a health or human services discipline that within its scope of practice allows the professional to conduct an assessment independently. License must be active through the last date of test administration.

OR

2. Baccalaureate or graduate degree in a health or human services field that promotes the physical, psychosocial, and/or vocational well-being of the persons being served, if licensure or certification is not required for your discipline. The degree must be from an institution that is fully accredited by a nationally recognized educational accreditation organization, and the individual must have completed a supervised field experience in case management, health, or behavioral health.”

The applicant is also charged with confirming experience in the practice of case management as demonstrated by specific employment experiences that range from one-year experience under the direction and supervision of a board-certified case manager or as a supervisor of case managers; or 24 months of acceptable full-time case management employment experience.

In addition to demonstrating professional background and duration of experience, the applicant must be able to provide a detailed job description that validates the provision of case management interventions including:

- At least 30 percent of work time focused on the provision of case management services
- Four of five core components of case management performed as a significant aspect of his or her role with all eight essential activities consistently performed across the continuum of care with direct client contact
- Case management experience achieved within the United States

Although other qualifications may be required to achieve eligibility, the previously detailed requirements offered an overview of the majority of eligibility mandates.

The *Certification Guide* provides a listing of the eight essential activities associated with a professional practice of case management. These activities include assessment, planning, implementation coordination, monitoring, evaluation, outcomes, and general. Each of these activities is provided in concert with direct client/patient contact.

The certification examination is based on the five core components or domains of case management including:

1. Care Delivery and Reimbursement Methods
2. Psychosocial Concepts and Support Systems
3. Quality and Outcomes Evaluation and Measurements
4. Rehabilitation Concepts and Strategies
5. Ethical, Legal, and Practice Standards

Each of these five domains includes a number of subdomains that reflect the role and function study that serves as the foundation for detailing aspects of the current practice of case management. It is worth noting that currently an increased focus on ethics and quality management has been identified as core components of current and contemporary practice.

Once eligibility is confirmed, the next step in the certification process is participation and review of the knowledge required to successfully complete the examination. CCMC currently details the examination as a multiple-choice test that includes 180 questions. Of these questions, 150 are scored and 30 questions are tested to confirm validity for inclusion in future exams. The 150 questions are drawn from a library of test questions that may vary from person to person but comprehensively represent the domains and subdomains of knowledge representative of a practice of case management.

Taking the first steps in moving toward certification may be daunting. Sitting in a testing environment and reading questions on a computer screen and seeking to identify the best answer can sometimes be a harrowing experience. Many potential certificants have “test anxiety” that may prevent them from being successful in achieving board certification. While a comprehensive review of this study guide is unable to remove the anxiety associated with the test-taking process, the study guide does present comprehensive and detailed information regarding the domains and subdomains that are covered within the examination. Being armed with the knowledge necessary to successfully complete the testing process is a primary step toward certification achievement.

In addition to this study guide and sample questions presented within this guide, please review the definition and philosophy of case management as provided by CCMC, the *Glossary of Terms* available on the CCMC website, and the *Code of Professional Conduct*

for Case Managers with Standards, Rules, Procedures, and Penalties as adopted by the CCMC. The Code is also available at www.ccmcertification.org. Each of these documents is included within the Appendices of this book.

Another source of information that may support successful completion of the examination is the *Standards of Practice for Case Management* as presented by the Case Management Society of America (CMSA) and CMSA's *Statement of Ethical Case Management Practice*. Both documents are available at the CMSA website, www.cmsa.org.

Prior to preparing to sit for the CCM examination, it is recommended that each candidate review any updates to examination components as detailed within the *Certification Guide to the CCM Examination*. This guide is available at www.ccmcertification.org.