

Managing Your Relationship with Your Pro Bono Client

The Start of Every CLE

- Brief Introduction
- What this presentation will NOT be
- “Let me know what I can do for you.”

The Process

- How to start these relationships
- How to keep them on an even keel
- Most importantly- how to end them.

In the Beginning....

1. Handling the pro bono cold call
2. Meeting with your client

At the 1st Meeting

- 1. Attorney/client relationship**
- 2. The Culture of Poverty**
- 3. Withdrawal**
- 4. Domestic Violence Issues**

And Most Importantly...

- You CAN withdraw
 - It's not easy, but you CAN do it;
 - “would I withdraw in this situation if my client was a paying client?”

So, then what?

- Pro Bono matters can be complicated
 - Lack of resources of clients lead to less than typical situations;
 - Issues associated with:
 - Well, Family Law for starters
 - poverty
 - untreated mental or physical illness
 - domestic abuse
 - Pro Se Litigants

What to do when you don't know what to do

Know the resources around you

- OJT
- Read the book
- Other services for your client
- Other services for you.

Getting help for your client

1. Criminal Law
2. Domestic Violence
3. Mental Health
4. Low Income Housing
5. Job Services
6. Parenting Classes
7. Substance Abuse Classes
8. Child Care

Getting help for your client's lawyer

(That would be you.....)

1. ASK ... ASK ... ASK
2. MLS
3. Other Family Law attorneys
4. The “other resources”
5. Law Enforcement and County Attorney

“Do Not Be Afraid”

- Give it a whirl.
 - Not clean cut - and full of “family law” standards of “equity” and “best interests”
 - Sometimes have to try new things
 - Be creative, then ask - or vice versa

When it's over...

- WITHDRAW
- Cheat sheet/tickler includes withdrawal date
- Explain withdrawal to client (again!)
- File withdrawal with Court 30 days after final order
- Notify Legal Services upon granting of withdrawal

...And then take your next Pro Bono Case

- Unabashed, obvious and over the top plug for pro bono family law cases from Montana Legal Services
 1. HUGE need
 2. MLS is great!
 3. Learn new things with every case
 4. It is NOT that hard
 5. Keep that skill set sharp
 6. Get to know and work with Judges and their staff

Thank You

-Questions, Comments, Concerns?
- (As opposed to “let me know if there is anything I can do for you?)
- If you want to discuss further, please feel free to call me:

Sara Berg, BKBH, PC

443-6820

sara@bkbh.com