

# Managing Your Relationship with Your Pro Bono Client

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# 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

# So...What are the Boundaries?

- You went to *Law School* - not Hogwarts
  - Reasonable Expectations
- Pro Bono clients lie too
  - Open, Frequent and (as much as possible) Honest Communication
  - Actually, You are **NOT** a “counselor”, Counselor
  - Keep it simple, professional, and **LEGAL** only.

# 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?”



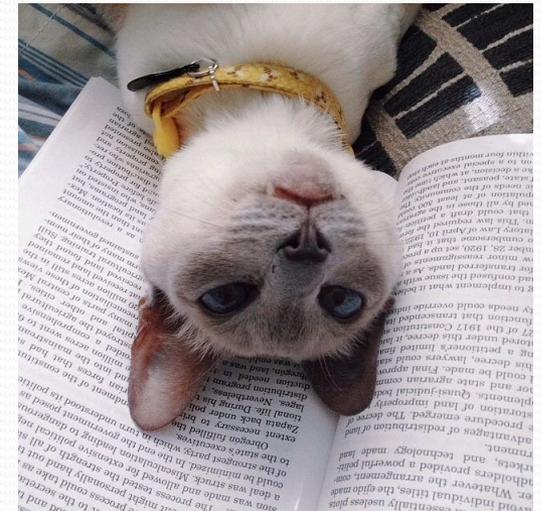
# So, then what?

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:
  - 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 contact me:

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