ACCESS TO JUSTICE: ROLE OF THE JUDGE IN THE COURT AND COMMUNITY

TARGETING A JUDGE’S ROLE

Responses from Past Workshop Participants

This is a list of activities that participants in prior workshops identified as appropriate for a judge to engage in within various areas of the court and the community.

COURT/COURTHOUSE – courthouse management, security, justices of peace, court administrators/clerks, county government, magistrates
- Convene regular domestic violence meetings of these groups
- Improve security measures. i.e., develop security protocols, provide escort services.
- Improve facilities. i.e., size of courtroom, children’s room, day care center
- Develop a procedures manual
- Train staff on domestic violence
- Develop a team approach
- Provide information to legal body
- Revise clerk forms so they are more user friendly

COURT-RELATED SERVICES – GALs, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), court services, probation, custody evaluators, pretrial services, prosecutor, public defenders, corrections department
- Develop coordinating council among these groups
- Encourage court services to receive domestic violence training
- Encourage police training and other mock trials on domestic violence
- Teach continuing education
- Develop a defendant specific file of all court contacts – probation, parole, convictions, injunctions & including all other jurisdictions
- Liaison with corrections
- Develop daycare for these groups
- Develop integrated data bank
- Develop multi-use standardized forms
- Develop CASA advisory board
• Lobby for allocation of resources
• Develop courthouse facilitators.
• Increase expectation of these groups

**COMMUNITY SERVICES/INTERVENORS** – Health care providers, police, domestic violence advocates/shelters, prosecutors, public defenders, batterer intervention services, child protective services
• Develop certification protocol for batterer’s programs
• Streamline access to delivery of shelter services – convene meeting
• Make yourself available for training to and cross training with groups (PD, DA, Police Dept, CPS/DV intake unit)
• Convene meeting to develop procedures to limit interviews w/victims
• Develop supplemental report with police
• Interact and educate health care personnel about domestic violence and the housing authority
• Provide feedback to prosecutors, public defenders, batterer intervention services.
• Create advisory committee for these providers.
• Facilitate a coordinated exchange of information between all of these programs, especially between child protective services, probation and criminal courts.
• Advocate for computerized system that tracks all cases, i.e., all family law cases, DV cases.
• Advocate for money for child exchange centers.
• Create a multi-disciplinary intake center.
• Help make FLACS system more responsive.
• Develop forms and train probation and pre-trial services on completing these services.
• Create self-service center.
• Identify funding for programs and services.
• Encourage private bar to provide pro bono legal services to batterers, victims and shelters.
• Presentation to DAs and PDs to develop open dialogue, encourage appearance at initial appearance, and enforcement of civil POs.
COMMUNITY AT LARGE – services clubs, churches, schools/educators, media, special interest groups

- Encourage moot court programs to consider using domestic violence fact patterns
- Develop relationship with media to explain what occurs in domestic violence courts
- Write editorial letters
- Speak in civic clubs
- Legislative and county government “ride alongs”
- Use service group member as community volunteers to help out in court
- Train faith-based leaders and communities regarding domestic violence and the overlap of domestic violence and child abuse
- Use university students as probation interns and advocates
- Join various organizations and speak about the role as domestic violence judge
- Compile community listing of services.
- Show interest.
- Mentor kids, i.e. Big Brothers, sports.
- Create web pages.
- Board of review re: death of children.
- Support building requests.
- Testify before legislature.
- Education
  - Host schools in courtroom
  - Schools/kids – “judges in the courtroom”, teen dating workshop, “kids at Court”, mock trial in schools, senior centers, malls
  - Churches – conference of clergy, presentation on DV
  - Boy scouts – a law badge
  - service organizations, i.e. Kiwanis, sororities/fraternities
- Set examples in personal life.
- Convene a DV clinic at law schools.
- AOC fund DV summits, holds virtual court.
- Create court community council.
Targeting the Judge’s Role

Learning Points

1. The court necessarily has influence over the court system players.

2. The judge can effectively and ethically impact the court system’s and community’s response to DV by engaging in activities on and off the bench.

3. A judge is only as effective as the resources available and the extent to which they are coordinated.

4. The court may ultimately have a role in violence prevention through public education and helping to change attitudes about domestic violence.