

INTERVIEWING THE JUVENILE CLIENT

I. INITIAL IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT

- A. Let your client know what your job is
 - 1. You are there to represent him/her, not their parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, etc.
 - 2. For juveniles, the sense of empowerment may be a welcome change
 - 3. Don't talk down to your client but use age appropriate language. There is a difference between talking to a 10 year old and a 17 year old.

- B. Explain confidentiality
 - 1. Children will often tell you what they cannot admit to their mother
 - 2. It is often appropriate to ask parent(s) to leave the interview
 - 3. See "Dealing with Parents" section

- C. There is more to your client than the allegations in the petition
 - 1. Ask them about life at home and talk to them about their family
 - 2. Determine if they are currently receiving treatment or medication, are in counseling or have ever been hospitalized
 - 3. Find out your client's interests, hobbies, goals, etc.

II. WHAT YOU NEED TO COVER

- A. How the system works

1. Rights and options of the juvenile
 2. Procedures in the juvenile system
 3. Explain what they can expect to hear from the judge
 4. Talk to your client about how to respond
 6. Coach them carefully about how to act in the courtroom
- B. Define and explain the various roles of the people in the system
1. Make sure that your client understands your explanation. If you suspect that they are unable to comprehend the proceedings consider requesting a competency evaluation
 2. Always consider competency issues with very young clients
 3. Determine if there is a mental responsibility issue
- C. Explain the allegations in the petition
1. Let your client tell you the story. Ask open-ended questions and listen carefully to the answers
 2. Determine if there are any witnesses that an investigator should talk to
 3. If the police report contains a statement read it to your client
- D. Determine if the client has had prior CHIPS, JIPS or Delinquency contacts or referrals
1. Find out if they have ever participated in a diversion program
 2. Determine if they have ever been subject to sanctions
- E. Discuss your client's school situation
1. What school are they attending?
 2. What grade are they in?

3. Are they currently in any special education program?
 4. Have there been any suspensions or disciplinary proceedings?
 5. Are they involved in any school activities, clubs, sports, etc.?
- F. Is your client employed?
- G. Discuss and determine any other adult in your client's life, i.e. coach, mentor, psychologist/therapist
- H. Have the client and/or parent sign a Release of Information
- I. Be honest and realistic with your client, both in terms of outcomes and future contacts
1. Explain the short-term possibilities
 2. Explain the long-term potential outcomes
- J. Explain carefully what is expected of them at each stage of the proceedings. Repeat these expectations at each meeting
- K. If you suspect untreated mental health issues hire your own psychologist for an evaluation.