



## Court Process Workgroup: Victim Access Subgroup

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

8:00 AM- 9:00 AM

Zoom

I. Welcome and Electronic Script

Judge Stoney read the electronic script. The appropriate motions were made and approved.

II. The Protective Order Process: Assessing available materials

a. What materials are available?

Nora explained the purpose of the meeting would be to identify and share what information each member's agency has regarding the protective order process.

Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV)- Most information is for training attorneys. LSNV has two grants that help them supply this information to the public. Information is made to be used throughout Virginia around family law, custody. Not a lot of information on protective orders.

DSVS/DVAC- Brochures describe Advocacy Services and how to seek a protective order (PO). The DVAC brochure explains family abuse, explains the three protective orders available (EPO, PPO, PO). The brochures direct people to call DVAC to find out more information about POs.

The DVAC brochure was recently updated to include new partners. Ayaan explained her role as an advocate to JDRDC to engage clients in advocacy and support them through the PO process, provide safety planning, access to shelter. When an Intake Officer screens someone for a protective order and sets up an appointment, they are connected to an advocate. Ayaan will start working with someone before they come to the courthouse. She can facilitate access to services to help arrange childcare, transportation. Safety planning will occur after court no matter the outcome of the hearing.

If the client doesn't speak English, she will use an interpreter to explain the protective order and the next steps in the process.

Nora noted that there was a lot of knowledge Ayaan had that seemed to live only with her. Nora wondered if there were checklists or other materials Ayaan used. Ayaan noted there were court volunteers for the Protective Order process, the other advocates at DVAC can provide back up if there are a lot of clients.

Nora asked if there are pieces of information that Ayaan repeats over and over again. Ayaan stated she will ask the client similar questions that the judge will ask; the questions are consistent. These might be important to put in the video. Sometimes there is a need to explain what physical abuse is, using examples in the protective order packet.

Nora asked if Ayaan would be willing to make a list of the things she discusses with victims to document it. Ayaan notes sometimes she has to address clients in crisis.

The DVAC brochure and the DSVS brochure will be sent to the group.

JCADA does not have any materials of their own about the protective order process in Fairfax. They provide resources that already exist to clients. The materials are not always Fairfax specific but might come from Virginia specific materials such as the Virginia Action Alliance. The information has basic information about the protective order process.

JDR will use LSNV and DVAC materials in addition to the PO packet. They try not to overwhelm and overload paperwork on the clients.

Brittany will follow up with Sandi Guerrero Perez to see about materials in JDR that are translated into other languages.

David shared that Ayuda does not have family law attorneys.

Pam Sejas shared that immigration concerns were a big fear for many petitioners and often caused them to feel like they had to stay in their abusive relationship. Pam asked David if he might be able to share brochures.

Kacey shared that Victim Services Division (VSD) from the Police Department updated their website during COVID with information about how to apply for a protective order. There are links to both courts' webpages to get more information about applying. The police department's General Orders for the police require officers to hand out a brochure with information about how to apply for a protective order in either court. They will also use the brochures of other agencies, like DVAC.

Nora clarified that VSD might be making referrals on the front end but will also accompany victims to court on the criminal matter. There are materials they've created over the years that can guide victims through the next steps. Much of it lives in their heads, but there are hard materials. Advocates will show victims

pictures of the courtroom so they are familiar with the setting. These are also on their website.

Kacey, former Detective Jacqi Smith, Tina Spurlock, and Katrina Smith created a purple sheet that officers can hand out to victims. JDR will also share the purple sheet with the magistrates.

Judge Stoney shared she serves on Access to Justice Commission for Self-Represented Litigants with the State Supreme Court. They faced a similar issue of wanting to make information available to self-represented litigants. Their committee faced similar obstacles this committee is facing with the state Supreme Court. They were able to add a link with a separate set of pages. The information is not Fairfax specific. Could be a model for how we organize our information and this group could do something similar where this group creates the pages.

Nora shared that the Fairfax DV Community Website is still a work in progress and the future of the project may be uncertain.

Brittany shared about the Protective Order Relief Workgroup and the issues they have been addressing.

Nora noted that the conversation has focused mostly on the JDRDC process and there might be a need to focus on the GDC process since there is very little information about the process and very little support for petitioners. DSVS will be hiring an advocate to work with GDC petitioners.

Next steps will be for people to send materials discussed to Brittany.

Brittany asked members to continue to help recruiting participants for focus groups, which will have run by the next meeting.

Nora shared there will updates from the subgroup working on the Protective Order packet that is being revised.

Judge Stoney adjourned the meeting since there was no further discussion.