

## **TIPS FOR DYNAMIC DISPOSITIONAL ADVOCACY**

### STEP 1: RESEARCH

#### **1. Know your CLIENT**

*Who* is s/he and what are his/her goals, dreams, aspirations?

*What* has shaped your Client's life?

- Review Family Background
- Request DSS Records (if applicable)
- Request School, Medical, Psychological Records

*Why* is s/he before the Court?

- Research Clerk's File
- Request DJJ File

*How* many places has s/he lived?

- Review Info/Records from other Jurisdictions

#### **2. Know the CODE**

- Remember the Purpose of Disposition 7B-2500
- Review the Statutory Options 7B-2506
- Review Client's Disposition Level 7B-2508
- Remember Special Rules and Conditions--Previous YDC Commitment, Extraordinary Needs and Chronic Offenders

#### **3. Know the COMMUNITY**

- Research Service Providers and Placement Options
- Research Mentoring and Youth Enrichment Programs
- Be mindful of emerging trends in Juvenile Justice and Child Advocacy

#### **4. Know the COURT ("Know thy Judge!")**

- Be mindful of the Judge's attitude about particular charges, approach to disposition and overall philosophy regarding Juvenile system

#### **5. Know relevant CASE LAW and CURRENT LEGISLATION**

[www.ncids.org](http://www.ncids.org)

[www.sog.unc.edu](http://www.sog.unc.edu)

## STEP 2: PRESENTATION

### **1. Reiterate Goals and Aims of Juvenile Court 7B-1500, 7B-2500, 7B-2501**

- Emphasize need for appropriate services for Client and family
- Focus on assisting Client's journey toward becoming productive member of community

### **2. Reintroduce your Client to the Court**

- Highlight Client's successes
- Discuss Client's goals, hobbies and interests
- Encourage your Client to speak

### **3. Remind the Court of Special Challenges and Issues affecting Client**

- Is this a Dual Jurisdictional Child? (DSS and Delinquency cases)
- Discuss Family Dynamics, Counseling Needs, Physical Challenges
- Address Educational Concerns, Substance Abuse, Mental Health Needs

### **4. Prepare Your Own Report and Recommendations**

- Ask for Dismissal
- Request Deferred Disposition
- Present Creative Alternatives to Detention, Probation, YDC
- Advocate for Lowest Dispositional Level or Lowest Probation Term
- Present Letters of Support, Testimonials, Certificates of Success

### **5. Protect the Record**

- Object to Unreliable Hearsay
- Ask for Specific Findings of Fact

### **6. Project Positive Attitude**

- Emphasize belief in Client's future success
- Empower Client – provide Client with copies of Dispositional Order, review special terms and conditions and give relevant contact information

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