HEROES AT THE TABLE: DEFENSE ATTORNEYS AND PROBATION OFFICERS

A Panel Discussion

Arizona Association of Drug Court Professionals Conference – Prescott, April 2018
Abstract

Our therapeutic courts work by combining professionals with diverse skill sets, educations, and backgrounds. In this session we are examining two players at the staffing table: defense lawyers and probation officers. In order to improve our working relationships and better serve our mutual clients, we are coming together to educate each other on our respective roles.

For POs, the basics of working with lawyers—how we are trained to think/analyze, obligations to our clients, and constitutional principles we must protect. We will discuss types of laws, confidentiality, duties of honesty, and some of the basic constitutional principles that guide our jobs in and out of the courtroom.

For lawyers, the basics of working with POs—what it means to be a probation officer, how we are trained to think/analyze, combining field work and the courtroom. We will discuss parts of our jobs, including case plans, available resources, officer and community safety standards, meeting clients where they are, building rapport with clients, and how the stigma associated with our position can affect our relationships with our clients. Additionally, they share information regarding how their workweek is structured and what sorts of issues they go through to reschedule events.
Attorneys

Amy Melcher
- Maricopa County Deputy Public Defender
- Specialty Group, Problem Solving Courts Unit (Drug Court, Driving Under the Influence Court, Domestic Violence Court, Probation Violation)

Kara Hyland
- Maricopa County Deputy Public Defender
- Specialty Group, Problem Solving Courts Unit (Drug Court, Driving Under the Influence Court, Domestic Violence Court, Probation Violation)
Adult Probation Officers

Megan Merker
- Maricopa County Adult Probation Officer
- Drug Court Unit, Women’s Trauma caseload

Crystal Yates Arce
- Maricopa County Adult Probation Officer
- Sexual Offenders Unit

Jennifer Dzezinski
- Maricopa County Adult Probation Officer
- Drug Court Unit
BREAKOUT SESSION: BARRIERS TO WORKING WITH PO’S AND ATTORNEYS

10 minutes
Probation Officer

what I think I'm supposed to do
what my mom thinks I do
what my friends think I do
what private sector employees think I do
what my clients think I do
what I really do

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Lawyer

what clients think I do

what friends and family think I do

what society thinks I do

what other lawyers think I do

what I think I do

what I really do

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WORKING WITH PROBATION OFFICERS

Myths and Malarkey
They’re just trying to send the probationer to jail
They’re mean
They’re not flexible
They make probationers move for no reason
They just want money
WORKING WITH DEFENSE ATTORNEYS

Legends and Lies
They’re know-it-all’s
They’re mean
They’re not understanding
If she says “Constitutional Rights” one more time, I swear...

- First Amendment blah blah blah
- Equal Protection yada yada yada
- “BUT YOUR HONOR, HIS LIBERTY INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE!!”
They’re just trying to get the probationer off on a technicality.
They don’t trust that we told the probationer what we say we told them.
They get weird when we talk to the clients without them
They want to tell the probationer things the probationer shouldn’t know
OVERCOMING BARRIERS
Trainings
Ride Alongs
Margs
THANKS FOR JOINING US

MCPDX – Amy Melcher, melchera@mail.maricopa.gov
MCPDX – Kara Hyland, hylandk@mail.maricopa.gov
MCAPD – Megan Merker – merkem@apd.maricopa.gov
MCAPD – Crystal Yates Arce, yatesarceca@apd.maricopa.gov
MCAPD – Jennifer Dzezinski, dzezinskij@apd.maricopa.gov