

Observation Assessment #1

Type of Observation: Client Meeting

Mentor: Anna Rupani

Location: Mosaic Family Services, Inc.

Date: Tuesday, February 6th

Time: 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Assessment:

After going on about half a dozen regular mentor visits, I finally got the opportunity to see Anna interact with one of her clients. I was so excited when Anna told me that she had a client visit that would align with a time I would be able to come, because I've wanted to see what a regular client interaction is like for Anna ever since starting the program this year. Sitting in on this meeting, I really wanted to come away with a sense of knowing what her daily job is like when she is acting as a lawyer to others, as opposed to be a mentor with me. Additionally, because my Final Product is going to rely so heavily on understanding clients, what they're going through, and what they want to understand about their situation, I was so excited to sit in on the meeting because it would be a first hand look on what victims of domestic violence working through their court cases would really want to know.

From the meeting, I was already surprised to learn about the prevalence of translators. Even though Anna had mentioned that most of the cases dealt with require the use of an impartial translator, it didn't connect to me how much that could change the dynamic between a client and their lawyer until I was seeing it upfront. I got the feeling that the client in the meeting communicated more to the translator, as opposed to the lawyer, just because of the shared language they had. Still, it really dawned on me how that probably created a barrier a lot of times and possibly even a slight level of distrust, just because the client and lawyer could never have fully fluid conversations with each other. Going from here, I think I will really need to take that into account when I consider the vulnerability of the clients and the likely uncomfortable position

they might feel that they are in just because of more trivial things like the way the meeting functions, for example.

Another major thing that I took away from sitting in on the meeting was the kinds of questions the client most wanted to know the answers too. Of course, I think it's unwise to apply this one person's questions to every domestic violence client that Anna or Mosaic takes on, but it's still an interesting gauge that I'll be able to factor into my potential list of questions from here on out. I really got the sense that child support and the financial aspects of the court decision were very important to this particular client, in addition to having full legal freedoms from their ex-spouse. Knowing what I know now about questions this client wanted most answered, I think my compiled list of faq questions will in turn be better formulated.

Overall, I was very happy to have the chance to sit in on this meeting. I saw the level of professionalism Anna had when interacting with her client, and I saw the reactions and responses of the client, all of which will help me better understand the field I've chosen to study. I think it was a truly fascinating experience and I was really able to take a lot away from the visit.