

Working with Your Lawyer: A Toolkit for Survivors of Domestic Abuse

WORKSHOP TEMPLATE

PART A = 50 Minutes

I) Reviewing the Nature of the Solicitor-Client Relationship and its dynamics, with particular reference to:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Expectations
- Decision-Making
- Communication

II) Exercise in groups of 5, or with whole group (if less than 10):

“Creating the Model Lawyer”

Describe what you would consider to be your model (i.e. perfect) lawyer:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Groups to report back to whole group. Facilitator will make a list in one column and ask for further definition in the 2nd column, e.g.

1) Be patient	Means?	_____

2) Be a good listener	Means?	_____

3) Understand my needs/Goals/Experiences	Means?	_____

4) Win my case	Means?	_____

5) Return my telephone calls	Means?	_____

6) Keep me updated	Means?	_____

7) Not push me into agreements I feel uncomfortable with	Means?	_____

III) A Look and Discussion about what Family Law Lawyers consider “The Model Client”

- Issues/problems written down ahead of time
- Understands boundaries and limited role of the lawyer as per the gamut of other issues client is also facing
- Is satisfied to rely on lawyer’s support staff when lawyer unavailable, or if have a question/concern that can be addressed by support staff
- Brings support person with her
- Understands the difference between procedural decisions and substantive ones, and allows the lawyer decision making responsibility for the procedural ones, while taking responsibility for substantive decision making, once all options are explained to her
- When possible, for example, if connected to community resources, client has goals and objectives in writing before meeting with the lawyer
- Client gives clear instructions

IV) Comparing the “Model Lawyer” to the “Model Client” - How similar/far apart are they?

PART B = 50 Minutes

I) Show Video (27 Minutes) followed by a 10 minute break for coffee.

II) Post-Film Discussion

e.g. Could you relate to what the clients were saying?

III) Roles and Responsibilities

- (a) What is your primary role in a solicitor client relationship?
- (b) What is your lawyer's primary role (define) in a solicitor client relationship?
- (c) What are your 3 essential responsibilities in the relationship?
- (d) What are your lawyer's 3 essential responsibilities in the relationship?

PART C = 20 Minutes

I) Effective Strategies to Achieve A Good Solicitor-Client Relationship

Participant's List (e.g.):

- (1) Make notes in each meeting
- (2) Make list of questions for lawyer
- (3) Take support person to Interviews
- (4) Keep telephone calls at a minimum
- (5) D.V. Case History for your lawyer, provide concise, vital information regarding the violence, particularly as it relates to:
 - a. Custody/access
 - b. Safety/ protection
- (6) Ask lawyer to confirm details of meetings, instructions/procedures, etc, in letters
- (7) Ask lawyer to explain ALL options in plain, accessible language, and if not understanding, ask lawyer to explain again

PART D

Distribute pamphlets