Client Interviewing

D. Tucker Charns
Chief Regional Defender
Indigent Defense Services
New Misdemeanor Training September 2019

CLIENT INTERVIEW CHECK LIST

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ☐ Check custody status

- ☐ Review warrants and affidavit

- ☐ Review for conflicts with witnesses

- ☐ Review for conflicts with co-defendants

- ☐ Look for indications that client may need an interpreter for interview

- ☐ Check for any other pending charges

- ☐ If there was a prior attorney on this charge, ask for file (client may need waiver)

- ☐ Print out/know the elements of the offenses

- ☐ Print out/know the defenses to the charges

- ☐ Print out/know the sentences of the offenses

- ☐ Print out/know the collateral consequences

- ☐ Know the next court date

- ☐ Know the conditions of release

THE INTERVIEW

☐   Introduce yourself and explain confidentiality

☐   Go over the elements of the offenses

☐   Go over lesser-included charges and the defenses of the charges

☐   Go over possible sentences

☐   Go over range of collateral consequences

☐   Discover immigration status

☐   Go over any court orders/conditions of bond

☐   Discuss client's personal information, story of the case, concerns, best outcome

☐   Discuss fines, costs, fees and ability to pay

☐   Discuss any further investigation/waivers

☐   Discuss not contacting witnesses, officers

☐   Discuss policy on calls from them, family, friends

☐   Go over the process in court

      ☐ what time to arrive

      ☐ what to wear/not wear

      ☐ what to bring/not bring

      ☐ what to expect when name called

      ☐ what it means to wait for attorney/remain and attorney will find client

      ☐ don't leave the court room unless a break/time expectations

      ☐ will the witness be there/what to do if the client sees the witness

      ☐ how to contact attorney if client is late/will miss court

      ☐ what happens if client is late/does not appear

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

☐ Have client sign up court date notification service:

https://www.nccourts.gov/court-dates

☐ Consider if you need to get funds for expert/fact investigator

☐ Consider if you need to contact IDS for an immigration consult

☐ Synopsis for yourself or any substitute counsel

☐ Understand and record the client's goal at this point

☐ Calendar any ticklers

☐ Keep any promises