


NORTH CAROLINA **Judicial** COLLEGE

Self-Represented Litigants

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District 15B
January 2024: New Judges School




www.sog.unc.edu

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Self-Represented?

Yes, Self-Represented Litigants...
instead of pro se litigants

Best practices



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Best practices:

1. Have a process for handling SRLs in the pre-trial phase

- Notice/communication
- Court managers
- Visiting judge hearing motions
- Senior resident

Best practices:

2. Provide transparency (or what I used to call... *a roadmap for trial*)

(jury selection, openings, evidence, objections, charge conference, closings)

Best practices:

Helpful techniques in providing transparency:

- Frame subject matter of hearing
- Explain process
- Elicit needed info from litigants
- Articulate decision from bench if able
- Provide written order
- Set expectations for next steps

Best practices:

3. Ensure procedural fairness

Be fair
Appear fair

Best practices:

4. Listen actively

Validate

Best practices:

5. Reset

Best practices:

6. Tour your own courthouse

**Front door
Signage
Website**

Best practices:

7. Consider self-help materials

Best practices:

8. Remote proceedings

Best practices:

9. Teamwork