

Public Defender Training- Discussion questions

Lorne worked as a commercial fisherwoman in Alaska before moving to Missoula 9 years ago. She is currently a student at the University of Montana. She is a mother of two daughters, and is currently facing charges of custodial interference.

1. What communication strengths does Lorne present?
2. What did you flag as potential communication challenges?
 - a. How might you address these challenges in communication?
3. In the broader context of cases like these- be they termination or custodial interference- what have you figured out about communicating effectively with people terrified of losing their kids?

Ty is a Montana native who studied at Bard, Yale, and the London Conservatory before returning to Missoula and working in social services. He is currently facing what he terms the “Hurricane Katrina” of check forgeries. He’s 33 years old, and has battled mental illness most of his life. *Note: We edited down over an hour of Ty’s video. It is presented here more chronologically than it was delivered.*

1. What communication strengths does Ty present?
2. What did you flag as potential communication challenges?
 - a. How might you address these challenges in communication?
3. Like many people with mental illness, Ty’s thinking is at times very clear and at other times disordered. What have you figured out about communicating with people whose thinking is disorganized?

Mike moved to Missoula from New York several years ago. He’s an A1 mechanic, and proud to have assisted in the rescue operation following the 9/11 collapse of the twin towers. He has a traumatic brain injury and an inoperable bleeding aneurism in his brain. He’s facing theft related charges.

1. What communication strengths does Mike present?
2. What did you flag as potential communication challenges?
 - a. How might you address these challenges in communication?
3. Mike seemed to imply that his attorney treated him differently based on his limited reading and spelling ability. What have you figured out about communicating with people who are illiterate?