

Final Product Proposal

Part 1: Introduction and Statement of Purpose

For the next few months I plan on creating a case study on clients with common mental health issues. As an attorney on the mental health wheel at the Collin County Courthouse, Ms. Petty has many clients with these disorders. From her experience, many clients do not receive the medical treatment they need and are instead sentenced to long terms in jail or prison for their crimes. Texas law does not recognize these issues very clearly so for the final product I will be creating a case study outlining the jobs of an attorney from beginning to end in cases dealing with these mental health issues. The goal following the completion of this study is to write a proposal on how to aid these clients. Common treatment plans will be found and understood, and research on the cost of treatment and medication in a facility will be done. This would include information on mental health facilities, funding needed for treatment compared to prison time, and from where the funding would come. With this proposal the hope is to spread awareness on the impact of mental health issues in the legal system and how it affects clients. The connections provided by Ms. Petty may aid in the spread of the proposal throughout Collin County, particularly to attorneys on the mental health wheel. From this, attorneys may be more educated on sentencing options for defendants with these mental health issues such as time in facilities for treatment rather than prison.

Part 2: Review of Skills and Research

Extensive research on schizophrenia and bipolar disorder is necessary to create a credible proposal and case study. It is important to understand how both of these mental illnesses affect

an individual and their actions, as well as the best way to treat the disorders. Once reasonable and common treatment plans are found and understood, research on the cost of treatment and medication in a facility will be done. This information can then be compared to the cost of providing for inmates in prison. In addition to this, research on the funding of mental health facilities will be conducted. It is unreasonable to expect taxpayers to fund these facilities if more criminals are sentenced there rather than prison. Because of this, it is important to understand how much it cost to run these institutions, their capacity, and how they are funded.

Aside from the institutions and mental illnesses themselves, research must be done to create a case study. Generally case studies are written on actual cases, which include the background information, topic or question of the case, and the verdict or outcome. However, since my focus is on the roles of an attorney working with mental illnesses and the problems that may arise, the study will be more general with some specific examples for support. This will provide information on representing clients with mental illness and outline some possible solutions to the general issues that may arise. With this information I can then create a proposal for attorneys in nearby counties to educate them on sentencing options for defendants with mental illness to time in mental health facilities for treatment rather than excessive prison time.

Part 3: Methodology

To begin the final product I will research the most common types of mental illness that Ms. Petty sees in her client list. From here, the focus will be on mental health facilities and their funding. Along with this research, I will be working on the case study simultaneously. Since these two are not connected until the proposal stage, I can continue research as I work with Ms.

Petty on the case study. This will require research on how an attorney works through a case from start to finish, specifically one where the defendant has mental illness. With information on various cases and problems that occur, I will learn more about the field itself and create some possible solutions to the more common issues. Furthermore, once this is understood, an research will be done on which defendants would most benefit from treatment in a facility rather than prison and the extent to which this treatment would benefit them. Certain characteristics associated with these illnesses may make certain treatment futile so it is important to know what types of clients would truly benefit the most compared to prison time. If an interview with a medical professional is needed to clarify this, one will try to be scheduled, though currently it does not seem necessary.

Part 4: Materials

Aside from sources to provide information to research, many materials are not needed to complete this case study and proposal. Following the completion of the case study, the proposal will be created on Canva. To increase its professionalism, I will be using a free 30-day trial of the upgraded version. Aside from this, the only cost will be printing the proposal on cardstock with binding. Since the goal is to educate attorneys on the sentencing possibilities in criminal cases involving mental health issues, copies of this proposal in a condensed brochure form will be handed out to attorneys on the mental health wheel in nearby counties. The number of copies that are made will dictate the cost. Since each proposal should cost about ten to twelve dollars depending on the number of pages, a brief brochure format would allow me to reach a larger

audience for less money. A QR code linking to the proposal would allow attorneys to read through the information quickly and then go on line for additional detail.

Part 5: Conclusions

Following the completion of this project, I will be meeting with attorneys in nearby counties on the mental health wheel to discuss my proposal and hopefully educate them further on sentencing options for defendants with mental illness to time in a mental health facility or programs for treatment rather than prison. This would greatly benefit those in nearby counties with mental illnesses like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Additionally, based on a hearing that was observed in early February in court, Collin County is making strides to aid those with mental illness and treat them as needed. Because of this, there is a strong possibility that nearby counties will be influenced by these improvements and my proposal, making the project more successful. If the cost of providing treatment to individuals rather than time in prison is reasonable and does not increase funding or taxes excessively, it may be a viable option for sentencing those in felony cases, at least for a period of time.