



May

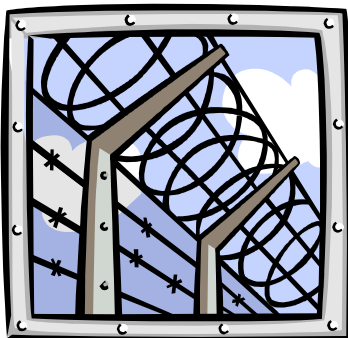
CJSN SYDNEY UPDATE

A Service of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service Inc.

In recent months.....

Since the last update a couple of exciting things have happened at CJSN. Firstly, a big welcome to our newly-trained court support workers. We hope that you find your time volunteering with CJSN both interesting and rewarding.

Earlier this year we held a long overdue get together of court support workers. Then in March, three of our volunteers received awards for their contribution to volunteering, and more recently three of our long term volunteers were granted authorisations to enter court cell complexes and correctional centres. As there are a large number of support referrals for people who are in goal to be supported either via video link from gaol to the court or in court itself, having



volunteers with these authorisations is already proving to be invaluable.

Thank you to all court support workers who have supported CJSN clients in the past few months. Without you, CJSN would not be able to support as many people as we do, and their court experience would be more traumatic than it need be.

Reminders

Court Supports can take all day as some of you have found out. Remember when phoning to introduce yourself to your client to remind your client to bring medication (if relevant) food and something to do.

If you have not done a support for some time, rereading your checklist of what a court support entails is a good refresher.



For us to continue to provide a good service to our clients and to support you in your work we need to be able to contact you. For obvious reasons we need to maintain up to date telephonic and email details. It is also important that we know if you change address as where you live makes a difference to the supports that we offer you. Please would you keep Joanne and/or Mitch informed if any of your contact details change.

If you need more Court Support Report forms, wallet cards (for clients), cards to write the date of the next court appearance and support worker cards, please let Ushan know.



Volunteer Get together / Refresher



Putting faces to names and meeting fellow court support workers (both volunteers and staff), was an important part of the volunteer get together held on 16th February. We benefited from learning more about Section 32 applications, reflecting on how best to communicate with our clients and from sharing our experiences. Some of these communication tips have been included in this update, and further handouts that were recommended will be developed.

Unfortunately the day and time did not suit many people. We hope more people will be able to attend the next session which will be held later in the year.

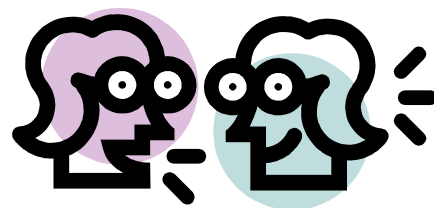
In the meantime, if there is enough interest we would like offer a repeat of the session on Section 32 applications, at our office at Redfern. If you are interested in attending such a session please contact either Mitch or Joanne and let us know what times suit you best.

Adopt your local court or police station

One way to maintain and increase the profile of CJSN in the community is to have information about the service readily accessible at Local Courts and Police Stations around Sydney. You may already have seen the information brochures, wallet cards, pens and posters which CJSN uses for promotion.

If you would like to visit your local court and/or police station on a regular basis to 'touch base', distribute and replenish promotional material for CJSN, please contact Joanne or Mitch. Thanks to Christine Lattimore who has already taken it on herself to visit courts in her neighbourhood.

Communication tips (with thanks to Robert Strike):






- ✦ A support person is there to provide support, not to take over.
- ✦ Don't speak for the PWID – allow your client to speak for him/herself. Talk to your client, not to the solicitor etc
- ✦ Maintain eye contact – to ensure your client is listening and hearing you.
- ✦ Don't ask your client if s/he understands – rather ask them to explain back to you what they understand they have been told.
- ✦ Answer questions straight away or the PWID might forget the question
- ✦ Do not show your own anxiety or frustration at the situation – the PWID can read your body language well and will react to it.
- ✦ Write important information down– e.g. next court date.
- ✦ Ideas for distracting the client (to help make them less anxious) – talk about a favourite TV program, what sport they follow,
- ✦ If a client's behaviour becomes difficult, often a distraction with some other topic will help calm them and then you can bring them back to what you were trying to explain.
- ✦ Breathing exercises help to calm people down – 'lets breathe deeply' (and do it with them)
- ✦ When you make contact before the court date find out your client's interests so that you can come prepared e.g. with a magazine article or similar – reading to the client may help reduce anxiety.



EXPENSES

When you do a support for CJSN you may claim all reasonable expenses.

Please:

-  Use a new CJSN claim form for each support that you do
-  Note that we now pay 55 cents/km (adjust if you have old forms)
-  Include all receipts

Free Training

The Community Restorative Centre has generously offered to run a course "Connect: Supporting Families of Prisoners" for CJSN. The course will broaden your knowledge of the prison system and its impact on families. Alex, Mitch and Joanne all found the 1 day course very useful for our work as court and police support workers.

To take up the offer of free training, CJSN will need to guarantee that at least 15 people will attend. It is proposed that the training would take place on a weekday sometime in August or September this year.

Please register your interest by emailing or calling Joanne or Mitch (Contact details below). Please indicate in your email which days of the week you could attend.

Useful Website: www.courtwise.nsw.gov.au

Recently I came across Courtwise – a website developed by a collaboration of a number of organisations to provide information on the NSW Court System. While the site has been



developed for victims and other witnesses it gives a good overview of the court process, has a dictionary to describe terminology in reasonably plain English and a number of information sheets. You may find it useful to look up the website to refresh your memory:



What is in your bag? (A timely reminder)

Recently a DADHC worker inadvertently left a fruit knife in her bag when she went to court. This resulted in a large fine. Let this be a timely reminder – when you support someone in court please make sure you remove all knives and other prohibited objects from your bag before entering the court complex.

RECOGNITION FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

Liverpool Volunteer Resource Centre recently recognised outstanding volunteers who work for organisations listed on their books. Three CJSN volunteers were nominated for an award.



Mike Sprange, Elizabeth Starr and Jillian McCarthy have all trained as both Police and Court Support Workers for CJSN. They are dedicated to the people we care and work for applying their considerable talents thoughtfully and going above and beyond the call of duty by trying to think outside the box to find solutions when they support clients. They have shown commitment, flexibility and reliability and have supported numerous clients often rearranging their lives to do the supports. All three were awarded a certificate for Outstanding Volunteer Work while Jillian McCarthy received an award for a significant contribution to volunteering.

Mitch Fraser and Elizabeth Starr were able to attend the awards ceremony and lunch held at the Mounties Community Club on Friday 28th March.

Contact details:

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| <u>Phone:</u> | 9318 0144 or 1300 665 908 (24/7 help line) |
| <u>Joanne</u> (M-W): | joanne@idrs.org.au |
| <u>Mitch</u> (W-F): | mitch@idrs.org.au |
| <u>Ushan</u> (M-F): | ushan@idrs.org.au |