

Executive Summary

Course Title: *Expert Testimony ~ The Art of Testifying in the Courtroom*

Outline of Training:

This two-day training is designed to teach child welfare workers how to be effective courtroom witnesses. Using faculty from the bench, county counsel, and attorneys who represent parents and children, the first day will explore why contested hearings are set, how attorneys analyze facts to advocate for their clients, form legal case theory and prepare and deliver direct and cross examination.

The second day will allow students to work in pairs to deliver direct and cross examinations and testify. Faculty will provide individual feedback to each participant.

Target Audience:

All child welfare staff who serve families that appear before the juvenile court are most likely to learn something from this course. Using law school curriculum that has been specifically adapted by child welfare worker trainers through CalSWEC, this curriculum teaches role understanding, trial skills and all the tools a child welfare worker will need to become an effective witness.

Supervisory and veteran staff can learn how to develop legal case theory and prepare direct and cross examination. They can then use this and their existing knowledge to help younger staff learn all of these skills and become effective witnesses.

Outcome Objectives for Participants:

Once attendees learn how to develop legal case theory and differentiate this concept from social work case assessment, they will prepare more effective reports and become more effective educators and advocates in the courtroom.

In addition to possessing advanced preparation skills, attendees will testify more effectively each time they are called to the witness stand.

Ways that Supervisors can support the Transfer of Learning from the classroom to the job...

BEFORE the training

Supervisors can identify prevailing concerns that line staff present with regard to the courtroom process in order to effectively work through these issues during the training. Supervisors can also plan to attend in order to assist line staff with the legal concepts they will be taught.

AFTER the training

Supervisors can apply the tools learned in every case that gets set for a contested hearing but reviewing the case with staff and county counsel and effectively preparing the worker to testify.