

**Challenging, but not Impossible:
A Case Study of the University of St. Thomas (MN) Interprofessional Center for
Counseling and Legal Services In Action**

Client: Male non-citizen presented as needing help with immigration issues and finding housing.

Referral: SW Director approached by student in a social work class asking if the Legal Clinic could help Client with immigration issues.

- SW Director verbally asked Legal Team to speak with Client
- Legal Team interviewed client twice, decided to take the case and help client apply for asylum.
- Legal Team verbally refers client to SW to continue helping stabilize housing and meet other basic needs.
- SW refers client to Psychology to provide therapeutic services.
- Legal Team refers client to Psychology to provide assessments to supplement the asylum application.

Legal Services: Overview of Asylum Law in this case

- Affirmative Asylum Application: Political Activist in Home Country – Jailed and Tortured:

Past persecution by Government Officials as a result of Client's
Nationality; Political Opinion; and Membership in a Social Group
Well-founded fear of being persecuted upon his return to home country.

- One-Year Filing Deadline to Apply for Asylum:

One-Year Deadline can be overcome by "Extraordinary Circumstances." Those circumstances may include but are not limited to: (i) Serious illness or mental or physical disability, including any effects of persecution or violent harm suffered in the past, during the 1-year period after arrival; (ii) ineffective assistance of counsel"

- Student Activity. Extensive client interviewing and fact investigation in order to prepare application for asylum. Challenge in interviewing involved retraumatizing client .

Social Work Services:

- **Case management services** including assistance in finding housing; referral for medical, psychiatric assistance and medications; referrals to legal and psychological services "in-house;" long-term referral to Center for Victims of Torture; assistance in applying for benefits; job-training assistance.
- **Addressing Psycho-Legal "Soft Spots":** e.g. social work debriefing client before and after interviews with legal team to manage retraumatization.

Psychological Services:

1. Services requested by IPC, Legal Services.

A. Referral questions

1. Does the client have a serious illness, or mental or physical disability, including any effects of persecution or violent harm suffered in the past, that has affected his ability to meet the one year filing deadline for asylum?
2. Is there any lingering evidence (the clients psychological health) that would indicate that he was persecuted in the past, and does it seem likely that he will be again in the future?

B. Assessment process

1. Bio-Psychosocial Interview
2. Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS) (www.ncptsd.va.gov)
3. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory -2 (MMPI-2)

2. Services requested by IPC, Counseling Services, Social Work.

A. Individual Psychotherapy

1. Helping the client to manage the emotional stress involved in preparing for the legal proceedings.
2. Helping the client to manage his mental health issues until services are available at the Center for Victims of Torture.

3. Preparation to work directly with the client.

A. Answering the legal questions

1. General counseling skills
2. Courses in assessment and integrated report writing at UST (MMPI-2)
3. Applying assessment course material to learning new assessment tools (CAPS)

B. Providing psychotherapy by the request of Social Work

1. General counseling skills
2. Courses in psychopathology and psychotherapy at UST

4. Preparation to work directly with the legal team.

A. Courses in Lay and Professional Witness testimony

1. Readings, role plays, and preparation work
2. Establishment of working relationships
3. Fall vs. Spring Semester class

B. Preparation in a previous immigration case: conducted assessment & prepped for trial