Court Process Preparation Without Legal Advice Workbook

A grounding and organization worksheet for stressful systems, paperwork, waiting, and aftercare.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

This is a reflection tool, not a test. One honest sentence, one checked box, or one small next step can be enough.

Court Process Preparation Without Legal Advice

Workbook

A printable reflection and practice resource Preparing for Court Without Pretending to Be Your Lawyer Plain-language organization for terminology, protection-order procedures, hearings, questions, exhibits, courthouse logistics, advocacy roles, and grounded participation.

Workbook 05

Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education

Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC Free therapeutic-style education - not therapy, legal advice, medical care, or emergency response My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 1 Before you begin This is a person-centered, trauma-informed workbook. You decide what to read, write, print, share, skip, or stop.

You do not need to prove that something is bad enough before seeking support. A worksheet should never be used to pressure someone to leave, stay, report, confront, forgive, remember more, or take legal action.

Immediate danger or medical emergency: call 911 in the U.S. or Canada. For suicide or mental-health crisis support in the U.S. or Canada, call or text 988. For relationship-abuse support in the U.S., contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233), text START to 88788, or visit thehotline.org. Services, privacy practices, and emergency-response policies vary by location.

Technology safety: if someone may monitor your device, accounts, vehicle, home network, or location, use a safer device or location when possible. Private browsing and deleting history do not erase every record. Changing access or settings may alert a person who is monitoring you or erase evidence, so consider confidential technology-safety support before making changes.

This workbook provides general education, not legal advice, representation, investigation, diagnosis, psychotherapy, medical care, crisis response, or an individualized safety plan. Laws, court procedures, evidence rules, deadlines, confidentiality, and available remedies differ by place and situation. Consult a licensed attorney, legal-aid program, tribal legal service, court self-help program, or trained advocate for guidance that fits your circumstances.

Choice and pacing

- Keep your eyes open, work in short sections, use initials, leave blanks, ask an advocate to sit with you, or stop.

Store or dispose of completed pages only in ways that support safety. Do not investigate, confront, or test another person because of a worksheet.

What would help this feel safer or more manageable today? _____

_____

___ _____

_____ My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 2 My support and safety page Write only what is safe to keep. Consider neutral contact names or an advocate's guidance if discovery is a _____

_____ _____

_____ concern.

Immediate emergency plan Confidential advocate or hotline Attorney, legal aid, or court self-help Medical or mental-health support Trusted person and code word Safer device or location Transportation, children, pets, language, or accessibility needs My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 3

1. Start with local legal help

Court names, forms, filing rules, service, evidence, hearing formats, confidentiality, appeals, and protection-order standards vary. Confirm each step with the court, a licensed attorney, legal aid, or authorized self-help program.

Court and case number Official source for local instructions Attorney, advocate, or self-help contact My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 4

2. Terms to verify

Petitioner, respondent, declaration, service, filing, motion, hearing, exhibit, testimony, order, continuance, dismissal, and enforcement may have specific local meanings.

Pause point: If this section increases fear, confusion, dissociation, or urgency, stop. Orient to the date and place, move toward support, and use emergency or crisis services when needed.

Terms I need explained Who explains procedure versus strategy Words I want written down

3. Process map

A common sequence may include forms, filing, judicial review, temporary orders, service, hearing, and a longer-term decision, but not every jurisdiction follows this sequence.

- My confirmed steps

Who handles service Dates and deadlines

4. What a hearing may look like

Hearings may be in person, remote, or hybrid. People may check in, wait, present evidence, answer questions, and receive a decision immediately or later.

Arrival or login plan Language, disability, or safety accommodations Support-person rules

5. Questions by role

Separate logistical questions for the clerk from legal questions for an attorney and safety/process questions for an advocate. Examples include exhibit labeling, copies, deadlines, interpreters, or remote evidence.

Questions for clerk or self-help Questions for attorney Questions for advocate

6. Organizing exhibits

Follow local rules. Keep originals safe, make required copies, label consistently, and create an index. Never alter evidence to improve it. Ask how digital or confidential material must be submitted.

Exhibit name or number What it shows and source

_____

_____ Rule or deadline to confirm My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 9

7. What to bring

Possible items include identification, hearing notice, filed papers, proof of service, evidence copies, witness details, timeline, questions, medication, charger, transportation plan, and advocate contact.

Required documents Comfort and access needs Childcare, transport, and aftercare My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 10

8. Advocate roles and limits

Advocates may offer emotional support, safety planning, referrals, and general process information. Their roles differ. They generally do not replace a lawyer or provide legal advice unless separately licensed and authorized.

What I want from an advocate _____

_____ _____

_____ **What requires an attorney** _____

_____ _____

_____ **Privacy questions before sharing My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 11**

9. After the hearing

Obtain the order or decision, read it, ask how corrections or questions work, learn enforcement steps, update safety planning, and note deadlines. A difficult outcome is not proof that harm was unreal.

Documents to obtain Who may need a copy Support for the hours after court My Reflective Collective - Safety, Advocacy & Recovery Education Page 12 One-page action map

- Choose only steps that fit your safety, legal advice, capacity, culture, privacy, and real life.

  _____

  _____

What I know right now

What I want help understanding

Most urgent safety consideration One person or service I may contact A step from a safer device or place A step I am intentionally not taking yet Date to review Resources and scope guidance that fits your circumstances.

National Domestic Violence Hotline (U.S.) thehotline.org | 800-799-SAFE | text START to 88788 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada Emergency services Call 911 for immediate danger or medical emergency in the U.S./Canada WomensLaw womenslaw.org - U.S. legal information and referrals Legal Services Corporation lsc.gov - U.S. civil legal-aid finder NNEDV Safety Net techsafety.org - technology-safety education 211 211.org - community-resource connections in many areas Copyright and sharing attribution, or present this material as individualized professional advice. Resource listings are starting points, not endorsements or guarantees.

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If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency: Call 911 in the United States or use your local emergency number. For U.S. suicide or mental-health crisis support, call or text 988. For relationship-safety support, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233, text START to 88788, or visit TheHotline.org from a safer device when possible.

_____
_____ Privacy and safer searching If someone may monitor your device, accounts, internet connection, location, downloads, or browser activity, consider using a safer device and a trusted network. Private browsing may reduce locally saved history but does not make activity invisible. Clearing history can also be noticed. A website Quick Exit button changes the page; it cannot erase browser, download, router, account, employer, school, carrier, or device records. Choose only steps that feel safer in your situation.

Do not store identifying or safety-sensitive answers where another person may find them.

Educational scope and professional limits This resource provides general psychoeducation, reflection, and wellness support. It is not therapy, counseling, diagnosis, assessment, treatment, medical advice, legal advice, crisis response, forensic evaluation, or an individualized safety plan.

It does not replace care from a licensed clinician, healthcare professional, attorney, trained advocate, emergency service, or other qualified professional. Laws, court procedures, services, and risks vary by location and circumstance.

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Choice, pacing, and inclusion You may skip, change, discuss, dictate, draw, pause, or stop any activity. No exercise can determine what you experienced, diagnose a condition, prove a legal claim, guarantee safety, or tell you whether to stay, leave, report, reconcile, forgive, or pursue court action. Adapt language and activities for culture, identity, disability, neurotype, age, literacy, sensory needs, and personal preference. Automatic translation can make mistakes; confirm legal, medical, emergency, and safety-critical wording with a qualified person.

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