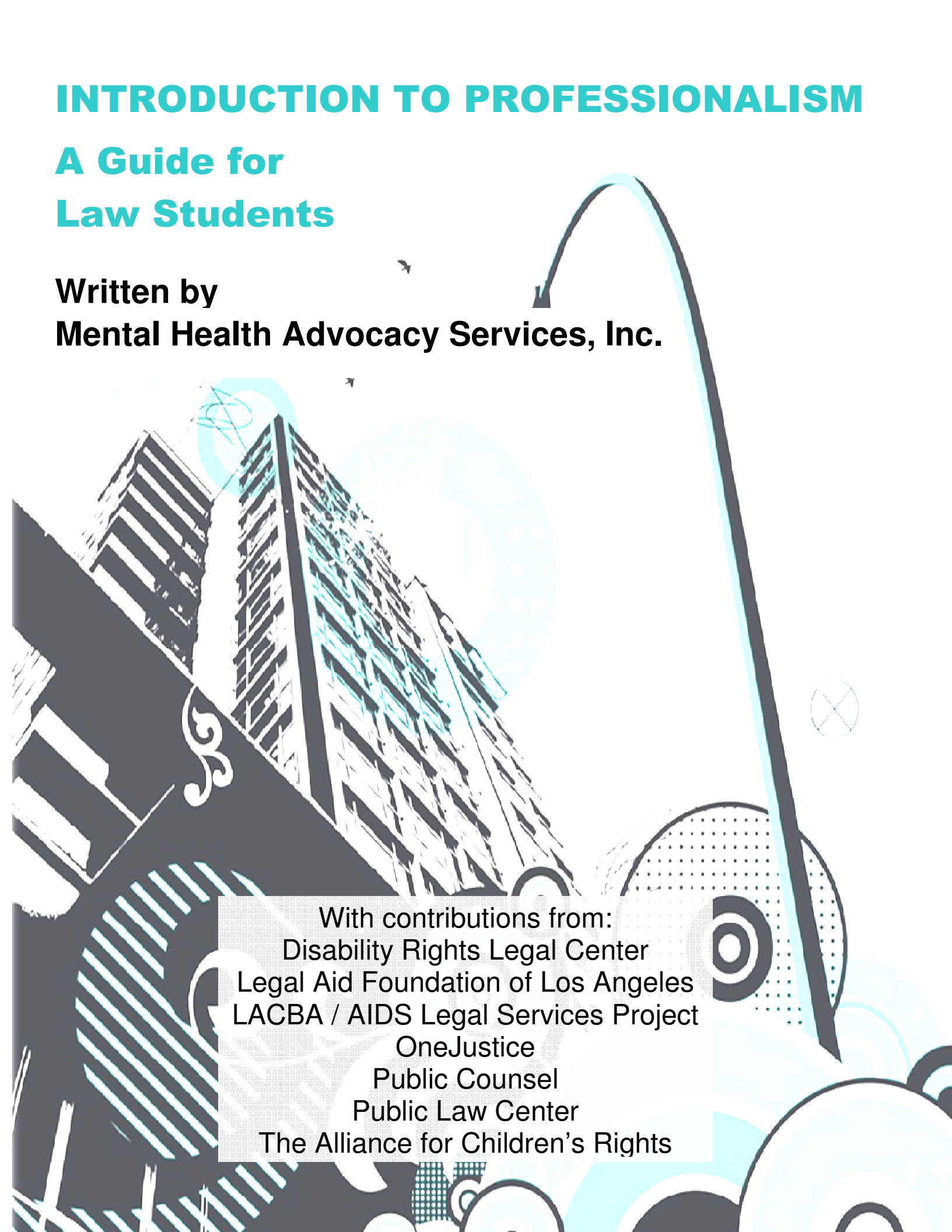


INTRODUCTION TO PROFESSIONALISM

A Guide for Law Students

Written by
Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc.



With contributions from:
Disability Rights Legal Center
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
LACBA / AIDS Legal Services Project
OneJustice
Public Counsel
Public Law Center
The Alliance for Children's Rights

Introduction to Professionalism: A Guide for Law Students

Chapter 1

Introduction – Why Professionalism Matters

This guide is intended to supplement the *Introduction to Professionalism: A Guide for Law Students* webinar sponsored by the SoCal Pro Bono Managers in cooperation with southern California law schools and the Public Interest Clearinghouse. The professionalism webinar is available through southern California law schools and on the SoCal Pro Bono Center website, <http://www.probono.net/ca/socal/>.

The SoCal Pro Bono Managers, working with clinical, extern and career staff of southern California law schools, developed this informational guide in an effort to enhance the experience of law students working for public interest agencies and the pro bono service provided by law firms through law student volunteers, interns and externs.

This guide provides law students with useful insights from the perspective of public interest legal services recruiters on the process of applying for positions, working effectively in those positions and cultivating important mentor and reference relationships.

Attorneys are held accountable to the codes of professional responsibility, which encompasses both legal ethics and general matters of professionalism. These standards help maintain the integrity of the legal profession, and as law students you are considered an integral part of the legal profession. When you work at an organization or firm through pro bono opportunities, internships and externships, your conduct and professionalism reflect upon the reputation of that organization or firm as well as yourself.

Cultivating a good reputation is the most valuable asset you can have as you pursue your legal career. Because the legal community is very small and the public interest community even smaller, your reputation, good or bad, will undoubtedly precede you. A first-rate reputation takes time and effort to establish and only minutes to destroy. Whether you stand out in the legal community for your professionalism or sloppy work and eyebrow-raising behavior can make all the difference in receiving an offer for an internship, job or pro bono opportunity.

Chapter 2

Applying to Public Interest Internships and Jobs

Professionalism in the workplace begins long before you set foot in an office for an interview or first day on the job. At all times, but especially when the job market is challenging, you want to ensure that you make the best impression on a prospective employer from your first contact. As a general matter, when you plan your telephone calls, email messages or interviews, think about how to make your interviewer's life easy. This means put yourself in that individual's place. The interviewer is often an attorney with a full-time work life aside from the time commitment made to interview prospective interns, externs or attorneys. As a result, the interviewer doesn't have a lot of extra time. Think about how you can be prepared in this process to make the receiver's job easier and hopefully nudge your inquiry along slightly ahead of the next person's.

A. The Application Process

Aspects of applying for a job include the initial contact, resumes, cover letters and interview scheduling.

1. **Initial Contact:** Look at the agency's website to identify the contact person for internship or job inquiries and contact information. If the website gives you information about how to apply, follow that direction. If necessary, do a little extra homework and make sure you find the contact person's name and title; do not use a generic "Dear Sir or Madam." Don't jump over the contact person listed on the website with a letter to the executive director. All that might do is ensure that your letter is lost or that you irritate the staffers who coordinate hiring by making yourself notable as someone who is unable to read and follow directions.

If your contact is by email, make sure that even your introductory email is tightly written as a business communication. Do not you begin with "hey" or "hi." "Dear Ms. Smith:" or "Ms. Smith:" is fine. Follow the directions you've been given. If none exists, then attach a cover letter, resume and writing sample, with a notation that you can provide references upon request.

Proofread! Even your introductory email should be thoroughly proofed to avoid typos that make a prospective interviewer think you are inattentive to detail. Also, it may sound obvious, but nothing turns a recruiter off quicker than seeing another agency's name in a letter addressed to her; it tips her off that you are sending out a big batch of resumes with little or no regard to the actual cause or mission of the individual agency.

2. Resume Tips: Several resume considerations are as follows:

- Consider writing a resume that is tailored for public interest jobs versus law firm or other positions. Such a resume emphasizes your charitable work.
- It is fine to include college volunteer and work experiences, especially if you are a 1L.
- Avoid references to high school honors. They are ancient history. The only exceptions might be some national or state ranking in a sport or other pursuit that demonstrates your persistence and perseverance or if you played some significant leadership role in community service or development of a community service program—especially if it directly relates to the mission of the agency to which you are applying. Nobody cares if you were your high school valedictorian.
- While there are a few public interest attorneys who disagree, most recruiters want to see one-page resumes only. When you look at the process from the recruiter's side and recognize the limited amount of time the person has to screen eligible candidates and the stack of resumes she has to go through, you'll want to take the cautious approach and limit yourself to one page. If there is something really important that you can't fit into one page, put it in your cover letter.
- Have several people look at your format to see how different readers respond. What looks fine to one person may look cluttered to another.
- Proofread! This can't be said enough. Some busy staffers use resume typos as an easy way to round file resumes and thin the stack of prospective applicants.
- Cover Letters Are Important: Use your cover letter to convey your commitment and passion for the organization's mission. Use it to show how your background offers a good fit for the agency's work. Generic cover letters can hurt you. If you don't have the time to do good cover letters, maybe you are better off narrowing your list of target organizations to the number you can meaningfully research and provide strong cover letters. Be careful about using your cover letter to restate everything you have listed in your resume. Your cover letter should be focused to highlight why you and your skills are a particularly good fit for the agency to which you are applying.

3. Scheduling the Interview: Different agencies have different staffing and response times. You will not always get an interview. Large agencies and small agencies may have different follow-up procedures. Some small agencies suggest that, if you haven't heard from the agency in two weeks, go ahead and re-contact the agency. Your email might have been buried or lost. This is especially true if it is an organization about which you feel strongly and/or to which you have a connection. Larger organizations, however, sometimes field 600 resumes. Pro bono coordinators in some of these larger organizations indicate that they do not like this sort of follow up. You will need to tailor your follow up to the individual agency, giving

credence to what the website directions are and what information you have been given by recruiters.

4. When you are exchanging emails about possible interview times, think about the recipient. How can you make this scheduling task easier for the agency? When asked when can you come in, give as broad a range of times and dates as you can for the next week or two. This can avoid the endless email exchange of dates that don't work.

Chapter 3

The Interviewing Process

Your interview begins the moment you come in the door. Professionalism at every point of contact is important. In other words, everyone matters. Everyone in the office is theoretically part of the interviewing team. You are always on—even in the lobby or waiting area.

How do you prepare for your interview? While it is certainly important that you know your own resume, knowledge of the agency with which you are interviewing is even more important. The minimum requirement is that you demonstrate that you looked at the agency's website. If you've done a little additional research on the agency's history—i.e., major litigation involvement, accomplishments within project areas, new areas of development or practice—you will stand out.

Prepare a list of questions you want to ask about the agency. Even as you have your list ready, try to actually listen to what the interviewer says because questions about the agency that grow out of the conversation are very noticeable to the interviewer since most are weary of the canned questions such as what has your most meaningful experience been at the agency, what do you find most rewarding, why did you come to the agency? While lawyers like to talk, these questions come up over and over again. New questions make you a more memorable interviewee.

Consider getting law student friends together for interviewing practice sessions. Practice answering questions from a public interest perspective, which might be different from how you answer questions at a law firm. Many interviewers ask what drew you to interview with this agency and why you are interested in public interest. Everyone wants to give back. Everyone wants to help. If this is your answer, consider whether there is some relevant detail in your life that will make even this stock response resonate better. Having an answer that might be different from the ten answers the interviewer has already heard that morning can be very helpful.

Chapter 4

Accepting, Declining, Delaying and Rescinding Offers

A. Accepting

The organization, National Association for Legal Career Professionals (NALP), has set up guidelines for offer lengths and student standards in dealing with offers and responses. You should become familiar with these. It is important to know, however, that public interest agencies, especially smaller ones, have a great deal of difficulty strictly adhering to these guidelines, especially as the summer interviewing season wears on. Some might give you shorter timeframes to respond and may not be willing to extend offers. These agencies are aware that students tend to hold onto their offers as last resorts if they don't get the job they really want and this ends up prejudicing the organization.

Early in the interviewing season, it is fair for you to expect at least a week to make a decision. Agencies should include a "think" weekend as part of the response deadline. Again, this seems only fair to the student.

Many agencies try to call students with offer information. It is good to confirm that information back in an email with your gratitude for the offer and that you will get back to the agency within the requested time line.

Other agencies do their offers via email. You can feel free to respond via email, but more importantly—give the offering agency the courtesy of quickly acknowledging that you have received the offer and are considering it. Offer emails that go unanswered for several days make a bad impression. If you accept the offer, you might want to ensure that the agency received your email response by also calling and leaving a message. Sometimes emails do not get through.

B. Declining

In addition to the NALP standards about how many offers you should keep open at any given time, be polite about declining an offer. The public interest world is small. It takes little effort to email a "no thank you" to the offering agency. Just letting an offer run out and not responding at all is probably considered rude by many attorneys. It smacks of that sense of entitlement that you want to avoid.

C. Delaying

You can request an extension of an offer deadline, but be aware that agencies understand this means that you are likely waiting for a preferred offer. Some students seem shocked when an offer isn't extended and emphasize how important their first summer's choice is. Attorneys understand this, but they also understand that your need for an extension means that you have only limited interest in their agency and they are losing the opportunity to make a timely offer to another candidate. If the offer is not extended but you find that you later want to pursue that offer, feel free to contact the agency again. If there is still an opening, you may get the nod. Some larger organizations extend multiple offers for individual slots and, while the agency gives you a

maximum of two weeks to respond, if another student responds earlier, the slot you were initially offered could be gone. It's a little like first come, first served.

D. Rescinding

Rescinding an accepted offer should only be done for very limited, extraordinary reasons. Sometimes people have financial, health or housing arrangements that change between offer acceptance and the beginning of summer. In these limited cases, it is acceptable to rescind an offer, which should be done as soon as you become aware of the problem. Don't prejudice the agency and another law student who might be able to take advantage of your rescission by delaying notice to the agency. Remember that the public interest agency community is small and agencies talk to each other. You do not want to be a law student who is spoken of negatively.

E. Other Concerns

It may seem fair to you that, when you have taken the time to interview, you receive a "no thank you" from the agency even if you are not going to get an offer. For some small agencies, they might actually keep resumes open until the beginning of summer just because there are sometimes last minute student rescissions. But, quite honestly, all agencies—and especially small ones—are really stretched in their staffing. Do not be offended if you do not receive an email advising that you are no longer under consideration. Some agencies do not respond to all inquiries due to the volume. Others (particularly large agencies) say that, as to summer hiring, if you haven't heard anything by March you are probably not under consideration. Look at the agency's website for guidance as to how applications are submitted and maintained. Don't be offended if you've interviewed but receive no response.

Chapter 5

At the Workplace

A. Interacting with People at the Office

Every office has a different tone and personality. While you will take some of your cues from those around you in terms of dress and office etiquette, remember that the people there have a job and you are an intern. In a way, you might consider your summer internship a ten-week interview period. While the public interest agency may not have a job to offer you at the end of the summer, as law firms historically have, the agency will be a source of references, fellowship connections and other career support. You want to leave a strong, positive impression.

If unsure, ask how you should address different staff members from the executive director to your supervising attorney. For most office interactions, first names are likely to be the rule, but don't let this familiarity lead you to believe that the office relationship is one of "friends." Many students ask how they should interact, especially with peers. You may debrief after work at a bar or at dinner. If the attorney leading the outing is young, there is a tendency to think of that person as a friend. In all situations, you are in a work setting. The stories of law clerks who went out and drank too much are rampant. Don't be that person. Have a drink, but be cautious.

Treat all the staff members with respect, from the receptionist to the executive director. Everyone has an eye on you and has the opportunity to put a word in about you. You want that word to be positive.

When you need assistance, it is a good idea to ask your supervising attorney for direction. Is it okay to ask an office assistant to make copies? Who should take care of faxes? In small offices, some of these tasks may well be done by attorneys if the job is small and you will do your own copying as well. In a small office, the executive director might seem accessible. Always go to your supervising attorney before you go to the executive director, even if the director has encouraged you to come in and ask questions.

B. Appropriate Dress

Don't make assumptions based on what you see different staff people wearing. Ask what the appropriate attire is. If in doubt, dress more formally until you've determined that more casual wear is appropriate. Even in an office that is very casual, you can never go wrong by wearing business casual—meaning slacks and a shirt, rather than jeans. If jeans are permissible, make sure they fit well, have no holes and are in good condition—even if you see others around the office in funkier-looking jeans.

For men, avoid shorts and sandals. Avoid sagging.

For women, avoid really short skirts and exposing cleavage.

For everyone, avoid clothing that is torn or has holes, even if that's the style. Avoid clothing with words or pictures on it.

Use common sense. The agencies and the law firms alike share stories about how frustrating it is that students don't understand what workplace attire is. You are not going to a cocktail party. You are going to work. You are not a kid anymore. Your summer internships, externships and volunteer opportunities at public interest agencies are your first step to your new career and connections and references count. Don't dress to stand out. Dress to blend in. Don't make fashion your statement; make work your statement.

That said, the next question is what do you wear to a social event. This is more of an issue in women's fashion. Again, be careful of the temptation to wear something particularly stylish or provocative. It may be a party you are attending, but you are still on a trial basis with your agency and you want to demonstrate that in every setting you use good judgment. Again, dress to blend in, not to be commented upon or to be remembered for the supervising attorney's stories for next summer's clerks about what not to do or what not to wear.

C. Work Ethics

Work environment varies, depending upon the size of the agency and the structure of the office. Some basics are as follows:

- Find out what the start and end times are for the work day and follow them. Don't be ten minutes late. Consider the musician's motto—on time is late. Be five minutes early rather than always running late.
- When at work, do work. Don't be the clerk who is always on her/his cell phone when an attorney walks by. Don't be the clerk who is always on her/his personal email. Don't be the clerk who is always surfing the net. Put your cell phone away. If you need to talk to someone on it, you might consider going outside the office. There are clerks who always seem to be on a personal call when an attorney stops in. It doesn't look good and it doesn't bode well for references.
- Put your cell phone on vibrate so the entire office doesn't have to enjoy your ring tone.
- If you like to listen to music while you work, find out what the policy is. It is much better to go without ear buds than be the student who never responds because of speakers in the ears.
- The Post-its belong to the agency, not to you. The same is true with the pens, paper and copies. You wouldn't take something from your friend's house without asking. Don't take things from your office. It's called stealing.

When you walk into any attorney's office, carry a pad and pen. Never stop in to chat without a pad to jot down notes. If you are working for multiple attorneys, find out immediately who is the attorney who helps you coordinate between assignments from different people. If all your assignments are from one attorney, ask that attorney how to prioritize your assignments.

Always feel comfortable asking for templates and samples. There is no reason to invent a wheel, if one exists. Also, if it is a research project, ask for research strategy suggestions from the attorney. If you have worked on the project for a day and seem to be making no progress and think you need more guidance, ask questions. Don't spin your wheels for three days without going in for more direction. You will only feel more uncomfortable and your attorney will only think you didn't manage your time well. If you are having difficulty and your attorney checks in and asks how it is going, don't say great when it's not. Ask the questions you have. Attorneys expect law students to have questions—especially 1Ls.

When you have submitted an assignment, you should expect to receive feedback, but it may not come immediately due to workplace pressures. If you haven't heard anything in a week or so, ask the attorney for feedback—are any changes needed, any additional research, any problems you should be aware of.

There is a rule about written product that you give to an attorney, even when the attorney asks to see a draft: Nothing is a draft. That means that, even if you are giving a preliminary research summary, the product you provide should look professional, be fully proofed and be as thorough as you can make it.

If you work with an attorney who is willing to give you a lot of feedback about your writing, be open to it. Don't feel as though you are being criticized. This kind of feedback is probably the best gift you can receive during early internships and clerking opportunities. Legal writing is difficult. It does not come naturally to many people and you will need to work hard at it.

One way to improve your writing immensely is to outline your proposed memo before you start writing. Everyone resists this. Students say, "I don't outline," "I'm a good writer," "outlining just slows me down." Outlining can help you avoid embarrassment. Also, an outline isn't a bunch of fragmentary thoughts. Writing a good outline with complete sentences will help you see the holes in your argument because you can't figure out what goes next in the structure of the outline. When you can't figure out what goes next, it's usually because you haven't fully figured out your thought process or the progression of legal arguments you are trying to make. If you can't figure out your thought process and put it into an outline, your draft is likely to be very flawed. Don't underestimate the power of a comprehensive outline.

Take responsibility—for your actions, inactions and work product. Don't blame someone else if you are called on an assignment or for an action or inaction. Rather than say "but so-and-so told me," say that you understand and it won't happen again. And then don't let it happen again. You'll feel better and your supervisor will be impressed. Other examples of blame deflection are that the assignment wasn't explained to you clearly, somebody told you the wrong time, etc. If you didn't show up on time for something, your response should reflect that you should have checked more appropriately. If you didn't do the right research or didn't meet a deadline, your response should reflect that you should have asked better questions or raised the progress challenge in the timely way. Taking responsibility shows maturity and good judgment and supervisors like to see this. Everyone gets things wrong now and then; it's how you respond that is important.

Especially as a first year, avoid a lot of preconceived notions of what your career plan is and what specialty you plan to practice. In the first place, the job market may not accommodate you. In the second place, you really don't know anything about the practice of law and what you might like and how different practice areas might mesh with your personality. So, keep an open mind and be open to getting experience in as many content areas as possible.

D. Communication

It's always a good idea to find out how your office wants you to communicate about lateness and sick days, when you have questions during the day and the like, but here are a few tips.

When you will be late or out sick, contact your supervisor via email and by calling into the office and leaving a message. By using both methods, you are enhancing the likelihood that someone will receive your message in a timely way. Don't assume that everyone in the office texts constantly and will always be on their Blackberry or Ipod to receive messages. The phone is still useful in many offices.

When you need to ask your supervisor a question, the strategy depends upon your supervisor and the office. Find out if a knock on the door is fine or if the attorney would rather that you email. One thing to avoid is hovering. You walk down the hall to ask a question and the attorney is either on the phone or meeting with someone and you stand outside the door waiting. Don't you have anything to do? Is this the best use of your time? Are you more important than what the attorney is doing now? All these things might be going through the attorney's head as you bob and weave outside the office waiting to ask your question. Once eye contact is made return to your office or return to your office and email that you have a question. Avoid hovering.

What should you do about social networks? Be cautious. You are not friends with your supervisor. You are not friends with the young attorneys in the office. You are work peers. It may feel very friendly, but do not forget this distinction. It only has the potential to lead you down the wrong path.

E. Workplace Situations and Opportunities

Internships and clerkships are actually quite a lot of work for the staff at a public interest agency. While you might be offering free service, it takes time out of an attorney's busy work day to follow up with you, provide feedback, check on progress and the like. Remember this when you think—I'm giving them all this free service; the least they could do is The fact is that you are being given an opportunity to learn and most agencies are very dedicated to giving you a good experience. While your service is valuable to the agency, having your help is still a lot of work for the attorneys with whom you work. If you remember this, you will avoid responding with a sense of entitlement when you don't get feedback as quickly as you like or you feel as though you are being ignored by an attorney.

If you are asked to attend a client meeting with an attorney or go to court, treat the situation as an opportunity to learn. Be professional. Take a notepad so you can write down questions you have. If you are in the position of potentially being able to provide useful information, talk with

your attorney before the meeting about your role and what she/he wants from your participation. Sometimes clerks can be asked to do meeting summaries. Taking a notepad and keeping notes and questions is a good way to ensure your alertness in the meeting. Too many times clerks go to meetings and lean back and yawn and it doesn't look good. Think about how you can learn from each opportunity you are given. Learn about the environment. Watch people's roles. Listen to their negotiation strategies. There is much to learn even when you are just tagging along.

Expect and appreciate criticism. If someone is taking the time to give you valuable feedback on how you can improve, take advantage of that learning opportunity. You are there to learn. That means that the attorneys don't expect you to know everything or have all the answers. They expect you to respect the position and the clients and work hard. In return, they take their time to tell you how you can improve. Expect this. Seek this. Appreciate this. It is a gift that can provide you with invaluable insights into your strengths and challenges that can help you build your career skills.

What you do if an attorney acts inappropriately with you probably depends upon what the inappropriate behavior was. If you feel as though you have been the subject of unlawful behavior such as sexual harassment, you should follow the steps provided in your volunteer handbook or training. If no guidance was given, the usual course of action would be to report the matter to an immediate supervisor, or if that person is the errant party, to that person's supervisor. If you can't identify who that person is, there should be some human resources staff or managing attorney to whom you can report the problem. Do so promptly.

If an attorney yells at you or responds to your work in a way you think inappropriate, remember that you can respond to unprofessional behavior in a professional manner. It is futile to escalate the situation by raising your tone. You can politely express your concern that this is an uncomfortable way for you to receive criticism or feedback and request that you talk at another time. If this does not work, remain professional and, when the talk is over, identify an appropriate managing attorney or human resources staff person with whom to speak. You are entitled to be treated with respect.

F. Client Interaction

Client confidentiality is paramount and your ethical obligation as a clerk. Make sure that you do not leave file information or laptop screens open in inappropriate places where others could view client information. Client information is not cocktail party talk so, if you are recounting matters you are working on to friends, do not include identifying information.

Some students are concerned about the challenges of working with low-income clients or clients with special needs. Clients are clients wherever you serve them and whatever their income or special needs. Clients are people with legal problems that worry and frustrate them, but this is true regardless of income or disability. Always be respectful and professional. While you want to speak directly and avoid legalese, do not talk down to clients. Low income does not mean low ability or low intelligence. If a client engages in escalating behavior, try to keep your voice low and calm. Do not attempt to over-shout someone who is getting excited.

G. Accountability

You are accountable for the work you do for clients in an agency. Real people with real legal issues are relying upon the work that you do. Accordingly, being timely, diligent and professional are not only important to your legal career. They have real meaning and consequences for clients. Set the priorities for your projects with your supervising attorney. Try to be flexible when emergency projects come up as they will. This is a law office and real issues arise from the real world in which we live. These unexpected issues may be your best learning opportunities.

Chapter 6

Cultivating Mentors and Using References

One of the most valuable aspects of the summer is the relationships you make. Again, remember, these are professional relationships, not friendships. Finding a mentor within the organization can be very valuable and different organizational structures bring different challenges in finding a mentor. If you are working for multiple attorneys, your challenge will be to try to identify one that you can work toward developing a stronger connection with so that you can seek advice, guidance and insight.

Keep in touch with the organization after you leave. Attorneys generally like to hear how former interns are doing. It is perfectly appropriate to check in occasionally so that the attorneys remember you when you are seeking references or other mentoring input. Some examples of ways to keep in touch are as follows:

- sending an email when you see a news story about the agency or something that you worked on over the summer;
- letting an attorney know how your experiences at the agency helped you get your next position; and/or
- occasional requests for mentoring insights or resume review.

You will likely want to use a writing assignment as a writing sample. Check with your supervisor as to the appropriate project and also as to permission. The attorney may have good ideas about which of several projects would best show your writing skill. Also, remember that client information will need to be redacted. Some organizations have very specific guidelines about when a writing project can be used as a writing sample. Make sure you know what your agency's policy is.

You may want to use an attorney you worked with as a reference. Make sure you give that attorney a heads up as to your intent via email several weeks in advance if possible. Also, always make it easy for the recipient of your inquiry. Remind the attorney who you are, what school you attend, what year you are and what you worked on with his/her agency.

If you are requesting a letter of reference, give the attorney no less than two weeks, but the more time the better. It is best to give one month if you can. Also, provide an updated resume and a list of particular skills you have developed. Make sure the attorney knows the purpose of the reference letter—a fellowship, job, generic? Also, while there are differences of opinion among attorneys regarding students providing a draft reference letter, you might consider offering such a draft because there are attorneys who find this helpful because of their busy schedules.

Chapter 7

Closing Thoughts and Resources

As you may have gathered from reading the previous chapters, there are many aspects to professionalism in the workplace, ranging from how you interact with others to your appearance and attitude. While each chapter focuses on a different aspect of professionalism, there are some common themes such as reputation, attention to detail, attitude, communication and fostering positive and professional relationships that should be highlighted.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, “being professional” is paramount to building a good reputation for yourself in the legal community. Your superiors, and peers for that matter, will remember how you treat them and others, whether you hold yourself to a high standard of work ethics, and whether you demonstrate a commitment and positive attitude towards your work and clients. Do not take your reputation lightly.

Strong communication skills and attention to detail also help foster a sense of professionalism. When you apply to an organization, be sure to follow any directions given concerning the application process. This includes not calling the agency to inquire about the status of your application if the website or other instructions you have been provided explicitly state not to. Nine out of ten times, an applicant will not be interviewed if the applicant has shown that she/he has not followed directions from the beginning of the process, even if the applicant’s resume shows that she/he is more than qualified for the position. If the requirements are not clear, ask.

Do your homework before going into an interview. Nothing says more about your lack of professionalism than when it is clear during an interview that you have not researched the organization or that you are unable to articulate how your experiences relate to the position to which you are applying. Preparing a few questions of your own will demonstrate your interest and commitment.

Lastly, there are three key points to reiterate about your professionalism at the workplace. First, when in doubt, dress in business attire. After all, you want to be remembered for your work, not what you wore. Second, be accountable to your colleagues and your clients. Accountability includes staying on top of your assignments, asking for help or clarification when you are uncertain about something at work, and observing client confidentiality by not speaking inappropriately to your peers. Third, maximize your workplace situations and opportunities. No assignment or task is beneath your skills. Especially at smaller agencies, everyone is expected to pitch in around the office. Take advantage of the opportunities you have to learn from staff attorneys. They are valuable resources who can help you navigate your legal career and serve as mentors and references.

Below is a list of additional resources on professionalism that might be useful to you as well as information on public interest and pro bono legal service and contact information for the organizations who have helped make possible the Introduction to Professionalism: A Guide for Law Students webinar, which accompanies this handbook.

A. Additional Resources on Professionalism

The American Bar Association
Center for Professional Responsibility
www.abanet.org/cpr/

NALP/National Association for Legal Career Professionals
Professional Development for Law Students
www.nalp.org/professionaldevelopment

The State Bar of California
www.calbar.ca.gov

The State Bar of California/Future Lawyers
Factors Regarding Moral Character Determination
<http://admissions.calbar.ca.gov/MoralCharacter/Factors.aspx>

B. Additional Resources on Pro Bono & Public Service

The American Bar Association
Standing Committee on Pro Bono & Public Service
<http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/>

The State Bar of California
Pro Bono Resources
<http://cc.calbar.ca.gov/CommitteesCommissions/StandingCommittees/DeliveryofLegalServices/ProBonoResources.aspx>

California Pro Bono Net
www.californiaprobono.org

SoCal Pro Bono Center
www.socalprobono.org

C. Contact Information for Contributing Nonprofit Legal Service Agencies

Bet Tzedek Legal Services
145 South Fairfax Avenue, Suite 200
Los Angeles, California 90036
323.939.0506
www.bettzedek.org

Disability Rights California
Los Angeles Region
3580 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 902
Los Angeles, California 90010
213.427.8747
www.disabilityrightsca.org

Disability Rights California
San Diego Region
1111 Sixth Avenue, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92101
619.239.7861
www.disabilityrightsca.org

Disability Rights Legal Center
919 Albany Street
Los Angeles, California 90015
213.736.1479
www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org

Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law
3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 710
Los Angeles, California 90010
213.388.7505
www.hbcfl.org

Inner City Law Center
1309 East Seventh Street
Los Angeles, California 90021
213.891.2880
www.innercitylaw.org

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
Central Office
1550 W. 8th Street
Los Angeles, California 90017
213.640.3881
www.lafla.org

LA County Bar Association/
AIDS Legal Services Project
3550 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 750
Los Angeles, California 90010
213.637.1690
www.lacba.org

Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
1241 S. Soto Street, Suite 102
Los Angeles, California 90023
323.980.3500
www.laclj.org

Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc.
3255 Wilshire Blvd. #902
Los Angeles, California 90010
213.389.2077
www.mhas-la.org

OneJustice
(Formerly Public Interest Clearinghouse)
433 California Street, Suite 815
San Francisco, California 94104
415.834.0100
www.pic.org

Public Counsel
610 South Ardmore Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90005
213.385.2977
www.publiccounsel.org

Public Law Center
601 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, California 92701
714.541.1010
www.publiclawcenter.org

The Alliance *for* Children's Rights
3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 550
Los Angeles, CA 90010
213.368-6010
www.kids-alliance.org