

## **What A Social Worker Needs From a Lawyer**

- Contact the Social Worker early, discuss the amount of time needed and file Motion for Funds for the necessary amount
  - The social worker needs sufficient time to prepare his/her work. He or she needs time to complete all the necessary interviews with the defendant and other collaterals (including family members, past providers, etc.), gather and review records, and either make referrals, develop a plan and/or write a report.
  - Get a signed HIPAA compliant release of information during your initial meeting with your client.
  
- Think about what you are asking the social worker to do
  - What are you hoping to accomplish in the hiring of a social worker.
  - Communicate the context and theory of your legal case to the social worker.
  
- Keep the social worker informed
  - Provide a copy of the police report and/or grand jury transcript so that the social worker understands the allegations of the offense. Also provide the CORI so the social worker has an understanding of past contacts with the courts.
  - Make records request with the help and guidance of the social worker. Records (hospital, mental health, school, DCF, etc.) provide documentation of things that a client or family member may report as well as insight into a client's history including a client's strengths. A social worker is qualified to make records requests, but it is generally more efficient for the attorney to send the requests, and does not deplete the potentially limited approved funds.
  - Keep the social worker up to date on the status and expected deadlines of the case. You should be in frequent communication with your social worker.