



**NC'S INTERDISCIPLINARY  
REPRESENTATION PROGRAM**

**Attorney Recruitment Webinar**

*September 2021*

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**About this webinar**

This webinar is made possible by funding from the NC's Court Improvement Program, part of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Developed and presented by NC's Office of the Parent Defender and the Family and Children's Resource Program at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.



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**Goals**

*By the end of this webinar, we hope you will know more about:*

- Plan for bringing Interdisciplinary Representation to NC
- Importance of partnership in this work
- Requirements and expectations for interested attorneys
- Next steps for application



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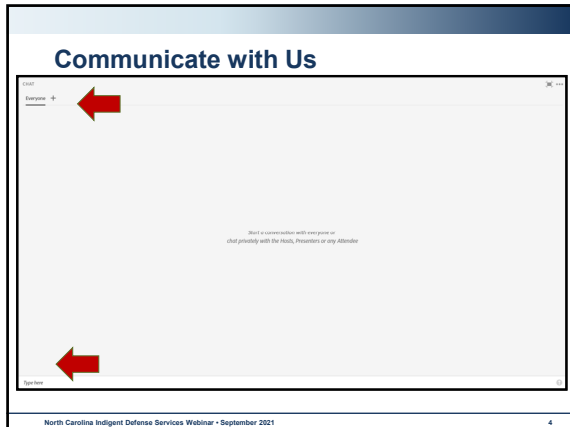
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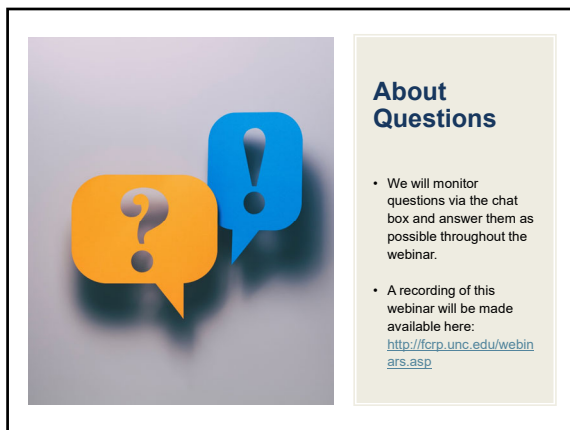
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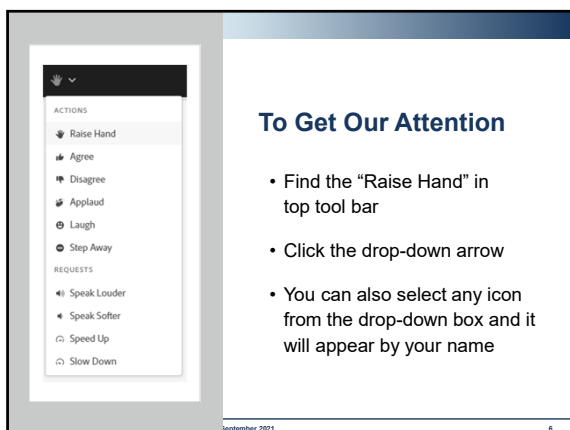
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<b>Presenter</b>	
<b>Wendy Sotolongo, JD</b> <i>Parent Defender at NC Indigent Defense Services</i>	
<b>Moderator</b>	<b>Tech Support</b>
<b>Chrystal Coble</b> <i>UNC School of Social Work FCRP Training Specialist</i>	Phillip Armfield John McMahon

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**Interdisciplinary Representation**

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**What Is Interdisciplinary Representation?**

Partnering a parent attorney with an IRP social worker

- Attorneys lead legal team
- Social worker is an agent of the attorney:  
extension of attorney-client privilege and  
client confidentiality to both team members
- Shared responsibilities and division of tasks
- Ongoing team communication

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### The Role of IRP Social Workers

**Parent Support**


- Encourage/motivate parent to participate in case plan
- Provide information to parent about court proceedings and agency procedures
- Help find court-ordered services and other resources

**Parent Advocate**

- Collaborate with community and state agencies to help clients achieve their goals
- Help attorneys understand mental health and other social services aspects of the case

**Interviewing and Investigation**

- Interview parent to assess overall functioning
- Conduct "home studies"
- Observe visits



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### The Role of IRP Social Workers

The IRP SW is not expected to:

- Testify
- Write reports
- Do the work of the DSS SW
- Withhold information from DSS social workers/GALs  
– Confidentiality exceptions



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### Funding and Assigning Social Workers

- IRP social workers will be hired by contract with the Office of the Parent Defender
- Funding for the positions will come from IV-E reimbursement
- May be more than one social worker assigned to a county
- Parent attorneys will request an IRP social worker through the Office of the Parent Defender



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### Families Served by IRP Social Workers

Preference will be given to cases in which:

- Only neglect and dependency is alleged
- The plan is reunification; and
- The request is made within 90 days of the filing of the petition.

Cases involving allegations of abuse will not be served by this program in Phase 1.

Participation is voluntary and clients will sign agreements to work with a social worker.

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### What's in Place to Support IRP?

Partnership with UNC and CIP

Implementation Guide

IV-E funding agreement

Collaboration with other states

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### Timeline for Bringing IRP to NC

#### Phased Implementation

**PHASE 1:** Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2022

- Parent attorneys from 3 to 6 North Carolina counties will be selected to participate in Phase 1

**PHASE 2:** Oct. 1, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2023

- Expansion

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### Next Steps in Phase 1

- Interested county parent bar completes application
- OPD hires SW supervisor/program coordinator
- Counties selected for initial phase
- IRP social worker recruitment and contract process
- Training for attorneys and IRP social workers
- Ongoing training and coaching for IRP social workers through learning community



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### Three Levels of Partnership

-  **State/OPD**
-  **County**
-  **Attorney and Social Worker**

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### Requirements for Interested Attorneys

- Demonstrate established collaboration among parent attorneys in the county
- Agree to enter a contract with the Office of the Parent Defender (OPD) that stipulates:
  - Social worker is a part of the team
  - Supervision of social worker will be provided by OPD
  - Complaint process will be handled by OPD
  - Data will be submitted to OPD
  - Payment will be provided through OPD

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### Other Expectations for Interested Attorneys

-  Assist with recruitment of social workers in your county
-  Attorneys attend kickoff in fall 2021
-  Attorney/social worker teams attend fall 2021 training aimed at supporting successful collaboration
-  Support social worker attendance at fall 2021 training
-  Support social worker attendance at learning community and coaching sessions
-  Attend supplementary trainings periodically
-  Open to being part of a new program and give regular feedback on the process and outcomes

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# Questions ? ?

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### Type into Chat . . .

What's one thing you will do in response to what you have learned today?



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**Contact Information**



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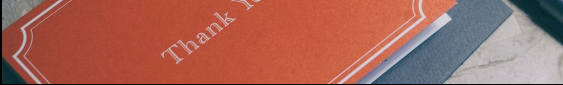
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**Thank you for your  
participation today.**



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