



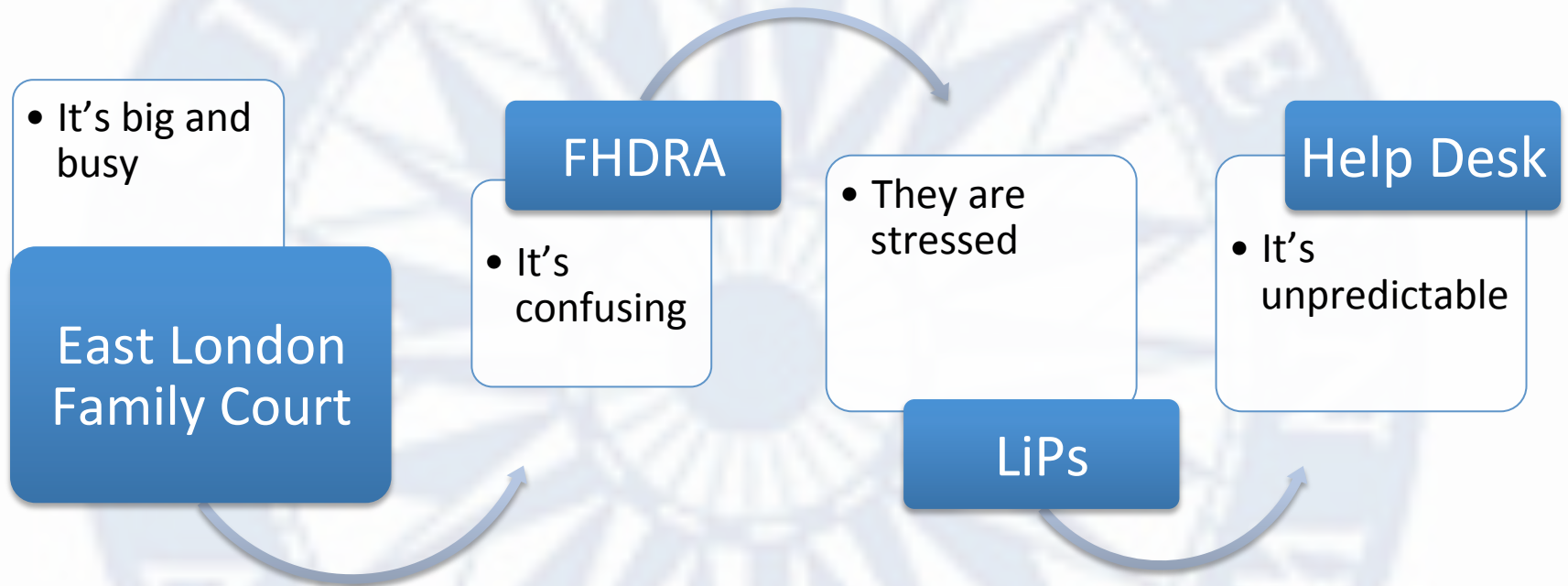
UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

The Family Court Help Desk Vital Service, or letting the Government off the hook?

Lucy Yeatman
10th July 2016



The Family Court Help Desk



My Amazing Students

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6ls29-oO3E>



Proactive Student Support

- Work on the court corridor
- Teams of students with lead students on the ushers desk
- Prepare clients for the hearing, by checking paperwork and helping draft missing documents including position statements
- Go into hearing and take notes.
- Explain it afterwards to litigants and provide them with a leaflet and a written summary of the hearing.
- I have to trust the students.



Benefit to Litigants in Person?

The student was brilliant. Settled me and took notes.

Having the student in court made me feel more confident.

Having someone with you at court really helps to boost your morale.



Letting the government off the hook?

The Cons

- We help process cases smoothly without challenging the decisions being made.
- We provide free help to busy court staff.

The Pros

- We provide emotional support at a very stressful time.
- We often pick up on key safety issues in domestic abuse cases.
- We empower litigants to identify issues and express their position clearly to the court.
- We refer litigants to free legal advice services.

Educational Benefit

- Students learn about:
 - law
 - justice and
 - themselves

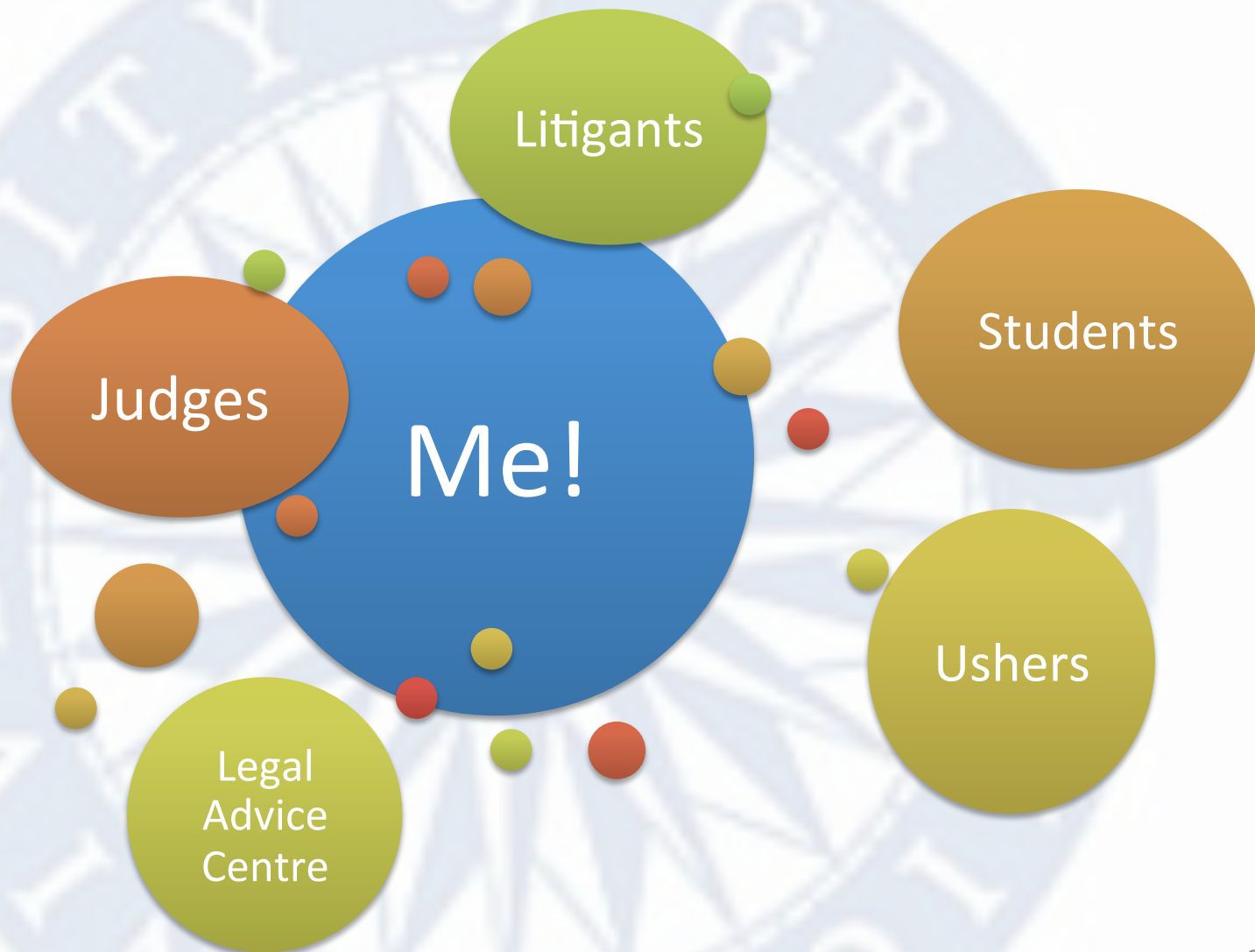
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsLthh2zA6s>

- I have learned that my students can flourish when thrown in the deep end and when I change my relationship with them from lecturer to partner.



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

A Partnership Model



Challenges hierarchies



- “Students are neither disciplinary nor pedagogical experts. Rather, their experience and expertise typically is in being a student – something that many faculty have not been for many years”
 - Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten (2014)
- “Partnership is fundamentally a way of relating to the other and to oneself which is both deeply challenging and enables challenge, is both risky and enables taking risks”
 - Healey, Flint and Harrington (2014)

HEA Framework for Partnership

Authenticity

Inclusivity

Reciprocity

Empowerment

Trust

Challenge

Community

Responsibility

References



- Standing Alone. Going to the family court without a lawyer. *Citizens Advice Bureaux* Nov 2015
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- Impact of changes to Civil Legal Aid. *House of Commons Justice Committee* march 2015
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmjust/311/311.pdf>
- Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education, *Mick Healey, Abbi Flint and Kathy Harrington*, HEA, July 2014 <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk>



Thank you for
listening

l.b.yeatman@gre.ac.uk

courthelpdesk@gre.ac.uk