



Divorce Quest: An Interactive Adventure through the Legal Maze of Divorce

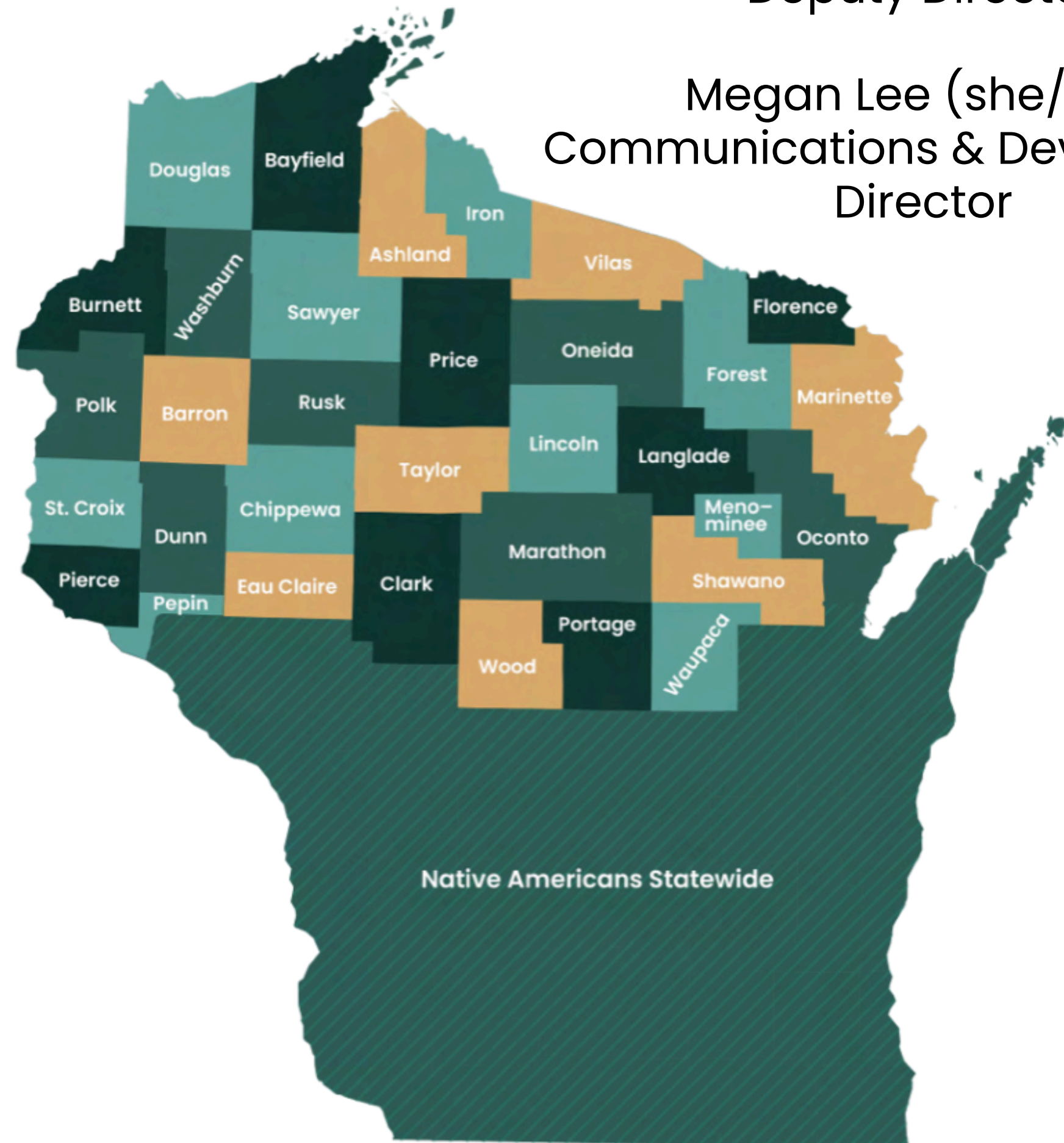
Developed by: Amanda Mayer, Karlie Merkel, & Megan Lee



Introductions

Amanda Mayer (she/her)
Deputy Director

Megan Lee (she/her)
Communications & Development
Director



Native Americans Statewide

Reminders

Take care of yourself

Creative approach to a heavy
subject

Learning Objectives

Basics of a Wisconsin divorce.

Multifaceted challenges faced by domestic violence survivors.

Intersection of survivors' identities and experiences with the court system.

Family court barriers for survivors.

Community supports.

Overview



**Basics of
Divorce**



**Divorce
Quest**



**Debrief &
Questions**



Basics of Divorce

Starting the divorce case



- Who are the parties?
 - Petitioner
 - Respondent
- Pro se versus represented
- Filing – joint or individual?
- Service of Process
- Jurisdictional requirements (county, state)
- What can the parties expect?
- Who are the marital children?
- Fee waiver
- No fault divorce

The first hearing



- Temporary order
 - Child custody, placement, and support
 - Supervised placement/visitation
 - Use of the family home
 - Use of vehicles and personal property
 - Payment of bills
 - Payment of maintenance/spousal support

Resolving custody & placement disputes



- Mediation
 - Cost
 - What to expect
 - Interplay with dynamics of abuse
- Guardian ad litem
 - Cost
 - What to expect
 - Interplay with dynamics of abuse
- Best interests of the children factors

Waiting



- Mandatory waiting period
- Court forms (wicourts.gov)
 - Financial Disclosure Statement
 - Proposed Parenting Plan
 - Marital Settlement
 - Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Judgment of Divorce
- Prepare for the final hearing

Final hearing



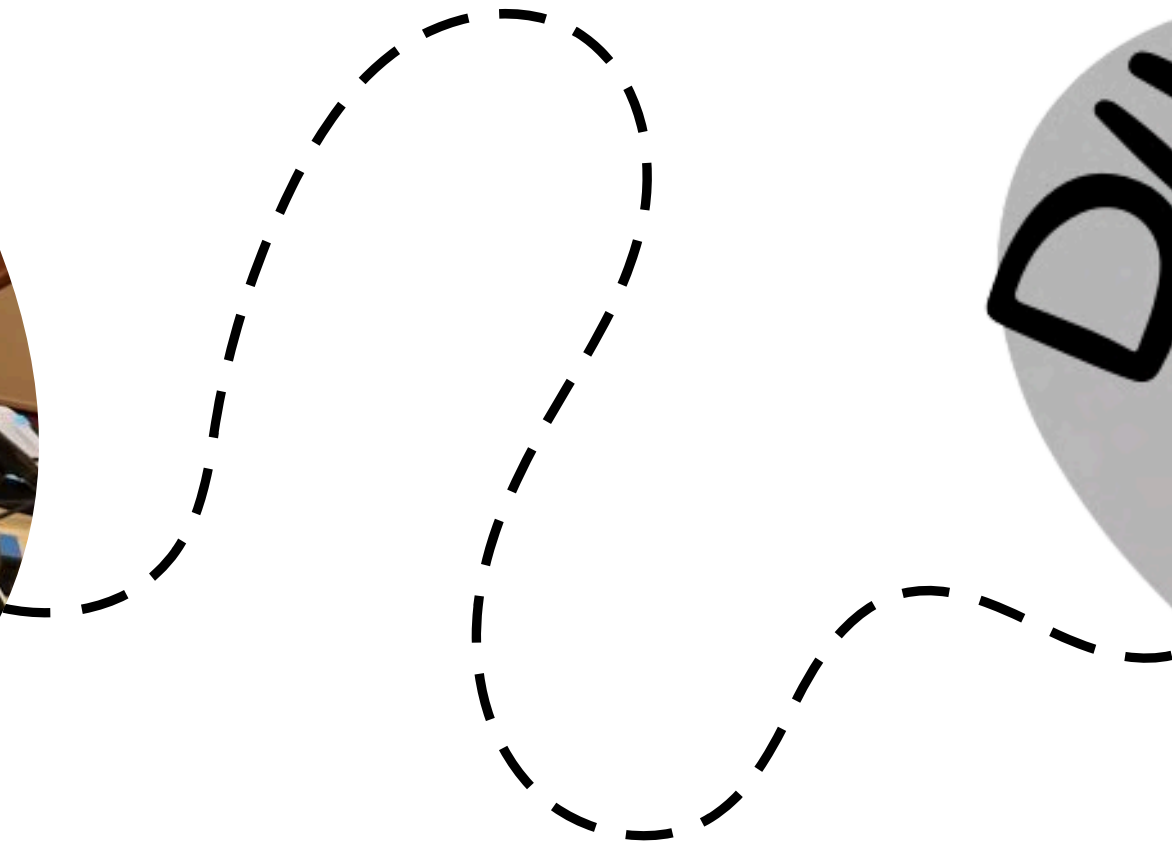
- Default divorce
- Stipulated divorce
- Contested hearing
- Disposition
 - Dismissed
 - Final orders



Judicare
LEGAL AID

Divorce Quest

Background



How it works

Name

Leslie



Adversity Score

3



LEAVING



STAYING

	Roll/Outcome	Notes
Stage 1: Start of the Divorce		
Stage 2: First Hearing		
Stage 3: Resolving Disputes		
Stage 4: Waiting		
Stage 5: Final Hearing		

Adversity Scale



- What are some reasons that the legal system might not work well for someone?
- Scale 1 – 4 [1 = minimal adversity faced; 4 = highest level of adversity faced]
- Adversity score's impact on outcomes
 - Roll above adversity score: good outcome
 - Roll below adversity score: bad outcome
 - Roll below adversity score 3 times: divorce is dismissed

Divorce Quest Stages



1. Start of the divorce
2. First hearing
3. Resolving custody and placement disputes
4. Waiting
5. Final hearing

Break

2:00 – 2:15 pm

See you back here at 2:15 pm!

Meet Leslie

A silhouette of a person standing on a dark ledge, looking out over a body of water at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue, with the sun low on the horizon. The person's shadow is cast on the ledge in front of them.

Leslie and their spouse have been married for 17 years.

They have two children, Jesse (16 years old) and Sawyer (4 years old).

During their marriage, Leslie stayed home to raise their children.

Leslie's spouse, Pat, exercises sole control over the family's finances, but when their youngest child was born Pat's behavior began to escalate.

Leslie has decided to leave.

Stage 1: Starting the divorce



- Goal: initiate divorce proceedings
- Possible outcomes
- Key terms

Stage 2: First hearing



- Goal: establish temporary orders
- Possible outcomes
- Key terms

Stage 3: Resolving disputes



- Goal: come to an agreement for custody and placement that is in the best interests of the children
- Possible outcomes
- Key terms

Stage 4: Waiting



- Goal: prepare for final hearing, make sure paperwork is in order
- Possible outcomes
- Key terms

Stage 5: Final hearing



- Goal: get divorced
- Possible outcomes
- Key terms



Alternative Outcomes



Judicare
LEGAL AID

Debrief & Questions

Debrief

- Were there any moments during this experience that surprised you or challenged any assumptions you had?
- What differences in experiences during any of the stages could have changed the outcome?
- In what ways would systemic issues, such as biases or gaps in the legal system, further impact a survivor's experience?
- Where in the process do you picture your agency services being involved?

Takeaways

- How can professionals in various roles (law enforcement, legal, medical, therapy) work collaboratively to address the challenges faced by survivors navigating the divorce process?
- How do you step back and look at the bigger picture when working with clients?
- How will you use this information to work with clients in the future?

QUESTIONS

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

?

Opposite of Poverty Campaign

During National Poverty Awareness Month (January 2025), follow along as legal aid providers statewide share how equal participation in our civil legal system is essential to eliminate poverty. We chose to name this "The Opposite of Poverty Campaign," inspired by the observation of attorney and activist Bryan Stevenson: "The opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice."

#OppositeOfPoverty