

# Community-Led Court Improvement

How to Review, Co-design  
and Evaluate Your Services  
with your Users

## **Justice by Design Field Guide**

March 2018 // Margaret Hagan and  
Stanford's Community Led System Design  
course // v1



# A note about this short book

In Winter 2018, the Legal Design Lab team held a “Community-Led System Design” class in which we focused on two questions:

- What are strategies for getting more input and priorities for court improvements from the people who use court services -- litigants and their communities?
- What are practical models and principles to guide future human-centered court innovation work?

We talked with experts from government agencies, non-profits, design agencies, corporations, and academics about how they involve community members in innovation work.

Student teams synthesized these models into specific proposals for courts to use to conduct a community-led system design project.

# Contents

In this first version, we cover some of the exploratory insights that emerged from our class; the models that we observed others using; and the specific proposals that students made in regard to a specific court innovation program

Section 1: Models and Methods

Section 2: Specific Proposals

Section 3: Sketchbook of future work

## Section 1

# Models and Methods

What are specific activities to run and methods to use when engaging community members in design work?

In our literature reviews and discussions with experts, we began to catalogue these different types of ways to involve users of courts, and wider community members in this work.

# Strategies + Ideas

These are ways to get community input into your system & agenda. We have started to document some in full, and will continue to update them in coming versions.

1. Co-creation process
2. Feedback surveys
3. Leadership Panels and Boards
4. Exit & Entrance check-Ins
5. Fake Money spend
6. Strategy Games
7. Wizard of Oz days
8. Mapping out Journeys
9. Drawing + Envisionment
10. Doll / action figure walkthrough

# USER VOICE IN ACCESS INNOVATION AGENDA

## DESIGN LAB

- ⊙ what do people create given a workshop?
- ⊙ what do they rank, vote, prioritize?
- ⊙ how do they edit ideas & budgets?
- ⊙ Do they like concept after using?

## FOCUS GROUPS

- ⊙ After light-use of a new 'innovation' how do they evaluate it?
- ⊙ What concerns + NEEDS do they express around these problems?

## Surveys

- ⊙ Rank types of innovations you find most worthwhile?
- ⊙ How would you allocate budget to different efforts + initiatives?

## Behavior Analysis

- ⊙ Do they use the resource? traffic
- ⊙ Are they able to get through procedure <sup>more</sup> quickly?
- ⊙ How engaged, repeat visits, reliance is there?



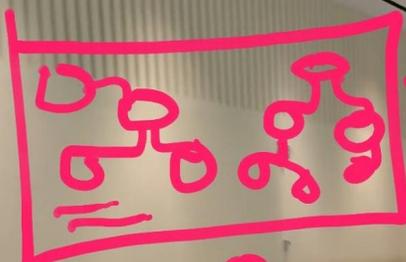
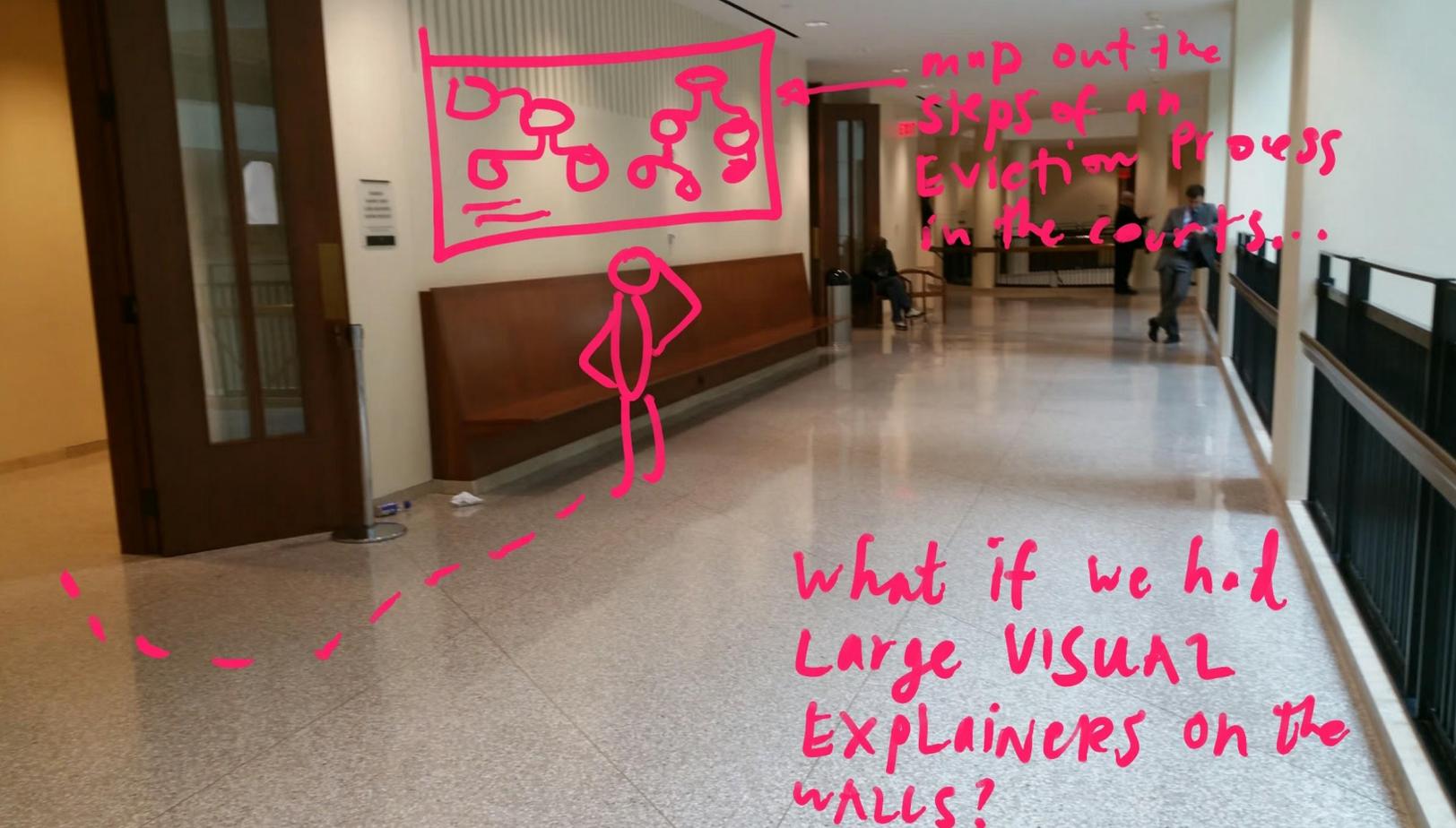
# Drawing + Envisionment

Put the pen in your participants' hands, to ask them what visions they have of better court space, process, or services.

Give them photographs of the space, so they can draw directly on them. You can provide some models, in which you have already drawn on top of photos -- so they feel license to do so themselves.

Encourage them to:

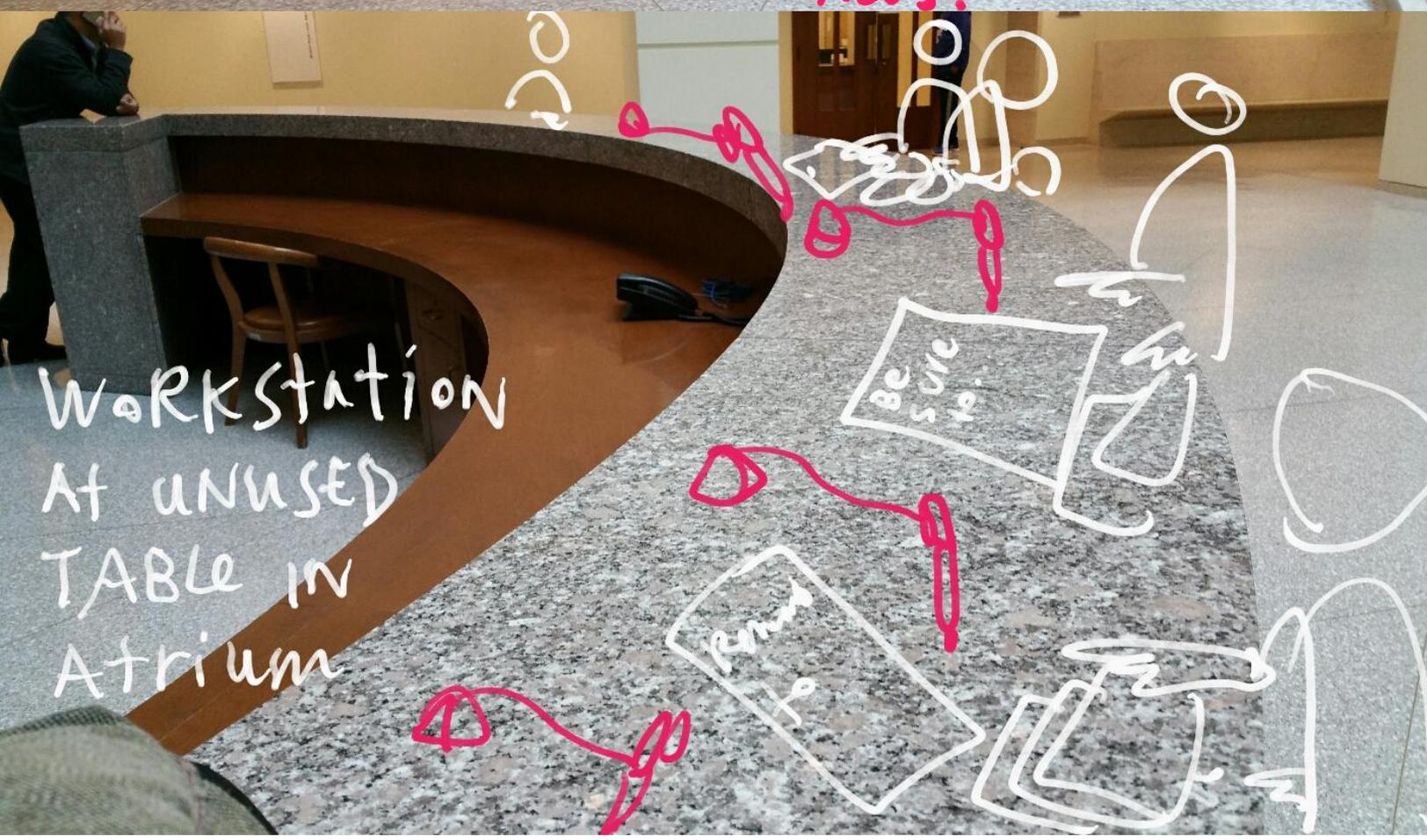
- Draw themselves or other people, and think about what would improve the experience
- Pretend you are on a housing makeover show, and you have a budget to make this space work better for you



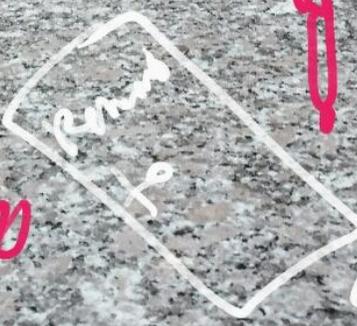
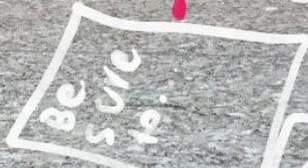
map out the steps of an Eviction process in the courts...



What if we had Large VISUAL EXPLAINERS on the walls?



WORKSTATION AT UNUSED TABLE IN Atrium



## Section 2

# Proposals for Community-Led Design Work

Teams of law, public policy, education, and technology students at Stanford proposed specific plans of action for community-led design work.

Their proposals focus on California courts' guardianship system. After 8 weeks of studying the current system and talking to various stakeholders, they formulated plans of action for courts to carry out -- to define a better innovation agenda.

## Proposal 1

**Think-Aloud tests  
with small teams:  
to redesign forms  
and tech-tools for  
forms**

# Process for Form/Tool Redesign



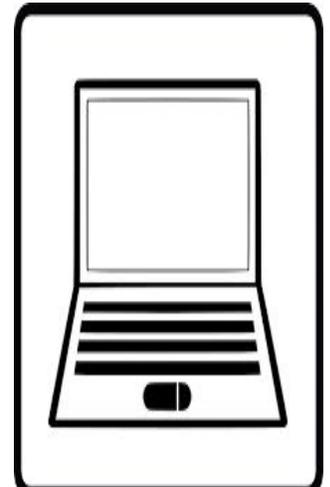
Survey  
Probate  
Researchers  
on Common  
Errors



Think-Alouds  
with User, Tech  
Developer, and  
Probate  
Researcher



Workshop to  
Develop  
Improved  
Website w/  
Users,  
Developers,  
Probate  
Researchers,  
Judicial Council



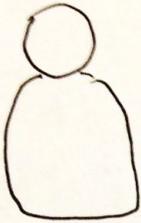
Develop New  
Website

As the court invests in new designs for the forms people use to apply for services, and the website presentation and tools to present these forms, they should use a user-centered process that involves court experts, subject matter experts and tech people responsible for building the new tools, and the people who will use these forms.

This should go through a handful of cycles -- at least two -- to ensure that as the new forms and tools are developed, they meet the users' needs.

# Think Aloud user sessions

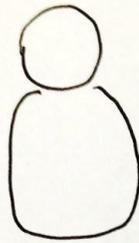
 Think Aloud 



Probate  
Researcher



Observing user  
and noting any  
errors, confusing  
legal language,  
~~and~~ bright spots,  
and redundancies  
on physical  
screen shot copies.



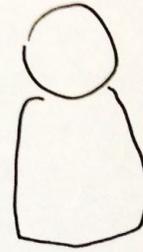
User



Using own personal  
experience or  
character card to  
fill out beta form.



Sharing aloud  
thoughts, feelings,  
reactions, etc...



Tech Developer



Observing user  
to understand  
and complete  
"User Emotional  
Journey"

# Character Cards

Users can fill out the beta form using their own experience as a guardian, or choose a character to walk through as.

You're going to do a "think aloud" ... Share out loud your thoughts, feelings, etc...



Grandma Gertie

- 55 years old
- You just found out your grandson, Theo (9 years old) was diagnosed with a learning disability and the school says that you need guardianship to sign his IEP.
- Theo's mom (and your daughter) is in rehab.
- You don't know where Theo's dad is. You haven't seen him in 4 years.



Friend Phil

- 32 years old
- Your best friend, Amy, just went into opioid rehab and asked you to care for her daughter, Ellie (5)
- You want to enroll Ellie at your daughter's school and were told you could not enroll Ellie since you are not her guardian.
- You speak Spanish and have limited English proficiency.



Sibling Sam

- 18 years old
- You live at home with your mom and two younger siblings, Sally (8) and Max (13).
- You need to take Max to the doctor but last time you were told that only a legal guardian can make medical decisions.
- Your mom struggles with substance abuse so you are the main caretaker.

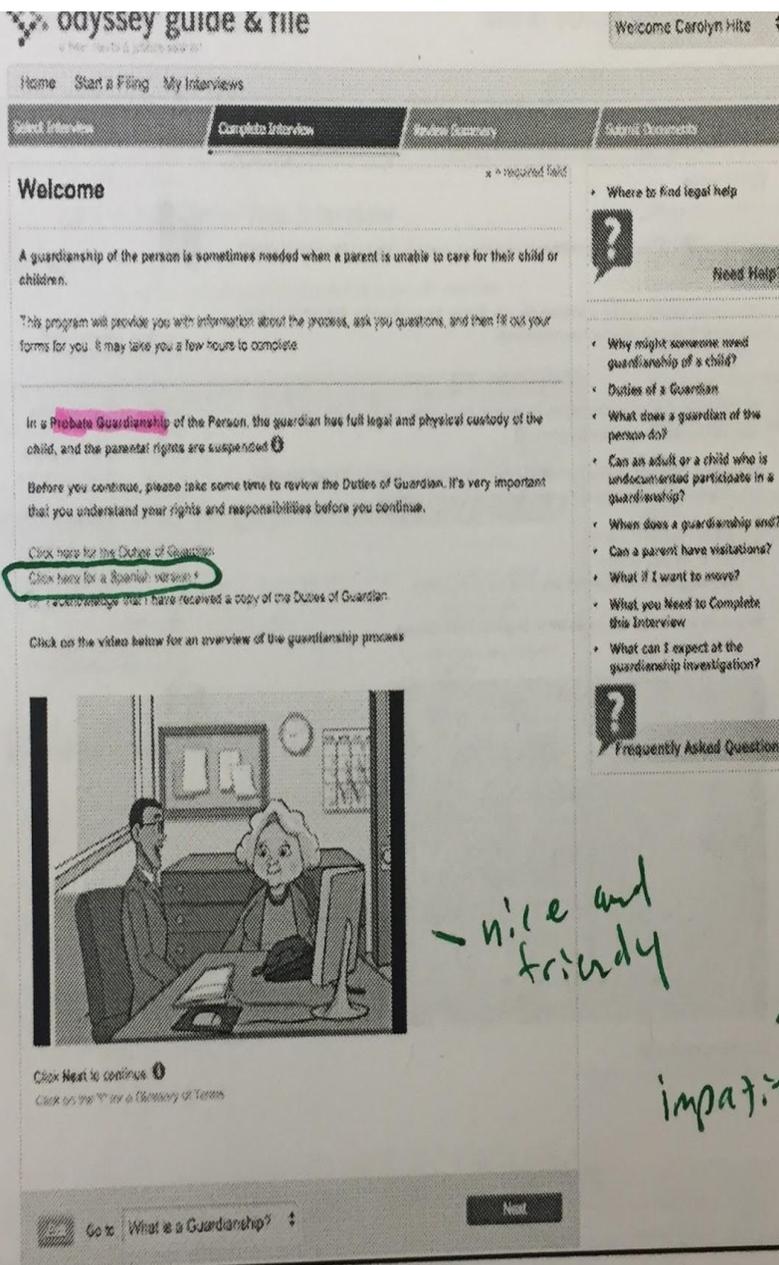


Aunt Alex

- 43 years old
- Your brother is incarcerated and he asked you to care for his daughter (11) (your niece), Bella.
- Bella's mom is deceased, but you remember her mentioning something about Native American heritage on her side of the family a couple years ago.

# Redlining + Annotating Screenshots

Probate Researcher (or other representative from court) will note any mistakes, confusions, repeated questions, on print outs of the forms or tool, based on the user's reactions



in English

Clicked on video

nice and friendly

impatient

Official?

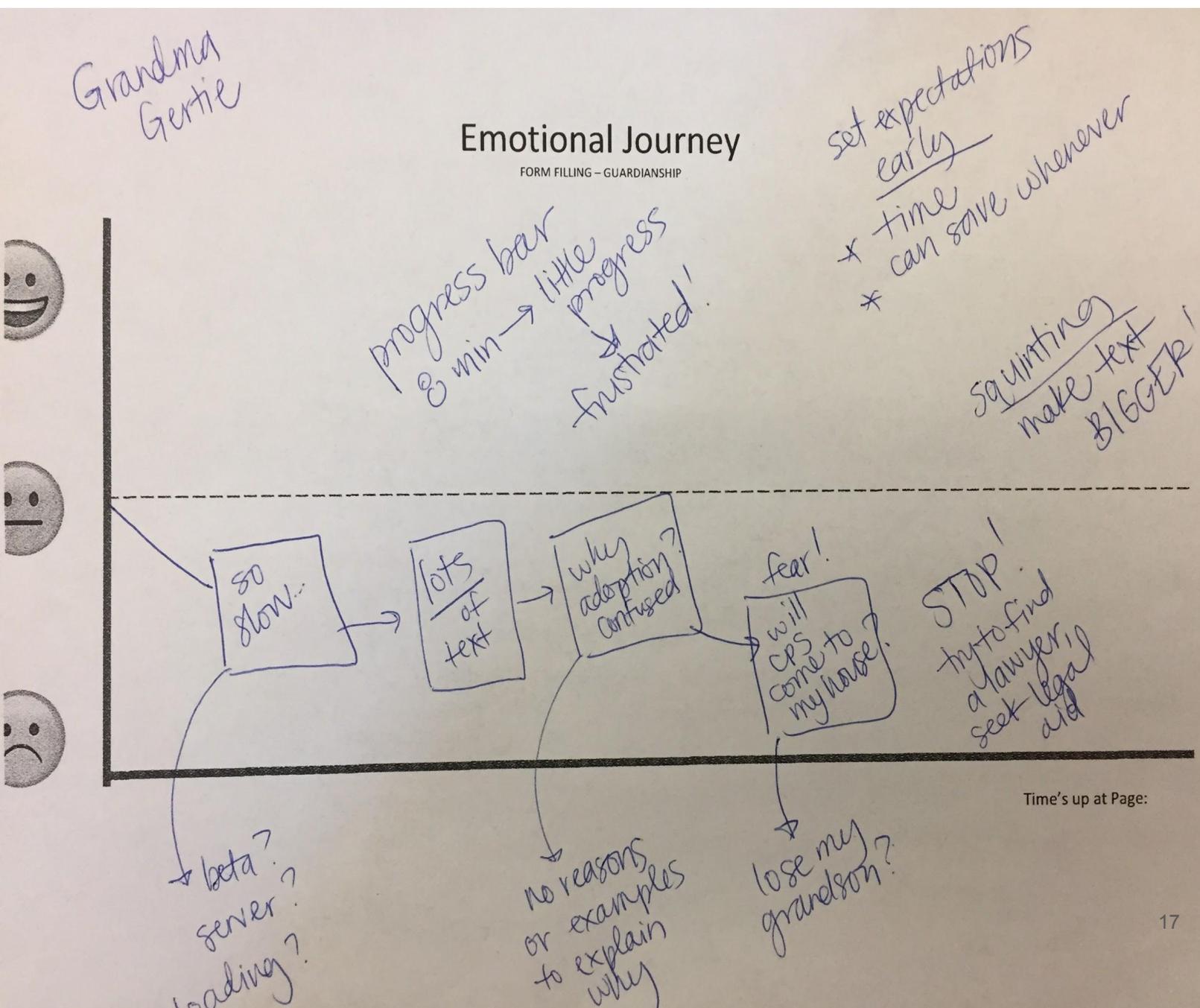
'Feeling good at the moment'

"Might have done wrong thing"

maybe have done something wrong

# User Emotional Journey

Tech developer observes user interface with beta form in order to understand and document the emotional experience -- charts it out as user goes through form





## Example of Think Aloud Session

### User Feedback:

- Beta forms too slow
- Too much text & too small
- Question order didn't make sense; ex. "is this program right for you" was 10 minutes in
- Progress bar depressing, frustrating
- Cartoons were friendly

# Preliminary Design Recommendations

## ❑ Format & Design

- ❑ Font
- ❑ Text size
- ❑ Amount of text (ie. big blocks of text can be overwhelming)
- ❑ Page layout
- ❑ Colors

## ❑ Language

- ❑ Clarity
- ❑ Brevity
- ❑ Legalese
- ❑ Tone

## ❑ Order

- ❑ Pages
- ❑ Information
- ❑ Actions

## ❑ Process

- ❑ Individualization (ie. “choose your own adventure” so that users are appropriately sorted by need)
- ❑ Set expectations early (ie. amount of time to set aside for completion, assurance that user can save work and come back)

# Evaluation Matrix to use

## User Experience

# of users

# of mistake

# of continuances

# non-finishers

# help center calls and appointments

## Form Effectiveness

# of mistake

# of continuances

# non-finishers

# calls and appointments to help center

Amount of time spent

## User Engagement

# changes Made to Beta Form to incorporate user feedback

Satisfaction of users:

- Applicants
- Staff

## Other

- child wellbeing during/ after

- representative/ equiting serving all people

## Proposal 2

**Over-the-shoulder  
reviews:  
to redesign  
websites meant to  
guide and support  
people**

# Walkthrough + Comparison user testing

To understand what website would best serve your court users, have them walk through the current one -- as well as several different models.

Give them a task --like filing for Guardianship, and ask them to try to find the right website, and then navigate it to complete the task.

As they do this, watch over their shoulder and ask them to talk aloud throughout it. Take notes. Redline screenshots, based on what is not clear.

Then have them go to selected or mocked-up alternative versions of websites. This could be from other states or countries -- your team should have identified these different models in order to see if other hypotheses, baked into the design and functionality of the other pages, work better.

After the series of walkthroughs and over-the-shoulder observation, then have a quick evaluation session and feedback conversation with the participant. See what big principles they recommend to make the best website for a task like this.

# How to set up a Workshop

## Where and When

- ❑ As early in process as possible
- ❑ @ People's homes
- ❑ @ The self-help centers
- ❑ @ The courthouse
- ❑ @ Stanford
- ❑ Evening or weekend

## How

- ❑ Obtain informed consent
- ❑ Interview in pairs - scribe and interviewer
- ❑ Observe
- ❑ Beware over-prompting
- ❑ Explain next steps
- ❑ Thank and offer gift card

## Who

- ❑ Grandparents 55+; friends 30-55
- ❑ On website + paper + mobile
- ❑ With assistance + solo
- ❑ Non English speakers

# How to Run the Sessions

## How to Test

**Test distinct options:** if you have several improvement ideas, do not test all in one version. Change the font in one, change the colour in another. That way you can isolate what is working

**Go lo-fi:** the first round of testing should be with hand drawn paper mockups of web pages. Test first, then improve, and test with mock ups of what a web page would look like. Use to inform the commissioning of the web page

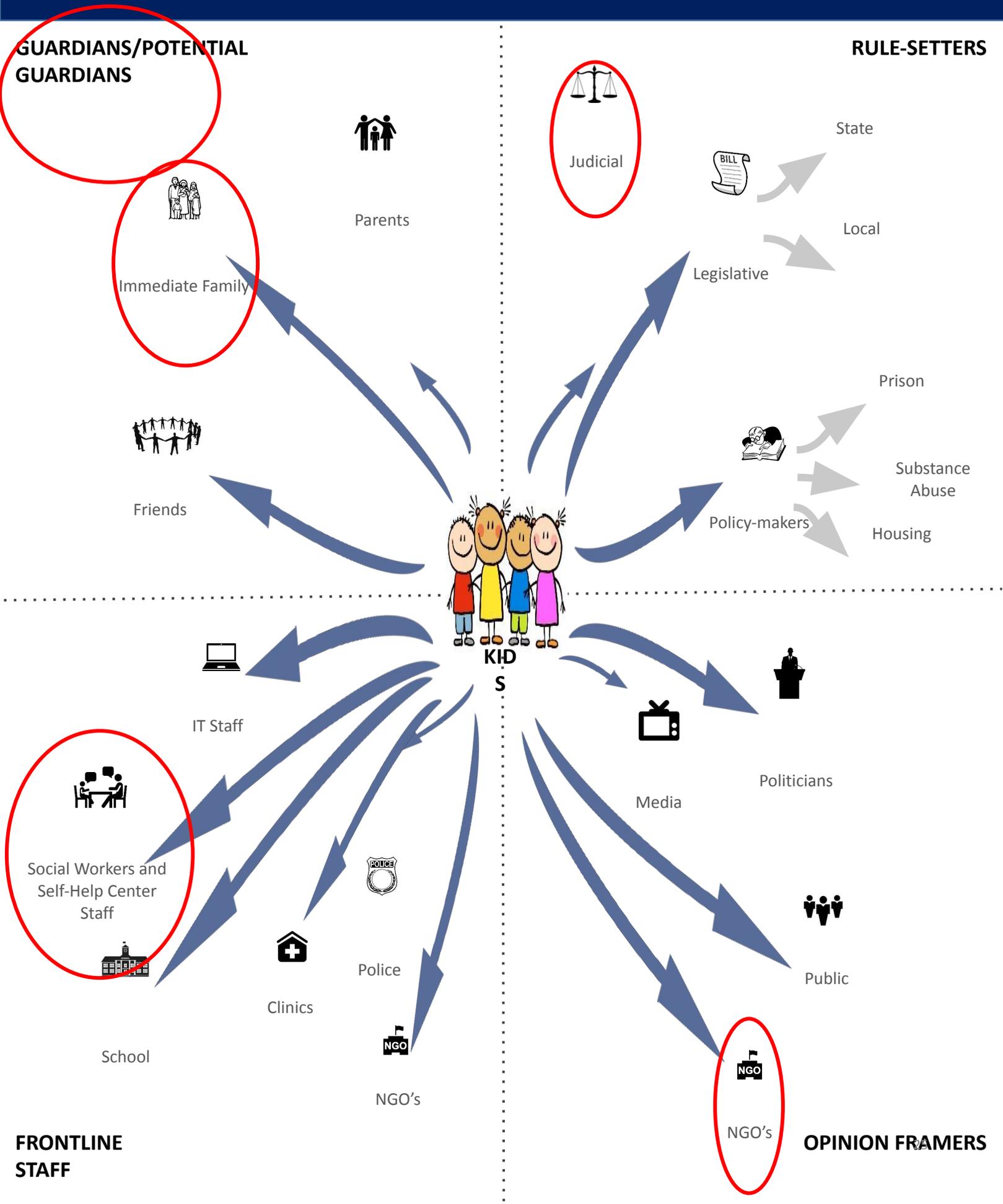
## What to Test

**The full flow:** front page > info pages > application page

**Tiering:** what is the most limited amount of text that allows 80% of users to succeed? What can you present as double clicks for the other 20%

**Banned words:** test if users understand terms like 'probate'. If not, delete throughout

# Which Stakeholders to involve?





# An Example Session

We interviewed several members of the Community-Led Systems Design class

Each interview was about 10 minutes with one person asking the question and one taking notes

Interviewees were shown the current CA website, the IL website and the Southern Nevada website -- three distinct versions.

Feedback was a mixture of qualitative observations and quantitative answers to standard question using a 1 to 5 scale or a sad to happy face metric.

The overall results for the California court website:

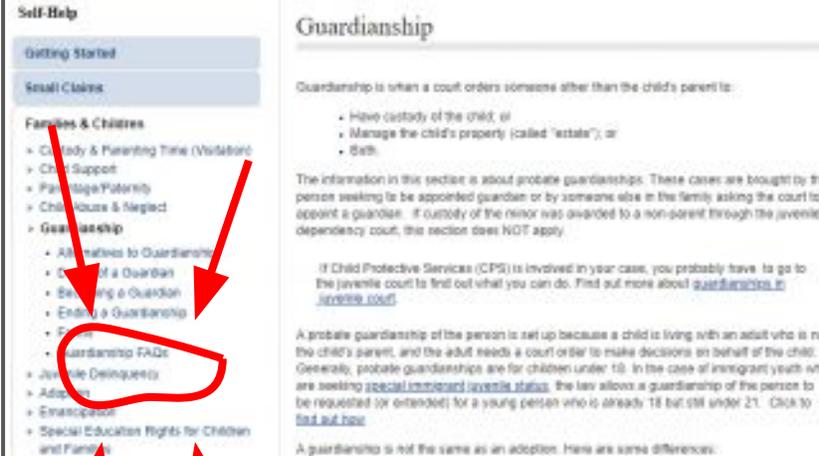
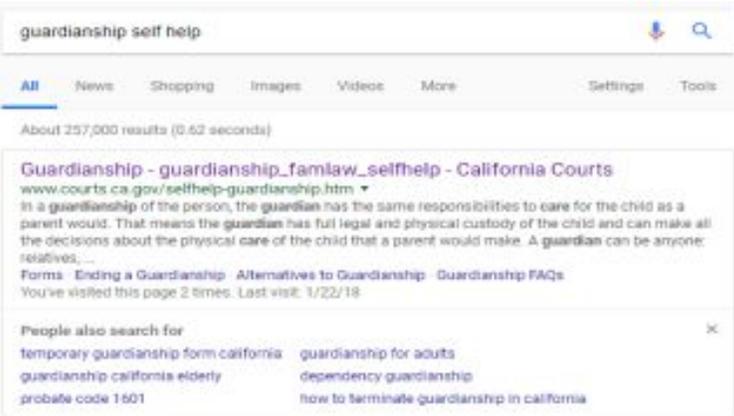


# Feedback we gathered

We watched users go through the journey from a search results page to the website, to try to get a guardianship, and noted the breakdown points.

1

2



3

28 forms on one page!

Some 45 pages required to fill in...

4

# Feedback we gathered

Our team debriefed after the interviews to pull out the actionable design changes and complaints that the majority of respondents made.

- Too busy + overwhelming
- More pictures + less text.
- Plain English.
- More whitespace
- Prominent search button, i.e. Google
- Mobile version

## Proposal 3

**Collaborative  
Design Sessions:**  
how to redesign a  
very confusing  
court process, like  
'serving notice'

# Collaborative, multi-stakeholder design work

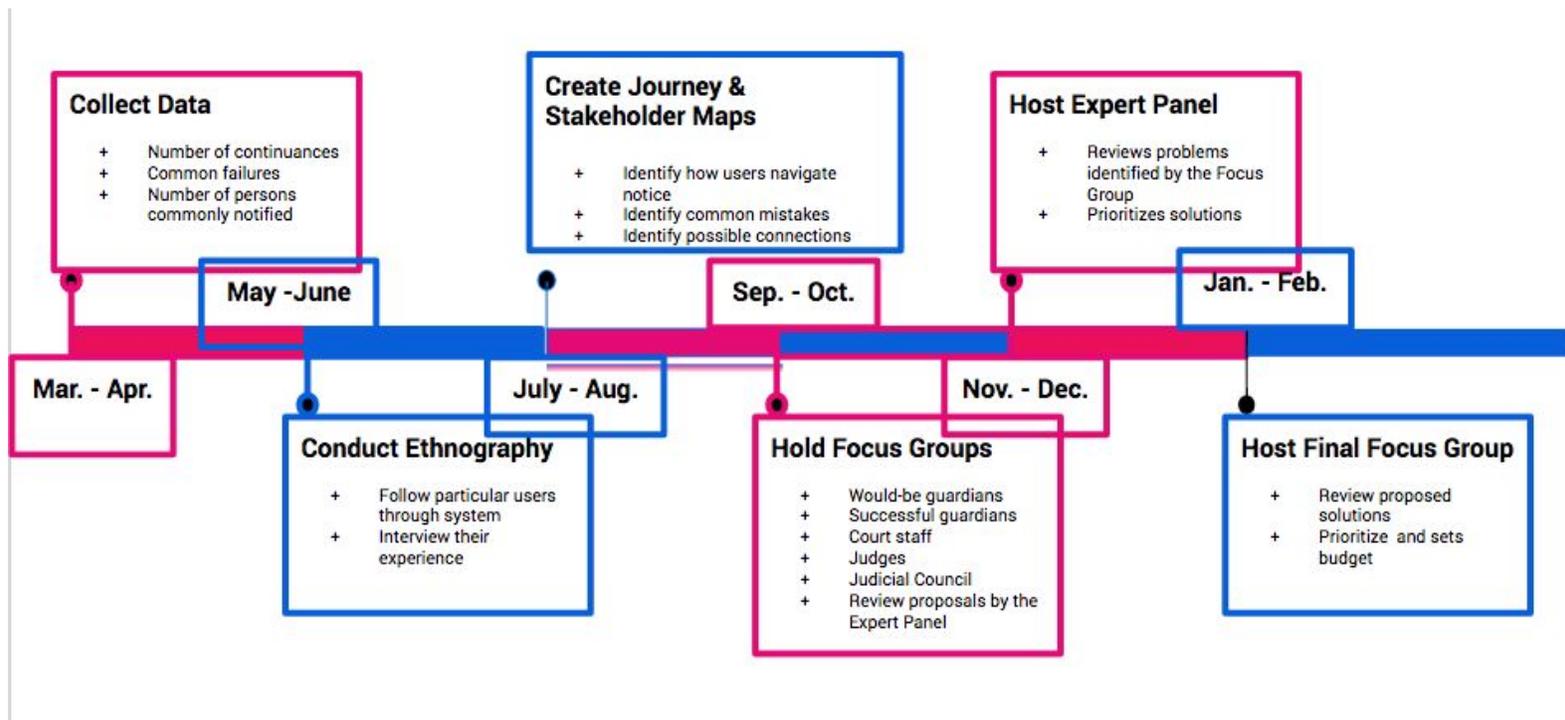
To reimagine a complex process -- that is baked into legislation, court rules, and policies -- we propose a yearlong process that would involve a wide group in changing this process.

It means imagining new interfaces and tools to help people through this burdensome process.

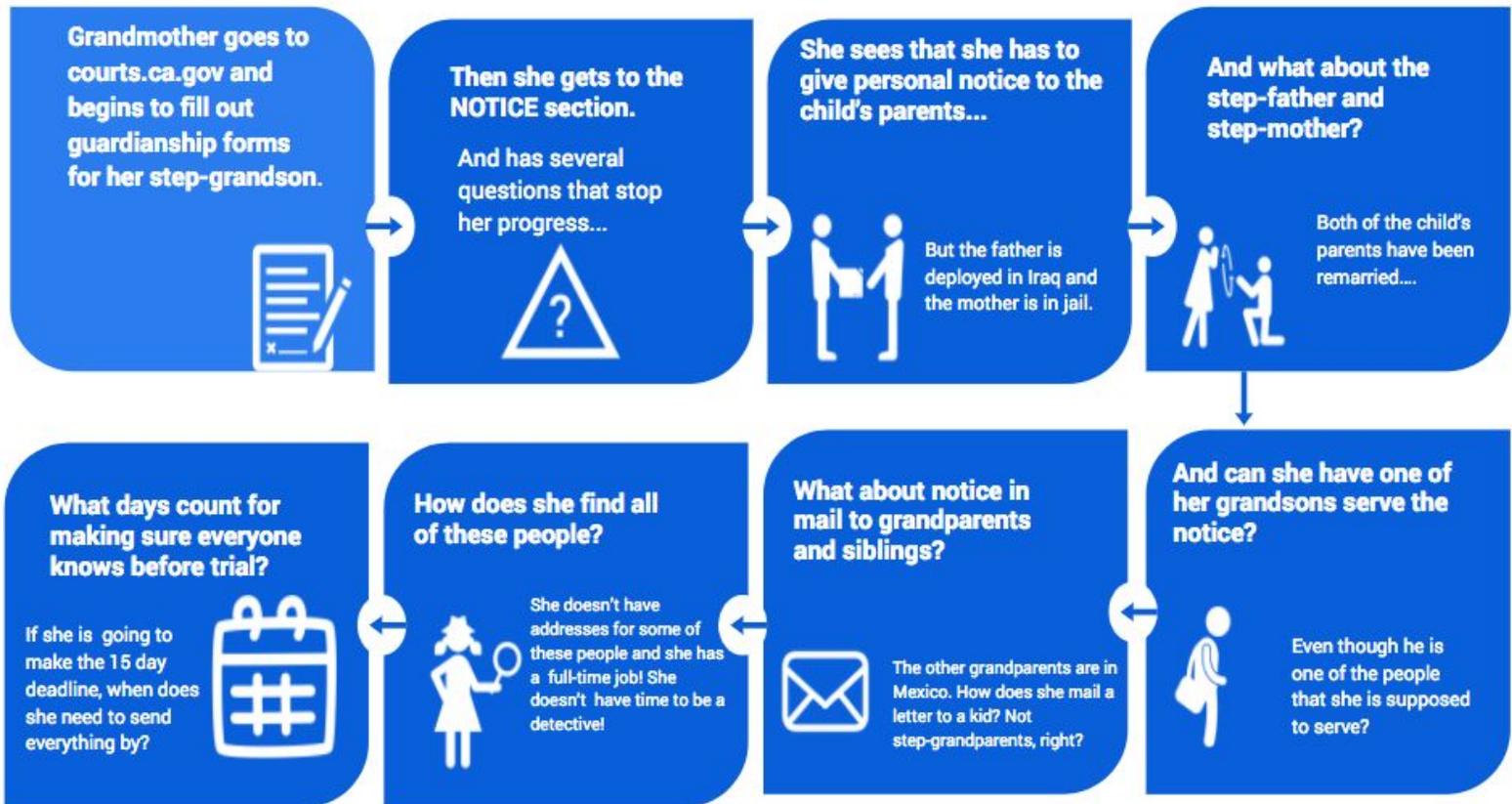
It also means spotting what rules and legislation can be changed, so that the process doesn't have to be so burdensome.

For example, this team worked on the very challenging process of 'Giving Notice'. This is when a person, who is filing to become a guardian of another's child, must alert all family members in this child's life about their guardianship application.

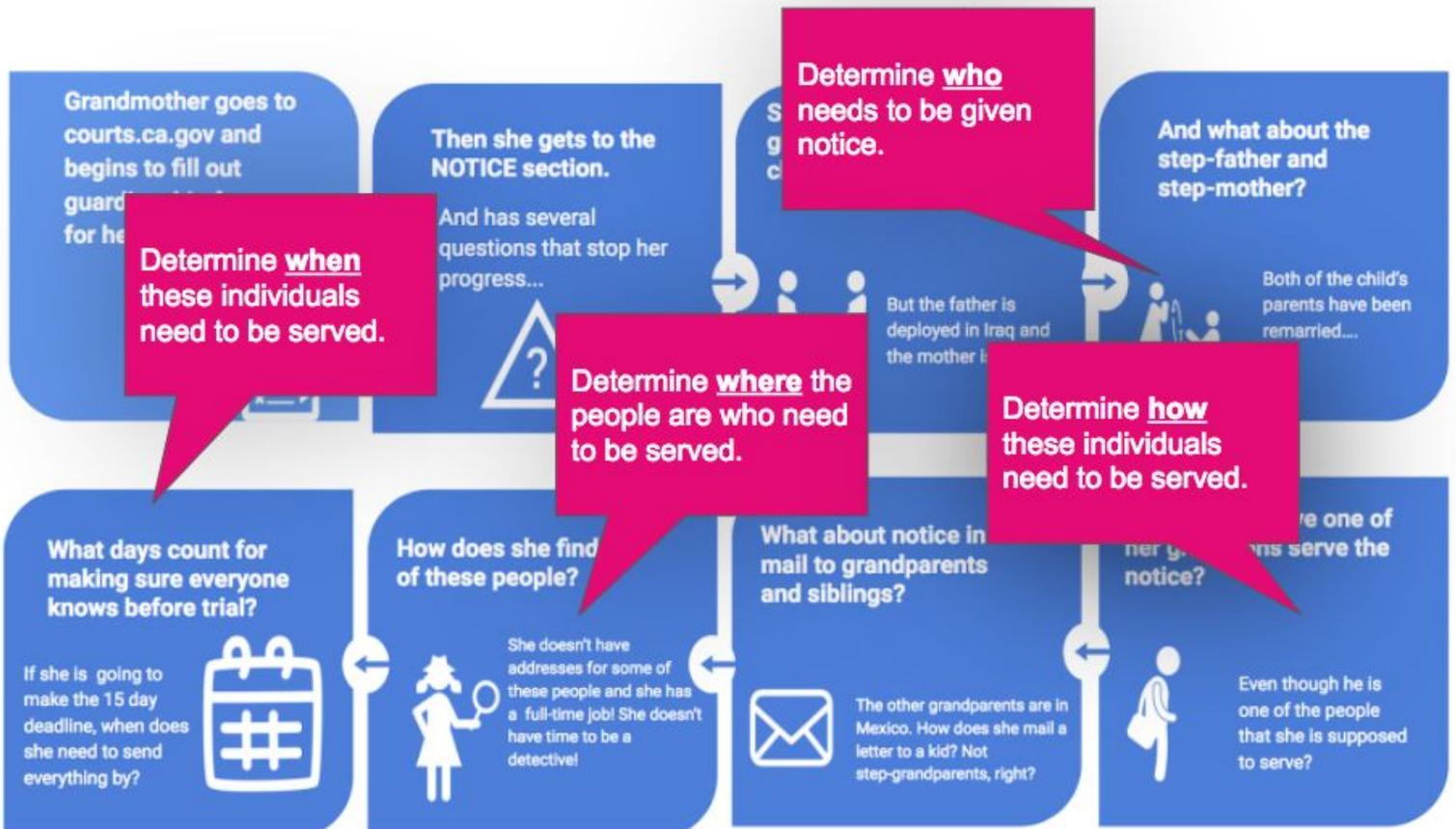
# One Year Timeline for a Co-Design to change a complex process



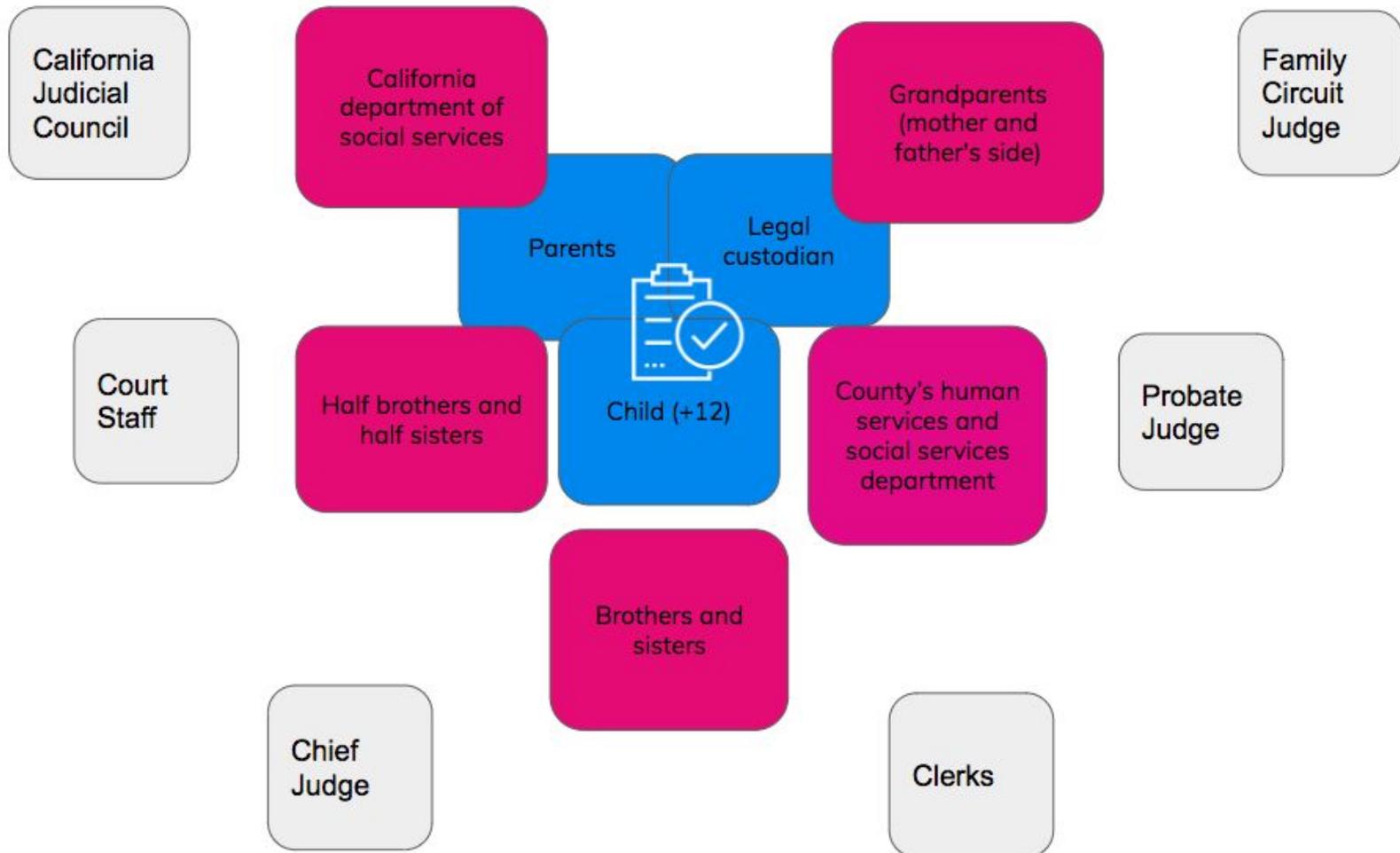
# Map out the current process



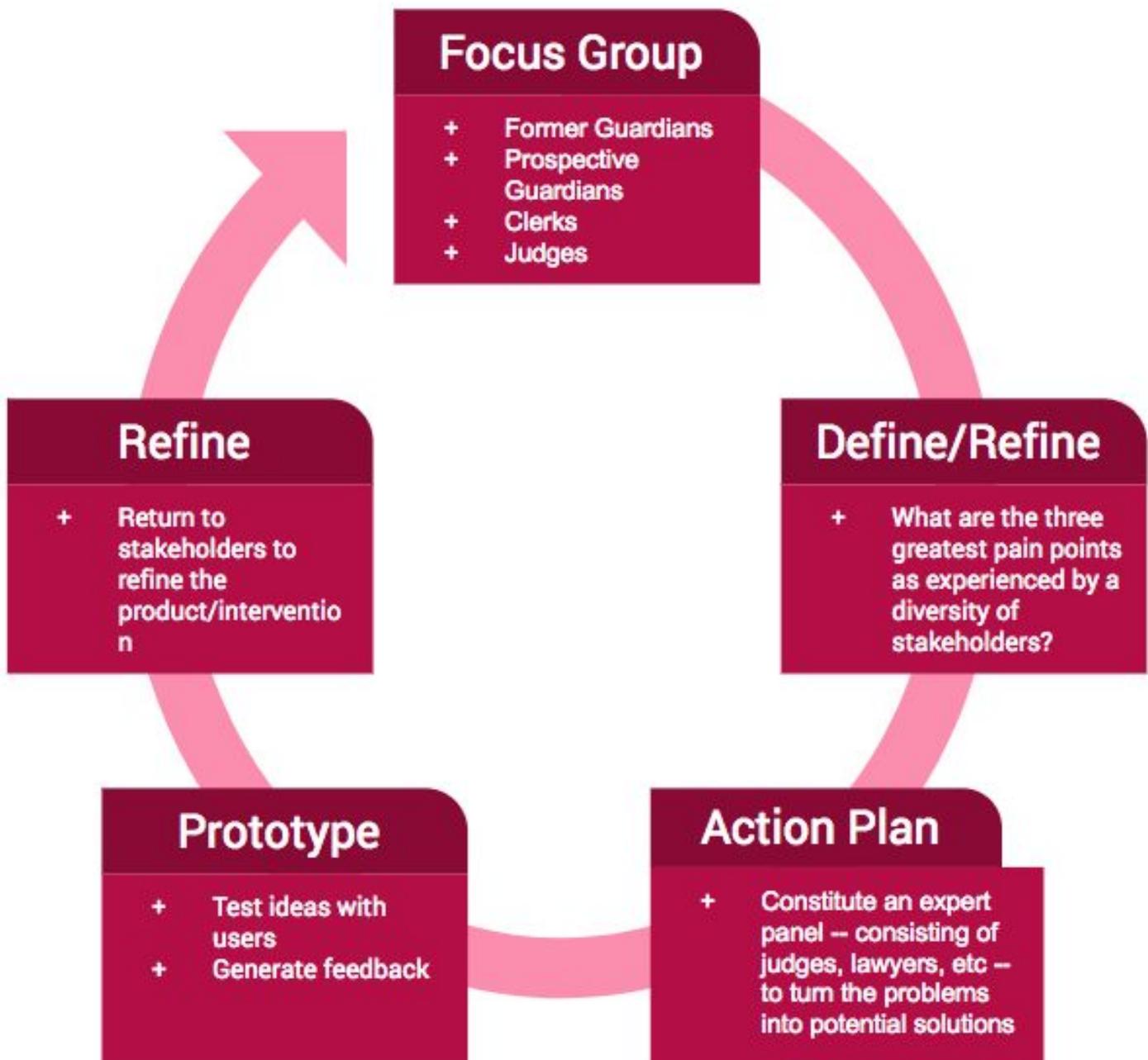
# Note Where Users Are Getting Stuck



# Understand Stakeholder Needs

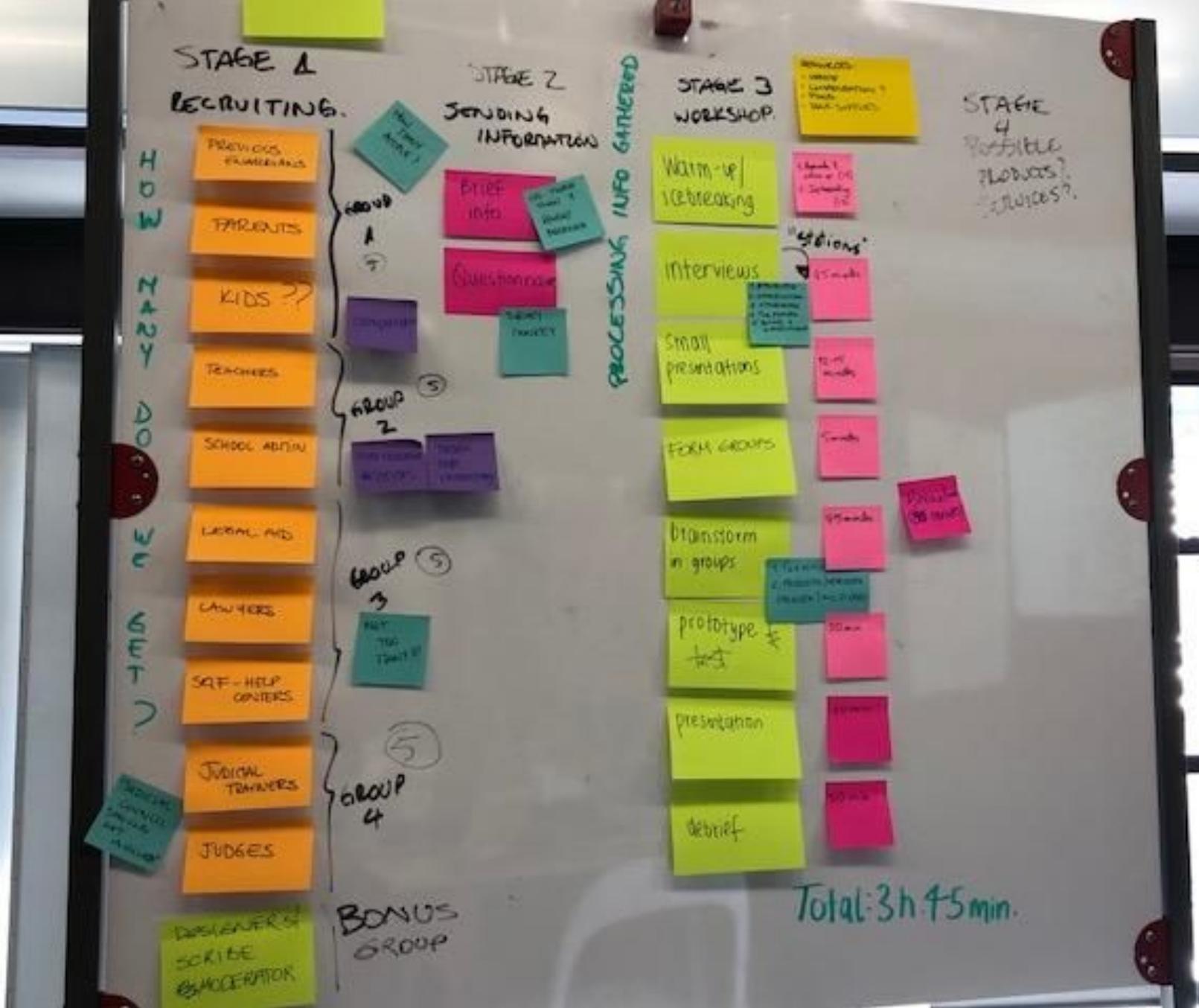


# Involve Stakeholders: Use a Design Approach



## Proposal 4

**Cross-System  
Design Sessions:**  
how to involve  
other touchpoints  
and systems in  
solving people's  
problems



How do we convince a separate system -- like the school system -- to join the system actors we're partnering with -- the court system -- to join forces to solve people's problems.

We propose cross-system design sessions, in which court and education leaders work with people who are navigating both systems to think about how to make the services work better for the people.

# Design Process: 4 Steps

1 Initial Research

2 Workshop

3 Prototyping

4 Measuring Outcomes

# Initial Research



# Workshop Participants

Group  
1

Veterans of system, parents,  
children

Group  
2

Teachers, guidance counselors,  
school administrators

Group  
3

Legal aid, lawyers, self-help  
centers

Group  
4

Judicial trainers, judges

Bonus

Designers, scribes, moderators

~ 5 from  
each

## Workshop: School as an entry point of guardianship

### Purpose:

We aim to generate ideas, policies and proposals around this question: How might we empower schools to help the guardianship process?

### Relevant input:

1. Schools are a common entry point.
2. It can be unclear when guardianship is needed, or what alternatives exist
3. Time can be critical, especially when enrolling a child in school
4. Schools are well positioned to support children and families going through process

### Process:

1. Warm-up / Ice breaking
2. Interview / stations
3. Presentations
4. Form groups
5. Brainstorming
6. Prototype & test
7. Presentation & Debrief

a. Problems of the current system  
b. Opportunities  
c. Stakeholders  
d. The guardianship process  
e. Schools & guardianship

a. Personas  
b. Products / services / policies / wild card

### Desired output:

1. A list of problems of the current guardianship system.
2. Ideas and proposals on how the schools could help to the guardianship process.
3. Empower key stakeholders from the schools and the judicial council to work together.
4. Map out how the guardianship could operate.

### Resources:

Venue, food, office supplies, etc.

# Prototyping: 3 Stages of Intervention

1. Proactive

2.  
Responsive

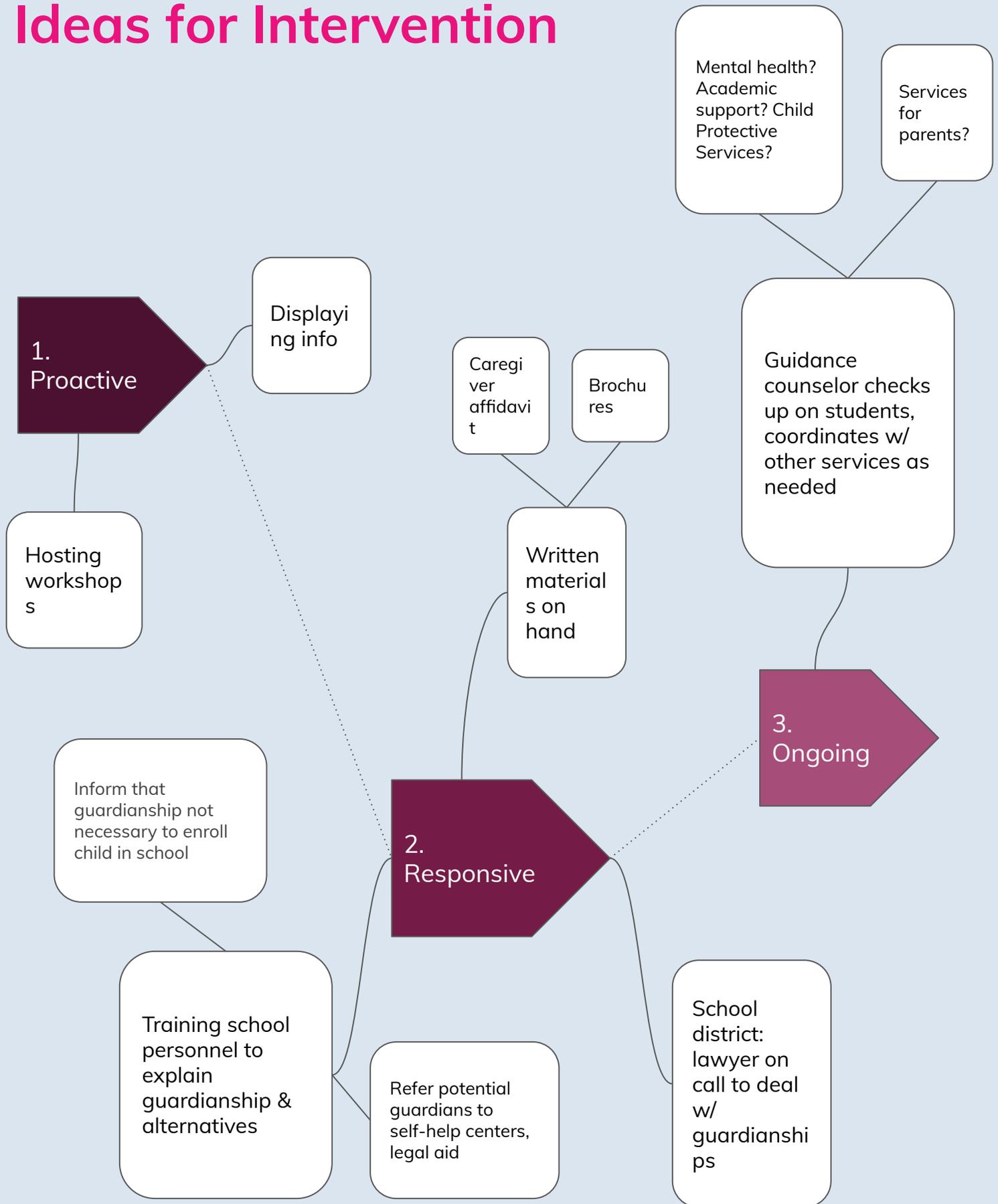
3. Ongoing

Schools reach out to communities, become hubs of information for families considering guardianship

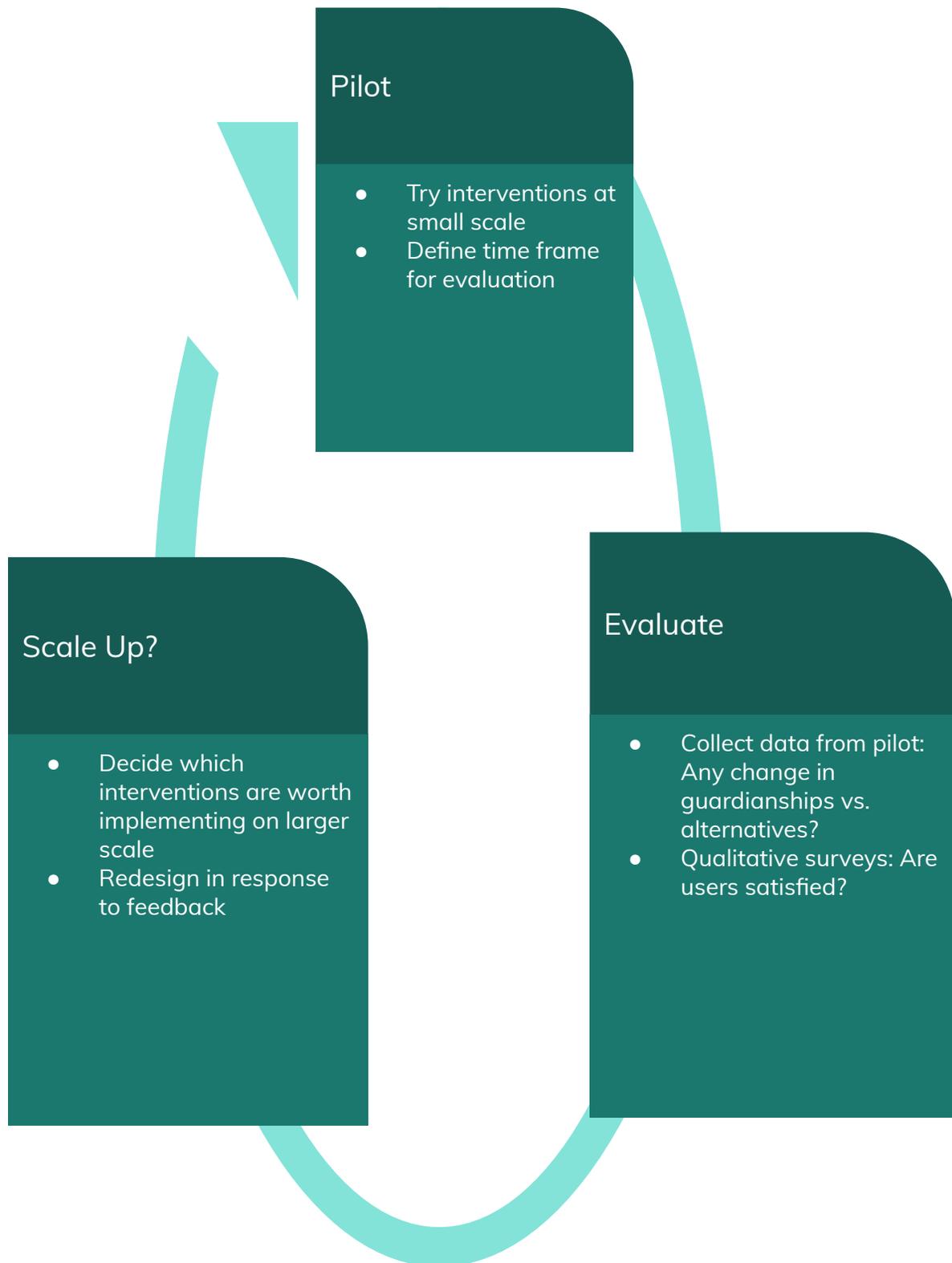
Schools respond helpfully when a potential guardian tries to enroll a child

Schools provide ongoing support to children and families going through process

# Prototyping: Ideas for Intervention



# Measuring Outcomes



# Potential barriers

Before carrying out the workshops, we need to explore these risks to make sure that all participants are protected, and we have the groundwork laid for productive sessions that lead to changes.

- Confidentiality issues
- Will guardians trust schools?
- Liability issues for the schools?
- How can we motivate schools to fully engage?
- Do schools have the capacity to take on this role?

## Section 3

# Sketchbook of Future Ideas

What could a future, more ambitious agenda look like -- to promote more community-led court innovation work?

Our class identified different possibilities for how more community members' voices could be included in plans to change how the court services are offered, how procedure and policy are set up, and how the space and organization operate.

These exploratory sketches and questions point to future directions for courts, law schools, and legal aid groups to work toward.

# Some Ideas and Provocations

Can we offer community-members training & services in return for their feedback?

Can we build community panels and ongoing relationships?

Can we make user co-design mobile and pop-up? Where we show up in a nimble, easy way where people are.

Can we fund for research output? So that there is a standing fund for compensation of users, and incentives for more researchers to conduct studies of

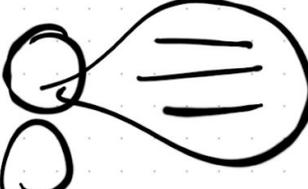
Can we have Pro Bono groups who do this work with us? If we created a protocol for designers and lawyers to follow, to conduct exit Interviews, form Redesign corps, make better signage, make guide videos, make guide handouts, and other 'best practices?

pop-up

# JUSTICE LAB

is open...

TELL US  
WHAT COULD  
BE BETTER.

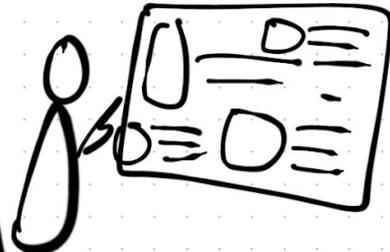


TELL US  
HOW YOU  
ARE DOING

GIVE US  
FEEDBACK  
ON NEW  
IDEAS FOR  
CONCRETS



SUBMIT YOUR  
IDEAS FOR  
WHAT YOU WANT  
TO SEE



get certified,  
get starter PACK

get MAPS  
get GUIDES

# Public Facing, On the Frontlines, Lab

• living it,  
whole person

- with food
- with drinks
- with tickets
- with play

BETTER PROCESS FOR BETTER SYSTEMS  
WE ARE ALL DESIGNERS...



- DO empirical research
  - CO-DESIGN PROTOTYPES
  - SET BACKERS, SUPPORTERS
- ROVING JUSTICE LAB



Get SCREENED FOR PROBLEMS, SOLVE THEM NOW.

Go to where people ARE ALREADY IN PROBLEM-SOLVING MODE

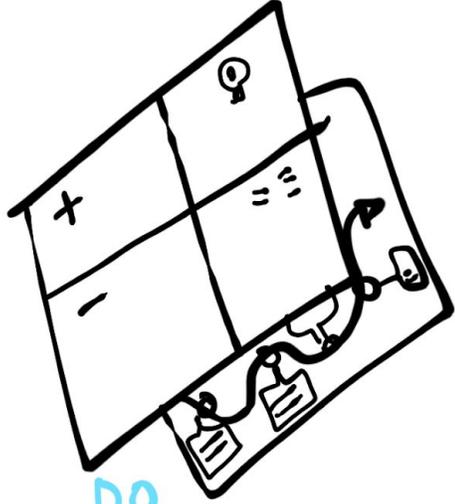
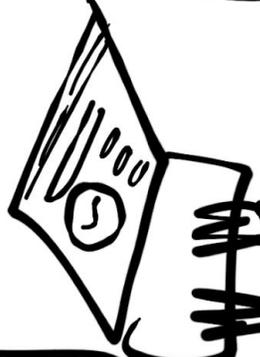
COME ON IN...



Have a coffee

What's your

Give some key info



DO DESIGN WORK



UNDERSTAND what happened



Get problem SOLVED early, then GET SUBSIDIZED—HELP WITH paying it OFF

Can we help spot issues before?



PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES DATABASE

Have Community Liaison to Respond

How do we have PEOPLE define what Justice will be?

User VOICE PANEL for Court Service

mapping + tracking local problems & acts

Demo PILOT? Low-Hanging Fruit?

Rate the JUDGE

USER Commission OMBUDSMAN

CHIEF JUSTICE / CLERK Town Hall meetings

IDEAS

from DIRECTOR Services -> Feedback Loop

Use Press for accountability

LINKED TO Rest of Community

CLIENT BOARD MEMBERS

INCLUDE IMPACTED people in conferences

How can Lawyers AND non-Lawyer common

How do we have communities lead + frame new solutions we build?

Not ALWAYS PRO-Efficiency

systems that get JUST Outcomes

lawyers, techies, funders, govt PROFESSIONAL CLIENT HAVE VOICE

User ADVOCATE ON Team

New KIND OF SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

set STAGE for TRUST, COMFORT

a Legal Professional who wants to make your knowledge

Community MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT Problems



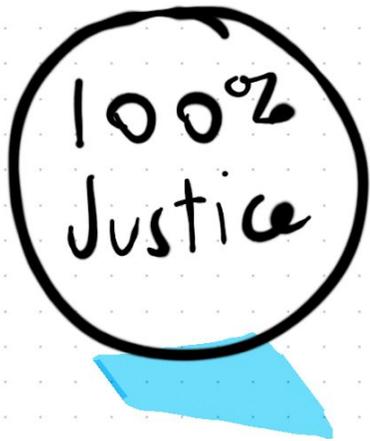
Community-Created Messaging

# EXPERIMENTAL, USER-CENTERED COURT PILOT



- A (TRAFFIC?) COURT DEDICATED TO EXPERIMENTING WITH
  - PROCEDURE
  - FORMALITIES
  - SPACE
  - PAPERWORK

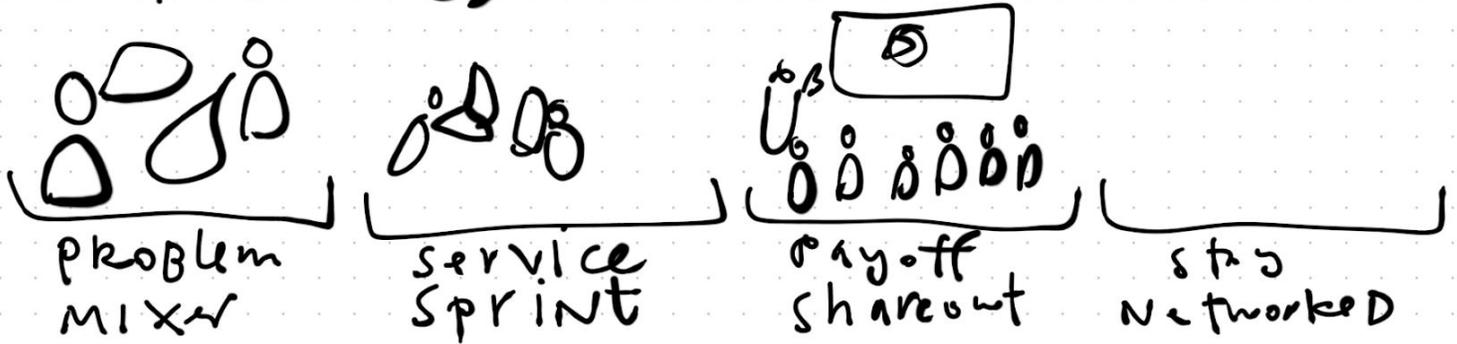




DESIGNERS + DEVELOPERS  
PRO BONO CORPS

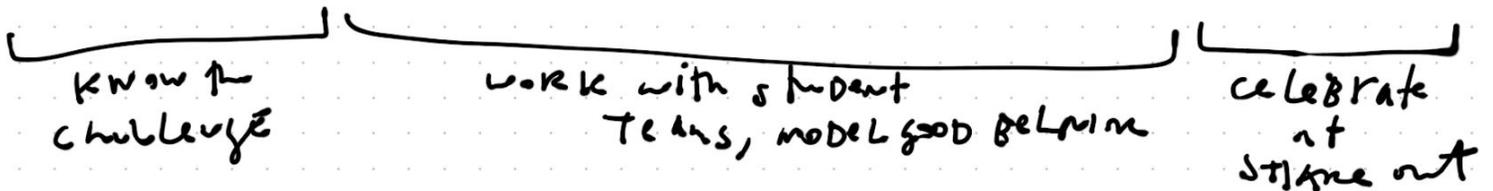
PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH CREATIVE WORK

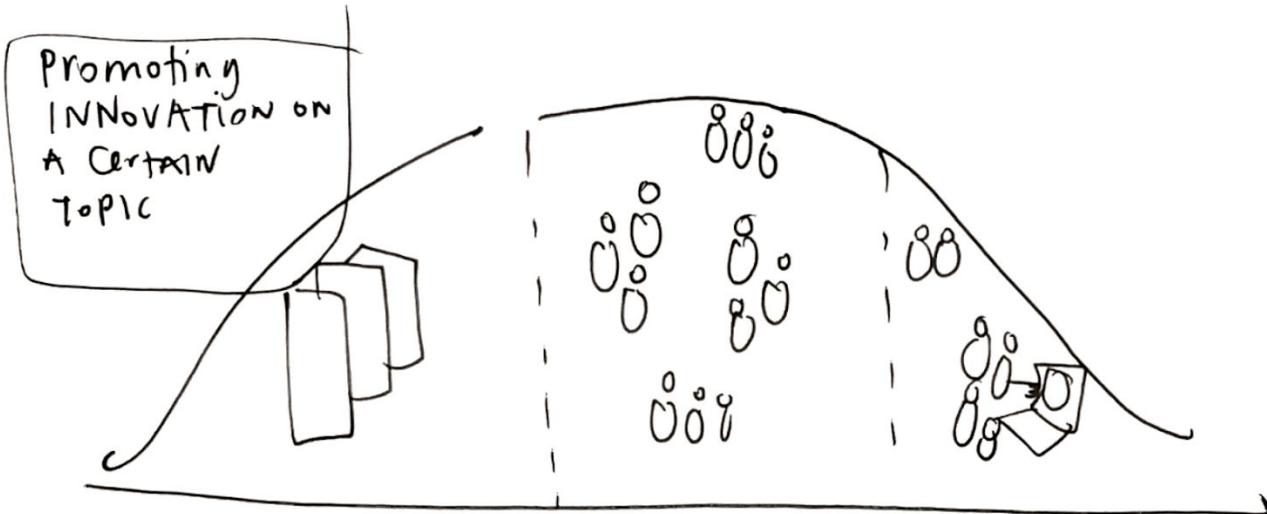
OUR PROCESS: SPRINT



OR

OUR PROCESS: CLASS COACH





white Paper  
on  
STATUS quo,  
current  
TECH & Projects,  
user Research

Pa  
WORKSHOPS,  
creating  
CONCEPTS,  
BUILDING  
ROUGH IDEAS

FOCUS ON  
HANDFUL OF  
PROMISING CONCEPTS  
TO BE SUPPORTED  
GOING FORWARD

RESOURCE TO  
THEM,  
to PROFESSIONALS

FELLOWS,  
LEADERSHIP

USER  
RESEARCH

INVENTORY,  
OUT-OF-THE-  
BOX

RESUME

SKILL  
SHARE

RECOGNITION,  
AWARDS,

- Needs
- Preferences

# Good luck in your design work!

## Tell us what you think

[mdhagan@stanford.edu](mailto:mdhagan@stanford.edu)

<http://legaltechdesign.com>

