Thank you for volunteering as an Intake Volunteer for the DBM Project. This script should guide you in completing the intake interview. All **highlighted language** is intended to be read verbatim. The non-highlighted language is guidance for you to use in tailoring your questions/answers.

**Introduction:**

***Hello Ms. Smith, this is Sarah and I’m with San Antonio Legal Services Association. I’m calling you about your interest in The Don’t Bully Me Project.***

***Thank you for reaching out to us. I’ve read the summary of the situation, and I’m very sorry your child and your family are going through this.***

***Our call today is to exchange some basic information. My goal is to better understand what is going on, provide you with some helpful resources, hear what your desired outcome is, and if warranted tell you more about the attorney referral program through the DBM Project. Before we get started, I need to let you know that I am not a mental health provider or an attorney, and so no part of our discussion should be considered a substitute for either.***

**Health and Wellness:**

***As part of our internal process, we need to state, before moving forward in our conversation, that if you feel your child has exhibited any behavior, or said anything, that would indicate that he/she is contemplating suicide or has attempted suicide, you should, of course, obtain immediate help from a mental health professional if you have not done so already.***

* ***Call 911***
* ***Take the child to the nearest Emergency Room***
* ***Call your local police department and ask for an officer that is specially trained in mental health***
* ***Take him/her to the local children’s mental health hospital***
* ***Call HHS-use map to identify applicable number based on school district*** [***https://txhhs.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=784b594122ea4c91ac0510100697e03d***](https://txhhs.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=784b594122ea4c91ac0510100697e03d)

***(***Note for internal use: This may be stating the obvious but should probably always be addressed very early on in the discussion. The tougher question is whether to recommend specific mental health professionals.)

**AVAILABLE RESOUCES BY LOCATION**

The Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) Interactive Map allows you to select a specific school district to determine what LMHA they fall under. The number can be provided to the parent to find out what mental health services are available to them.

Access the Interactive Map by clicking here: <https://txhhs.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=784b594122ea4c91ac0510100697e03d>

Counseling support in Bexar County:

Jewish Family Services-sliding scale; 210-302-6920

The Ecumenical Center-sliding scale; 210.616.0885

UTSA Sarabia Center (DLF can refer to them) - free Maurine to verify

Clarity Child Guidance Center-will do assessments and make referrals; [210-582-6412](tel:210-582-6412)

Sigma Mental Health – \*does not accept insurance; <https://www.sigmamhuc.com/>

School counselor

**Conversation Starters:**

***I am going to ask you some additional questions*** *(not exhaustive list);*

* *Ask clarifying questions from the intake form and determine their level of familiarity with the available resources:* 
  + ***Has anything changed or developed since you sent in your request form?***
  + ***Who was the last person you spoke with at the school and when was that?***
    - ***What did they say was the next step?***
  + ***If they filed a police report…What was the next step the officer offered to take?***
  + ***Have you looked up your school’s anti-bullying policy or code of conduct expectations?***
  + ***Have you read the David’s Law one pager and printed the TXSSC checklist?***
  + ***Have you reviewed the Advocate for Your Child Chart?***
* *Discuss options:*
  + ***In bullying situations, there are several avenues the victim’s family might want to pursue. These options generally break out into four basic categories:*** 
    - ***Motivating the school to take appropriate action***
    - ***Suing the school***
    - ***Pursuing criminal charges if the bullying behavior rises to that level,***
    - ***Taking action against the bully through a private attorney, such as sending a cease-and-desist letter, filing a lawsuit, or obtaining a temporary restraining order, injunction, protective order.***
* ***Do you have a sense for what you would like to see happen in this situation?***

Note: The answer to the previous question will drive the remainder of the conversation.

* + Motivate the School (not sue the school):
    - *Walk the parent through the Advocate for Your Child Chart*
    - *It’s usually best to start by talking with the teachers and coaches, and then work your way up through the system – i.e., assistant principal, principal, superintendent, and ultimately the school board. The higher you go in that process, the more important it will be for you to have other like-minded parents joining you in the effort. If you go through the entire chain of command without satisfactory action, you might consider starting a parent group to demand that the school do a better job of taking appropriate action in bullying situations.*
  + Sue the School/District*:*
    - ***DBM Project attorneys don’t take directly adversarial positions against schools; that is beyond the scope of what they do.  The reason for this is that they frequently need to work cooperatively with schools, and if they were to directly take on schools through formal grievances, lawsuits or otherwise, we feel as though that cooperative relationship we try to foster will become very difficult generally, as we would develop a reputation for going after schools.  Therefore, if you want to pursue that route, you would need to engage another lawyer for that, and you should be aware that there are various deadlines for taking action, which the attorney you hire to go against the school can explain to you.***

Note: We do not have references for any specific attorneys who handle lawsuits against schools, but they are generally referred to as “school lawyers” and you can investigate more online.

* + Criminal Action:
    - ***You should contact your school resource officer, local law enforcement, sheriff’s office or Texas Rangers, to try to have charges brought against the bully, but keep in mind that it’s not always easy to convince law enforcement officials that they should take action, and that decision essentially rests with them.  You can request a formal report be taken so that you can show a history if the behavior continues. Some officers will do a “knock and talk” to deter a young person from bullying/cyberbullying behavior. If you are not satisfied with your officer you may work your way up the chain of command or ask for Internal Affairs. If you feel there is a serious school safety concern you may contact the FBI.***
  + LEGAL CIVIL ACTION
    - ***David’s Legacy Foundation started the Don’t Bully Me Project when they advocated for relaxed requirements for parents or guardians to get a temporary restraining order, injunction, or protective order against a minor cyberbully. They learned that as a first step to make the bullying stop an attorney sending a cease and desist letter was very effective. The foundation has all the forms on their website that an individual can file themselves or they can hire an attorney and direct that attorney to the website for information. By providing these forms to the public they are making it easy for attorneys and hopefully cut down on legal costs.***
    - ***SALSA and our other partner legal service organizations recruit volunteer attorneys that help families that cannot afford an attorney in certain situations. Would you like to be considered for placement with a volunteer attorney?***

**IF THEY WANT TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROJECT PLACEMENT**

Ask Legal Server income and asset check questions.

If income-qualifying, notify potential client that their case will be reviewed, and they will be contacted by SALSA staff for an update on whether their case will be placed with a volunteer attorney.

If not income-qualifying, provide other options: (1) Tell them they can hire a private attorney or (2) Tell them about the forms on the DLF website; If their attorney has questions, DLF has attorneys who can answer questions, or the person may file pro se forms which may be found on the DLF website.

**IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PROJECT PLACEMENT**

***If you are not ready to be considered for placement with a volunteer attorney, that’s okay. We understand that you may need to think about it or discuss it with someone else in your family. Should you change your mind or have additional questions, you may email us again through the DLF site. We know that this is a difficult time for you and your child but please remember to take care of yourself. You need to be the best you can be to help your child get through this. Would you like me to give you the number for your LMHA (Local Mental Health Authority) in case you or someone you know needs it?***

***This will conclude our call unless you have any further questions. Thank you for reaching out to us and please don’t hesitate to contact us again should you need further assistance.***

**Intake Closure:**

Once the interview is completed, please complete the project referral, if applicable, AND fill out the online Intake Closure form for all cases.