

UX Research Report

Enhancing the Experience of Court Users

Executive Summary

The experience of court users can significantly impact their ability to participate effectively in legal proceedings and their perception of the justice system.

Methods

This research focuses on three key user groups - Applicants in the Family Law Court, Lay Witnesses, and Victims in Criminal Cases - to understand their needs, identify challenges in their court journey, and recommend solutions to *improve their experience*.

The study utilizes stakeholder mapping, journey mapping, and empathy mapping to gain a thorough understanding of each user group.

Outcomes

Based on these insights, we propose solutions for enhancing the user experience, followed by a structured plan for implementing and evaluating these solutions.

In seeking improvements, we are drawing on successful practices from other judiciary systems.

Through these targeted interventions, the court system will not only provide a more efficient and transparent process but also foster a supportive environment that promotes user confidence, emotional well-being, and access to justice.

Next Steps

The next step is to engage stakeholders to prioritize solutions and begin a collaborative design process, leading to the development and testing of prototypes, followed by a structured rollout and continuous improvement plan.

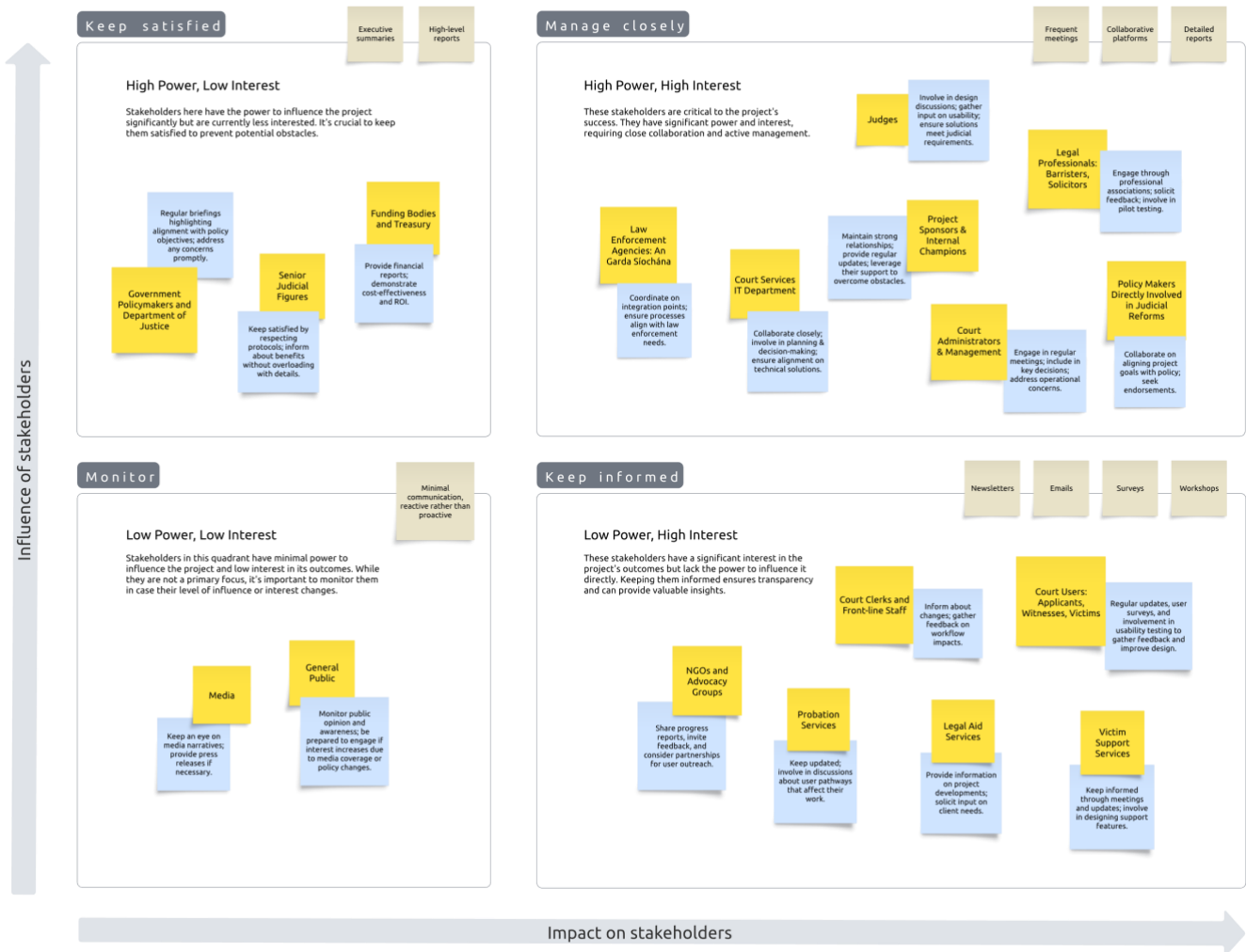
Table of Contents

1. Research Methodology	3
Stakeholder Mapping	3
Developing User Personas	4
2. Key Themes and Insights	11
Complexity of Legal Processes	11
Emotional Stress	11
Communication Gaps	11
Accessibility Issues	11
3. Identifying Opportunities for Improvement	12
4. Possible Solutions	13
1. Simplified Information Resources	13
2. Digital Case Management Portal	13
3. Court Liaison/Navigator Services	13
4. Pre-Court Preparation Sessions	14
5. Safe Spaces and Emotional Support for Vulnerable Users	14
6. Transparent Scheduling and Communication Improvements	14
7. Emotional and Legal Support Post-Trial	15
8. Hybrid Court Models for Efficiency	15
5. Recommendations for Next Steps	16
1. Prioritize Solutions Through Stakeholder Engagement	16
2. Conduct User-Centered Co-Design Workshops	16
3. Develop and Test Prototypes	16
4. Scope Project for Implementation	16
5. Pilot Testing and Continuous Feedback Loops	16
6. Plan for Full-Scale Rollout	16
7. Establish Sustainable Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms	16
6. Annexes	16
Stakeholder Maps	17
User Journey Maps	21
Empathy Maps	27

1. Research Methodology

Stakeholder Mapping

In undertaking a UX design project aimed at addressing user issues within a system, it's essential to identify and understand the various stakeholders involved. Below is the stakeholder mapping for this project, categorizing stakeholders into four quadrants: Monitor, Keep Informed, Keep Satisfied, and Manage Closely.



Engagement Strategies

By identifying stakeholders and categorizing them according to their power and interest, we can tailor our engagement strategies to meet their needs and expectations.

This approach ensures that:

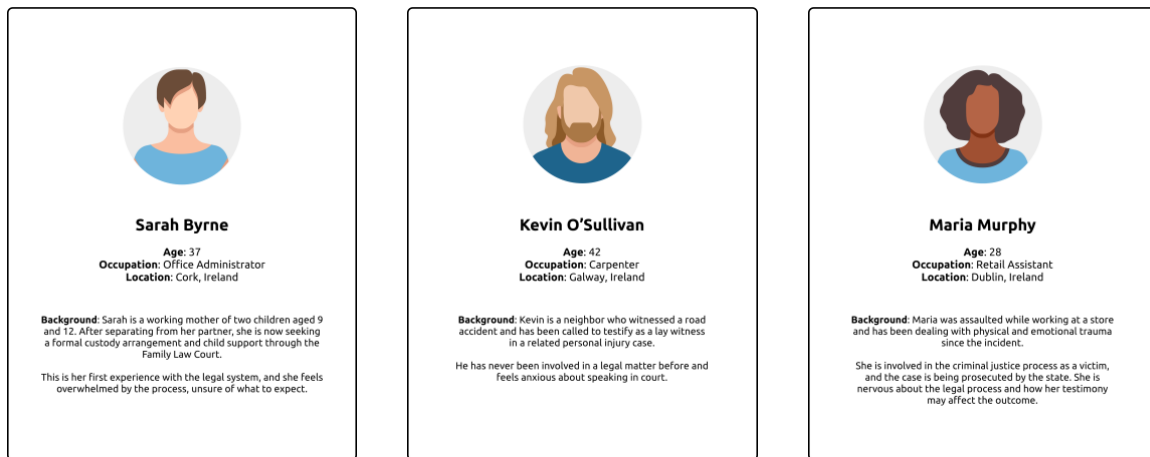
- Influential stakeholders are actively involved.
- Interested parties are kept informed.
- Potential challenges are addressed proactively.

Developing User Personas

As we design for the user, we need to get to know the user very well.

In our UX study, we began by selecting three key court users - an Applicant, a Witness, and a Victim - who reside in the "Keep Informed" quadrant of our stakeholder mapping due to their high interest but low power in influencing project decisions.

We initially drafted basic personas for each, outlining their demographics, backgrounds, technological proficiency, goals, frustrations, and specific needs from the court system.



As we progressed, we delved deeper through user journey mapping and empathy mapping exercises, uncovering their pain points, fears, challenges, and evolving needs.

This evolving understanding allows us to tailor our designs to genuinely meet their needs and improve their experience with court services.

User Persona 1: Applicant in the Family Law Court

Name: Sarah Byrne

Age: 37

Occupation: Office Administrator

Location: Cork, Ireland

Background: Sarah is a working mother of two children aged 9 and 12. After separating from her partner, she is now seeking a formal custody arrangement and child support through the Family Law Court. This is her first experience with the legal system, and she feels overwhelmed by the process, unsure of what to expect.

Tech Proficiency: Intermediate; uses online banking, social media, and basic office software but has no experience with legal technology.

Goals:

- Secure a fair custody arrangement and ensure her children's well-being.
- Understand her rights and responsibilities in the family law process.
- Navigate the court process efficiently without losing excessive time from work.

Frustrations:

- Confusion about the required documents and procedures for the court.
- Stress over legal jargon and the fear of not being heard or understood in court.
- Emotional tension from interacting with her former partner and the impact on her children.

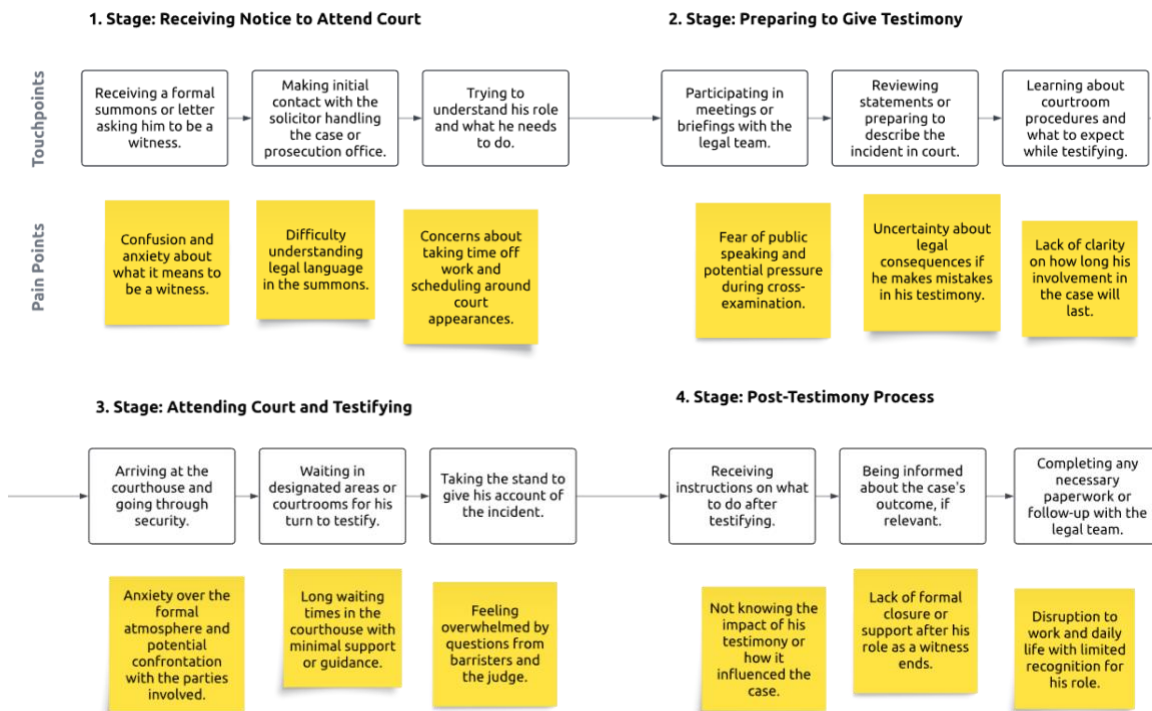
Needs from the Court System:

- Clear and simple guidance on what to prepare for court.
- A supportive and neutral environment where she can voice her concerns comfortably.
- Online resources or self-help tools to prepare her case and understand court procedures.

Pain Points:

- Overwhelming amount of complex legal information; difficult to find clear steps.
- Difficulty understanding legal jargon and requirements for her case.
- Uncertainty about costs and timelines associated with going to court.
- Confusing paperwork; unclear instructions on how to complete and submit forms.
- High emotional burden and stress related to gathering personal information and dealing with the ex-partner.
- Difficulties taking time off work for meetings and consultations.
- Intimidating atmosphere of the courthouse; feeling uncomfortable and nervous.
- Lack of privacy and support in an emotionally charged environment.
- Potential delays, adjournments, and long waiting periods between hearings.
- Unclear information on next steps after a decision is made.
- Concerns about enforcing orders and the implications for her children.
- Emotional exhaustion from a lengthy legal process.

User Journey



Empathy Map



Fears:

- Making a mistake that could affect custody or financial support.
- The emotional impact on her children.
- Cost and length of the legal process.

Challenges:

- Navigating complex legal language and procedures.
- Balancing time and finances while managing the case.
- Managing stress and emotional strain.

Wants:

- A fair and swift resolution that supports her and her children.
- Clear instructions on legal processes and what's required.
- Emotional support and understanding from the court and legal professionals.

User Persona 2: Lay Witness

Name: Kevin O’Sullivan

Age: 42

Occupation: Carpenter

Location: Galway, Ireland

Background: Kevin is a neighbour who witnessed a road accident and has been called to testify as a lay witness in a related personal injury case. He has never been involved in a legal matter before and feels anxious about speaking in court.

Tech Proficiency: Basic; uses a smartphone for calls, texts, and browsing but does not rely heavily on technology for work or personal matters.

Goals:

- Fulfil his civic duty by providing a clear and accurate account of what he witnessed.
- Minimize disruption to his daily life and work commitments.
- Feel confident and prepared to answer questions in front of lawyers and the judge.

Frustrations:

- Nervousness about speaking in a formal setting and being questioned.
- Uncertainty over the type of questions he will be asked and how to answer them appropriately.
- Taking time off work and losing income due to court obligations.

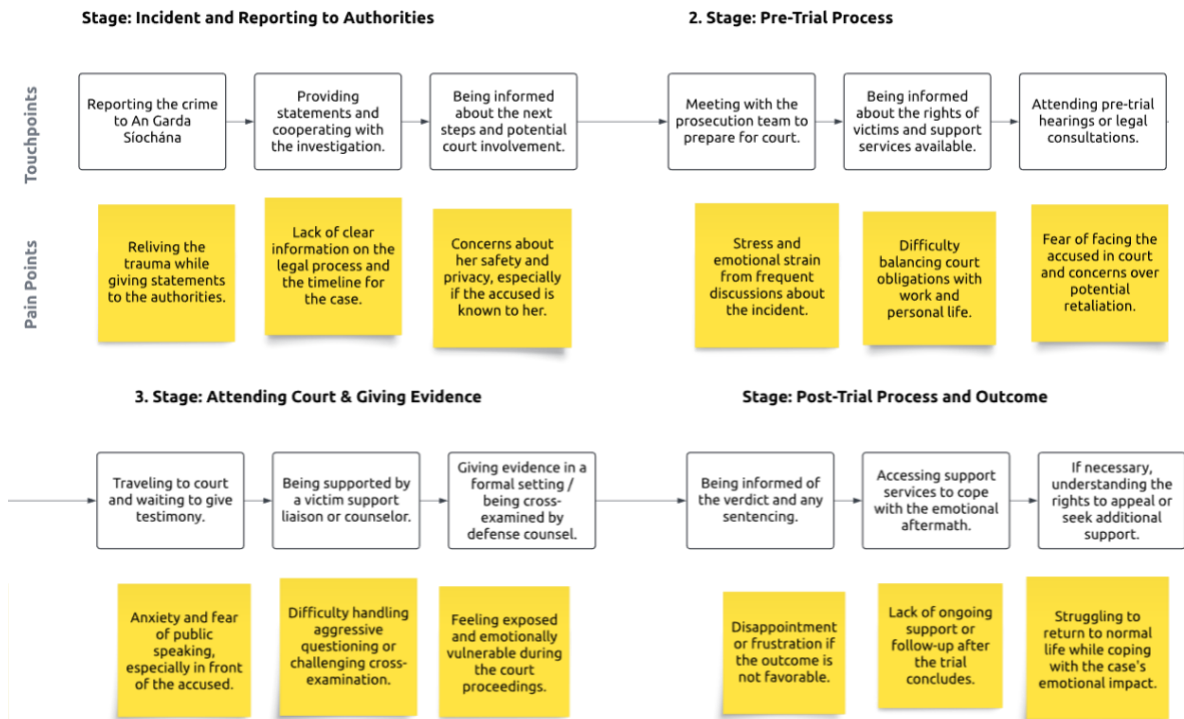
Needs from the Court System:

- Clear instructions on what to expect on the day of his testimony, including location, schedule, and process.
- A supportive environment to help him feel comfortable and not pressured while testifying.
- Timely updates on the status of the case to avoid unnecessary trips or delays.

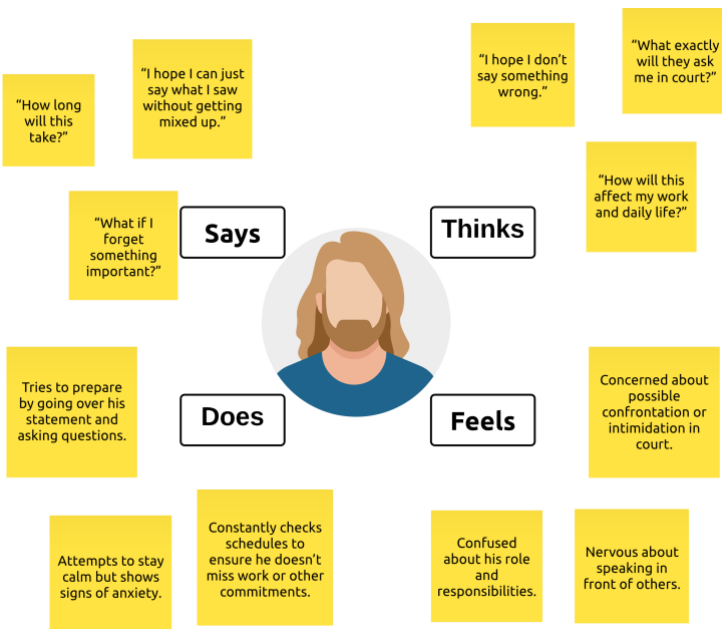
Pain Points:

- Confusion and anxiety about what it means to be a witness.
- Difficulty understanding legal language in the summons.
- Concerns about taking time off work and scheduling around court appearances.
- Fear of public speaking and potential pressure during cross-examination.
- Uncertainty about legal consequences if he makes mistakes in his testimony.
- Lack of clarity on how long his involvement in the case will last.
- Anxiety over the formal atmosphere and potential confrontation with the parties involved.
- Long waiting times in the courthouse with minimal support or guidance.
- Feeling overwhelmed by questions from barristers and the judge.
- Not knowing the impact of his testimony or how it influenced the case.
- Lack of formal closure or support after his role as a witness ends.
- Disruption to work and daily life with limited recognition for his role.

User Journey



Empathy Map



Fears:

- Saying something incorrect or being misunderstood in court.
- Being put on the spot and feeling pressured by legal questioning.
- Disruption to his work and daily life.

Challenges:

- Lack of understanding of the court process and his role.
- Feelings of anxiety and nervousness about public speaking.
- Uncertainty about how long his involvement in the case will last.

Wants:

- Clear guidance on what to expect and what is required of him.
- A quick and efficient process without too much disruption to his life.
- A calm and supportive environment while he is testifying.

User Persona 3: Victim in a Criminal Case

Name: Maria Murphy

Age: 28

Occupation: Retail Assistant

Location: Dublin, Ireland

Background: Maria was assaulted while working at a store and has been dealing with physical and emotional trauma since the incident. She is involved in the criminal justice process as a victim, and the case is being prosecuted by the state. She is nervous about the legal process and how her testimony may affect the outcome.

Tech Proficiency: High; uses social media, online services, and mobile apps frequently, and is comfortable finding information and communicating through digital channels.

Goals:

- Achieve justice and ensure the perpetrator is held accountable for the crime.
- Feel safe and supported throughout the legal proceedings.
- Have a voice in the process and be updated on the case's progress.

Frustrations:

- Anxiety about facing the accused person in court and potentially being cross-examined.
- Fear that the process will be slow and stressful, prolonging her ability to move on from the incident.
- Emotional difficulty reliving the incident while giving evidence.

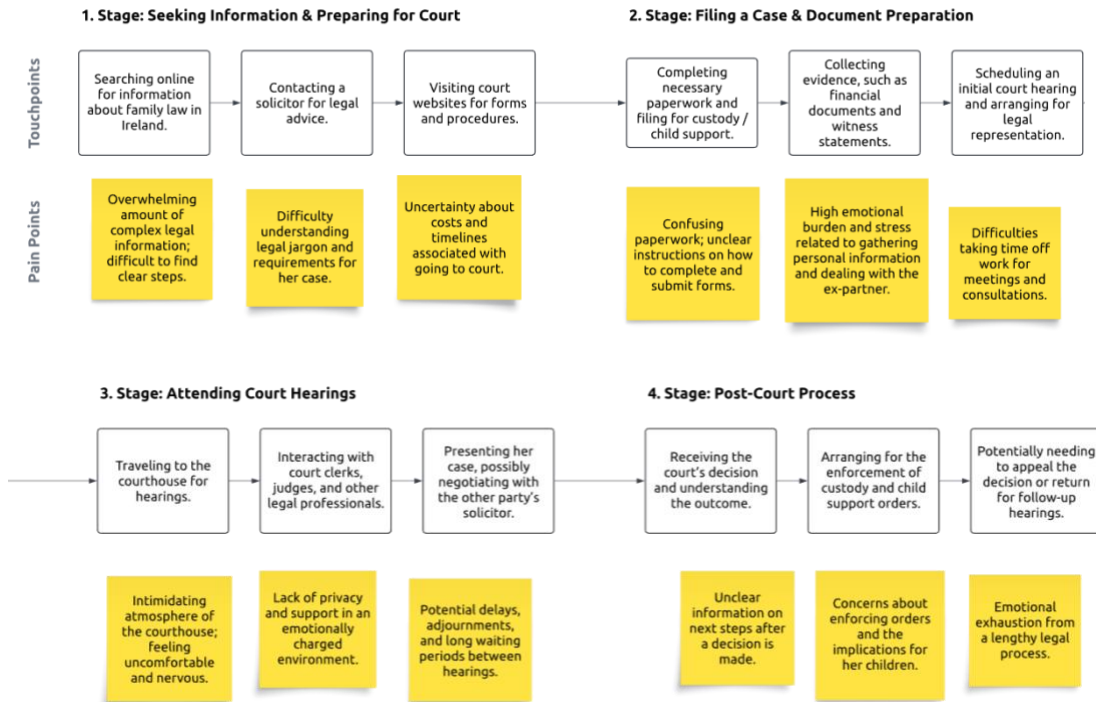
Needs from the Court System:

- Access to victim support services, such as counselling or court accompaniment.
- A clear understanding of her rights and the court process, including how to give evidence and what to expect at each stage.
- Regular updates on the status of the case and any required court appearances.

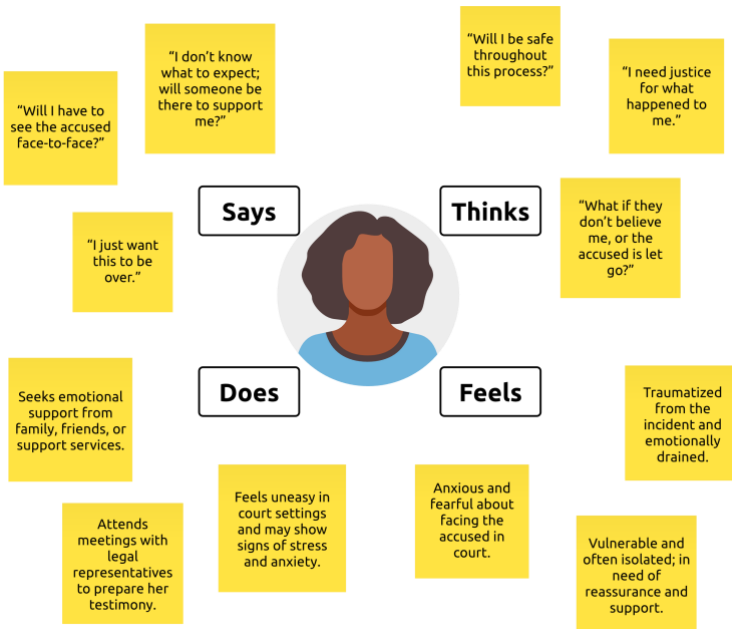
Pain Points:

- Reliving the trauma while giving statements to the authorities.
- Lack of clear information on the legal process and the timeline for the case.
- Concerns about her safety and privacy, especially if the accused is known to her.
- Stress and emotional strain from frequent discussions about the incident.
- Difficulty balancing court obligations with work and personal life.
- Fear of facing the accused in court and concerns over potential retaliation.
- Anxiety and fear of public speaking, especially in front of the accused.
- Difficulty handling aggressive questioning or challenging cross-examination.
- Feeling exposed and emotionally vulnerable during the court proceedings.
- Disappointment or frustration if the outcome is not favourable.
- Lack of ongoing support or follow-up after the trial concludes.
- Struggling to return to normal life while coping with the case's emotional impact.

User Journey



Empathy Map



Fears:

- Facing the accused and feeling unsafe in court.
- Being cross-examined aggressively or having her credibility questioned.
- The case dragging on for a long time, prolonging her trauma.

Challenges:

- Emotional strain from reliving the incident during court proceedings.
- Navigating a formal and impersonal legal process.
- Balancing the case with daily life, work, and recovery from the incident.

Wants:

- A supportive and secure environment throughout the court process.
- A clear understanding of her rights and what to expect in court.
- Timely updates and a resolution that brings closure and justice.

2. Key Themes and Insights

Across all personas, several overarching themes and patterns emerged that highlight both common and unique experiences for court users.

Lack of Clarity and Information

Users often struggle to understand legal processes and terminology, leading to confusion about procedures, documents, and timelines. This lack of clear guidance can result in errors, delays, and a sense of being lost.

Stress and Anxiety

Court experiences are emotionally charged, and the complexity of legal procedures without accessible information increases stress. Users often feel overwhelmed and unprepared as they navigate their rights and appearances in court.

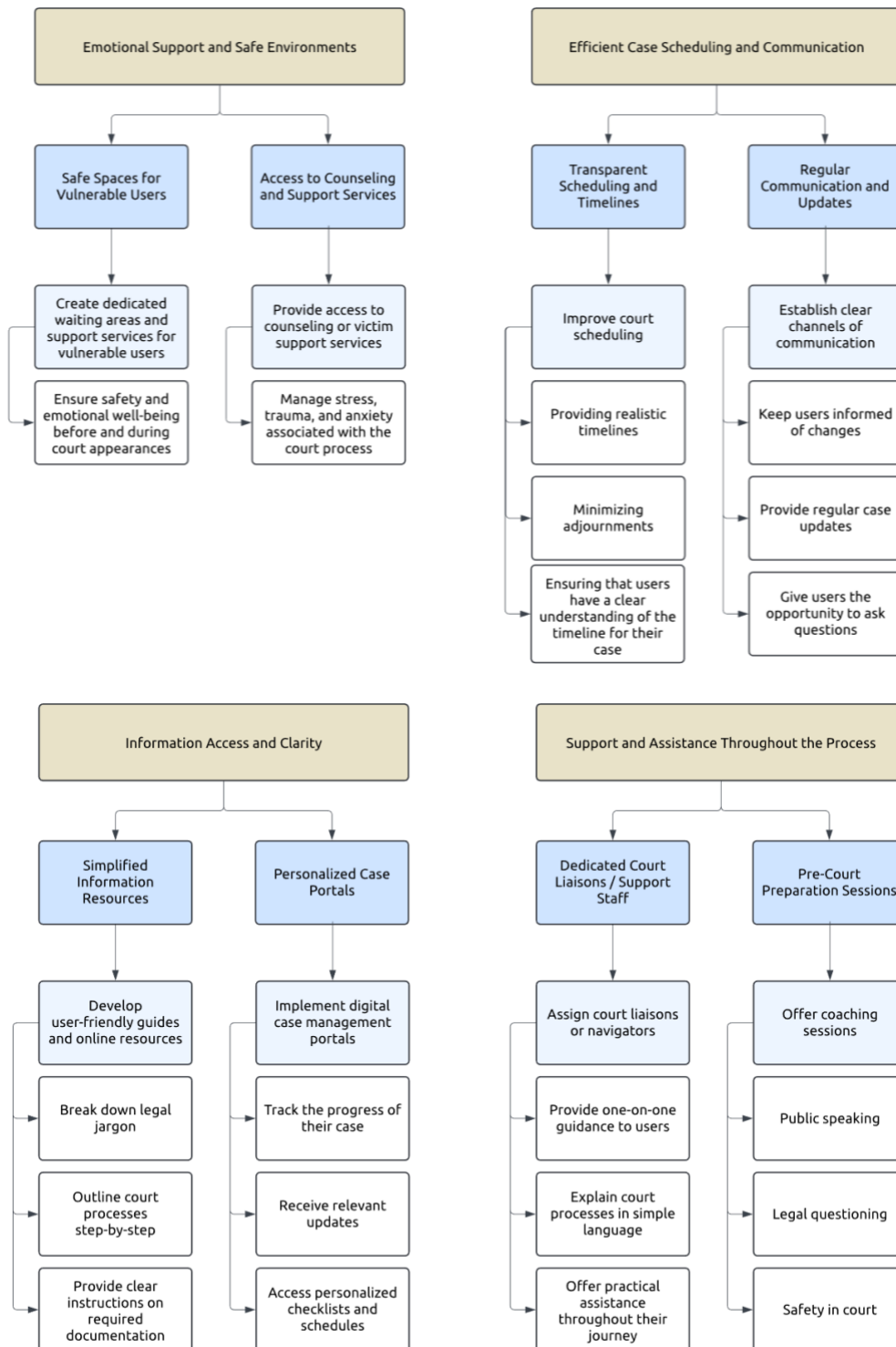
Need for Support and Guidance

Users expressed a strong desire for clearer instructions and personalized support throughout their journey. This highlights an opportunity for more empathetic, user-centred services to improve the overall experience.



3. Identifying Opportunities for Improvement

Based on the key findings, several opportunities exist to enhance the court experience for all personas. The research reveals that users of the Irish court system all share common pain points around stress, lack of information, and a need for support. Designing court systems with empathy and practical user-centered solutions can significantly enhance the experience for all involved, ensuring that they feel informed, prepared, and supported throughout their legal journey.



4. Possible Solutions

1. Simplified Information Resources

Problem: Confusion and stress from lack of clear, user-friendly information on court procedures and requirements.

Reference: UK Online Family Court Information Hub - The UK has implemented comprehensive online information hubs specifically designed for family court users, offering plain-language guides, step-by-step instructions, and FAQs.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Develop a centralized online portal for each type of court case (family law, criminal cases, witness information) with easy-to-understand resources.
- These resources would cover court processes, required documents, timelines, and step-by-step preparation, including visual aids and videos.
- **Example:** Interactive guides tailored to specific case types (e.g., "Your Guide to Applying for Custody"), which include checklists, downloadable forms, and self-help tools.

2. Digital Case Management Portal

Problem: Users lack transparency on case status and timeline, causing anxiety and disruption.

Reference: Singapore's Integrated Electronic Litigation System (eLitigation) - Singapore's eLitigation platform allows users to track their case progress, access documentation, and receive real-time updates on court schedules.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Implement a user-centric digital platform where applicants, witnesses, and victims can securely log in to view the progress of their case, check court dates, and receive personalized updates.
- **Features:** Secure messaging with legal representatives or court staff, access to evidence files, and automated reminders for upcoming hearings or required actions.
- **Benefit:** Improved transparency, reducing users' anxiety and uncertainty about next steps.

3. Court Liaison/Navigator Services

Problem: Users are overwhelmed by the complexity of court processes and require guidance.

Reference: New York City's Court Navigator Program - New York courts implemented a Court Navigator Program that provides trained volunteers to assist unrepresented litigants, helping them prepare documents, understand proceedings, and navigate the court system.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Introduce Court Liaisons or Navigators in courthouses and online, trained to support applicants, witnesses, and victims by guiding them through paperwork, procedural requirements, and helping them prepare for court appearances.

- **Enhanced Support:** Special training for navigating emotional cases, such as family disputes or criminal cases involving victims, ensuring that support is empathetic and user-centred.
- **Benefit:** More informed and confident users, resulting in smoother proceedings and fewer administrative errors.

4. Pre-Court Preparation Sessions

Problem: Witnesses and victims are nervous about testifying, lack information on courtroom procedures, and are fearful of facing cross-examination.

Reference: Canada's Witness Preparation Programs - In Canada, pre-court preparation programs are offered to witnesses and victims to help them understand the court process, manage stress, and prepare for testimony.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Offer dedicated preparation sessions for witnesses and victims, either in person or online, to familiarize them with courtroom settings, legal questioning techniques, and their rights as witnesses.
- **Supportive Tools:** Role-playing scenarios, informational videos, and interactive sessions to simulate giving evidence and being cross-examined.
- **Benefit:** Increased confidence and reduced stress for witnesses and victims, ensuring they are prepared and able to give clear testimony.

5. Safe Spaces and Emotional Support for Vulnerable Users

Problem: Victims and family law applicants face emotional trauma and anxiety in the court environment.

Reference: Australia's Family Violence Courts - Australia has established special family violence courts that provide safe waiting areas for victims, separate from the accused, and access to support services such as counselling.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Establish secure, private waiting areas for vulnerable users, including victims and family law applicants, ensuring they do not encounter the opposing party before or after court proceedings.
- **On-site Support:** Social workers, victim support specialists, and counsellors available on-site to provide emotional support before, during, and after the hearings.
- **Benefit:** Enhanced safety and emotional well-being, reducing trauma and stress associated with the court process.

6. Transparent Scheduling and Communication Improvements

Problem: Unpredictable and often lengthy timelines add to users' stress and disrupt their lives.

Reference: Denmark's Digital Court Schedules and Case Management - Denmark's court system provides real-time access to court schedules, timelines for different case types, and automatic notifications for users.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Improve scheduling transparency by providing clear and accessible information on expected case timelines from filing to resolution.
- **Digital Notifications:** Use SMS and email updates to notify users of schedule changes, required actions, or upcoming court dates, reducing unnecessary courthouse visits and missed deadlines.
- **Benefit:** Reduced anxiety over unexpected delays, better ability to plan time off work or childcare, and greater trust in the court process.

7. Emotional and Legal Support Post-Trial

Problem: Users often lack follow-up support after the case concludes, which can affect their ability to process the outcome and move on.

Reference: New Zealand's Victim Support Services - In New Zealand, victims of crime have access to ongoing support services that assist with emotional recovery, navigating legal outcomes, and connecting with counselling.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Establish a follow-up service for vulnerable users, including victims of crime and family law applicants, providing them with guidance on post-trial procedures, counselling, and access to additional legal advice if needed.
- **Counselling and Peer Support Groups:** Enable victims and family law users to access mental health resources and support groups where they can share experiences and receive emotional support.
- **Benefit:** Improved well-being and sense of closure, helping users transition back to their daily lives after the court process.

8. Hybrid Court Models for Efficiency

Problem: Long waiting periods, adjournments, and time-consuming court appearances disrupt users' lives.

Reference: Estonia's E-Court System - Estonia's e-court system uses digital platforms to conduct hearings and resolve preliminary matters, significantly reducing in-person court time.

Proposed Solution for Ireland:

- Implement a hybrid model for certain case types (e.g., procedural hearings, document submissions) using video conferencing and online document filing to minimize the need for physical court appearances.
- **Virtual Mediation and Hearings:** Allow certain family law matters or preliminary hearings to be conducted virtually, enabling users to participate from home or their solicitor's office.
- **Benefit:** More efficient resolution of cases, reduced travel and waiting times, and greater convenience for court users.

5. Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Prioritize Solutions Through Stakeholder Engagement

Engage all relevant stakeholders, including legal professionals and user representatives, to prioritize the proposed solutions. Use criteria such as feasibility, potential impact, and cost-effectiveness to determine the sequence of implementation.

2. Conduct User-Centered Co-Design Workshops

Organize collaborative workshops with court users, designers, and stakeholders to co-create user-centred solutions. Employ methods like journey mapping, role-playing, and rapid prototyping to refine the design based on direct user input.

3. Develop and Test Prototypes

Create prototypes for key solutions, such as simplified legal documents, digital support interfaces, and enhanced communication tools. Test these prototypes with users from each target group to identify usability issues and gather feedback for improvement.

4. Scope Project for Implementation

Clearly define the scope of the project, including goals, deliverables, timelines, budget, and resource requirements. Develop a comprehensive project plan with assigned roles and responsibilities, and set success metrics to measure progress.

5. Pilot Testing and Continuous Feedback Loops

Roll out solutions on a small scale through pilot programs in selected courts. Monitor usage and gather real-time feedback from users and staff to identify challenges and areas for improvement. Use continuous feedback loops to make iterative enhancements.

6. Plan for Full-Scale Rollout

Based on pilot testing results, prepare for a broader rollout across the court system. Ensure proper training for staff and communication to all users about the new solutions. Develop user support materials (guides, FAQs) and provide access to help desks.

7. Establish Sustainable Improvement and Feedback Mechanisms

Implement mechanisms to gather ongoing user feedback through surveys, focus groups, and analytics. Set up an advisory board to regularly assess the effectiveness of the solutions and recommend further enhancements based on evolving needs.

Stakeholder Maps

1. Monitor (Low Power, Low Interest)

Stakeholders in this quadrant have minimal power to influence the project and low interest in its outcomes. While they are not a primary focus, it's important to monitor them in case their level of influence or interest changes.

General Public

- *Description:* Citizens not directly involved with the court system.
- *Interest:* Low; may benefit indirectly from improvements.
- *Power:* Low; limited ability to influence the project.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Monitor public opinion and awareness; be prepared to engage if interest increases due to media coverage or policy changes.

Media (Not Directly Involved)

- *Description:* Media outlets not currently covering judicial reforms.
- *Interest:* Low; may become interested if the project gains public attention.
- *Power:* Low; can influence public perception if they engage.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Keep an eye on media narratives; provide press releases if necessary.

2. Keep Informed (Low Power, High Interest)

These stakeholders have a significant interest in the project's outcomes but lack the power to influence it directly. Keeping them informed ensures transparency and can provide valuable insights.

Court Users (Applicants, Witnesses, Victims)

- *Description:* Individuals directly using court services.
- *Interest:* High; directly affected by UX improvements.
- *Power:* Low; limited influence over project decisions.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Regular updates, user surveys, and involvement in usability testing to gather feedback and improve design.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Advocacy Groups

- *Description:* Organizations advocating for legal reform, victim support, and user rights.
- *Interest:* High; invested in improvements that benefit their constituencies.
- *Power:* Low; can advocate but have limited direct influence.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Share progress reports, invite feedback, and consider partnerships for user outreach.

Victim Support Services

- *Description:* Agencies providing support to crime victims.

- *Interest:* High; improvements can enhance their service delivery.
- *Power:* Low; influence through advocacy and feedback.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Keep informed through meetings and updates; involve in designing support features.

Legal Aid Services

- *Description:* Organizations providing legal assistance to those who cannot afford it.
- *Interest:* High; changes affect their clients.
- *Power:* Low; limited direct influence.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Provide information on project developments; solicit input on client needs.

Probation Services

- *Description:* Agencies supervising offenders.
- *Interest:* High; interested in system efficiencies.
- *Power:* Low; influence through operational feedback.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Keep updated; involve in discussions about user pathways that affect their work.

Court Clerks and Frontline Staff

- *Description:* Staff interacting with users daily.
- *Interest:* High; changes impact daily tasks.
- *Power:* Low; limited decision-making authority.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Inform about changes; gather feedback on workflow impacts.

3. Keep Satisfied (High Power, Low Interest)

Stakeholders here have the power to influence the project significantly but are currently less interested. It's crucial to keep them satisfied to prevent potential obstacles.

Government Policymakers and Department of Justice

- *Description:* Officials responsible for judicial policies and funding.
- *Interest:* Low to medium; interested if project aligns with policy goals.
- *Power:* High; can affect funding and policy support.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Regular briefings highlighting alignment with policy objectives; address any concerns promptly.

Funding Bodies and Treasury

- *Description:* Entities controlling financial resources.
- *Interest:* Low; primarily focused on fiscal responsibility.
- *Power:* High; can approve or withhold funding.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Provide financial reports; demonstrate cost-effectiveness and ROI.

Senior Judicial Figures (Not Directly Involved)

- *Description:* High-ranking judges or officials not engaged in daily operations.
- *Interest:* Low; unless changes affect broader judicial processes.
- *Power:* High; influential in judicial circles.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Keep satisfied by respecting protocols; inform about benefits without overloading with details.

4. Manage Closely (High Power, High Interest)

These stakeholders are critical to the project's success. They have significant power and interest, requiring close collaboration and active management.

Court Services IT Department

- *Description:* Responsible for technical implementation.
- *Interest:* High; directly involved in system changes.
- *Power:* High; can influence technical feasibility.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Collaborate closely; involve in planning and decision-making; ensure alignment on technical solutions.

Court Administrators and Management

- *Description:* Oversee court operations and administration.
- *Interest:* High; improvements affect operational efficiency.
- *Power:* High; can approve or block changes.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Engage in regular meetings; include in key decisions; address operational concerns.

Judges (Directly Involved)

- *Description:* Judges whose workflow may be affected.
- *Interest:* High; interested in how changes impact court proceedings.
- *Power:* High; influential in acceptance and adoption.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Involve in design discussions; gather input on usability; ensure solutions meet judicial requirements.

Legal Professionals (Barristers, Solicitors)

- *Description:* Lawyers interacting with the court system.
- *Interest:* High; changes impact their practice.
- *Power:* High; can influence user adoption and provide critical feedback.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Engage through professional associations; solicit feedback; involve in pilot testing.

Law Enforcement Agencies (An Garda Síochána)

- *Description:* Police services integral to the judicial process.
- *Interest:* High; changes affect case handling.
- *Power:* High; can impact cooperation and data sharing.

- *Engagement Strategy:* Coordinate on integration points; ensure processes align with law enforcement needs.

Project Sponsors and Internal Champions

- *Description:* Individuals or groups advocating for the project.
- *Interest:* High; invested in project success.
- *Power:* High; influence resources and organizational support.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Maintain strong relationships; provide regular updates; leverage their support to overcome obstacles.

Policy Makers Directly Involved in Judicial Reforms

- *Description:* Officials focused on modernizing the judiciary.
- *Interest:* High; project aligns with reform objectives.
- *Power:* High; can shape policy and provide support.
- *Engagement Strategy:* Collaborate on aligning project goals with policy; seek endorsements.

Engagement Strategies Summary

Monitor

- **Action:** Keep an eye on for any changes in influence or interest.
- **Communication:** Minimal; reactive rather than proactive.

Keep Informed

- **Action:** Provide regular updates and seek feedback.
- **Communication:** Newsletters, emails, surveys, workshops.
- **Goal:** Ensure transparency and incorporate valuable insights.

Keep Satisfied

- **Action:** Meet needs without over-involvement.
- **Communication:** Executive summaries, high-level reports.
- **Goal:** Prevent dissatisfaction that could hinder the project.

Manage Closely

- **Action:** Actively engage and involve in decision-making.
- **Communication:** Frequent meetings, collaborative platforms, detailed reports.
- **Goal:** Secure commitment and support; address concerns promptly.

User Journey Maps

Applicant in the Family Law Court, Ireland (Sarah Byrne)

1. Stage: Seeking Information & Preparing for Court

Touchpoints:

- Searching online for information about family law in Ireland.
- Contacting a solicitor for legal advice.
- Visiting court websites for forms and procedures.

Pain Points:

- Overwhelming amount of complex legal information; difficult to find clear steps.
- Difficulty understanding legal jargon and requirements for her case.
- Uncertainty about costs and timelines associated with going to court.

2. Stage: Filing a Case & Document Preparation

Touchpoints:

- Completing necessary paperwork and filing for custody/child support.
- Collecting evidence, such as financial documents and witness statements.
- Scheduling an initial court hearing and arranging for legal representation.

Pain Points:

- Confusing paperwork; unclear instructions on how to complete and submit forms.
- High emotional burden and stress related to gathering personal information and dealing with the ex-partner.
- Difficulties taking time off work for meetings and consultations.

3. Stage: Attending Court Hearings

Touchpoints:

- Traveling to the courthouse for hearings.
- Interacting with court clerks, judges, and other legal professionals.
- Presenting her case, possibly negotiating with the other party's solicitor.

Pain Points:

- Intimidating atmosphere of the courthouse; feeling uncomfortable and nervous.
- Lack of privacy and support in an emotionally charged environment.
- Potential delays, adjournments, and long waiting periods between hearings.

4. Stage: Post-Court Process

Touchpoints:

- Receiving the court's decision and understanding the outcome.
- Arranging for the enforcement of custody and child support orders.
- Potentially needing to appeal the decision or return for follow-up hearings.

Pain Points:

- Unclear information on next steps after a decision is made.
- Concerns about enforcing orders and the implications for her children.
- Emotional exhaustion from a lengthy legal process.

Lay Witness (Kevin O'Sullivan)

1. Stage: Receiving Notice to Attend Court

Touchpoints:

- Receiving a formal summons or letter asking him to be a witness.
- Making initial contact with the solicitor handling the case or prosecution office.
- Trying to understand his role and what he needs to do.

Pain Points:

- Confusion and anxiety about what it means to be a witness.
- Difficulty understanding legal language in the summons.
- Concerns about taking time off work and scheduling around court appearances.

2. Stage: Preparing to Give Testimony

Touchpoints:

- Participating in meetings or briefings with the legal team.
- Reviewing statements or preparing to describe the incident in court.
- Learning about courtroom procedures and what to expect while testifying.

Pain Points:

- Fear of public speaking and potential pressure during cross-examination.
- Uncertainty about legal consequences if he makes mistakes in his testimony.
- Lack of clarity on how long his involvement in the case will last.

3. Stage: Attending Court and Testifying

Touchpoints:

- Arriving at the courthouse and going through security.
- Waiting in designated areas or courtrooms for his turn to testify.
- Taking the stand to give his account of the incident.

Pain Points:

- Anxiety over the formal atmosphere and potential confrontation with the parties involved.
- Long waiting times in the courthouse with minimal support or guidance.
- Feeling overwhelmed by questions from barristers and the judge.

4. Stage: Post-Testimony Process

Touchpoints:

- Receiving instructions on what to do after testifying.
- Being informed about the case's outcome, if relevant.
- Completing any necessary paperwork or follow-up with the legal team.

Pain Points:

- Not knowing the impact of his testimony or how it influenced the case.
- Lack of formal closure or support after his role as a witness ends.
- Disruption to work and daily life with limited recognition for his role.

Victim in a Criminal Case (Maria Murphy)

1. Stage: Incident and Reporting to Authorities

Touchpoints:

- Reporting the crime to An Garda Síochána (police).
- Providing statements and cooperating with the investigation.
- Being informed about the next steps and potential court involvement.

Pain Points:

- Reliving the trauma while giving statements to the authorities.
- Lack of clear information on the legal process and the timeline for the case.
- Concerns about her safety and privacy, especially if the accused is known to her.

2. Stage: Pre-Trial Process

Touchpoints:

- Meeting with the prosecution team to prepare for court.
- Being informed about the rights of victims and support services available.
- Attending pre-trial hearings or legal consultations.

Pain Points:

- Stress and emotional strain from frequent discussions about the incident.
- Difficulty balancing court obligations with work and personal life.
- Fear of facing the accused in court and concerns over potential retaliation.

3. Stage: Attending Court & Giving Evidence

Touchpoints:

- Traveling to court and waiting to give testimony.
- Being supported by a victim support liaison or counsellor.
- Giving evidence in a formal setting and potentially being cross-examined by defence counsel.

Pain Points:

- Anxiety and fear of public speaking, especially in front of the accused.
- Difficulty handling aggressive questioning or challenging cross-examination.
- Feeling exposed and emotionally vulnerable during the court proceedings.

4. Stage: Post-Trial Process and Outcome

Touchpoints:

- Being informed of the verdict and any sentencing.
- Accessing support services to cope with the emotional aftermath.

- If necessary, understanding the rights to appeal or seek additional support.

Pain Points:

- Disappointment or frustration if the outcome is not favourable.
- Lack of ongoing support or follow-up after the trial concludes.
- Struggling to return to normal life while coping with the case's emotional impact.

Empathy Maps

Applicant in the Family Law Court (Sarah Byrne)

Thoughts:

- "I just want what's best for my children."
- "Am I doing this right? What if I make a mistake?"
- "This process is so complicated; I don't understand all this legal talk."

Feelings:

- Stressed about the future and uncertainty of the case.
- Overwhelmed by the emotional toll and complexity of the legal system.
- Hopeful for a positive outcome but anxious about facing her ex-partner.

Say:

- "I just want to make sure my kids are okay."
- "I don't understand this; can you explain it in simpler terms?"
- "When will I know what to do next?"

Do:

- Constantly seeks reassurance from her solicitor.
- Tries to stay organized but struggles with legal paperwork.
- Balances attending court with work and parenting responsibilities.

Fears:

- Making a mistake that could affect custody or financial support.
- The emotional impact on her children.
- Cost and length of the legal process.

Challenges:

- Navigating complex legal language and procedures.
- Balancing time and finances while managing the case.
- Managing stress and emotional strain.

Wants:

- A fair and swift resolution that supports her and her children.
- Clear instructions on legal processes and what's required.
- Emotional support and understanding from the court and legal professionals.

Lay Witness (Kevin O'Sullivan)

Thoughts:

- "I hope I don't say something wrong."
- "What exactly will they ask me in court?"
- "How will this affect my work and daily life?"

Feelings:

- Nervous about speaking in front of others.
- Confused about his role and responsibilities.
- Concerned about possible confrontation or intimidation in court.

Say:

- "What if I forget something important?"
- "How long will this take?"
- "I hope I can just say what I saw without getting mixed up."

Do:

- Tries to prepare by going over his statement and asking questions.
- Attempts to stay calm but shows signs of anxiety.
- Constantly checks schedules to ensure he doesn't miss work or other commitments.

Fears:

- Saying something incorrect or being misunderstood in court.
- Being put on the spot and feeling pressured by legal questioning.
- Disruption to his work and daily life.

Challenges:

- Lack of understanding of the court process and his role.
- Feelings of anxiety and nervousness about public speaking.
- Uncertainty about how long his involvement in the case will last.

Wants:

- Clear guidance on what to expect and what is required of him.
- A quick and efficient process without too much disruption to his life.
- A calm and supportive environment while he is testifying.

Victim in a Criminal Case (Maria Murphy)

Thoughts:

- "Will I be safe throughout this process?"
- "I need justice for what happened to me."
- "What if they don't believe me, or the accused is let go?"

Feelings:

- Anxious and fearful about facing the accused in court.
- Traumatized from the incident and emotionally drained.
- Vulnerable and often isolated; in need of reassurance and support.

Say:

- "I just want this to be over."
- "Will I have to see the accused face-to-face?"
- "I don't know what to expect; will someone be there to support me?"

Do:

- Attends meetings with legal representatives to prepare her testimony.
- Seeks emotional support from family, friends, or support services.
- Feels uneasy in court settings and may show signs of stress and anxiety.

Fears:

- Facing the accused and feeling unsafe in court.
- Being cross-examined aggressively or having her credibility questioned.
- The case dragging on for a long time, prolonging her trauma.

Challenges:

- Emotional strain from reliving the incident during court proceedings.
- Navigating a formal and impersonal legal process.
- Balancing the case with daily life, work, and recovery from the incident.

Wants:

- A supportive and secure environment throughout the court process.
- A clear understanding of her rights and what to expect in court.
- Timely updates and a resolution that brings closure and justice.