

Is it time for a kinder, more gentler court? It may be. Think about all the past work on access and assistance to those navigating the court without the assistance of a lawyer.

And, a variety of factors, and influences, are becoming more prominent in support of a kinder, gentler court and court experience. Court litigant and customer perceptions of courts have been catalogued by the National Center for State Courts in previous “State of State Courts” surveys. Among the factors to be considered when thinking about courts being ‘kinder and gentler’ are:

- public reactions to ease of access,
- difficulties in using and understanding court processes,
- media information about court processes, and,
- reticence of court leaders to openly talk about the work that courts perform.

Among the emerging influences in support of courts being more moderate in the treatment of litigants and users are the: use and role of technology, ease of access to information and processes, procedural fairness and perceptions of bias, civil justice reform, bail and pretrial release reforms, and ongoing attention to self-help mechanisms.

Please let us know your thoughts about courts focusing on kinder and gentler practices. Thank you! Janet G. Cornell

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