HIDELTA - MIC

"Giving Children a Voice."

Faye Ochi, Pramika Kamana,
Jackson Murray, Ellie Starzak,
Macy Bosworth, Phuong Bui, Zoe Wetzel

MEET THE TEAM

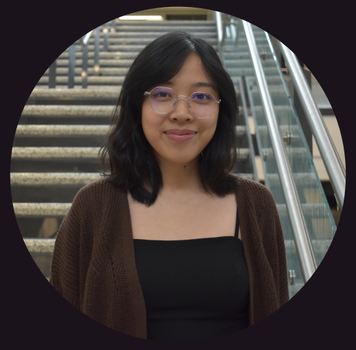
Faye Ochi

Pramika Kamana

Jackson Murray

Ellie Starzak

Macy Bosworth



Jasmine Bui

Zoe Wetzel

SPECIAL THANKS

Nancy Rasche
PO

Ananya Desai
TA

Vaishnavi Anand
TA

Sadie Bunting
TA

OUR SPONSOR

Landon Young

Sponsor, Founder, Entrepreneur,
Real CASA Volunteer

About the Company

MIC is a startup company focused on providing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) with a secure platform to communicate, manage, and interact with those involved in the child welfare system.

PRESENTATION AGENDA

- Project Background
- Design Process Overview
- Solution Walkthrough
- Next Steps

PROJECT BACKGROUND

About CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

A trained volunteer community that advocates for abused and neglected children in the child welfare system and supports children seeking for permanence.

Advocates for Children

CASA's Goals

Secure a permanent, loving home for kids

Tasks included

Support the child until the case is resolved.

Manage dozens of relationships with stakeholders

Advocate for child in court proceedings

Key Terms

CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate
CASA volunteers are sometimes referred as
“Volunteers”, “CASA”, “CASA volunteers”

DCS or CPS

Department of Children Services (DCS)
Child Protective Services (CPS)
Both terms are used interchangeably.

How Can We Make an Impact?

97,900
CASA Volunteers

242,000
children served

407,000
children in foster care

We can empower CASA volunteers

*according to national CASA statistics in 2021

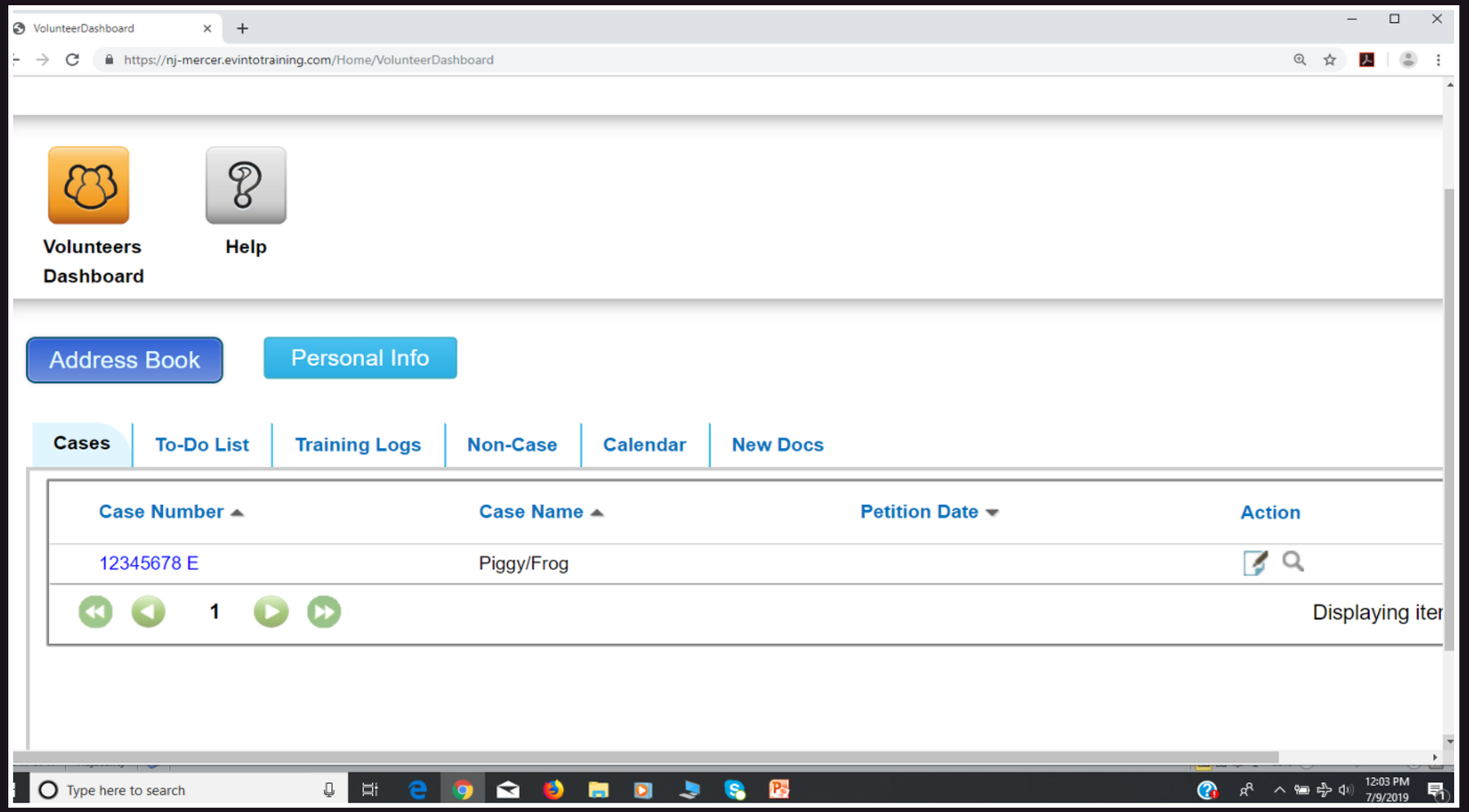
Problem Statement

CASA volunteers with full-time jobs need
***a system to effectively take, organize, review, upload meeting notes and information*,** enabling them to provide the best recommendations and insights when writing court reports.

Within the current system it is...

- difficult to transfer and upload notes
- challenging to organize and keep track of information

Current Software (Optima)



“Optima scratches at the surface. We need a solution that chips away at the massive iceberg of challenges CASA volunteers face.”

- Landon
(Our Sponsor)

User Group

CASA Volunteers with a full-time job

Due to working full-time, they are limited on the time spent on CASA tasks and will experience the most value from our solution.

Milestones

1

Framework Development

Communicate meaningful research findings and analysis about the existing process/problem space.

2

Vision Document and Analysis

Display solutions and analyze how they address pain points and empower volunteers.

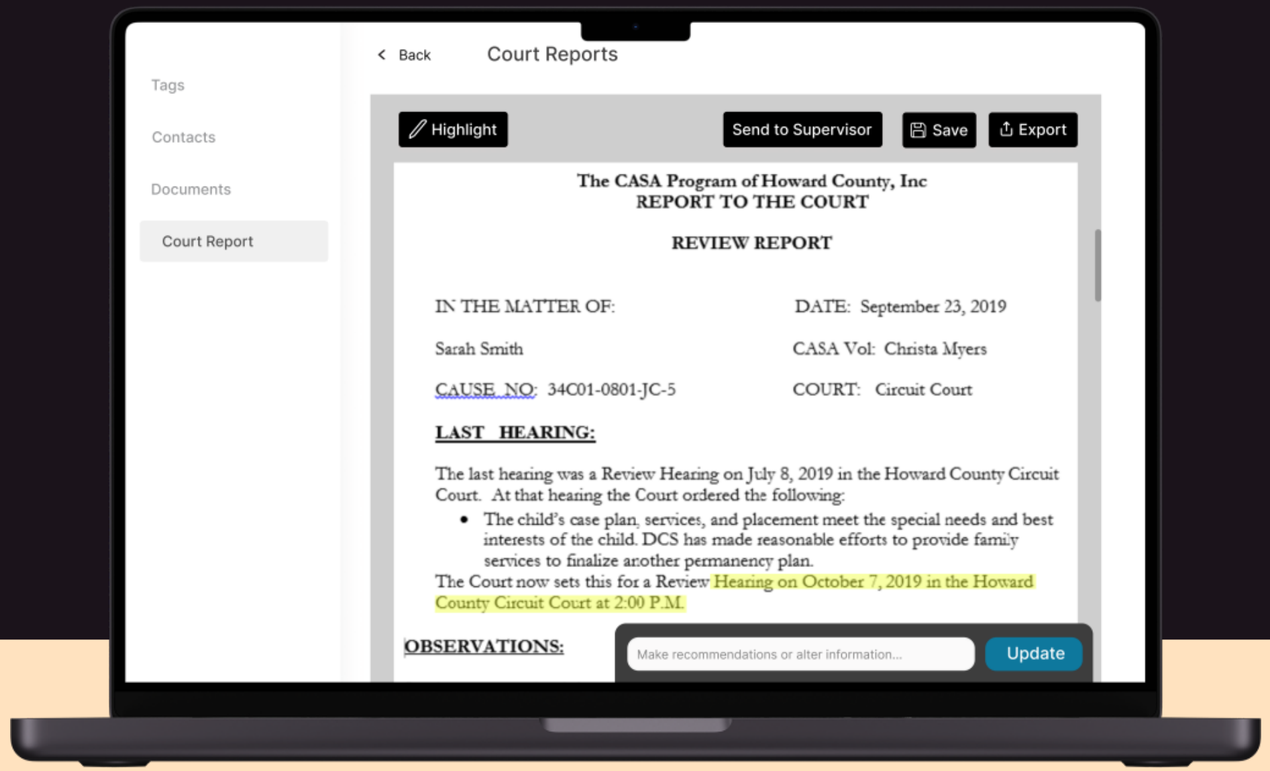
3

Design Solution

Design a low-to-mid fidelity functionality-based design that serves CASA’s needs.

Final Design

MIC - A mobile and web ecosystem for CASAs to upload and organize their notes and information to help them prepare for court.



DESIGN PROCESS OVERVIEW

Research Questions

Overall Goal: Gain context understanding, identify pain points, and visualize data.

What are a **CASA Tasks and Responsibilities**?

What **stakeholders are involved** in the CASA ecosystem?

What are the **CASA's primary needs**?

What is **the CASA journey** of representing a child in a case?

Our Approach

Desk Research

Gained valuable knowledge of CASA's work

Interviews

Rich insights from 2 CASAs, 1 Attorney, 1 Supervisor, 1 CPS Worker.

Stakeholder Ecosystem

Case Full-Time Staff

CASA Supervisors

Case Attornies

CPS Worker

Cases range from around 5 to 15 stakeholders involved

Child's Family

Biological Mom

Biological Father

Foster Mom

Foster Dad

Extended Family

and more ...

Child's Support System

Therapists

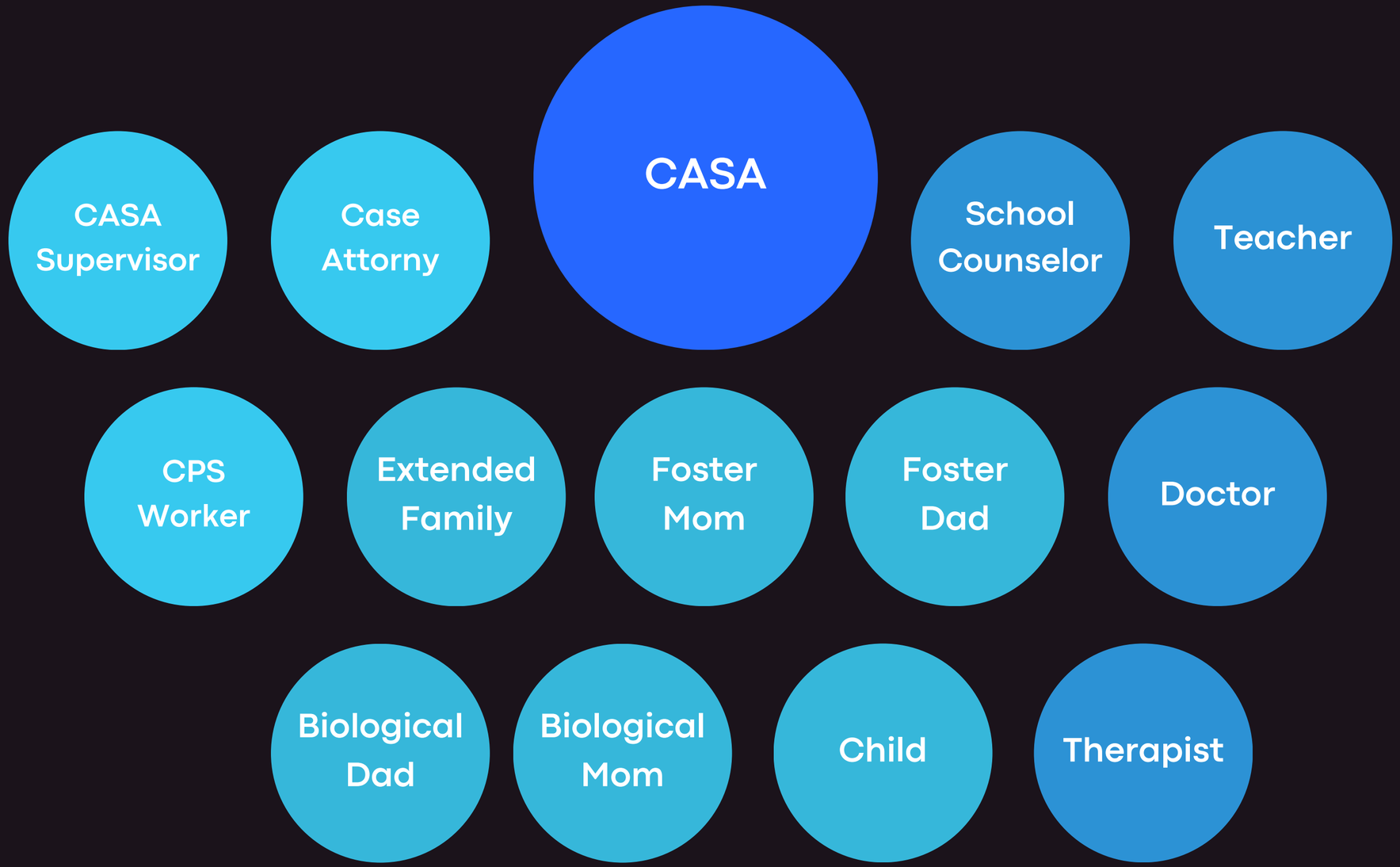
Doctors

Teachers

School Counselor

and more...

Communicating with Stakeholders



Communicating with Stakeholders

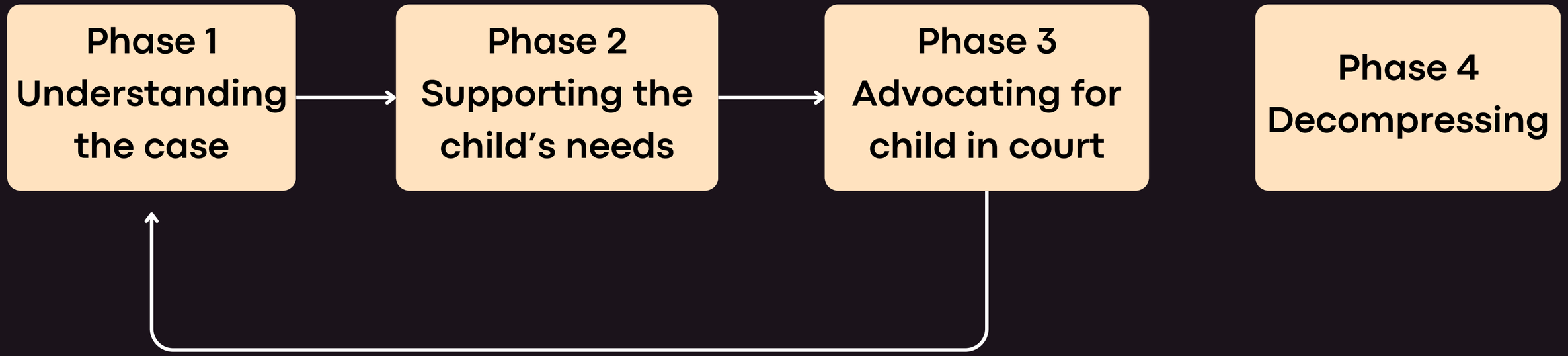
CONTACT	FREQUENCY
1. CHILD	1x per month, with a minimum of seeing the child in the home every other month
2. DCS CASE MANAGER (FCM)	1x per month by phone/email/in person
3. CASA SUPERVISOR	1x per month by phone/email/in person
4. PARENTS (if applicable)	1x per month (in home CHINS) 1x per 2 months (out of home CHINS)
5. FOSTER PARENTS	1x per 2 months in person/email/phone
6. SERVICE PROVIDERS	1x per 2 months in person/email/phone
7. TEACHERS	1x per 3 months
8. CHILD (2 or more hours away)	1x per 60 days in person *You still need to have contact with the child 1x per month (virtual or phone)

miro

CASA's contacts and communication frequency

CASA’s Journey Throughout a Case

Cases have 4 phases with unique circumstances and situations leading to a process with no fixed duration.



What phase can we provide the most impact to CASA volunteers?

Identifying CASA's Needs from Quotes

"I take a notebook to take notes and then transpose them into my personal google docs because bringing a laptop or phone into a meeting can create a communicaton barrier with the child"

- CASA Volunteer

"Reports take the longest to write."

- CASA Volunteer

"I sometimes feels unsafe giving certain stakeholders my contact information."

- CASA Volunteer

Decide our Focus

Which *problems* should we focus on?

Codesign Workshops

Identified top needs and innovative ideas.

Workshop with CASAs

Participants

- 2 current CASA volunteers.

Takeaways:

- Increased understanding of CASAs' values in certain tasks.
- Identified the top 3 most important needs to CASAs.
- Reports = Most Valuable (it can create direct impacts on the child's situation)

Workshop Outcomes: Top 3 Needs of CASAs

Need 1

Able to effectively take and store notes

Need 2

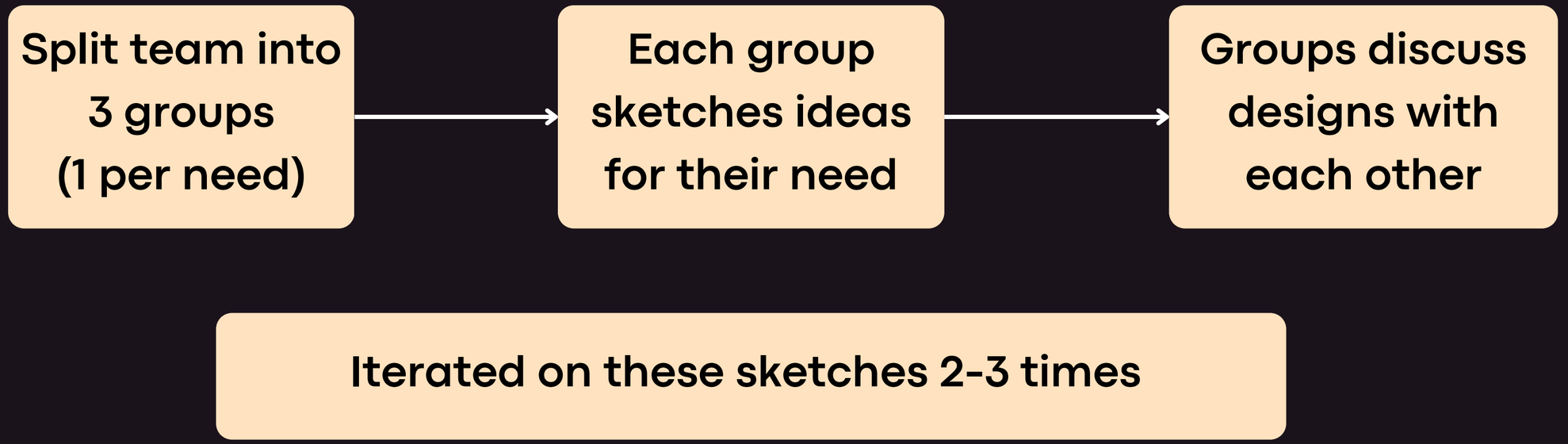
Able to access and review relevant documents to help write a court report

Need 3

Able to create, store, and stay updated with contacts of involved stakeholders

Creating a Vision - Vision Document

Based on the top 3 identified needs, our vision document illustrates 3 solutions/features we created to address these needs



The vision document shows why these solutions address pain points and empower volunteers

Ideation

Need 1

A mobile application to upload and automatically store meeting notes in the main case management system

Need 2

An interface solution to organize, store, tag, and export needed notes and documents

Ideation

Need 3

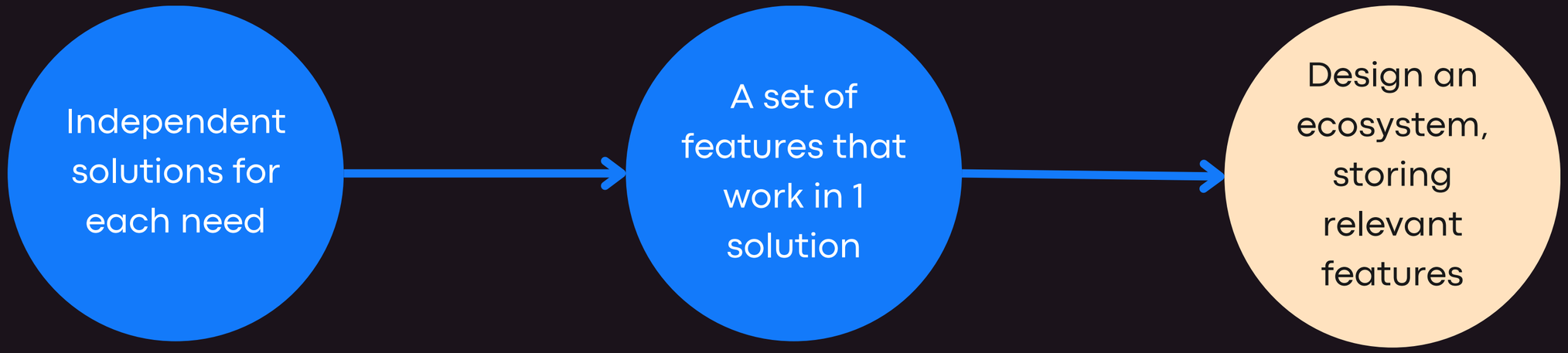
A mobile application for CASA volunteers to create, view, and filter through all stakeholder’s contact information

Need 3

An interface showing one way that contacts can be organized, as well as being able to request the contact information for someone from a CASA supervisor

Thinking Broader...

Instead of choosing 1 need to focus on, our team decided to direct the features (for 3 needs) into a streamlined solution that assists volunteers on their journey.



Competitive Analysis

Goal: Find existing features for each need to guide the development phase.

Need 1 - Adobe Scan:
Cutting-edge experience for scanning on phone

Need 2 - DoveTail:
Tagging and organizing word based information

Need 3 - Monday.com:
Organizing information across people & projects

Quick Recap

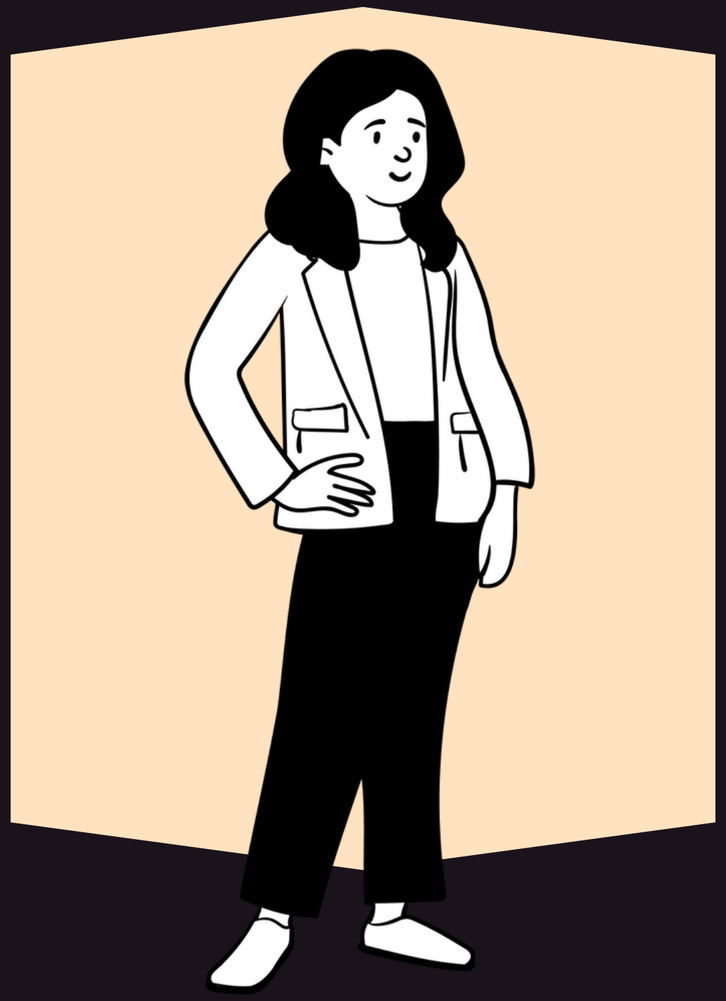
CASA volunteers...

- struggle to **effectively take and store notes,**
- lack a system to **quickly access and review documents** to help write a court report and
- seek the capability to promptly **create, store, and stay updated with case stakeholder information.**

Final Goal:
Create a low-fidelity ecosystem, separate from Optima, that empowers full-time employees to more efficiently carry out the responsibilities of a CASA volunteer.

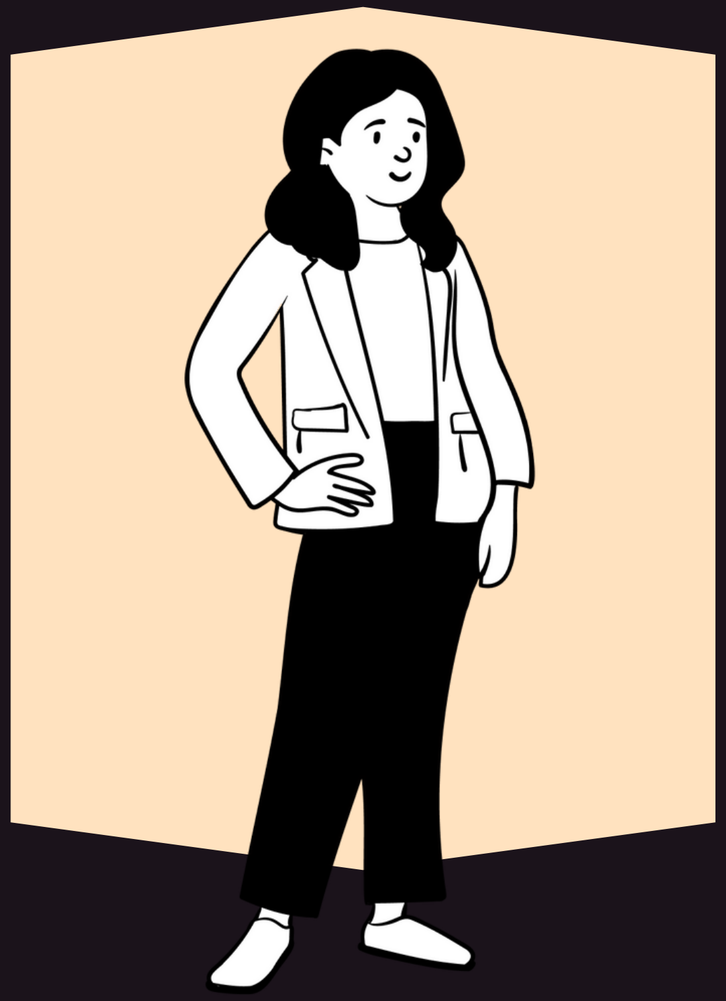
SOLUTION WALKTHROUGH

Meet Amanda, a CASA volunteer



- A 38-year-old full-time marketer in Lafayette,
- Interested in adopting children in the future.
- Work as a CASA volunteer in her free time.

As a CASA Volunteer, Amanda...

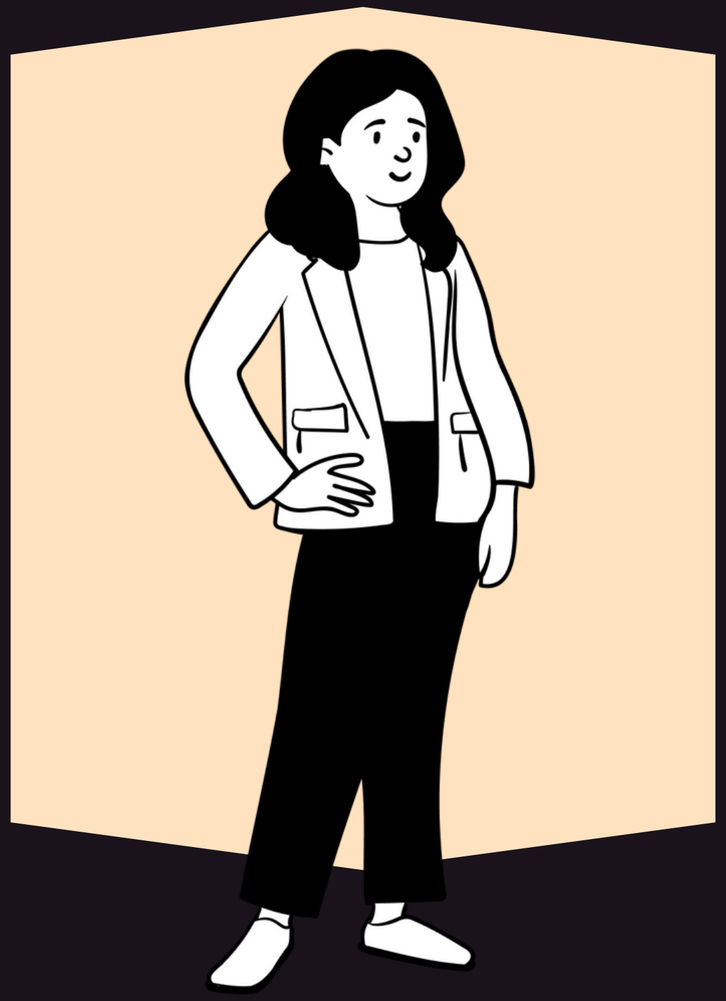


- Meets with different stakeholders.
- Bonds and understands the child’s needs.
- Advocates for the child’s best interest.

Habits:

- Has versatile notetaking methods.
- Doesn’t check her files & notes often.

She uses her...



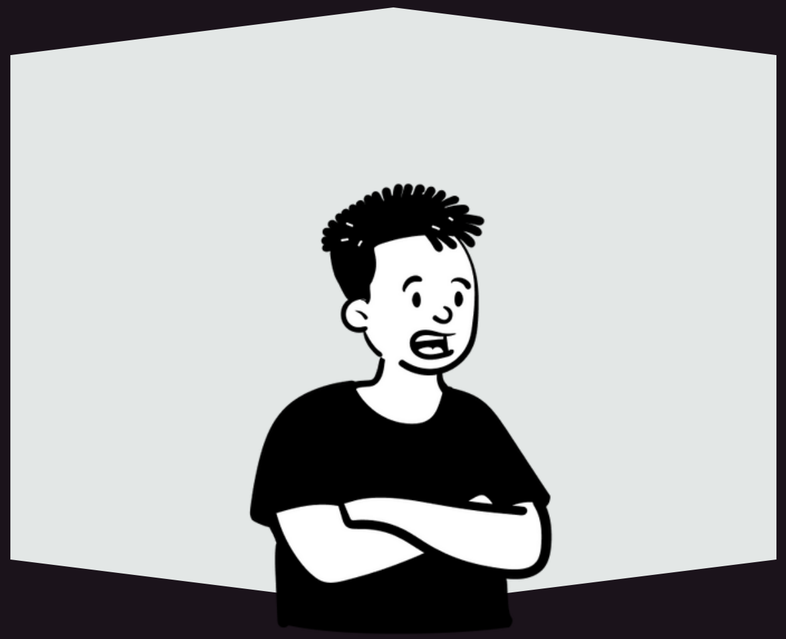
- Phone: quick, on-the-go tasks
  - Writing small notes in the Notes app
  - Quickly adding in new contacts

] more often

- Computer: longer, at home tasks
  - Writing, reading and reviewing reports
  - Creating court documents
  - Preparing for court

] less often

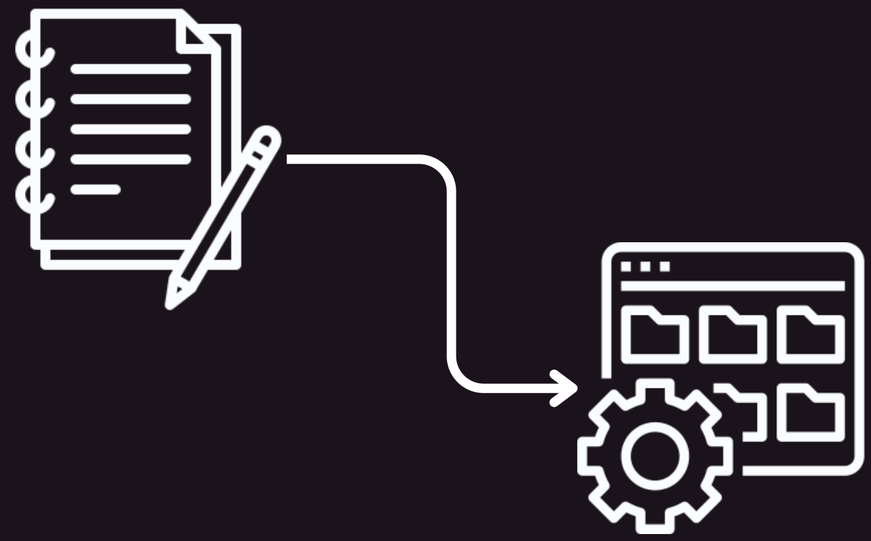
Meet James - A Child that Needs Advocacy



- Amanda’s current case
- A 12-year-old neglected kid, currently living with a foster family.
- Meets with Amanda at least 1 per month.

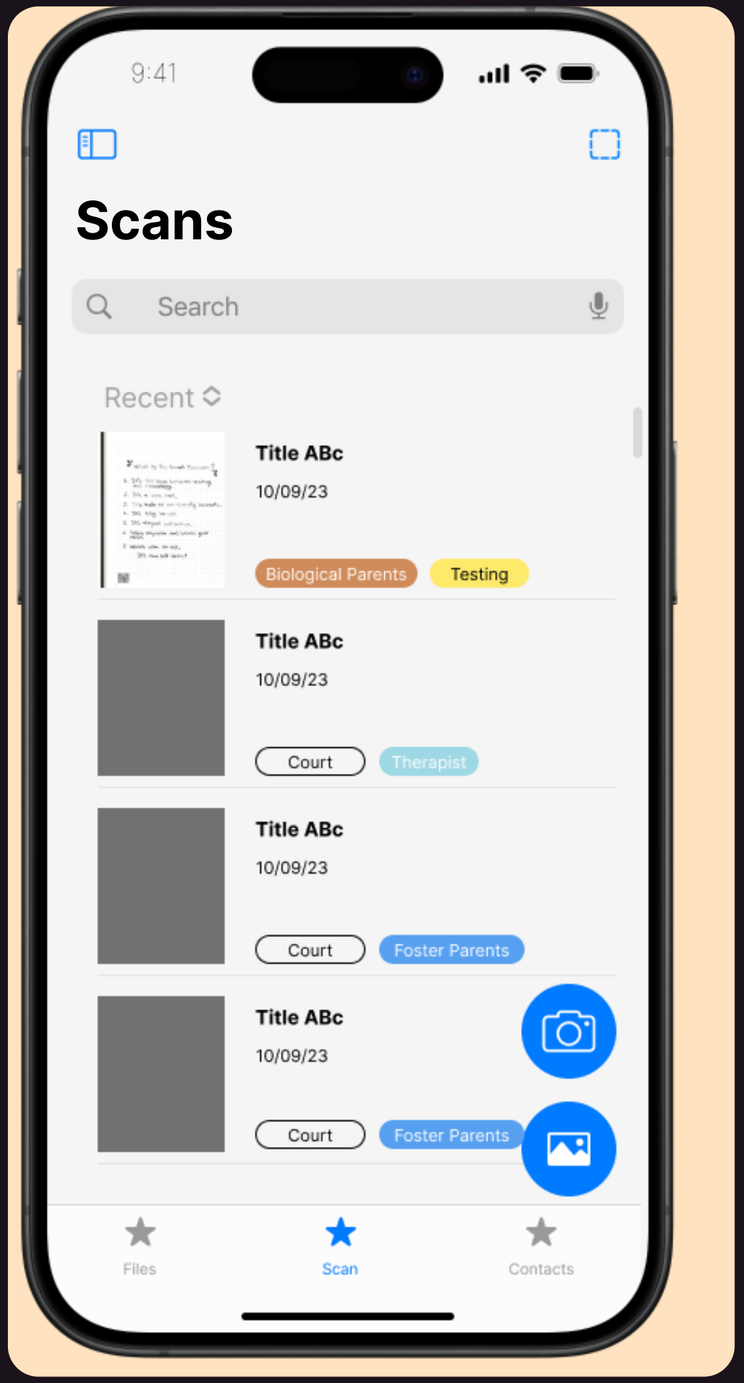
After meeting with James

Amanda wants to store her notes
in CASA system before she forgets.



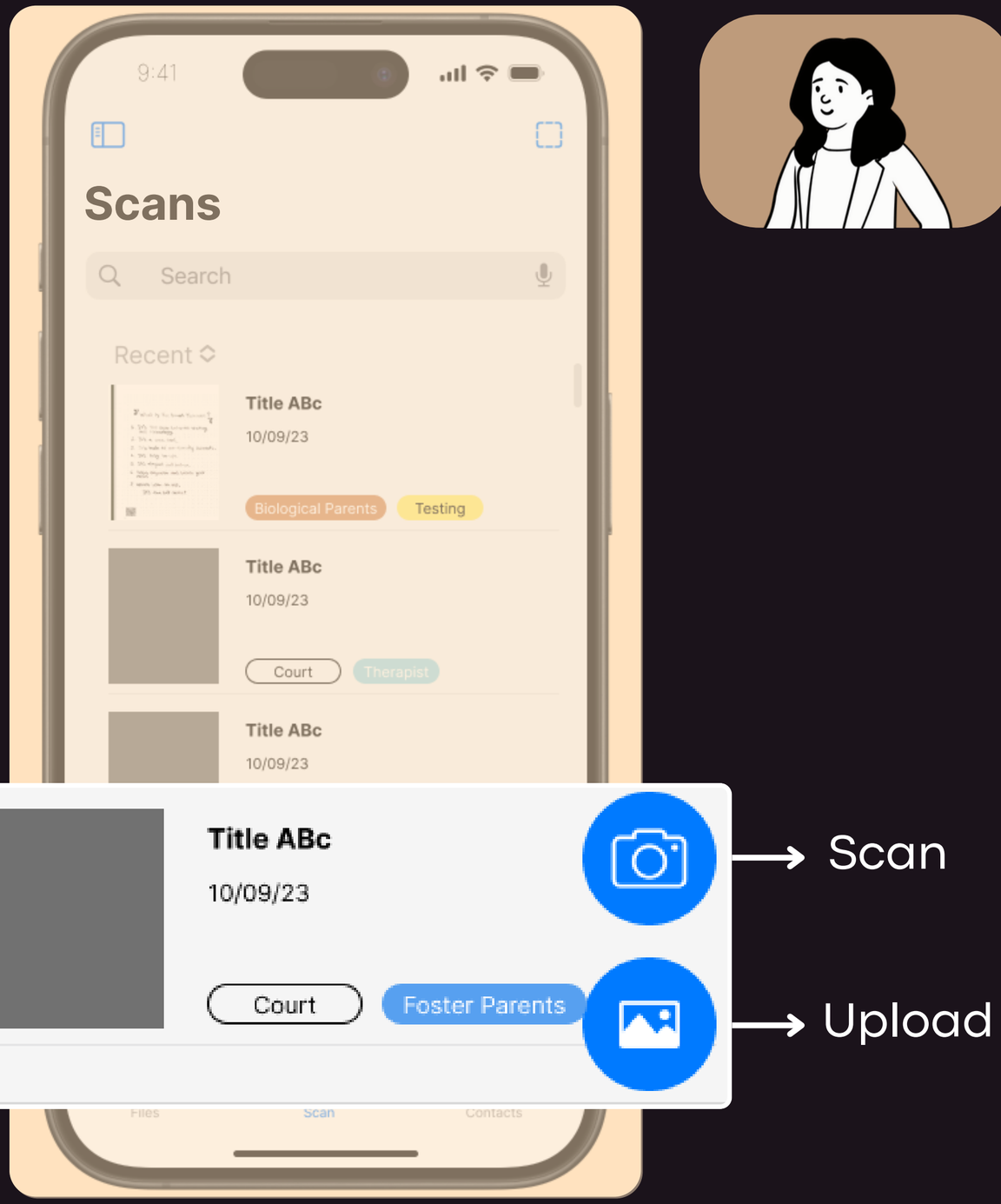
Scan documents using MIC app

Amanda opens the Scan tab to input her notes from the meeting.

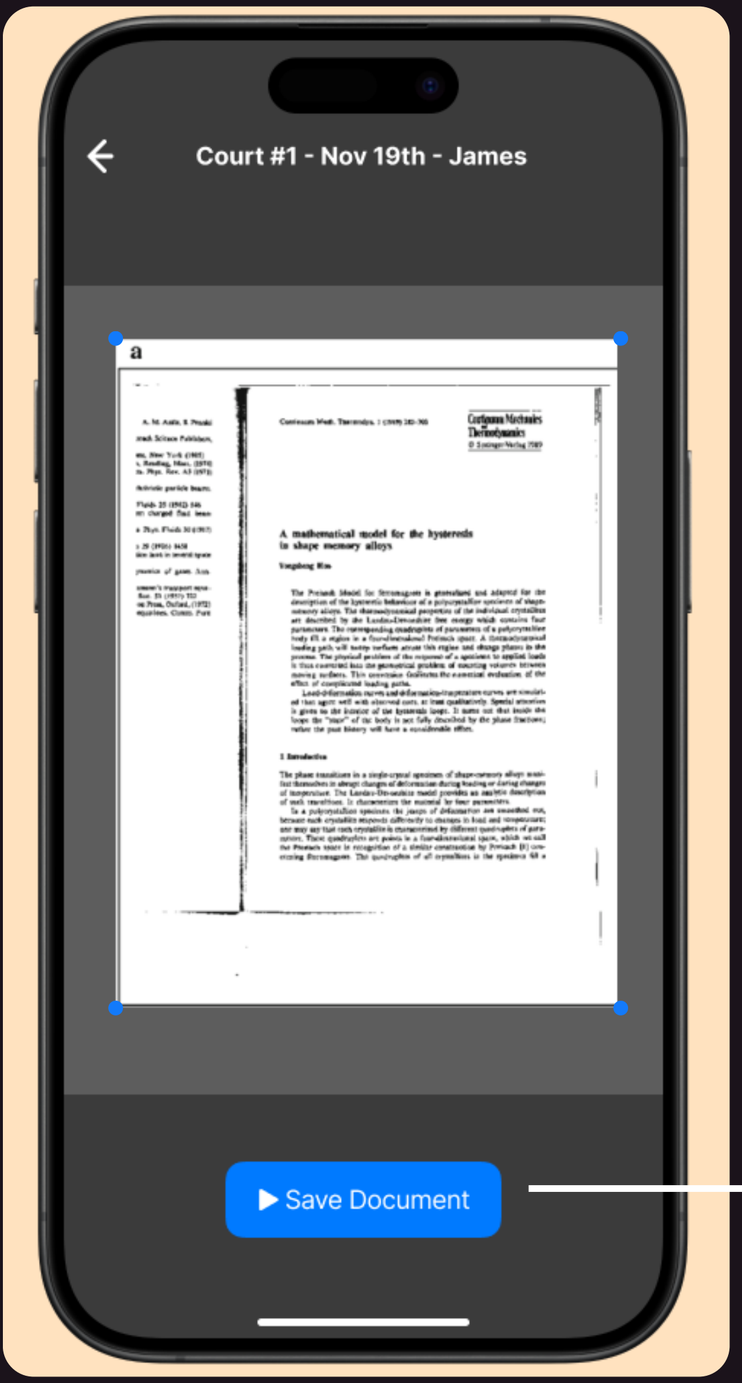


Scan documents

Amanda can scan physical notes or upload a screenshot of it.

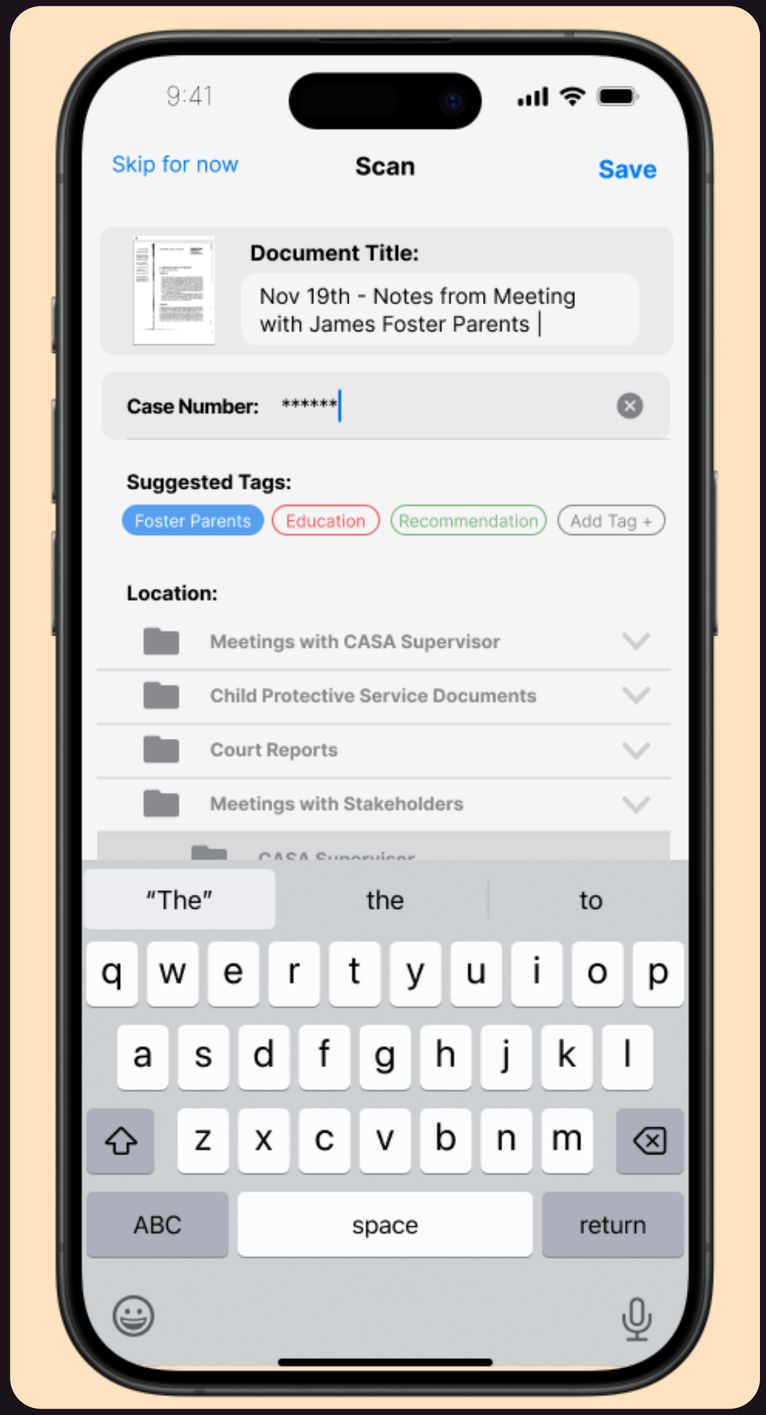


Save the scan



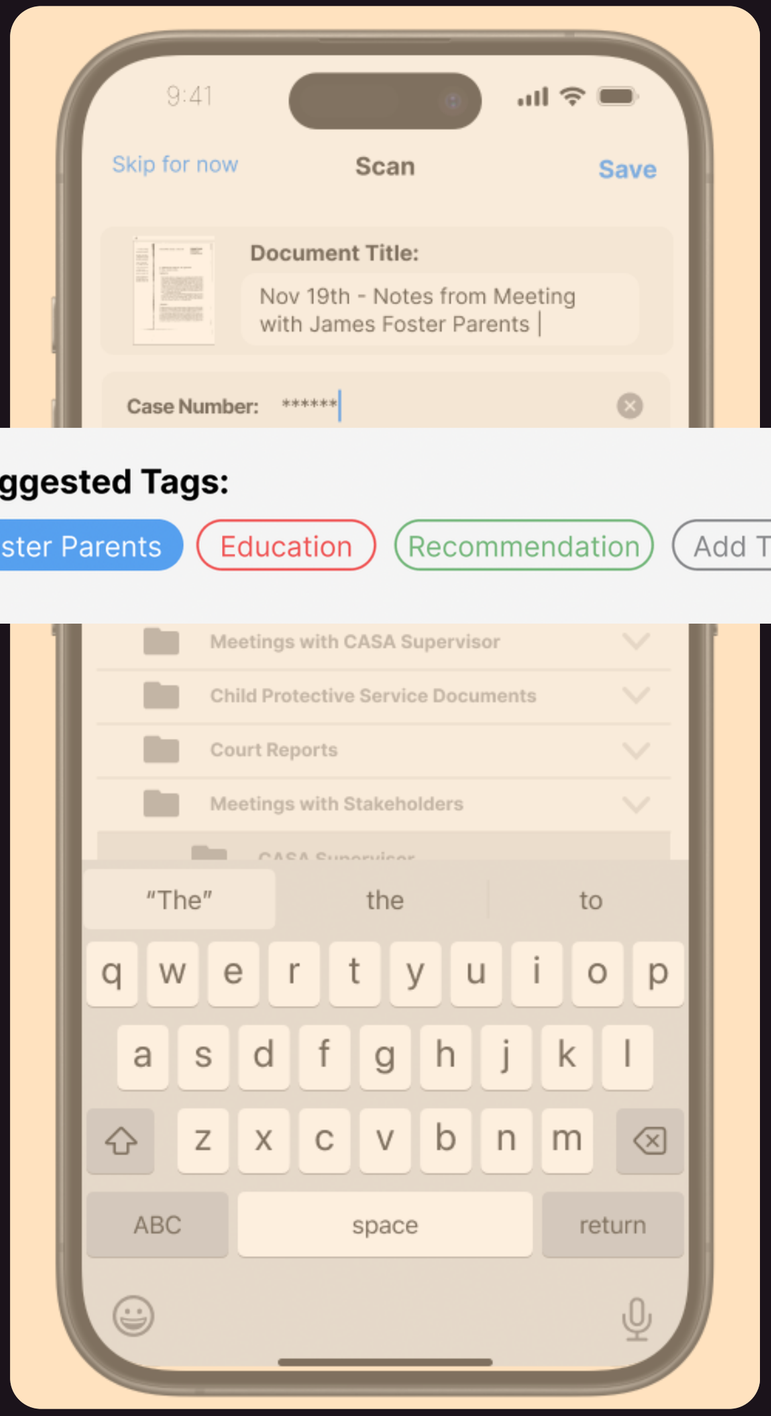
Organize the scans

Amanda can save the scan as it is, or organize it by tags, folders, and case, which helps her later on.



Assign Tags

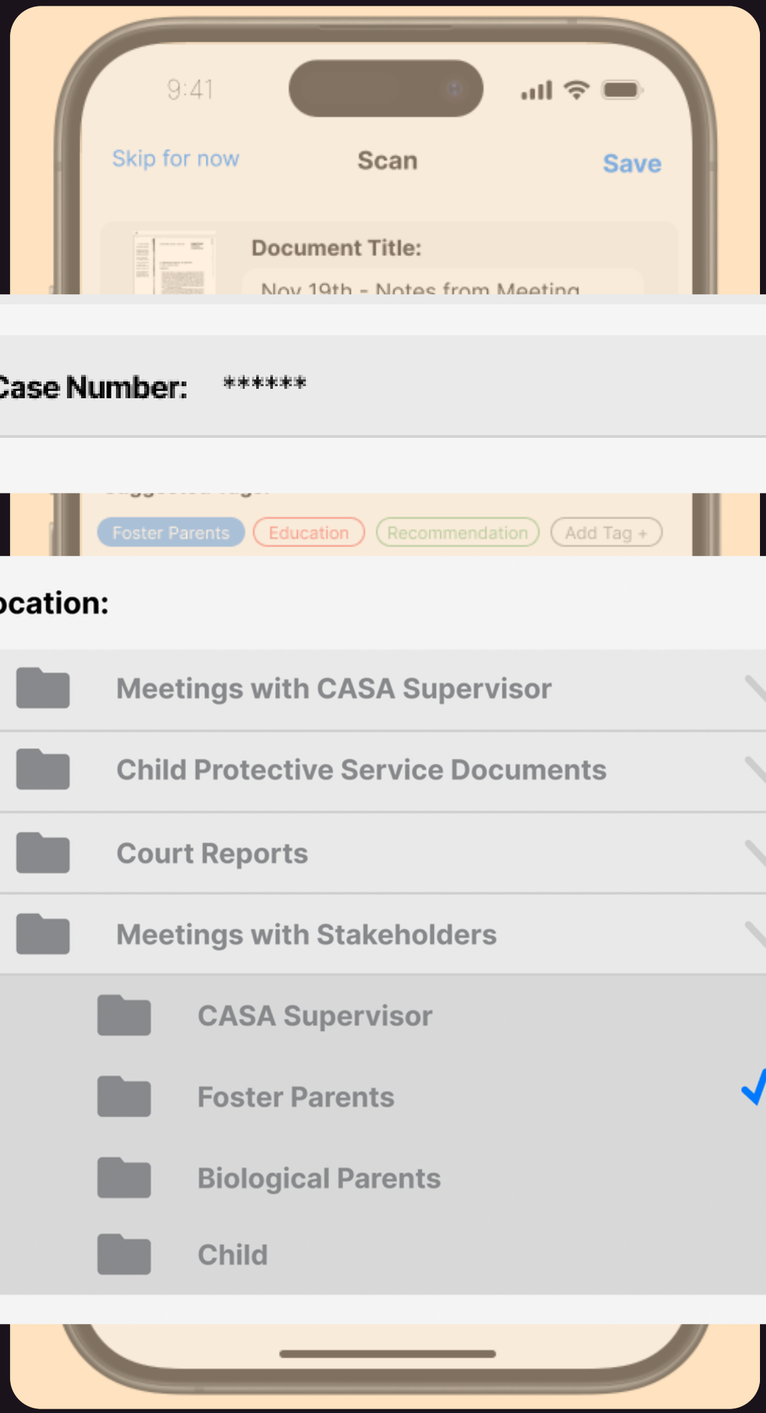
AI-Suggested tags
(enhance automation)
Or customize tags



Place in Folders

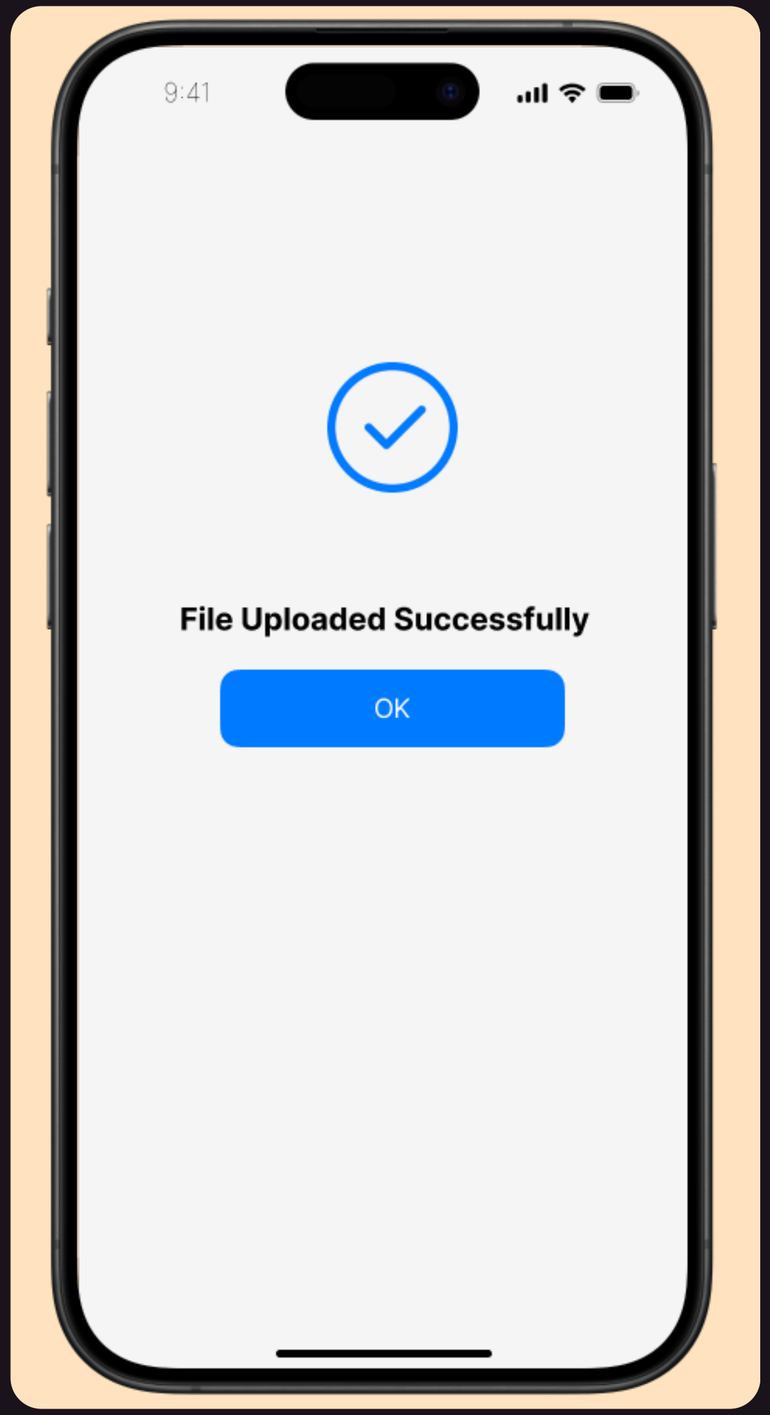
Current active case ←

Choosing the correct folder ←



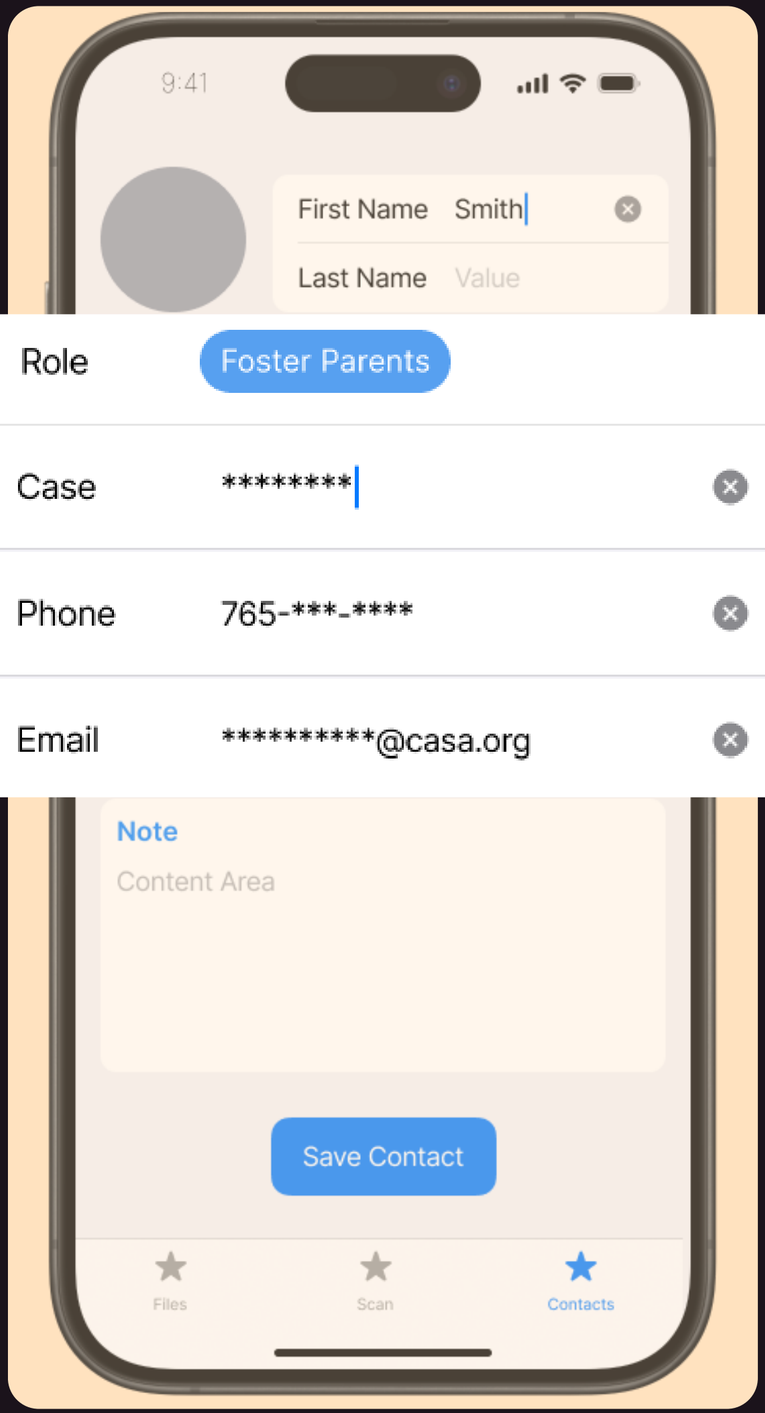
Upload to CASA System

No need to worry about the notes, it is now uploaded in the right place in the system



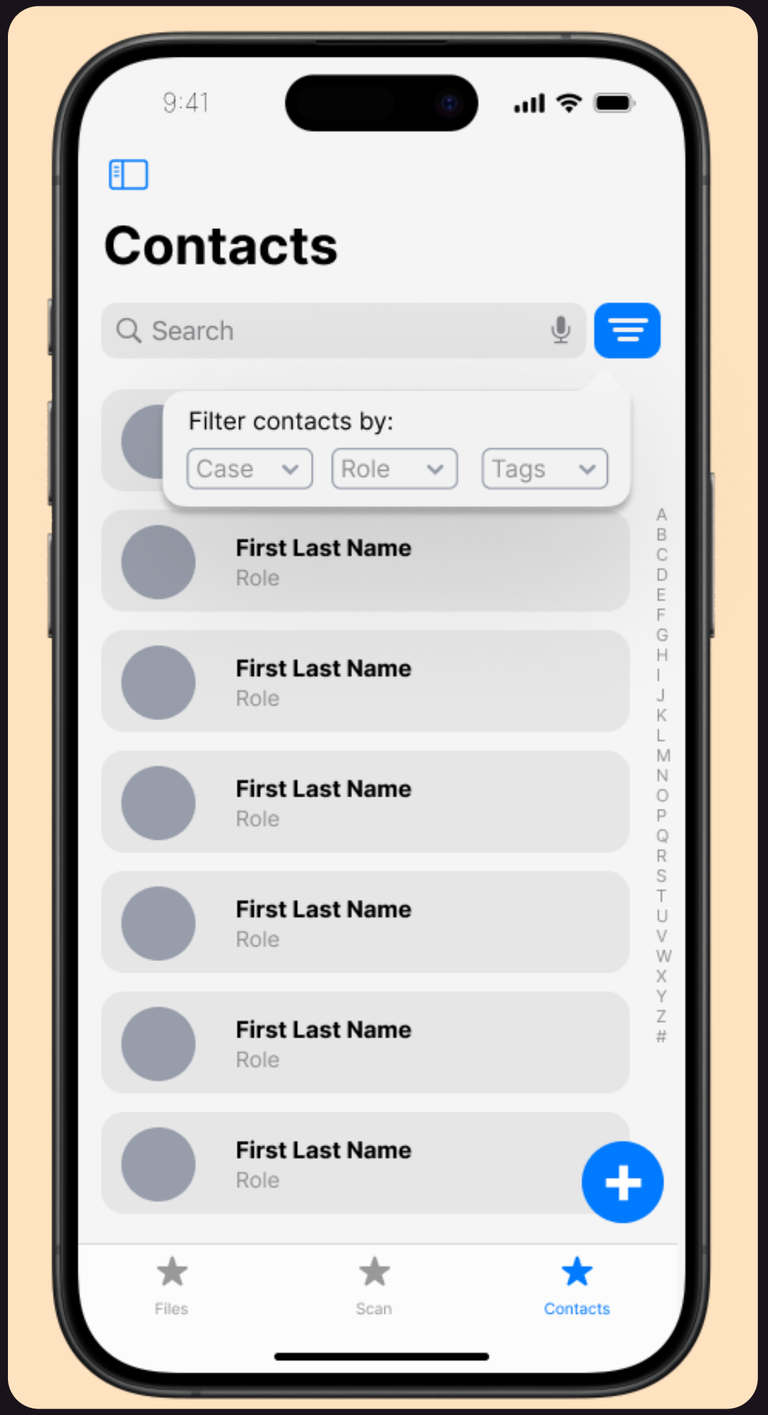
Add/Update Contacts

Receiving new contact info, Amanda quickly adds it to the list of stakeholders.



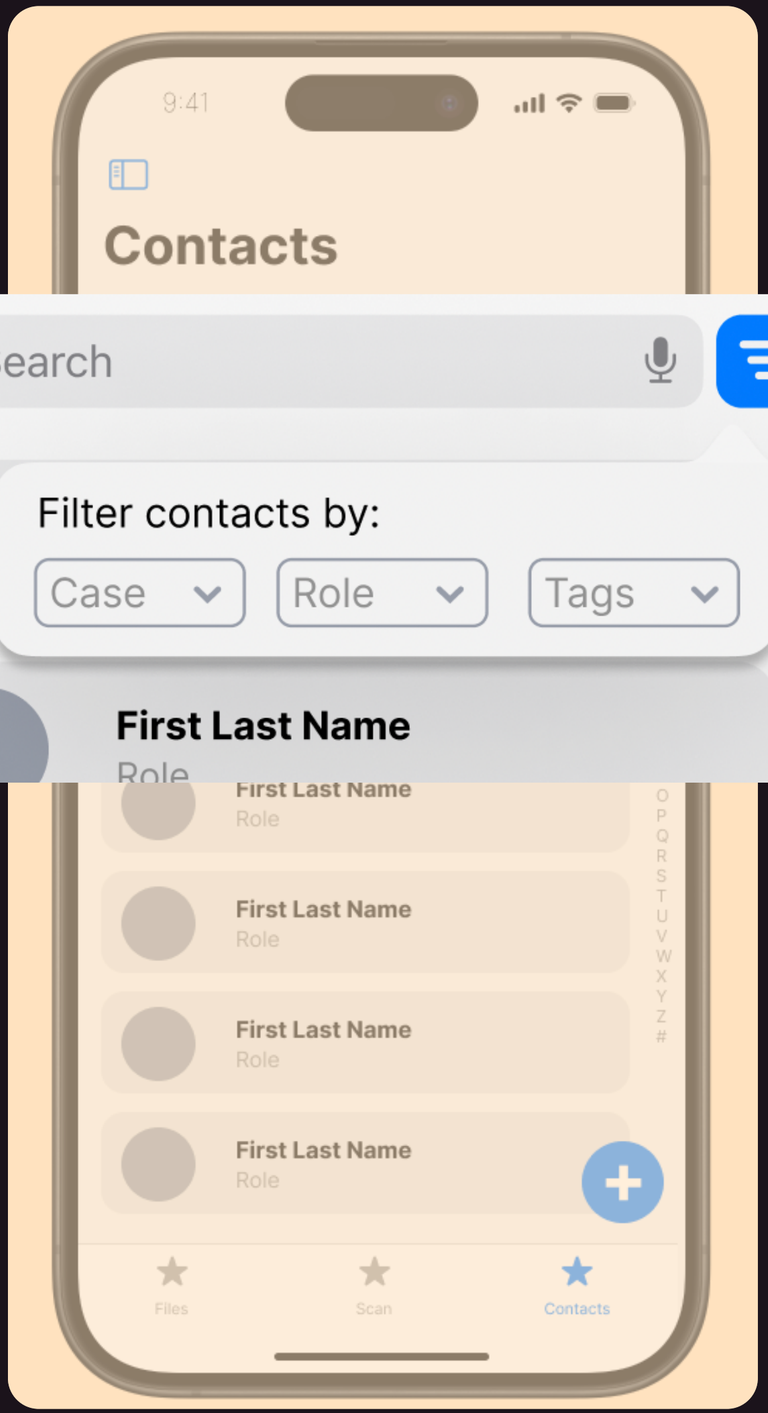
Filter Through Contacts

Navigating through all stakeholders' contacts is easier using filters.



Filter Through Contacts

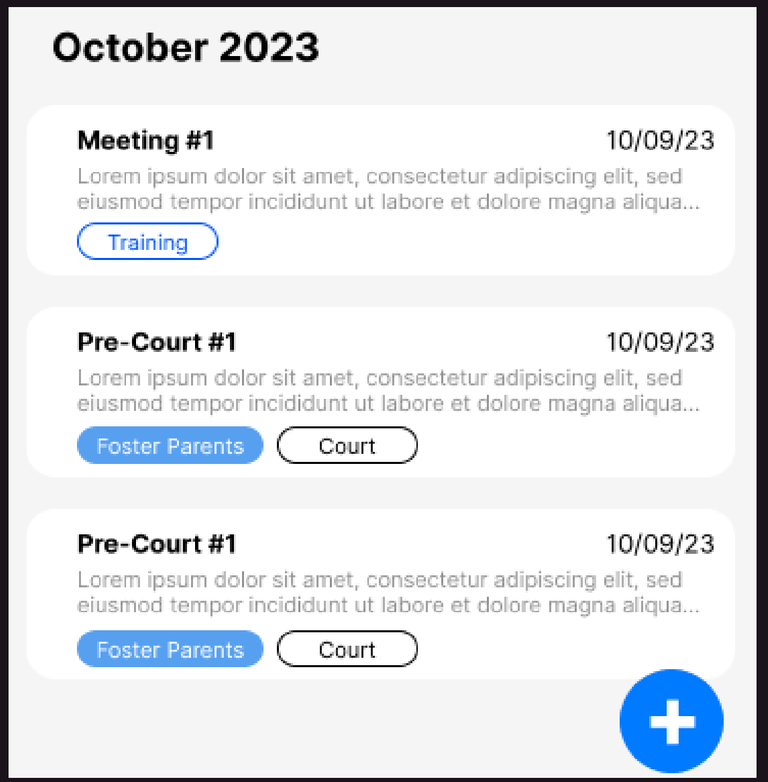
Contacts are filtered and categorized by case, role, and tags.

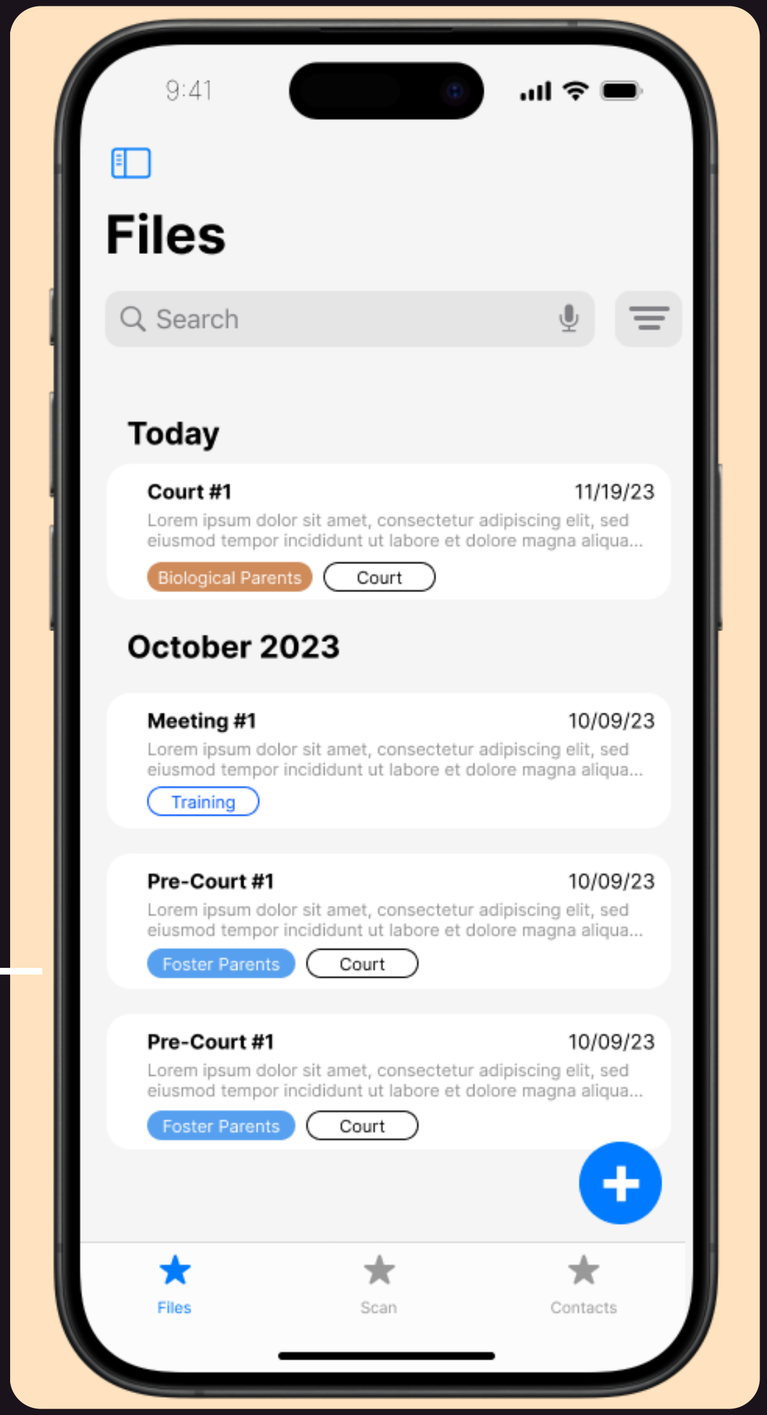


Amanda continues her day with little worry about her notes.

View Documents

Search, access, and review documents at any time on her phone, and her desktop too!





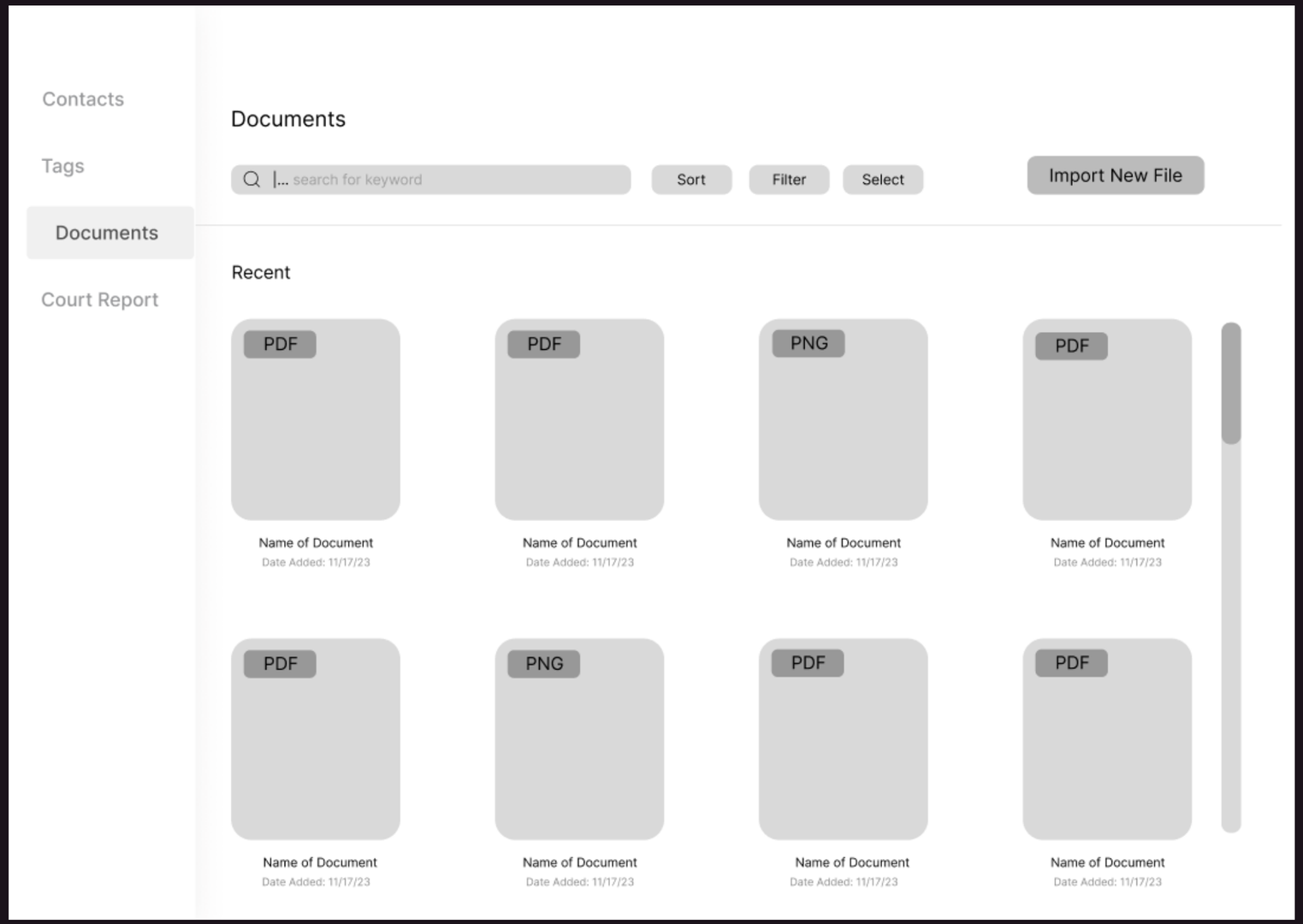
LATER AT HOME...

Amanda switches to her desktop
to work on CASA tasks.

Viewing Documents

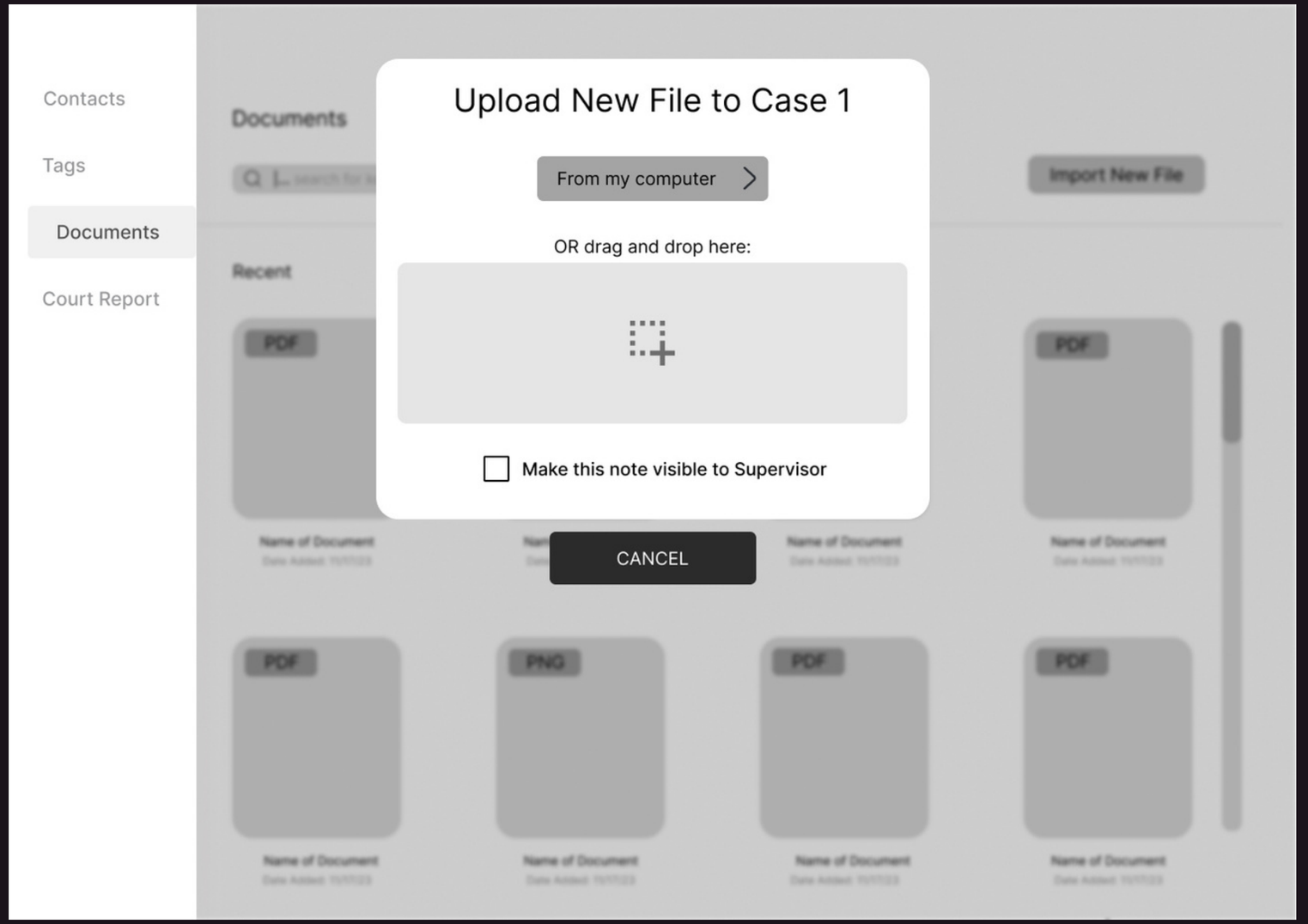
Amanda goes home and wants to check the notes at home, on her computer.

Everything is updated in her desktop system, and she can easily review all of her documents.



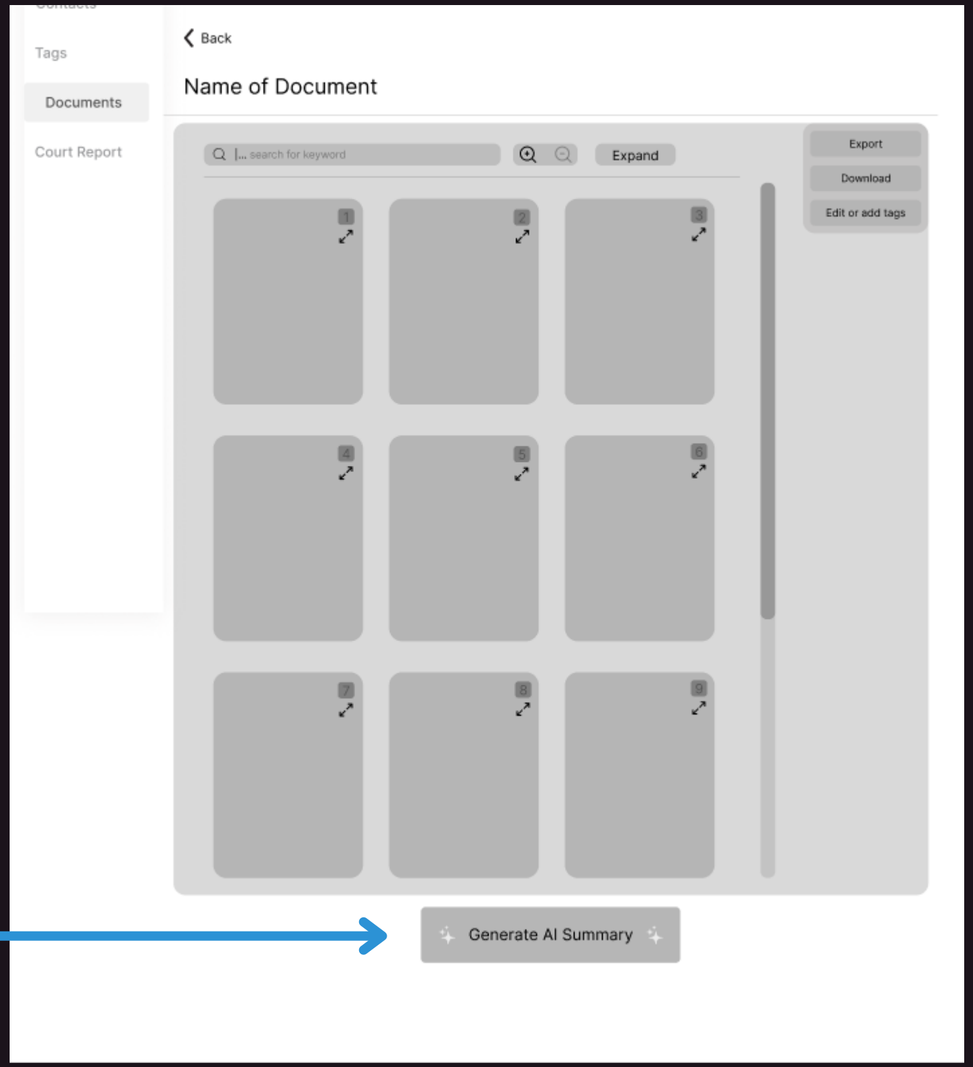
Amanda receives a 20-page document over email from a CPS worker

She uploads it to the Mic Server and it generates an AI summary, allowing her to easily look over the main points before reading and reviewing.



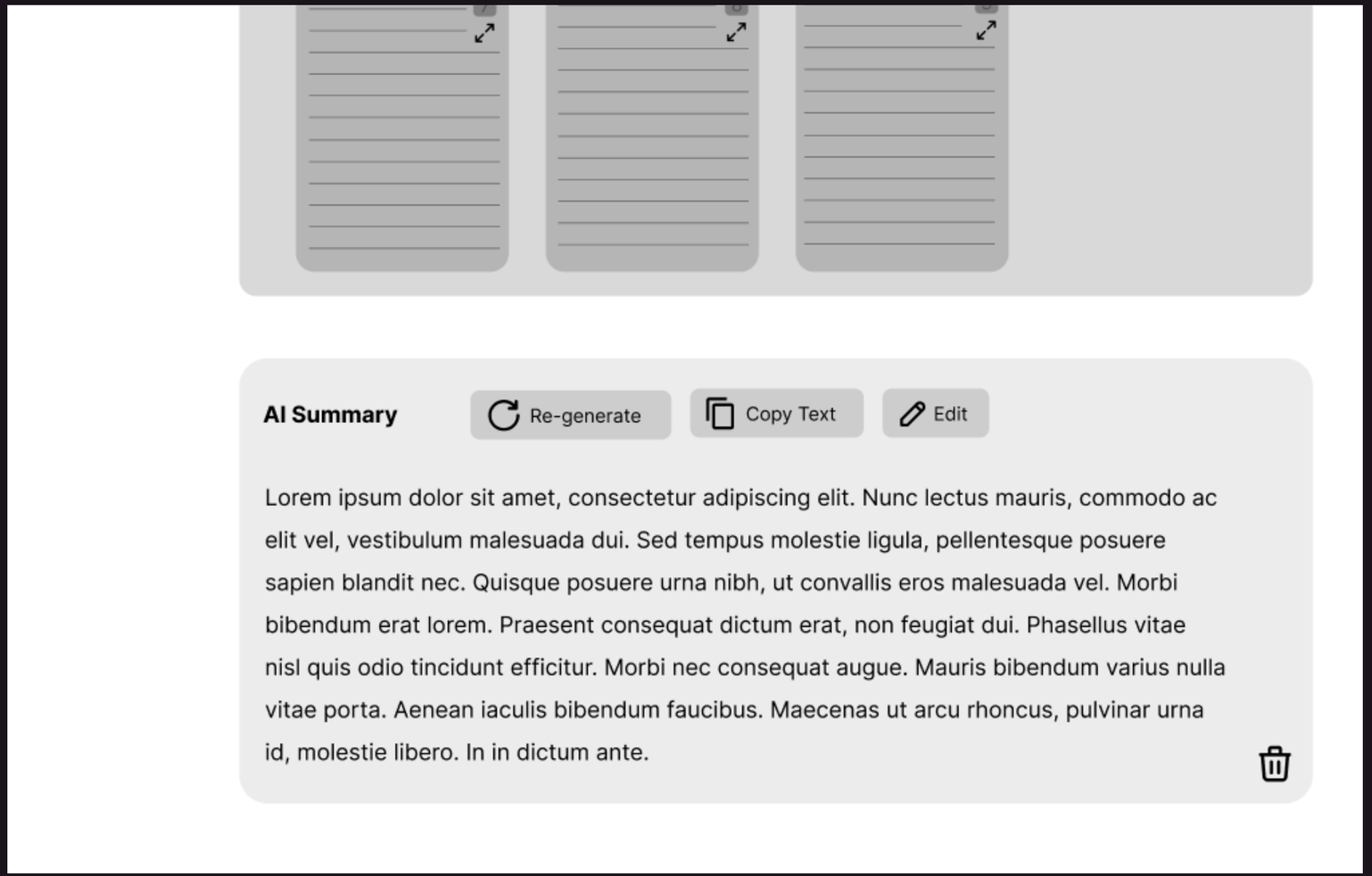
Amanda receives a 20-page document over email from a CPS worker

She uploads it to the Mic Server and it generates an AI summary, allowing her to easily look over the main points before reading and reviewing.



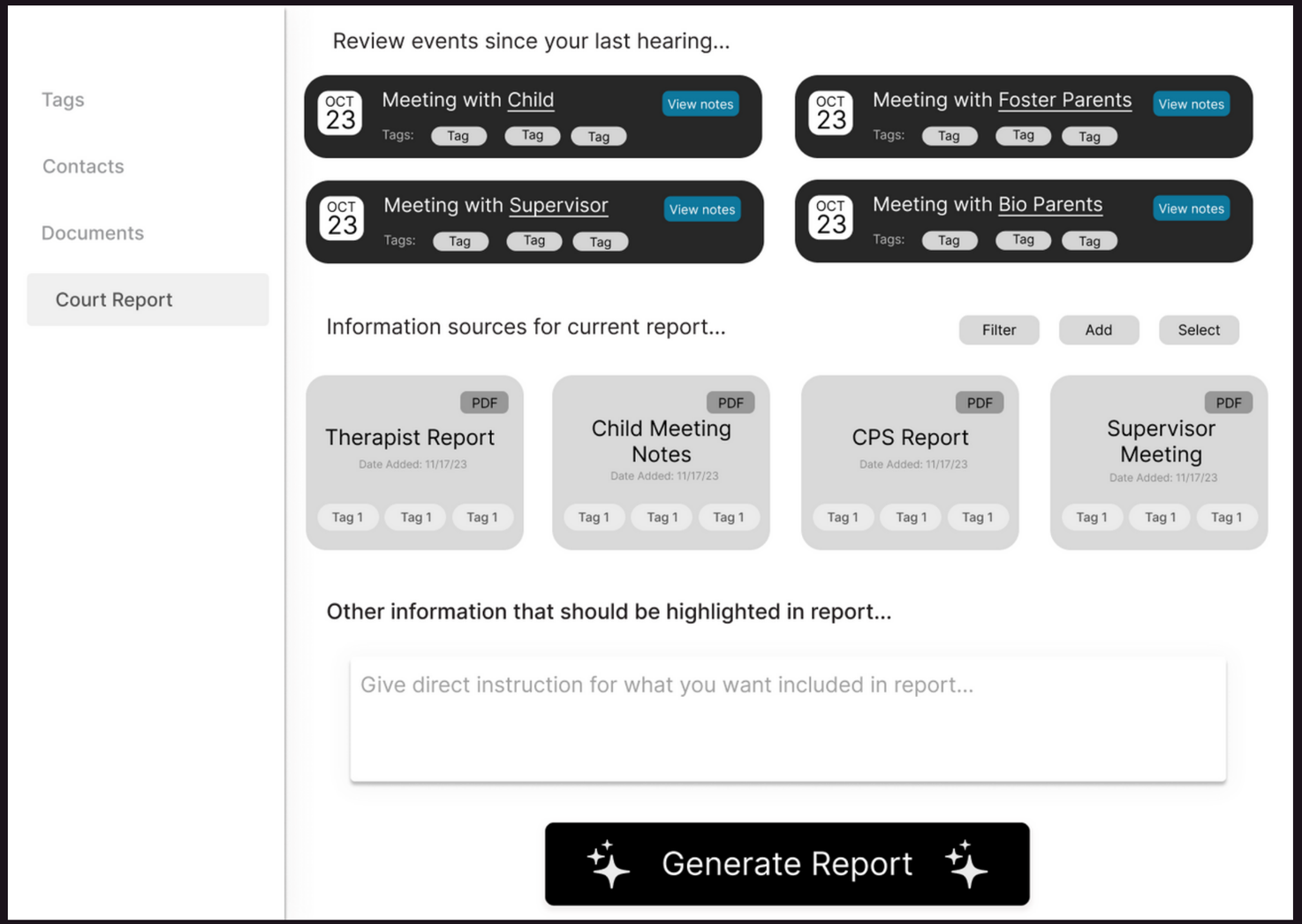
Amanda receives a 20-page document over email from a CPS worker

This feature is not intended to replace a CASA’s job, only for them to use as a tool to save some time when reviewing documents and creating a report.



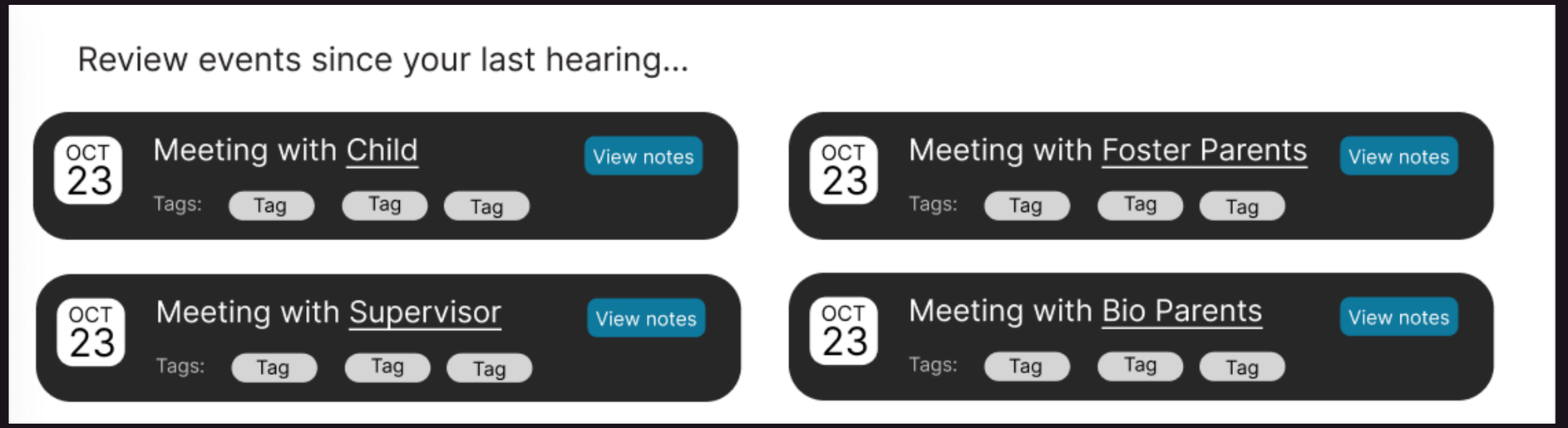
Amanda’s court hearing is approaching...

She decides to use the **Court Report Tool** to generate a rough draft of the report she’ll present in court



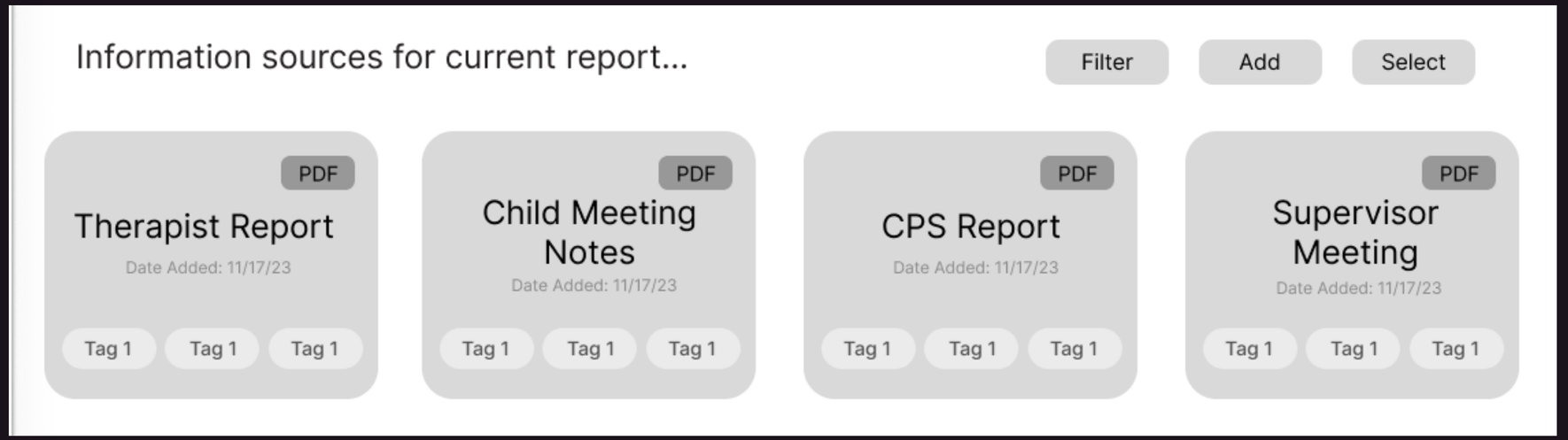
Court Report Tool

She can review events/meetings since her last hearing

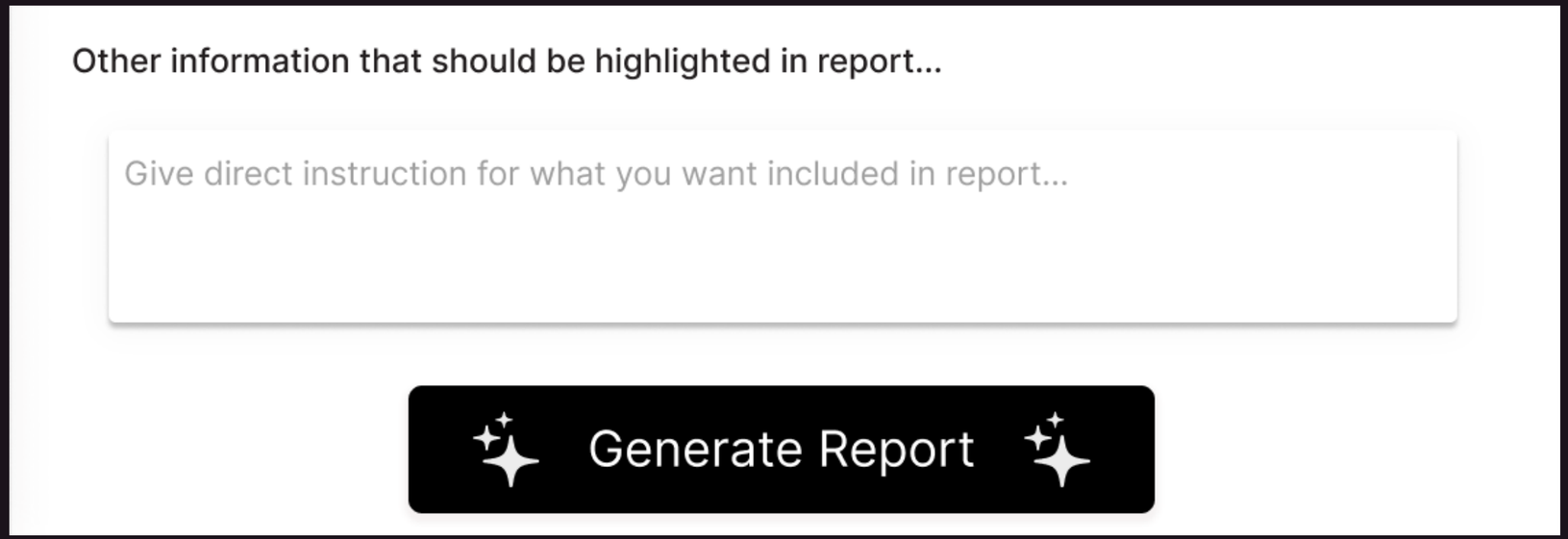


Review documents that information will be pulled from

- add/delete documents



Give direct instruction to the AI of important things that should be emphasized in report



Once her report is generated she can:

- Directly edit information

Tags

Contacts

Documents

Court Report

< Back Court Reports

Highlight | Send to Supervisor | Save | Export

The CASA Program of Howard County, Inc
REPORT TO THE COURT

REVIEW REPORT

IN THE MATTER OF: DATE: September 23, 2019

Sarah Smith CASA Vol: Christa Myers

CAUSE NO: 34C01-0801-JC-5 COURT: Circuit Court

LAST HEARING:

The last hearing was a Review Hearing on July 8, 2019 in the Howard County Circuit Court. At that hearing the Court ordered the following:

- The child's case plan, services, and placement meet the special needs and best interests of the child. DCS has made reasonable efforts to provide family services to finalize another permanency plan.

The Court now sets this for a Review Hearing on October 7, 2019 in the Howard County Circuit Court at 2:00 P.M.

OBSERVATIONS:

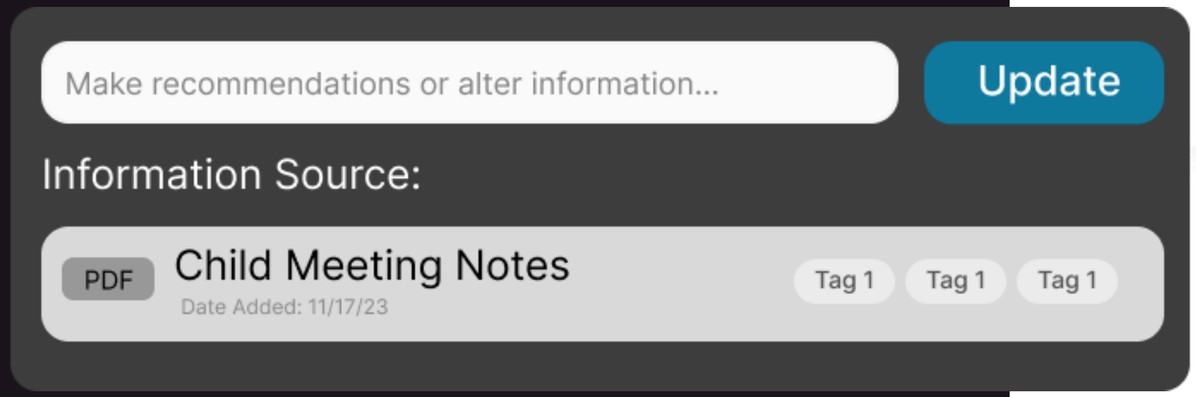
Sarah appears to be doing well since her return to her mother's care. She is pulling herself around the furniture and is starting to say more words. Ann does not report any medical concerns with her. Sarah celebrated her first birthday on August 10, 2019 and Ann had a birthday party for her.

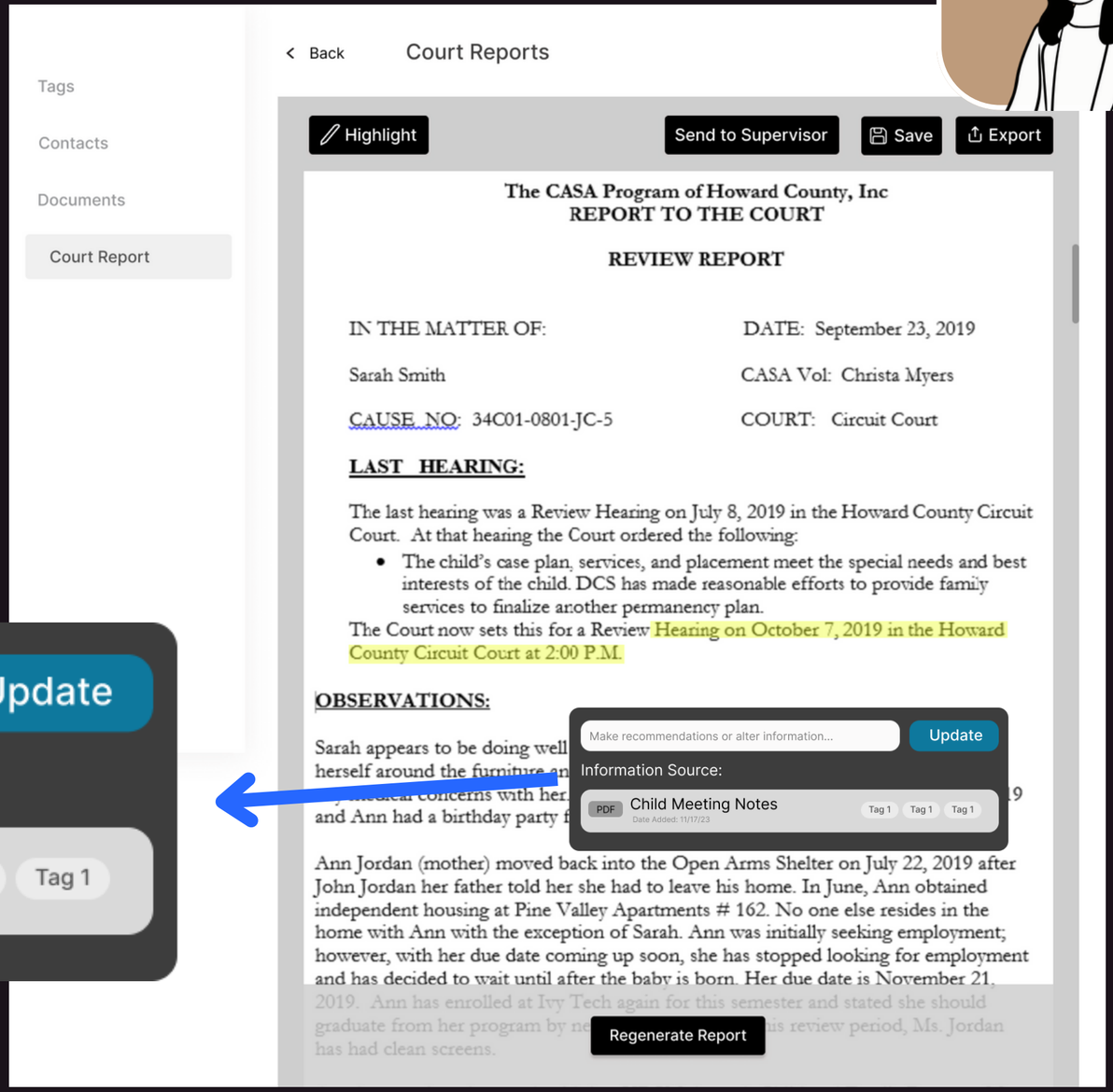
Ann Jordan (mother) moved back into the Open Arms Shelter on July 22, 2019 after John Jordan her father told her she had to leave his home. In June, Ann obtained independent housing at Pine Valley Apartments # 162. No one else resides in the home with Ann with the exception of Sarah. Ann was initially seeking employment; however, with her due date coming up soon, she has stopped looking for employment and has decided to wait until after the baby is born. Her due date is November 21, 2019. Ann has enrolled at Ivy Tech again for this semester and stated she should graduate from her program by na[illegible]us review period, Ms. Jordan has had clean screens.

Regenerate Report

Once her report is generated she can:

- Directly edit information
- **Highlight tool**
  - **Find where information is from**
  - **Regenerate/rephrase information**





Amanda can send the court report to her supervisor for review and feedback before she presents it in court

< Back Court Reports

Highlight | Send to Supervisor | Save | Export

The CASA Program of Howard County, Inc
REPORT TO THE COURT

REVIEW REPORT

IN THE MATTER OF: DATE: September 23, 2019

Amanda presents her report in court and helps James' experience in the foster care system

CASA volunteers like Amanda will spend LESS time on tedious tasks, and MORE time on making great impacts with the children.

Design Rationale

Why integrate AI?

- Automate volunteers' workflows, enhancing task efficiency (summarizing documents, suggesting tags, etc.)

Why design an ecosystem?

- Cater to the diverse needs of CASA volunteers regardless of locations (at home vs outdoors) or device accessibility (phones vs desktop).

Impacts of the New System

97,900
CASA Volunteers

242,000
children served

407,000
children in foster care

Volunteers' tasks are offloaded, so they can help more kids in the system seek permanence.

*according to national CASA statistics in 2021

Limitations

Lack of Access to CASAs

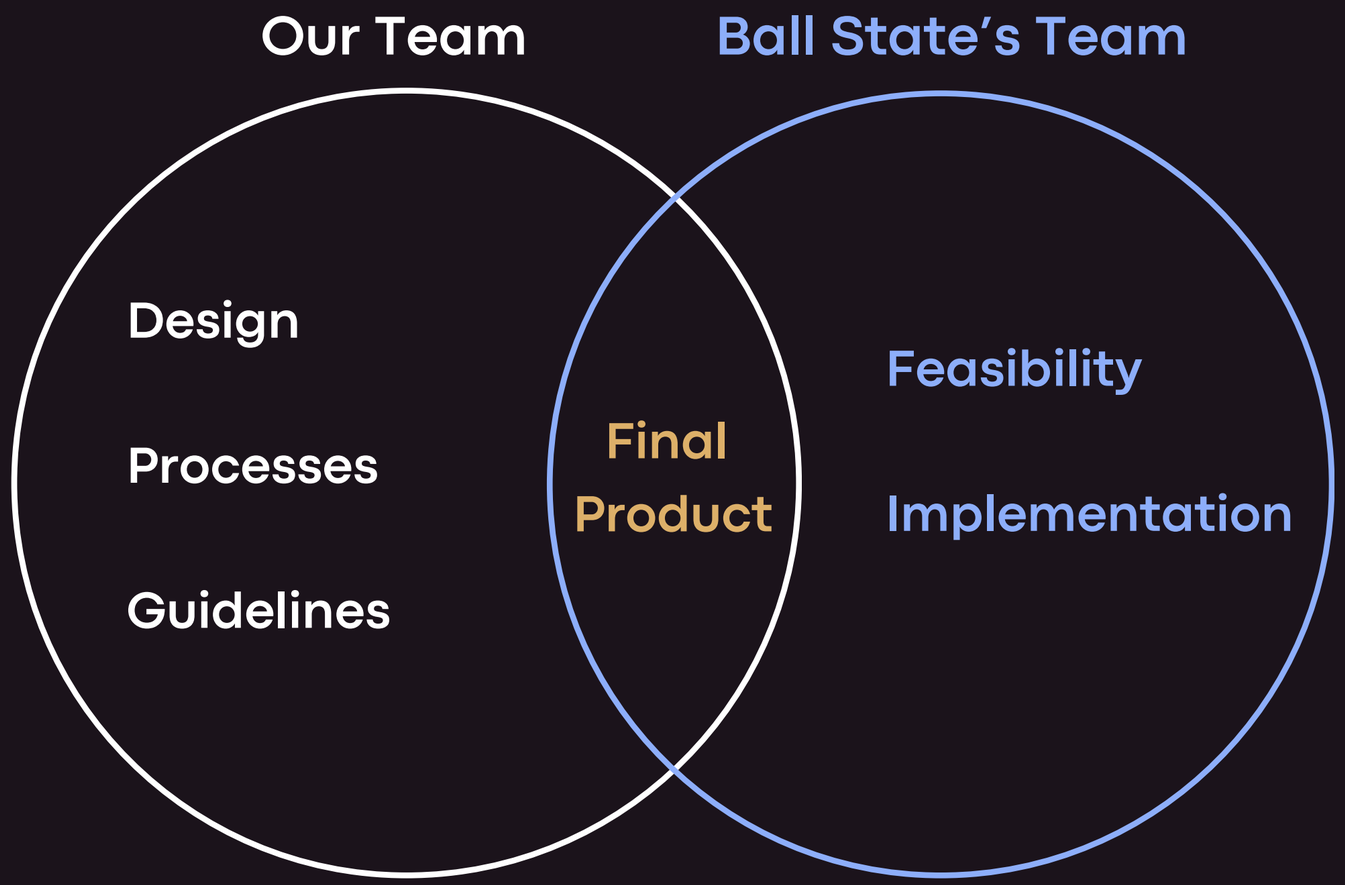
Constrained Ideation Window

No Usability Testing

NEXT STEPS

Development Aspects

Further development and implementation of our designs will be carried out by a team of Computer Science students at Ball State



Next Steps

Finish Mockups

Final Documentation

Prepare for Handoff with Ball State & Sponsor

THANK YOU!

Any Questions