

# Coercive Control, Child Abuse, and Parenting Time Issues:

A Child-centered approach

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## COURSE OVERVIEW

Child custody/parenting time in the context of spousal/partner abuse encompasses:

- The coercive control tactics and domestic abuse dynamics that impact best interests of the child in custody/parenting time cases
- Mediation requirements in divorce/custody/parenting time cases
- The multidisciplinary approach related to child custody and visitation/parenting time when domestic abuse/coercive control tactics and child abuse occur prior to separation and during visitation

This multi-disciplinary perspective of court system issues impacted by coercive control tactics and domestic abuse dynamics is designed to help court system personnel better meet the needs of children in child custody/parenting time/visitation litigation.

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## HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED BY FAMILY COURT ABUSE?

58,000 children per year are placed in the custody of their abusers

588,600 children (at any time) are in the custody of their abusers

70% of abusers who petition the court for sole or shared custody of their children are granted their request (Chester, 2011)

10% of all divorces are considered high-conflict; Actually, Coercive Control Divorces



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## ABUSERS' POST-SEPARATION ABUSE

- Other coercive control tactics not tied to custody are:
  - Stalking
  - Emotional threats
  - Abuser's manipulation of social institutions, i.e., by bad-mouthing her to social services.
  - Personal threats during child visitation, often the only contact between the ex-partners.
  - Using the children (including threats to kidnap them)
  - Threats, excessive phone-calls, and denigrating comments
  - Using economic abuse

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## CHILDREN AT RISK

- Studies have evaluated the co-occurrence of domestic violence and forms of child maltreatment or abuse:

Children growing up in families in which intimate partner violence (IPV) takes place are at increased risk to become victims of child maltreatment (CM). 1,2,3,4,5

Children who live in homes with IPV are more likely to be sexually abused than children who do not live in homes with adult violence. 2,4,18,20,23

Children who witnessed IPV in the past year were almost four times more likely to experience CM in the same year compared to children who did not witness IPV. 6,7,8

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## Abusers Seek Sole Custody

- Domestic violence perpetrators are more likely to contest custody than non-abusers.
- Abusive fathers are more than **twice** as likely to petition for sole custody than non-abusive fathers (*American Psychological Association/APA*).

ABUSIVE MEN SEEK SOLE CUSTODY. NOT BECAUSE THEY WANT THE CHILDREN, BUT AS A MEANS TO PUNISH A WOMAN FOR ESCAPING THEIR GRIP OF CONTROL.

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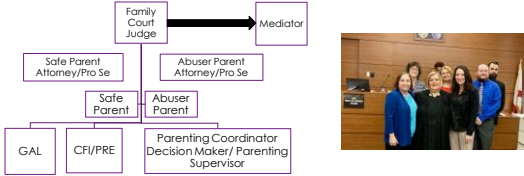
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### MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH RELATED TO CHILD CUSTODY



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### DIFFERENCES IN COURT VALUES

- Criminal Court Values:** Offender accountability, Victim Safety
- Juvenile Court Values:** Child Protection
- Civil Court Values:** Victim & Child Safety
- Family Court Values:** Both parents have access

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### MEDIATION

- Requirements of Family Courts
  - Exceptions: Domestic Violence (must have proof)
- Limited/ poor/no assessments for domestic violence
- Lack understanding of Coercive Control Tactics
- Victims/ Mothers comply due to past or current threats
- Mediators subject to coercive manipulations

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## HISTORY OF GENDER-BIAS AGAINST MOTHERS

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"Fathers who fight tend to win custody, not because mothers are unfit or because fathers have been the primary caretakers of their children, but because mothers are women and are held to a much higher standard of parenting."

"Mothers also risk losing custody if they accuse fathers of physically or sexually abusing them or their children—even or especially if these allegations are supported by experts."

"Female professionals were often completely taken in by charming, sociopathic men, dangerous and violent men, and men who sexually abused their children."

"...lawyers and judges are quick to say that joint custody should not apply where there is domestic violence and incest, they are often the ones who do not believe that domestic violence and incest exist all that much."  
(Chester, 2011)

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## WHAT COURTS ARE MISSING

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CC and Child Abuse far more harmful than previously understood.

- Courts need education on CC, ACE Study, and neurobiological impacts on children.

Fear and stress cause most of the harm.

- Children experience CC when mothers are experiencing it. Toxic stress has life-long impacts on children.

One-quarter of US children sexually abused by age 18.

- CPS discounts or refuses to believe mothers when children report sexual abuse after parents separate.

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## COMMON MISTAKES FROM IGNORANCE OF ACE\*

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Exclusive or primary focus on physical abuse.

Assumption older abuse doesn't matter.

Approaches that require victims to "get over it."

High conflict vs. Coercive Control approaches

\*ACE- Adverse Child Experiences

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### COMMON MISTAKES FROM IGNORANCE OF ACE

- Use of co-parenting instead of parallel parenting in abuse cases.
- Reliance on court professionals who are not trauma-informed.
- Minimizing the significance of CC and child abuse.
- Failure to recognize the significance of fear.

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### HARM FROM FAILURE TO INTEGRATE ACE

- Failure to recognize true reports of abuse.
- Fundamental mishandling of child sexual abuse cases.
- Children die early from murder, suicide, substance abuse, and stress.

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### HARM FROM FAILURE TO INTEGRATE ACE

- Children more likely to suffer cancer, heart disease, mental illness, and other health and social problems.
- Children silenced, isolated, and suffering.
- Children do not receive the treatment that could help them.

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**NEEDED REMEDIES**

- Use of trauma-informed professionals.
- Calculating the ACE score of all children involved in abuse cases.
- Focus on actions needed to save children from ACE consequences.
- Treating abuse cases as a matter of life and death.

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**NEEDED REMEDIES**

- Emphasizing the importance that safe parent makes health care decisions.
- Focusing on how to reduce fear and stress in children and safe parent.
- Require abusers to change behavior if they want unsupervised visitation.

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**BREAKOUT**

**Many survivors want the judge to know how they were coercively controlled.**

How do you discuss this with a survivor to help her understand:

- How (and who with) she can process her emotions and work on healing
- That the court is uninterested in what happened to her because the divorce doesn't have fault in most states
- That the court is more interested in impacts on the children emotionally and physically

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## Causing to Stumble <sup>22</sup>

"Truly I tell you," He said, "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes Me.

**But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.** Woe to the world for the causes of sin. These stumbling blocks must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!



See that you **do not look down on any of these little ones**. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:3-7, 10)

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## SAUNDERS STUDY <sup>23</sup>

### SAUNDERS STUDY

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## WHAT COURTS ARE MISSING <sup>24</sup>

There is now a specialized body of coercive control knowledge.

Court professionals need training about specific CC subjects.

Most evaluators and other professionals do not have the specific CC knowledge needed.



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### WHAT COURTS ARE MISSING

Professionals without the necessary knowledge tend to focus on the myth that mothers frequently make false reports and unscientific alienation theories.

Professionals without the needed knowledge make recommendations that harm children.

Coercive Control advocates have the most CC information courts need.



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### WHAT COURTS ARE MISSING

A mother's anger or emotion is overemphasized in DV/CC cases.

Impacts on children who experience CC.

Use of psychological tests causes more harm than good.

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### COMMON MISTAKES FROM IGNORANCE OF SAUNDERS STUDY

Limiting experts to mental health professionals without specific training in DV/CC.

Failing to rely on professionals with the specific DV/CC expertise or requesting their involvement as well.

Continuing to impose harmful outcome cases.

Allowing co-parenting in DV/CC cases.

Relying on professionals who don't know how to recommend safety planning.

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## COMMON MISTAKES FROM IGNORANCE OF SAUNDERS STUDY

Failure to use risk assessment in DV/CC cases.

Assuming the end of a relationship ends the risk.

Failure to consider the importance of fear.

Failure to focus on the impact of DV/CC on children.

Assuming children benefit from an abusive parent in their lives.

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## HARM FROM FAILING TO INTEGRATE SAUNDERS STUDY

True reports of abuse routinely disbelieved.

Children are placed at-risk physically and emotionally.

The risk to children is minimized or ignored.

Benefit of having both parents in children's lives exaggerated.

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## HARM FROM FAILING TO INTEGRATE SAUNDERS STUDY

Judges spend their entire careers receiving misinformation from a small group of unqualified professionals.

The myth that mothers frequently make false reports is promoted.

The alienation scam is perpetuated.

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**NEEDED REFORMS**

- Courts need to use a multi-disciplinary approach that includes experts in DV/CC and child sexual abuse.
- Professionals without the specific knowledge recommended by Saunders are unqualified to handle potential DV/CC cases.
- Courts must stop creating harmful outcome cases and existing orders vacated.
- Judges must accept training from professionals who are not judges.

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**FREQUENT CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES**

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**FREQUENT CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES**

**Over 963 children involved in contested custody murdered since 2008. (September 25, 2023)**

- 493 family court-involved cases
- 469 children killed before court involvement
- 136 Family Court Failures (children killed in preventable cases)
- Most murders committed by abusive fathers.
- Courts repeatedly provide the access the killers need.
- Many murders permitted because of the myth that mothers frequently lie. <https://centerforjudicialexcellence.org>

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## FREQUENT CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES

**Bartlow's (2016) study explains why courts fail to reform dangerous practices.**

- Judges assume local tragedy was an exception.
- Courts fail to look for patterns within and between cases.
- Court professionals extremely defensive about their mistakes.
- No effective process to review tragedies or create needed reforms.

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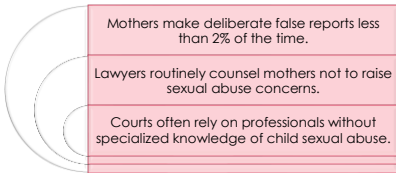
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## FREQUENT CATASTROPHIC MISTAKES



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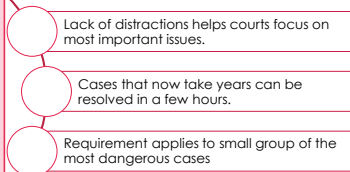
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**IN CC AND CHILD ABUSE CASES, COURTS SHOULD HOLD EARLY HEARING LIMITED TO ABUSE ISSUES.**



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**COURT PROFESSIONALS NEED TRAINING AND RETRAINING ABOUT CC.**

- Courts need to learn about current scientific research.
- Courts need multi-disciplinary training that includes experts in DV/CC and child sexual abuse.
- Professionals need to unlearn misinformation they have heard their entire careers.

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**STATES MUST PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO DV AGENCIES SO ADVOCATES CAN PARTICIPATE IN CC CUSTODY CASES.**

- Saunders found DV/CC advocates have more of the specific DV/CC knowledge courts need than the professionals now used.
- CC advocates should help train court professionals.
- CC advocates should be trained to serve as expert witnesses.

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### JOAN MEIER STUDIES

Abusers create myths that women often make up false allegations of abuse and particularly sexual abuse to discourage courts from taking their abuse seriously. (PAS, PAD, PA, Alienation)

Abusers often use false allegations to distract attention from their own abuse.

Meier found that when women raised allegations of spousal or child abuse during custody cases, **judges believed them only 36% of the time. In cases where fathers countered by claiming alienation, judges were even less likely to credit mothers.**



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## JOAN MEIER STUDIES

When fathers cross-claim alienation, courts are more than twice as likely to disbelieve mothers' claims of any type of abuse than if fathers made no alienation claim; and

When fathers cross-claim alienation, courts are almost 4 (3.9) times more likely to disbelieve mothers' claims of child abuse than if fathers made no alienation claim.



Joan S. Meier  
National Family Violence Law Center  
Professor of Clinical Law, Director,  
National Family Violence Law Center,  
George Washington University Law School

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### Meier Study Reviewed Published Cases Involving Claims of DV, Child Abuse, and Alienation.

- Gender bias continues to be widespread.
- Alienation theories have more influence than DV or child abuse.
- Most child sexual abuse allegations disbelieved.
- Court practices tilt abuse cases in favor of alleged abusers and against protecting children.

**MORE EVIDENCE  
CUSTODY COURTS  
GET HIGH  
PERCENTAGE OF  
ABUSE CASES  
WRONG**

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### Meier Study Reviewed Appellate Cases Involving Claims of DV, Child Abuse, and Alienation.

- Mothers reporting abuse believed 41% of time and 23% when alienation claimed.
- For child sexual abuse cases mothers believed 15% of time but only 2% when alienation claimed.
- Mothers lose custody 26% of time when reporting abuse, 44% when alienation claimed and 73% when alienation believed.
- Other research proves mothers disbelieved and punished far more than the actual circumstances warrant.

**MORE EVIDENCE  
CUSTODY COURTS  
GET HIGH  
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## The Little Children and Jesus

Jesus said, "Leave the children alone, and don't try to keep them from coming to me, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)



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## COERCIVE CONTROL TACTICS IN FAMILY COURT

- Litigation Abuse
- Using Court-appointed Professionals
- Using Family Court Judges

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## SOME LEGAL TACTICS ABUSERS USE

**Judges need to be aware of these abuser tactics and prevent them from working**

- Abusers seek custody as a way to maintain control over their victim.
- Abusers use visitation exchanges to continue their abuse.
- They seek mutual orders of protection to nullify an order obtained by a woman.

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## SOME LEGAL TACTICS ABUSERS USE

**Financial Abuse examples:**

- They seek joint custody to maintain control or trade for financial considerations.
- They hide income and assets to maintain control and punish women for leaving.
- They use their superior resources to hire better, more aggressive attorneys to help win court cases.

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## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ABUSERS – LITIGATION ABUSE

Protracted divorce litigation	Repeated continuances, delays	Unsupportable custody demands
Burdensome discovery, esp. depositions	Trading children for money	Repeated motions for custody/evaluations
Repeated motions to increase visitation	Repeated motions to reduce support	Repeated motions for visitation contempt

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## ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING LITIGATION ABUSE

**"For the complete "Litigation Abuse" checklist, see Dr. Debra's book *Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents* or visit [https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ipv\\_assessment.htm](https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ipv_assessment.htm)**

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## ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING COURT-APPOINTED PROFESSIONALS

When you told the mediator, custody evaluator, or GAL there was a history of CC tactics, abuse, or violence during the relationship directed at you or the children, they would dismiss abuse reports without evidence or would say it no longer mattered since you were not in the relationship anymore. This was especially true for non-physical abuse toward you.<sup>15</sup>

Court-appointed professionals denied reports of CC tactics, abuse, or violence during custody evaluations, mediation, or GAL meetings even when documentation was provided to the professional.<sup>6, 16</sup>

The mediator, custody evaluator, or GAL criticized or punished you for attempting to protect your children in ways the mediator, custody evaluator, or GAL did not understand.<sup>15</sup>

The GAL was "chamed" by your abusive ex and he was given custody/unsupervised access to your children.<sup>5</sup>

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## ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING COURT-APPOINTED PROFESSIONALS

\*For the complete "Using Court-appointed Professionals" checklist, see Dr. Debra's book *Eyes Wide Open: Help! With Control Freak Co-parents* or visit [https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/jpy\\_assess.htm](https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/jpy_assess.htm)

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## KEY QUESTIONS FOR COURT-APPOINTED PROFESSIONALS WHEN CC USED IN RELATIONSHIPS

Refer to Family Court course for questions.

What is your understanding of the use of children as leverage by an abusive parent in high conflict/contested custody cases?

Watch out for use of terms like: "parental alienation," "parental alienation syndrome," or similar terms. These are "red flags" that this person does not understand Coercive Control tactics.

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## QUESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

**What is your approach to working with children's emotional, social, and cognitive development in shared parenting situations where prior Domestic Abuse or Coercive Control is experienced by a child?**

Look out for therapists who are more interested in **reunification** of a child who does not want contact with the abuser parent instead of meeting the **emotional needs** of the child.

How willing is the therapist to **explore, work with, and understand** why a child does not want contact with one parent?

How do you tell if the child is reluctant/refusing contact **with one parent because the other is coaching them** to not want to be with that parent?

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## QUESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

How do you help children view their world on a reality basis when one parent uses manipulations to gain power and control over the child?

How do you handle children's communication with you when parents ask you to tell them everything the child shared in therapy?

Do you work strictly with the child in therapy or do you bring the parent in for part of the session?

What role do you ask the parent to take on in therapy?



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## QUESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

When parents are no longer living together, how do you work with both parents around issues concerning their children?

How do you handle reports of child abuse/neglect/sexual abuse grooming/sexual abuse by the child?

How do you approach financial abuse of one parent by the other parent in therapy when the child is the client/patient?

Is the parent who brings the child to therapy responsible for paying for part or all of the therapy? Are both parents equally responsible for payment for therapy?

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- The judge issued restraining orders to both the abusive partner and to you, indicating that the abuse was partially your fault.<sup>5,33</sup>
- The judge down-played the domestic violence in the relationship, or refused to consider the pattern of abuse over time.<sup>5, 20</sup>
- The judge treated domestic violence charges against your abusive ex-partner and against you as equally real, even though your ex filed charges against you as an intimidation strategy after you separated.

**ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING FAMILY COURT JUDGES**

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- The judge viewed counseling received by the abuser as a "cure," and with no recent domestic violence incidents, treated the abusive partner as a responsible and caring parent.<sup>5</sup>
- The judge held you, the mother, to a higher level of care for children than the father.<sup>35</sup>
- The judge cut off your testimony before you have placed all facts in evidence, but allows the father to complete his testimony uninterrupted.

**ASSESSMENT OF COERCIVE CONTROL— USING FAMILY COURT JUDGES**

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- Gag orders were placed on you by the judge to keep you from raising allegations of abuse/neglect or judicial misconduct.<sup>35</sup>
- The judge refused to grant or enforce restraining orders against the abusive partner.
- The judge down-played the domestic violence in the relationship, or refused to consider the pattern of abuse over time.<sup>5, 20</sup>
- The judge counted only documented incidents of DV; some require several incidents, count only recent incidents, or require a higher standard of proof.<sup>35</sup>

**ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING FAMILY COURT JUDGES**

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## ASSESSMENT OF CC: USING FAMILY COURT JUDGES

\*For the complete "Using Family Court Judges" checklist, see Dr. Debra's book *Eyes Wide Open: Help! with Control Freak Co-parents* or visit [https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ip\\_v\\_assess.htm](https://www.houseofpeacepubs.com/ip_v_assess.htm)

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# BREAKOUT

How would you educate a survivor about avoiding court professionals as much as possible, and how they can prepare to work with court professionals when they do have to work with them?




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## Instructions for Fathers

Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Fathers, do not antagonize your children, so that they will not become discouraged. (Colossians 3:21 NASB).




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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

• Example:

- Colorado Revised Statutes: Title 14, Domestic Matters > Title 14, Dissolution of Marriage - Parental Responsibilities > Article 10, Uniform Dissolution of Marriage Act



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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

§ 14-10-124. Best interests of child

(1) Legislative declaration.

While co-parenting is not appropriate in all circumstances,.... in most circumstances, it is in the best interest of all parties to encourage frequent and continuing contact between each parent and the minor children of the marriage after the parents have separated or dissolved their marriage.

In order to effectuate this goal when appropriate, the general assembly urges parents to share the rights and responsibilities of child-rearing and to encourage the love, affection, and contact between the children and the parents.

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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

§ 14-10-124. Best interests of child

(1.3) Definitions. For purposes of this section and section 14-10-129(2)(c), unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) "Domestic violence" means an act of violence or a threatened act of violence upon a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship, and may include any act or threatened act against a person or against property, including an animal, when used as a method of coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge directed against a person with whom the actor is or has been involved in an intimate relationship.
- (b) "Intimate relationship"
- (c) "Sexual assault" has the same meaning as set forth in section 19-1-103.

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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

### § 14-10-124. Best interests of child

**(1.5) Allocation of parental responsibilities.** The court shall determine the allocation of parental responsibilities, including parenting time and decision-making responsibilities, in accordance with the best interests of the child giving paramount consideration to the child's safety and the physical, mental, and emotional conditions and needs of the child as follows:

- **(a) Determination of parenting time.** The court, upon the motion of either party or upon its own motion, may make provisions for parenting time that the court finds are in the best interests of the child, with the **child's safety always paramount**, unless the court finds, after a hearing, that parenting time by the party would **endanger the child's physical health or significantly impair the child's emotional development**. In addition to a finding that parenting time would endanger the child's physical health or significantly impair the child's emotional development, in any order imposing or continuing a parenting time restriction, the court shall **enumerate the specific factual findings supporting the restriction, including findings related to domestic violence, child abuse, and child sexual abuse**, and may enumerate the **conditions that the restricted party could fulfill in order to seek modification in the parenting plan**. When a claim of child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, or sexual assault where there is also a claim that the child was conceived as a result of the **sexual assault has been made to the court, or the court has reason to believe that a party has committed child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, or sexual assault where there is also a claim that the child was conceived as a result of the sexual assault, prior to determining parenting time**, the court shall follow the provisions of subsection (4) of this section.

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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

### § 14-10-124. Best interests of child

In determining the best interests of the child for purposes of parenting time, the court shall consider all relevant factors, including:

- **(III.5)** Any report related to **domestic violence** that is submitted to the court by a **child and family investigator**, if one is appointed pursuant to section 14-10-116.5; a **professional parental responsibilities evaluator**, if one is appointed pursuant to section 14-10-127; or a **legal representative of the child**, if one is appointed pursuant to section 14-10-116. The court may consider **other testimony regarding domestic violence from the parties, experts, therapists for any parent or child, the department of human services, parenting time supervisors, school personnel, or other lay witnesses**.
- **(VI)** The ability of the parties to encourage the sharing of love, affection, and contact between the child and the other party; **except that, if the court determines that a party is acting to protect the child from witnessing domestic violence or from being a victim of child abuse or neglect or domestic violence, the party's protective actions shall not be considered with respect to this factor;**

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## BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

### § 14-10-124. Best interests of child

**(b) Allocation of decision-making responsibility.** The court, upon the motion of either party or its own motion, shall allocate the decision-making responsibilities between the parties based upon the best interests of the child. In determining **decision-making responsibility**, the court may allocate the decision-making responsibility with respect to each issue affecting the child mutually between both parties or individually to one or the other party or any combination thereof. When a **claim of child abuse or neglect or domestic violence** has been made to the court, or the court has **reason to believe** that a party has committed **child abuse or neglect, domestic violence, or sexual assault** where there is also a claim that the child in question was **conceived as a result of the sexual assault**, prior to allocating decision-making responsibility, the court shall follow the provisions of subsection (4) of this section. In determining the best interests of the child for purposes of allocating decision-making responsibilities, the court shall consider, in addition to the factors set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection (1.5), all relevant factors including:

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# BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD STANDARD

## § 14-10-124. Best interests of child

(f) When the court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that one of the parties has committed domestic violence, the court may order the party to submit to a domestic violence evaluation. If the court determines, based upon the results of the evaluation, that treatment is appropriate, the court may order the party to participate in domestic violence treatment. At any time, the court may require a subsequent evaluation to determine whether additional treatment is necessary. If the court awards parenting time to a party who has been ordered to participate in domestic violence treatment, the court may order the party to obtain a report from the treatment provider concerning the party's progress in treatment and addressing any ongoing safety concerns regarding the party's parenting time. The court may order the party who has committed domestic violence to pay the costs of the domestic violence evaluations and treatment.

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# SAFE CHILD ACT IS SOLUTION TO URGENT PROBLEM

## SAFE CHILD ACT IS SOLUTION TO URGENT PROBLEM

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# Health and Safety of Children should be the first priority in all custody and visitation decisions.

Health and Safety of Children should be the first priority in all custody and visitation decisions.

Courts routinely focus on less important issues.

Courts are not trauma-informed.

Courts frequently fail to recognize health and safety issues.



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**Courts must integrate current scientific research (like ACE, Saunders, and Meier's studies).**

Courts have failed to create reforms based on scientific research.

Courts have failed to abandon outdated and discredited practices.

Failure to use current scientific research leads directly to avoidable tragedies.

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**Courts must use a multi-disciplinary approach.**

- Mental health professionals rarely have the necessary DV expertise.
- There is a specialized body of DV knowledge that can be used to recognize and respond to DV and child abuse.
- When professionals fail to recognize abuse, they focus on less important issues.
- Use of the same small group of professionals has created an insular atmosphere where new ideas and research are discouraged.

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**WHY IS CUSTODY LITIGATION SO SUCCESSFUL FOR ABUSERS?**

**Child Custody Expert:**

"The most important thing to remember about many abusive fathers seeking child custody is that this is a NO-LOSE GAME for him, because...

He doesn't really want the kids anyway!"



Jorzo, Juan PPT © 2010 & Mike Blinger, Esq.

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**Reality**

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*"I got custody of the kids. Do you want one?"*

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**BREAKOUT**

80

How would you educate a survivor about using the "timeline outline" tool and how it can be used to address:

- "best interest" factors and
- impacts on her children?

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**Use of Courts**

81

The Lord defests dishonest scales, but accurate weights find favor with him. (Proverbs 11:1)

*"You shall not do injustice in judgment; you shall not show partiality to the poor nor give preference to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people; and you are not to jeopardize the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord. You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may certainly rebuke your neighbor, but you are not to incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor hold any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. (Leviticus 19:15-18)*



Woe to those who enact unjust statutes. And to those who constantly record harmful decisions. (Isaiah 10:1)

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