

Policy for Working With Children of Separated-Divorced Parents

Therapist Beliefs

- Children are part of a network of familial relationships. It is in their best interest to involve all active and engaged caregivers in order to create the most significant change.
- Even though the parents have decided that separating is the right choice for them, the child may not share this view. Children benefit from having a relationship with both of their parents unless abuse and/or neglect are occurring which could significantly impact the child's wellbeing.
- Counselling outcomes are maximized when children believe that their counsellor can be trusted with their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. If there is an expectation that the counsellor will reveal the content of sessions to the parent(s), it is likely that the child will shut down and will gain no benefit from the counselling process.
- My goal is to help the child client build coping/emotional regulation skills, process events and to help parents in any way that is appropriate to help the child achieve these therapeutic goals. It is not helpful for me to try to convince one parent to comply with the demands of the other parent, nor is it appropriate to determine who is the "better" parent.

Legal/Custody

- I require a copy of any court documentation indicating custody arrangements, allowances or restrictions for the contact between parent and minor child, court orders for counselling, or any other legal documentation related to the medical care of the child before counselling can take place.
- I will try to include both parents in the counselling process except in cases when it is expected that doing so would cause serious detriment to the child.

Confidentiality

- Your child has a right to confidentiality the breadth of which increases as they age. As such I do not provide session notes to parents. If access to the file is requested, I will provide a summary of the counselling arch including dates of sessions, general themes, and interventions.
- Any written communication will become part of the child's clinical file as record of communication

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- It is unethical for me to keep secrets between parents unless in the case of suspected abuse or neglect.
- If requested, I will provide a brief emailed summary after the session copied to both parents. This summary will include areas of work, and ways in which parents can help support their child's counselling. Any summary that requires more than 15 minutes of my time will be billed at my regular rate. Please check with your insurer with regards to their coverage for email, letter, or phone conversations.

Financial

- The parent who initially sets up counselling for the child is considered the guarantor. This means this parent is considered financially responsible for covering the cost of services and communicating cost and reimbursement with the other parent. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide the appropriate payments to the counsellor, not the responsibility of the counsellor to provide billing according to court-ordered co-parenting financial agreements. It is not feasible to expect the counsellor to send separate, divided bills to each parent.
- I will provide receipt of payment to the parent who paid for the session. It is the parent's responsibility to work together to share receipts.

Scheduling

- I use the Jane app to schedule appointments. There will be a primary parental contact in Jane. It is the parents responsibility to communicate regarding scheduled appointments.

Legal

- At times one or both parents may decide to take legal action regarding custody of the child. Counselling and legal testimony are different services. I provide counselling services which include creating a supportive, safe relationship with the child for the purpose of achieving therapeutic goals. I cannot and will not provide a recommendation regarding custody of the child.
- I cannot and will not provide you with legal advice. Please refer any legal questions to a lawyer.
- I will communicate with legal professionals as required by law. It is my responsibility to maintain your child's confidentiality and to protect the counselling relationship.



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- I cannot speak to one parent's attorney without the consent from the other parent.

By signing below, you agree to the following:

I have read the statements above and agree to comply with the policies listed in this document. I understand that if I break any of the rules listed in this document I may be asked to discontinue the counseling relationship.

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date