

# DIVORCE SHOULDN'T BE A TUG OF WAR

CO-PARENTING CONSULTATION CAN HELP

## WHO CAN BENEFIT?

Parents who are separated or divorced, or who are in the process of splitting up, may benefit from co-parent consultations. Specific treatment goals vary according to individual needs but generally focus on reaching agreements on parenting time and child management, joint decision-making, communication, and any other issues that create stress and conflict. Co-parenting consultation may help parents resolve some of their anger or grief related to the ending of the relationship allowing both to focus more fully on parenting without the intrusion of "unfinished business" from the past.

When parents create and maintain a strong parenting alliance after separation, children experience a secure base they can depend on while they grow up. Parents seek co-parenting consultation at all stages of post-separation. Some come in before separation to explore how to split up a way that best supports their children's needs. Others have been co-parenting for awhile and want to strengthen their co-parent alliance, increase patterns of healthy communication and decision-making.

## FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES LLC

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## CONSIDER SEEKING HELP WHEN YOU SEE THESE SIGNS OF STRESS IN CHILDREN

- Fear of separation from either parent.
- Acting younger than their chronological age.
- Unexplained moodiness.
- Acting out.
- Manipulative behavior.
- Sadness and depression.
- Expressions of guilt.
- Sleep or eating problems.
- Personality change.
- Academic or social problems.
- Excess fears or compulsive behaviors.

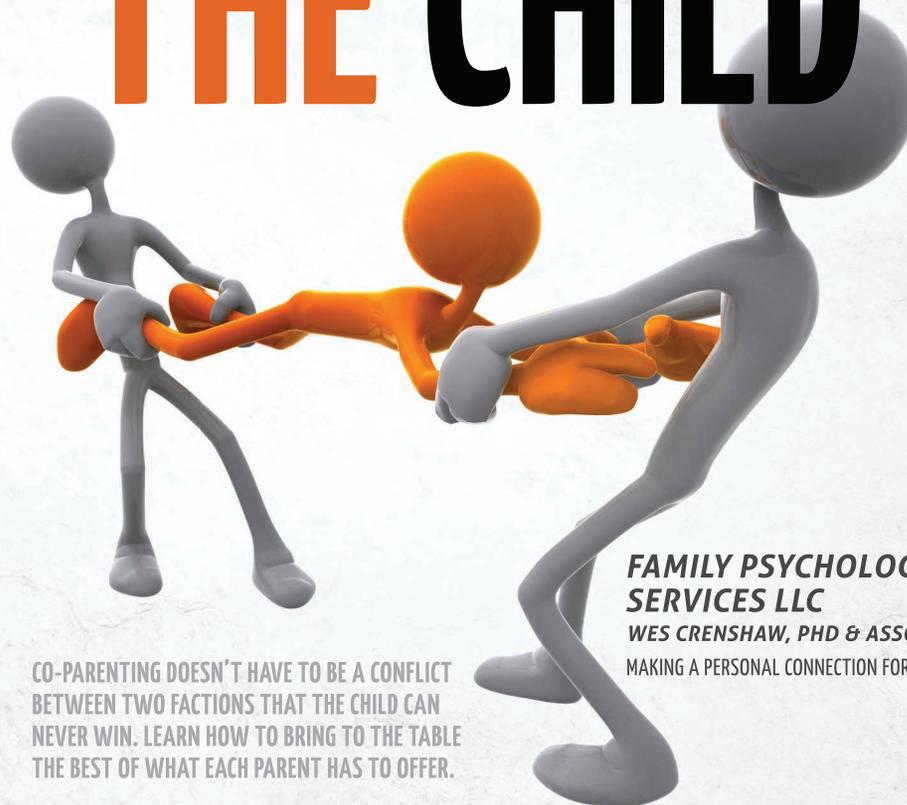
## PARENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR CHILD'S STRESS WHEN THEY

- Use the legal system to fight with or degrade one another.
- Make children messengers or ask them to spy on the other parent.
- Put children in the middle of adult conflict.
- Find children trying to intervene in parent disputes, or in some cases, make those disputes worse.
- Fail to manage their own depression or anxiety or express emotional reactivity to their children.
- Rely on children for emotional support or major responsibilities during the divorce process.



- DOES CO-PARENTING SOMETIMES FEEL IMPOSSIBLE?
- DO COURTS SEEM TOO INVOLVED IN YOUR CASE?
- DO YOU WANT GREATER INFLUENCE IN YOUR CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS?
- DO YOU WISH YOU COULD WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR CHILD'S OTHER PARENT?

# SPARE THE CHILD



CO-PARENTING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO FACTIONS THAT THE CHILD CAN NEVER WIN. LEARN HOW TO BRING TO THE TABLE THE BEST OF WHAT EACH PARENT HAS TO OFFER.

**FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SERVICES LLC**  
WES CRENSHAW, PHD & ASSOCIATES  
MAKING A PERSONAL CONNECTION FOR CHANGE

# CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS IN DIVORCE\*

The right to love and be loved by both of your parents without feeling guilt or disapproval.

The right to not be forced to choose one parent over the other.

The right to age appropriate answers to questions about the changing family relationships, without placing blame on either parent.

The right to be able to experience regular, consistent, and flexible shared parenting time with both parents without interference.

The right to not be put in the middle of parental battles or used as messengers.

The right to know that their parents decision to divorce is not their fault.

The right to have a secure relationship, express love and affection for, and receive love and affection from both parents.

The right to be protected from hearing degrading or bad comments about either parent.

\*The New Jersey Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

## PAYMENT FOR CO-PARENTING SERVICES

Parties, attorneys, and courts should be aware that health insurance and KanCare (Medicaid) rarely pay for any aspect of co-parenting therapy. Exceptions may include cases in which a child (a) has an existing mental health diagnosis, and (b) co-parenting therapy can be shown to be medically necessary to address that need, and (c) the carrier will reimburse a 90846 code, (psychotherapy without client present) as part of treatment.

Costs for co parenting therapy run \$120 per hour and \$150 for ninety minutes with costs shared between the parties as apportioned by the court.

We recognize that other providers and practices take a different view and may attempt to bill co-parenting services to insurance. Unless the above criteria are met, those claims are subject to recoupment under "waste, fraud, and abuse" clauses. Adrian Zelvy and Carrie Poe can review cases to make a final determination about potential insurance reimbursement, but parties should not expect insurance to cover this service. On the rare occasions when insurance will reimburse, parties should expect to cover a number of costs for consultation outside of reimbursable expenses including reports, email, testimony, consultation with attorneys, etc.

## HOW COURTS, ATTORNEYS, GUARDIANS, AND PARTIES CAN INITIATE CO-PARENTING CONSULTATION AT FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES



Most of our staff accept co parenting cases, depending on the age of the child and the specific need. However, Adrian Zelvy, LCPC is coordinating the program and engaging most of our new referrals. Mr. Zelvy has extensive experience working with divorced families and is currently training in parent coordination in divorce. Additionally, Dr. Wes Crenshaw, owner of Family Psychological Services, has received extensive training in forensic psychology, divorce, and custody, and consults regularly with Mr. Zelvy.

### CHANGING CHILDRENS' EXPERIENCE OF DIVORCE, TWO PARENTS AT A TIME

Divorcing and separating parents can have a large impact on their children's ability to cope with changes in the family and transition into healthy adjustment. Research proves that the strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in children after divorce is exposure to high levels of conflict between parents.

Parental conflict has deeper and greater consequences when the tug-of-war is hostile, antagonistic, poorly resolved and focused on matters pertaining to the kids. However, even when parents are "high conflict" there are ways they can develop cooperative or business-like relationships for the sake of their children



A core part of co-parenting therapy is for you and your ex- to begin to understand the reactions you each have to each other and to consciously change those response patterns from broken up partners to conscientious parents.

The most effective tool you have to change the level of conflict in your relationship is to work on how you react to the other parent.

With the help of a third, neutral party, you and your ex- can then take the opportunity to address the four critical areas:

1. Discuss issues You and your ex-find difficult to address without intervention.
2. Decide and manage issues must be consistent between households.
3. Identify issues you can manage separately for each household without co-parent input.
4. Reduce communication styles and interaction patterns that sustain conflict.