

Instructions for Coparent Counseling Clients

Coparent counseling is designed to be brief and aimed at helping parents learn to peacefully, respectfully and successfully share time with their children. My approach is based upon communication retraining, inasmuch as communication, written or spoken, is the only conduit through which information is shared between divorced/separated parents. Learning to communicate respectfully and efficiently is the best guarantee for a successful coparent relationship. The following instructions, tips and advice are offered to help prepare parents for their first coparent counseling session. Please thoroughly read the below information well in advance of our first 3-way appointment so that you are familiar with how sessions will be conducted. If you have any questions or comments prior to our first appointment please don't hesitate to contact me.

Session Protocols :

- 1) Coparent counseling focuses on the present and future as it relates to your child(ren) so topics having to do with the parent's personal relationship history are typically off limits. However, exceptions are occasionally made, by mutual consent, for discussing historical information - only if it directly affects current and future situations involving the child(ren).
- 2) During the first session please direct all of your comments to me and not to your ex. The purpose of this is to prevent outbursts from occurring. It has been my experience that I occasionally have to remind clients about this, so don't be surprised if this happens in our first 3-way session.
- 3) Please only use what are commonly referred to as "I statements" – statements from your own personal experience. Using "You statements" tends to promote blaming and defensiveness in others, which almost always creates resistance and conflict.
- 4) It is never my goal to have parents become friends or, for that matter, to even get to a point of liking each other. My goal is to create a "business-like" relationship between parents whose job (raising the children) depends upon getting along well enough to share information and make decisions.
- 5) Everyone needs to take turns speaking. Talking over someone is not well tolerated and tends to promote outbursts.
- 6) The greatest single thing you can do to prepare for coparent counseling is to envision the possibility of a different, more positive relationship with your ex. Before the first session spend a few moments and just imagine how both you and your ex can be different with one another.

Other Matters :

Documents - I prefer to have all communication you would like for me to be aware of (court documents, emails, textx, faxes, letters, notes, etc...) brought into sessions and read aloud - not sent to me via email. Of course there are exceptions made for this but please be aware that I charge my current hourly fee, prorated on a quarter-hourly basis, to read anything sent or given to me. Also, I

am forced to assume that whoever provides this type of information outside of the sessions is taking responsibility for payment of this fee unless otherwise mutually agreed by both parents.

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