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You have been referred to me for the purpose of a child custody and/or parenting time evaluation. I hope during the interview process you feel that you have every opportunity to explain your ideas and concerns regarding your family. My office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00-5:00. Appointments are scheduled between 10:00am and 3:00pm. I have 24 hour voice-messaging and e-mail available for additional communication at your convenience.

Confidentiality

Even though this is a counseling and mediation office, you need to know that the evaluation process is not a confidential one. Your concerns will be openly discussed with the other parent and their concerns will be discussed with you. This includes email correspondence, which is typically forwarded to the other parent if they were not CC'd on the original message. A written report is the end product and is mailed to your attorney of record. You will not receive a copy of the report from this office; *if you are a pro se client you will only receive the summary and recommendations* – a copy of the complete report will be made available for your review in my office and provided to you in the courtroom if the matter proceeds to trial. The entire file created for your family including all notes and the documents reviewed is available to both attorneys and the court if the problematic issues are not resolved. I may be called as an expert witness by either parent at trial. Testimony is always provided on behalf of your child, not the parent who has called me as a witness. I do not have any further correspondence with parents/grandparents (step-parents or personal references) after the written evaluation is released – US mail, voicemail, and e-mail will not be returned.

Neutrality

My role as an evaluator is to help determine what is in your child's best interest, *your child is my client secondary to the court* and I remain involved on the child's behalf until the final plan is in place. Assessing a child's best interest is accomplished by a thorough review of documentation, talking to both parents, talking directly to the child and other important people that know your family. I hope by communicating with me you feel like someone is listening to your parenting concerns and helping to keep the spotlight focused on your child. I appreciate the difficult job of parenting and want you to know that you will not be judged personally during the evaluation. All ideas about how best to proceed are reserved until the final process of writing the report. Who pays the professional fee makes no difference in regard to the final recommendations.

Fees

I charge a flat rate fee for the evaluation that includes interviews with you, the other parent and the child or children involved. The fee also includes a home visit at each residence (with some exceptions), personal and professional reference calls, and the written report. The flat rate fee does not include extended travel time outside the tri-county area. If the matter is more complicated than average, includes multiple legal parties, documentation that exceeds a one inch binder, or more than two children then you or your attorney will hear from me regarding additional cost.

A not-refundable commitment fee is required to schedule your evaluation. This amount is applied to the balance of the evaluation, due a week in advance of our first meeting. If the evaluation fails to move forward for any reason the not-refundable commitment fee is forfeited. Once an evaluation begins, there is no refund of any monies. Payment is due in full a minimum of one week in advance of our first meeting. My office does not process credit or debit cards. We do not have payment plans available. The written report will not be released from my office without all fees paid in full. If a check is returned with non-sufficient funds, the amount must be re-submitted in cash or cashiers check and include an additional \$50.00 returned check fee.

Record Keeping

You and your attorney may submit collateral information for my review. The \$8000 fee covers one 1” notebook of documents, per parent. Please include an index for your materials and use dividers to organize your documents into identifiable sections of your concerns. My office will provide you with a 1” notebook upon request. If you submit more information than a 1” notebook, \$300 per hour will be assessed to review the additional material you deem necessary. Please do not submit email or text messages, unless they are specifically requested. Report cards, police reports, letters authored by other professionals, and assessments are most relevant (DHS, medical, psychological, substance abuse). If you have an audio or video file, these must be placed into a dropbox for my review – I will not accept a USB drive or audio/video delivered via email. All documents will be kept in a secure place until your legal judgment is complete (via litigation or stipulation). Please arrange to pickup your documents within 30 days of your signed judgment. Records submitted during the process that are left in my keeping will be shredded/destroyed/deleted 30 days after your judgment is signed. I maintain a copy of your evaluation, as well as copies of any documents I deem necessary to support the recommendations of my report, for a period of seven years. After seven years all records (except the report) associated with your case are destroyed and no longer kept by this office.

Child Abuse and Neglect Allegations

There are times during the course of an evaluation when allegations are made regarding the care and safety of children. I recognize that this is common in highly contested custody cases and that sometimes these allegations are exaggerated. However, it is my mandatory obligation to report suspected abuse to the proper authority that can assess the level of intervention necessary. After a mandatory report has been made, the custody evaluation will be temporarily suspended until the Department of Human Services and/or law enforcement has concluded an assessment.

Illness

If you or your child is sick at the time of a scheduled appointment, please call in advance and reschedule. If you or your child arrives to an appointment and are visibly ill, the evaluator will cancel the appointment. This policy is an effort to keep all of the children and families who come to this office healthy, as well as the evaluator and office staff. All families going through this process have a timeline to respect, which illness can delay. Please be courteous of others involved in this process and wash your hands before coming in.

Post-Report Services

If the evaluation report and recommendation are not dispositive resolving the conflict, there might be a settlement conference arranged, which would include both parents and their attorneys, the evaluator and a skilled mediator (Oregon Family Institute model). As your child’s advocate I will make every effort to try and help your family settle the conflict outside of Court. Judges prefer parents make decisions about their children.

All post-report services are billed at an hourly rate of \$300. In certain situations litigation is unavoidable and a \$1500 fee is charged for expert testimony, due a minimum of one week in advance of the trial date. This fee secures time on my professional calendar and is non-refundable inside 48 hours of the trial date.

I am not able to provide counseling or therapy to you or your child after an evaluation but can make a referral to skilled mental health professionals in your community.

I the undersigned have read, understand, and agree to be bound by the extent of information herewith.

_____ Date _____
Mother

_____ Date _____
Father

_____ Date _____
Intervening Legal Party