

Solutions for Court-Involved
Family Conflict

Ireland Seminar for Mental Health
& Legal Professionals

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A treatment-based solution to court-involved
family conflict.

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Overview of Seminar

- Paradigm shift from custody to treatment
- Healthcare solutions
- Standards of practice
- Treatment plan
- Consultation
- Pilot program for the family courts

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Paradigm Shift

From Custody to Treatment

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Legal		Psych
Judge	Authority	Doctor
Trial	Evidence	Assessment
Laws & Statutes	Guidelines	ICD-10 & Ethics Code
Precedents	Expansion	Research
Ruling	Decision	Diagnosis
Court Orders	Outcome	Doctor's Orders

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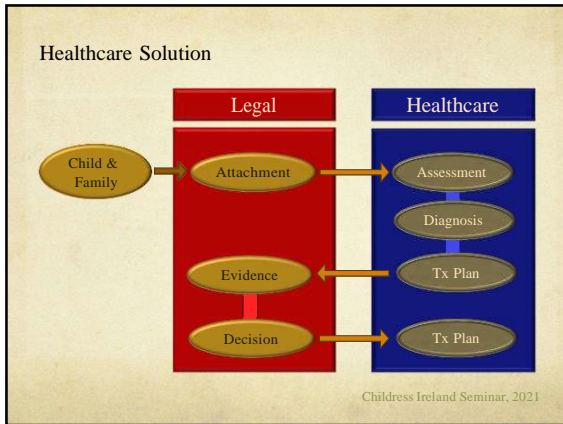
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Legal Solution

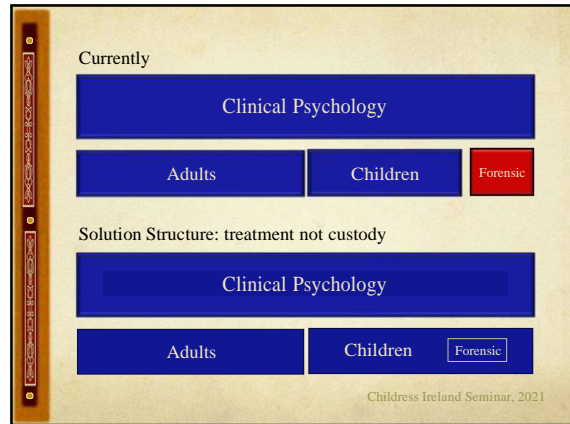
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graph TD; A([Child & Family]) --> B(Custody Conflict); B --> C(Motions); C --> D(Forensic Psych Custody Evaluations); D --> E(Evidence); E --> F(Decision); G(Psychology Input) --> D;
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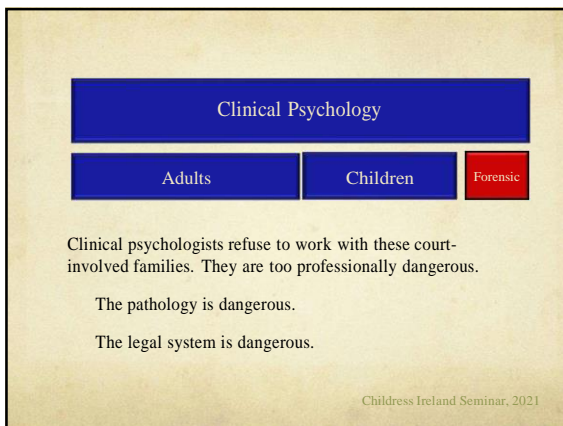
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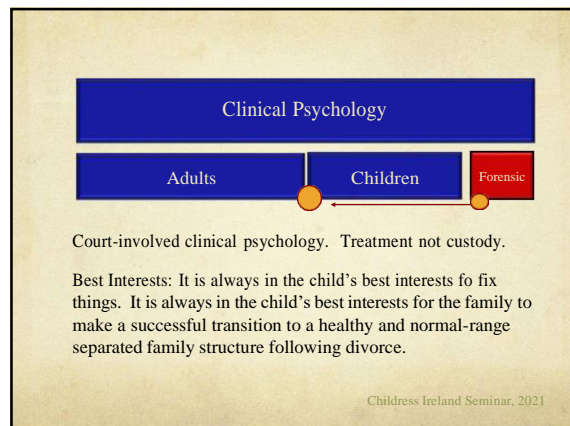
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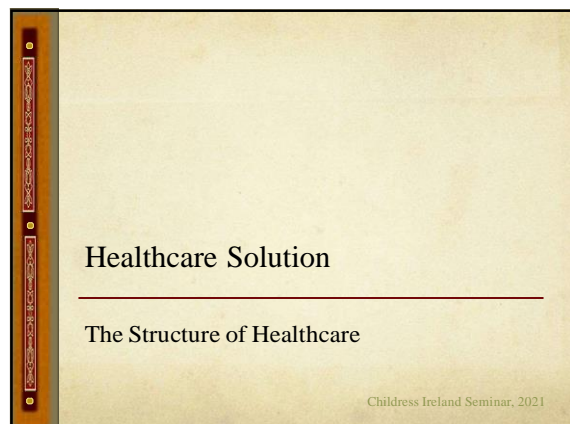
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- ### Custody & Clinical Psychology
- In the absence of child abuse, parents have the right to parent according to the cultural values, their personal values, and their religious values.
 - In the absence of child abuse, each parent should have as much time and involvement with their child as possible.
 1. Equal-shared 50-50 schedule
 2. Every-other-weekend with one, school-week with the other
 3. Distance: school-year with one, vacation with the other
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Two **separate** and **co-equal** systems

Healthcare Legal

Healthcare System:

- Diagnosis guides treatment – always
- Diagnosis is a pattern-match to diagnostic criteria
- You tell me the symptoms; I'll tell you the diagnosis

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Healthcare Structure

Assessment Diagnosis Treatment

proper accurate effective

Parents want a *proper* assessment that leads to an *accurate* diagnosis that guides the development of an *effective* treatment plan.

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proper

Assessment Risk assessment for psychological child abuse

accurate

Diagnosis Shared persecutory delusion ICD-10 F24

effective

Treatment Solution-focused family systems therapy

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Healthcare Standard of Practice

- Patients receive the highest quality of care.
- Our diagnosis is accurate 100% of the time.
 - ❖ Each diagnosis for each patient is accurate. That adds up to 100% of the time. Misdiagnosis harms people. There is no acceptable level of misdiagnosis.
- We consult or refer to a specialist when indicated.
- The appellate system for disputed diagnosis is second-opinion.
- We have duty of care and duty to protect obligations.

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Decisions from Doctors

Application of 'Statutes' & Research

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Laws & Statutes Guidelines ICD-10 & Ethics Code

ICD-10 Diagnosis: The ICD-10 assigns a code number for every medical and psychiatric disorder.

- The ICD-10 diagnostic system represents the 'statutes' that must be applied by the doctor to the clinical symptom evidence – in the same way as the judge applies legal statutes to the legal evidence.

The APA ethics code is mandatory for all psychologists. Ethical practice is not optional.

- The APA ethics code is the second set of 'statutes' that must be followed by all psychologist doctors in their decisions.

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Persecutory Delusion

Thought Disorders

From the APA: “Persecutory Type: delusions that the person (or someone to whom the person is close) is being malevolently treated in some way.” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Google malevolent: having or showing a wish to do evil to others.

Does the child have a fixed and false belief that the targeted parent has a “wish to do evil” to the child?

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ICD-10 Diagnosis - Required

ICD-10 F24 – Shared Psychotic Disorder, a shared delusion

From the APA: “Usually the primary case in Shared Psychotic Disorder is dominant in the relationship and gradually imposes the delusional system on the more passive and initially healthy second person... Although most commonly seen in relationships of only two people, Shared Psychotic Disorder can occur in larger number of individuals, especially in family situations in which the parent is the primary case and the children, sometimes to varying degrees, adopt the parent’s delusional beliefs.” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000)

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APA Ethics Standard 2.04 - Required

Standard 2.04: Psychologists are required to apply established knowledge in reaching their decisions.

2.04 Bases for Scientific and Professional Judgments
Psychologists’ work is based upon established scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline.

The established scientific and professional knowledge of the discipline is: attachment (Bowlby), family systems therapy (Minuchin), personality pathology (Beck), complex trauma (van der Kolk), child development (Tronick), the ICD-10 & DSM-5 diagnostic systems. Mandatory.

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APA Ethics Standard 2.01 - Required

Standard 2.01: Psychologists are required to know the necessary knowledge for the pathology before they start working with the pathology.

2.01 Boundaries of Competence
(a) Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience.

Mandatory.

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APA Ethics Standard 9.01 - Required

Standard 9.01: Psychologists are required to apply the necessary knowledge in their assessments of pathology sufficient to substantiate their findings.

9.01 Bases for Assessments
(a) Psychologists base the opinions contained in their recommendations, reports, and diagnostic or evaluative statements, including forensic testimony, on information and techniques sufficient to substantiate their findings. (See also Standard 2.04, Bases for Scientific and Professional Judgments .)

Note the citation reference to Standard 2.04. Mandatory.

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Clinical Psychology

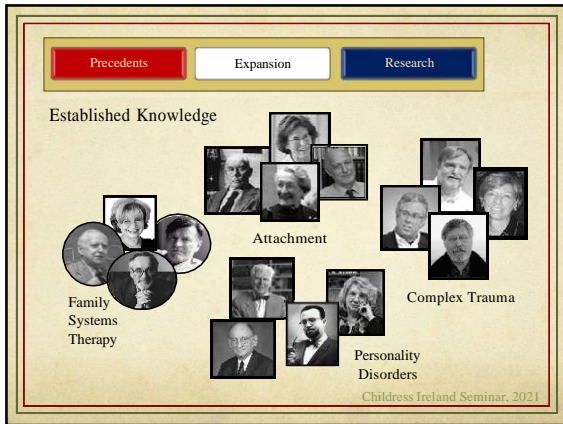
Adults Children Forensic

Forensic psychologists can speak to their compliance with the APA ethics code in their professional judgements.

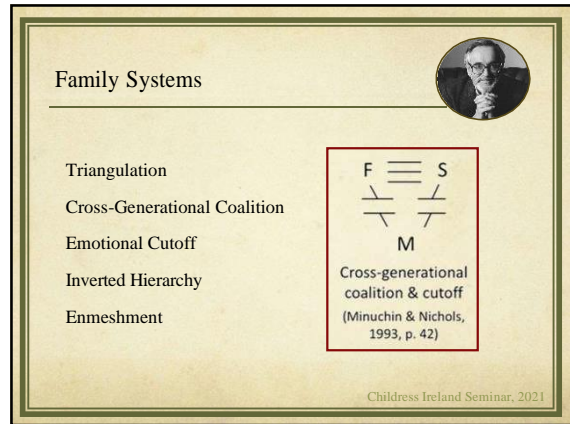
Court-involved clinical psychologists abide by Standards 2.04 Bases for Scientific and Professional Judgments, 2.01 Boundaries of Competence, 9.01 Bases for Assessment, 3.04 Avoiding Harm, and 2.03 Maintaining Competence of the APA ethics code.

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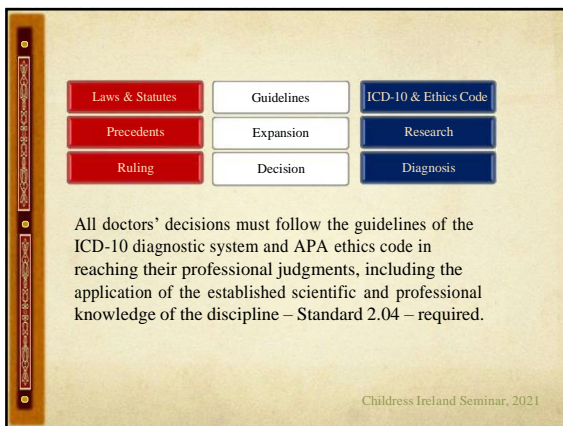
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Written Treatment Plan

Diagnosis Guides Treatment – Always

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Written Treatment Plan

Google “mental health treatment plans” and read the top two returns.

- **Goals** – specified in measurable ways
- **Interventions** – described for each goal
- **Time-frames** – time-frames for goal accomplishment
- **Outcome Measures** – to document treatment progress and goal accomplishment

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Therapy Components

Trauma-informed solution-focused family systems therapy.

- **Trauma-informed:** Information sets for thought disorders, personality disorders, delusions, and child abuse.
- **Solution-focused:** Trauma pulls for an unsolvable past. Solution-focused therapy (Berg) releases the therapy from the past.
- **Family systems therapy:** Minuchin – Bowen. One of the four primary schools of psychotherapy.

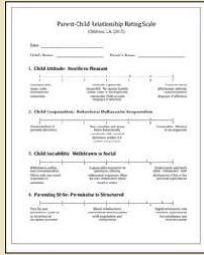
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Outcome Measures: Parent-Child Relationship Rating Scale

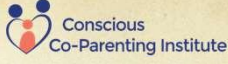
The Relationship Rating Scale monitors the symptoms of psychological child abuse, which are emotional and behavioral.

The Relationship Rating Scale can be used in treatment to normalize the child perceptions of family interactions and provide communication support and skills training.



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Dorcy Pruter
Conscious Co-Parenting Institute

Ms. Pruter offers a separate approach to resolution of high-intensity family conflict surrounding divorce.

I have reviewed the approach and protocols for the *High Road* workshop and *Higher Purpose Parenting* course. I support and endorse them both.

- ❖ The *High Road* workshop successfully recovers children from complex trauma and child psychological abuse.

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Consultation

The Age of Experts is Over

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Highest Standards of Practice

- Work with children and work with the courts demands the highest standards of professional practice.
- All psychologists should be applying exactly the same knowledge to reach exactly the same diagnosis 100% of the time.
- Testimony from all court-involved clinical psychologists will be the same, i.e., the application of established scientific and professional knowledge of psychology – Bowlby, Minuchin, Beck, van der Kolk, Tronick, ICD-10 and DSM-5 diagnostic systems.

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Consultation

3.09 Cooperation with Other Professionals
When indicated and professionally appropriate, psychologists cooperate with other professionals in order to serve their clients/patients effectively and appropriately.


- The appellate system in healthcare for a disputed diagnosis is second-opinion.
- Diagnoses with court-involved family conflict are anticipated to be disputed.
- Consultation and second opinions should be the norm.

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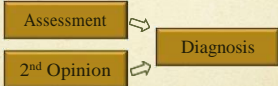
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Consultation

Sequential:



Simultaneous:



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Pilot Program for Family Courts

Solutions for the Family Courts

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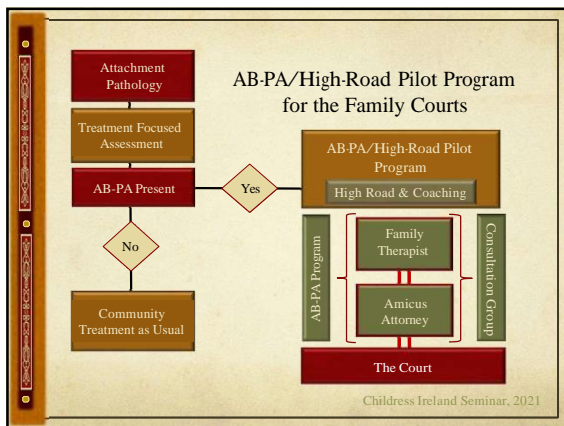
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Pilot Programs

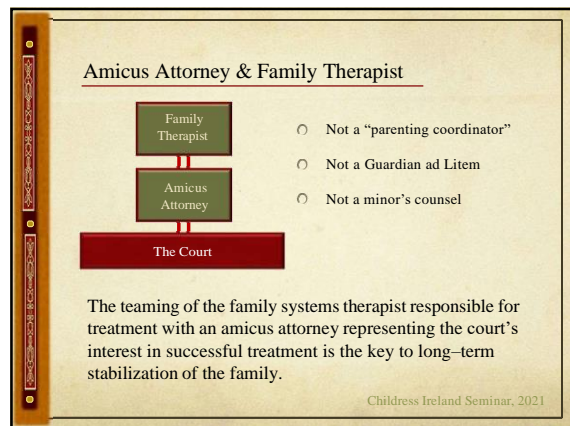
- Develop three Pilot Programs for the family courts
 - ❖ AB-PA/High-Road is one, develop two more, anything you'd like.
- Recruit university involvement for collection of outcome measures and evaluation research.
- Implement the pilot programs, collect data, see what works, do that.

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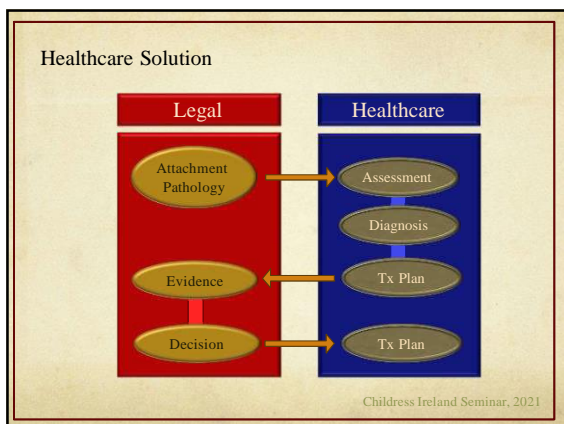
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