

CRAZY – YOUR CLIENT OR MINE?

Moderator: Wendy S. Burgower, Esq.
Panelists: Sol R. Rappaport, Ph.D., ABPP
James R. Flens, Psy.D., ABPP
Jonathan Bates, Esq.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES IN CUSTODY LITIGATION
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Goals

- ▶ Understand Mental Disorders commonly found in custody litigation
- ▶ Understand Personality Disorders most commonly seen in custody litigants
- ▶ Learning how these problems can impact parenting
- ▶ Understanding what you should expect in a custody evaluation report when a parent has a Mental Disorder or Personality Disorder.
- ▶ Learning how to manage these clients



With whom are you dealing

- ▶ You are not dealing with the average person
- ▶ You are dealing with people with problems
- ▶ You are dealing with the extreme
- ▶ You are dealing with good people in bad circumstances
- ▶ You are dealing with problematic people in bad circumstances
- ▶ Differentiating between the two is important

Common Mental Disorders

- ▶ Mood Disorders
 - Major Depressive Disorder
 - Bipolar Disorder
- ▶ Anxiety Disorders
 - Panic Disorder
 - OCD
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- ▶ ADHD
- ▶ Expect some depressive and anxious symptoms

What's the Impact on Parenting?

- ▶ Depression – most widely researched
 - Less sensitive parenting
 - Less supportive of children
 - Less authoritative parenting
 - Greater difficulties in youth romantic relationships
 - Increased mother child discord
 - More verbal and physical pressure for children to eat
 - Used more incentives/conditions to get child to eat
 - More psychological control
 - Children contribute as well – skin conductance

Yet more

- Deficient modeling of social skills
- Low nurturance and sensitivity
- Angry, negative and retaliatory behavior
- Intrusiveness
- Negative discipline
- Harsh, hostile and coercive parenting
- Higher anxiety and guilt induction
- more disengaged

Depression – Impact on Children

- Increased internalizing problems (Schudlich & Cummings, 2003)
- Infants – more difficult temperament, lower motor and mental development and less secure attachment (Zahn-Waxler et al., 2002)
- Preschoolers – same as above +
- Less effective regulation strategies
- React more negatively to stress
- Lower social competence

Also available as part of the eCourse

[Custody Litigation: Problem Clients](#)

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"Panel III: Crazy—Your Client or Mine?"

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