

Children Are Not Weapons

Family conflict is not solved by litigation. Family conflict is solved through professional psychology.

Divorce ends the marriage; it does not end the family. Where there are children, there will always be a family.

In divorce, the child's best interests are that the family successfully transitions to a healthy and functional separated family structure, united by bonds of shared affection with both parents. It is the responsibility of professional psychology to ensure that this occurs.

Why?

Because it is in the best interests of the child. Our client. The person we work for.

It is up to professional psychology to solve this. For the child. For the family. For the client. For the Court. That's our job. Professional psychology.

Professional psychology can absolutely 100% solve this, through the application of the standard and established constructs and principles of professional psychology.

There are four domains of knowledge – four data-sets from the constructs and principles of professional psychology – that need to be applied to the problem of family conflict in order to solve it:

The attachment system;
Personality disorder pathology;
Family systems therapy;
Complex trauma.

With attachment-related family conflict surrounding divorce, we start by applying the data-set from family systems therapy.

Triangulation,
Cross-generational coalition,
Inverted hierarchy,
Emotional cutoff.

Professional psychology can absolutely 100% solve the family issues surrounding divorce and the separated family structure through the application of the proper data sets from professional psychology. It is the responsibility of professional psychology to solve this; that all families transition to a healthy separated family structure following divorce.

Family Therapy Surrounding Divorce

Principle 1: Parents are not allowed to use the child as a weapon. The child is not a weapon.

That is non-negotiable. The child is not a weapon.

For all mental health professionals working with family conflict, if that is NOT currently your orientation to family therapy, it needs to immediately become your orientation to family therapy. The child is not a weapon.

If the child is being “triangulated” into the spousal conflict through the formation of a “cross-generational coalition” with one parent against the other parent that is resulting in an “emotional cutoff” in the child’s relationship with the targeted parent (Bowen; Minuchin; Haley)... then the child is being used as a weapon.

The allied parent is using the child as a weapon. That’s not okay in divorce. You’re not allowed to weaponize the child. That’s not healthy for the child.

And you know what,... Depending on the degree of child-weaponization, the parenting practices of turning the child into a weapon could rise to the level of **psychological child abuse**; creating severe psychopathology in order to weaponize the child in the spousal conflict is psychological child abuse. Children are not weapons. Ever.

Children have the right to love both parents, and children have the right to receive the love of both parents.

Children have the right to be loved by their grandparents and siblings, by their aunts and uncles and cousins. Children have the right to be loved by friends, and teammates, and teachers, and coaches, and mentors.

Children have the right to be loved. And it is up to professional psychology through family therapy to ensure that. Because that’s in the best interest of the child, and the child is our client.

Professional psychology can solve this. Professional psychology needs to solve this. Because that’s in the best interests of the child, our client.

Professional psychology will need the support of the family court system based on the principle that children are not weapons. The issue that AB-PA knowledgeable professionals, both legal and psychological, will be taking to the Court is that children are not weapons to be used in divorce. Children are neutral; they’re off limits to the spousal conflict.

Children are not weapons.

For professional psychology, here are the professional constructs to apply:

Triangulation – cross-generational coalition – inverted hierarchy – emotional cutoff.

Source – cause – action – result.

The child is being used as a weapon in the post-divorce “spousal” conflict.

This is standard family systems therapy.

Bowen, Minuchin, Haley: triangulation – cross-generational coalition – inverted hierarchy – emotional cutoff.

What is required is professional competence in the constructs and principles of family systems therapy when conducting family therapy.

Professional psychology can absolutely solve this. We will need the support of the Court. Children are not weapons. With that support, professional psychology can absolutely solve this.

Craig Childress, Psy.D.
Clinical Psychologist, PSY 18857