



Supervised Visitation Monitor Training

The Role of a Supervised Visitation Monitor- The Custodial Parent

Hi. Welcome to part fourteen of the Supervised Visitation Monitor Training, brought to you by Family & Children’s Counseling Services, Inc.

In this segment, we will explore the experience of Supervised Visitation from the eyes of the Custodial Parent.

A lot of supervised visitation cases are the result of domestic violence and/or substance use. People who have experienced abuse or have witnessed their partner’s behavior deteriorate due to substance use are usually struggling with their own strong emotions. Sometimes they fear for themselves and their children. Having a stranger watch their ex with their children is of little comfort.

They may want no visits. They have probably seen the worst in the other parent, and they may be thinking about the worst-case scenario when it comes to visits. As you can imagine, this can be anxiety provoking.

Or, they may have seen charm, manipulation, lies, and a variety of other unhealthy behaviors displayed by the Visiting Parent and they worry that you will be fooled into thinking the Visiting Parent is a wonderful and the Custodial Parent is the horrible one.

With this kind of history, the Custodial Parent may be experiencing:

- A trauma response
- Fear or anxiety
- Anger or resentment
- A wild mix of emotions that feel overwhelming



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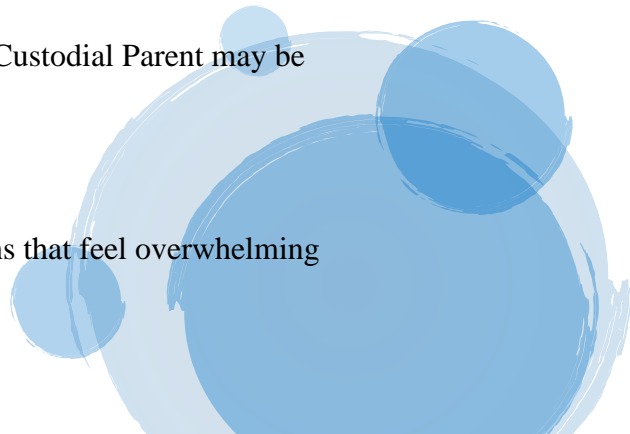
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And, these feelings may show up in behaviors that look like control, nit-picking, procrastination, and/or passive-aggressive behavior.

As an exercise, we are going to put ourselves in the shoes of the Custodial Parent. Use imagery with me.

You have been screamed at, held against your will, threatened, and maybe hit or grabbed or strangled. You have seen your children get yelled at, spanked, and belittled. You have felt trapped and hopeless. Maybe for years. Reaching out for help was the most terrifying thing you've ever done. Now, you live in fear of retaliation. You suspect that the other parent will use visits to get back at you or to continue abusing the children.

How do feel? Did you feel your blood pressure rising? Your heart beat getting faster? Maybe it was hard to breathe? That's how some of our Custodial Parents feel.

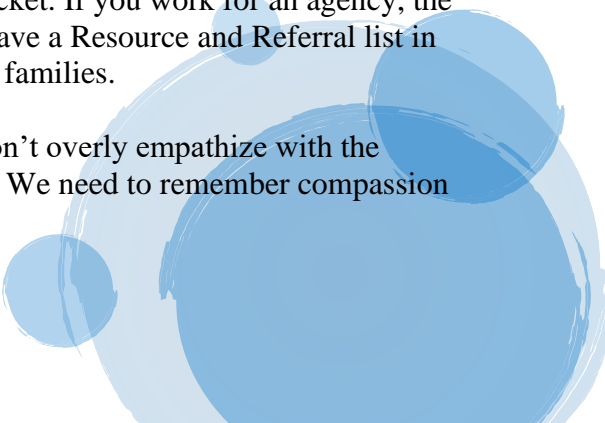
If you need to, pause the video and use some of your coping skills to return your breathing and physical sensations to normal. If you were triggered by our exercise, please call a trusted friend, family member or counselor to help you reset. This is a good time to do some self-reflection: Is this role a good fit for you? If you think you might be too triggered working with adults and children who have experienced abuse, talk to your Supervisor. If you are a solo practitioner, speak with a therapist, doctor or attorney.


While our primary role is to remain neutral, we can still have an understanding of the situation and compassion for the person.

We can also clearly communicate our stance on Neutrality and review the Guidelines for visits. This may help to alleviate anxiety or hesitation.

It is a good idea to have a Referral list of Therapists that work with domestic violence and family conflict in your area. You can include the list in the initial packet. If you work for an agency, the Program Coordinator should have a Resource and Referral list in the Orientation packet for new families.

Be careful, though, that you don't overly empathize with the plight of the Custodial Parent. We need to remember compassion with neutrality.





I have included links to handbooks called Mothers Who Have Experienced Abuse

http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/supervised_visitation_handbook.pdf

and Families Change <https://www.familieschange.ca.gov/>.

Please review both of these documents.

Thank you for watching. I'll see you again at the next video, The Role of the Supervised Visitation Monitor- The Visiting Parent.

Family & Children's Counseling Services, Inc. is a non-profit California LMFT Corporation directed by Melinda Haynes, MA, LMFT 102308.

You can find FCCS online at www.HealPlayLove.org.

You can find Melinda's therapy channel, Can We Talk?, at <https://www.youtube.com/canwetalk>

