

Online High Conflict Divorce Certification Course

Sections and Exercises

Instructions: You can use this document to assist you in keeping notes and participating in the exercises. The quiz at the end of the course relates to more global questions rather than specific information, so do not be anxious about remembering all the information of this course in detail.

Section 1. What is Your Current Co-Parenting Status?

Section 1 Exercise: Consider writing these questions and answers on a device or medium that you can quickly refer to the future when you begin to be triggered by your co-parent or related situation.

Imagine Life Without This Conflict. How Would Life Be?

1. What type of life do you want for your children? What are your goals and dreams for them?
2. Is there anything that stands in the way of your children attaining what you want for them?
3. How might your children be affected by conflict with your former partner or their family?
4. Identify three or more positive outcomes that would happen for your children if there was less conflict.
5. Identify three or more positive outcomes that would happen for you if there was less conflict.
6. Imagine three to five years from now, that your child tells a close friend what you did to help them through the separation or divorce. What would you like them to say about you and your behavior?

Section 2: Divorce and Toxic Stress. Your Number One Obligation is to Protect Your Children

Section 2 Exercise: Identify in writing examples of parental high conflict that have been experienced by your children.

1. Hearing hurtful words and insults about or toward the other parent.
2. Hearing scary, negative tones or threats in a parent's voice.
3. Watching a parent being humiliated or hurt.
4. Hearing a parent screaming and crying.

5. Hearing a parent blaming the other parent in a harsh manner.
6. Feeling forced to pick a parent over the other.
7. Perceiving a parent's withdrawal.
8. Hearing whispering of an older sibling or family member about what is happening.
9. Seeing signs of violence such as bruising, other injury, or one parent being fearful of the other.

Section 3: Models and Stages of Divorce

Section 3 Exercise: The aim is to move through these stages to reach psychic or psychological divorce, where you are now independent and have created a new healthy self-identity. What is your current stage based upon the model that applies to you best, and how can you begin to move to the next stage and final stage if you are not there already?

Section 4: What can individuals do to adjust to the sudden news or not so sudden news of divorce?

Section 4 Exercise: What has been your responsibility in the conflict, and what do you need to do to change it right now? Most importantly, are you willing to begin to make that change regardless of the other's parent's behavior and position?

Section 5: Adjusting to Conflict with a Difficult Co-Parent

Section 5 Exercise: I want you to write brief statements about the defense mechanisms you use when misinterpreting your co-parent's behaviors or messages, and then write down your alternate thoughts, and then shorten these alternate thoughts and create a list of easy to use self talk messages or mantras that you will gently arm yourself with in preparation for resolving your own reactions during the next conflict.

Section 6: Setting Co-Parenting Boundaries

Section 6 Exercise: I would like you to run through the steps described above to create a four stepped plan to establish a boundary around a problematic behavior exhibited by your spouse that you hope to have improved by persistently changing your own behavior regarding the matter.

1. Identify the Problem
2. Determine Your Response

3. Communicate
4. Follow Through

Section 7: Parallel Parenting Plans

Section 7 Exercise: Determine whether you require a parallel parenting plan or a typical co-parenting plan. Additionally, regardless of which plan would best suit you and your co-parent, what aspects of a parallel parenting plan would behoove you to adopt when co-parenting with the other?

Section 8: Putting It All Together: Review of Dr. D'Arienzo's Co-Parenting Partnership Method and Co-Parenting When All Else Fails

Section 8 Exercise: Introspection, Illustration, and Action. What is something that you will do differently the next time you are in an uncomfortable situation with your former partner? What behavior do I need to change that contributes to the ongoing conflict? What am I willing to let go of about the other person? Am I willing to now focus on my own change rather than attempting to will the other to change? It is true most of our arguments and conflicts have been about our attempts to will the other to be different?

Section 9: Managing High Conflict Personalities when Co-Parenting

Section 9 Exercise: Reflection. Do you recognize these traits in yourself or in the other person? What action will you take knowing this new information?

Section 10: Summary of the Deleterious Effects of High Conflict and Stress on Children, and a Review of the Co-Parenting Partnership Model

Section 10 Exercise: Reflection. What has stood out in our course? What are you going to change about you and your co-parenting relationship today for the benefit of your child(ren)?