

How Should Divorced Parents Behave With Each Other During The COVID-19 Crisis?

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This crisis is one which no one has ever experienced before. There is no template on how to respond, but, for sure, not only is real medical data sobering, the atmosphere of fear is everywhere, putting people on edge. Divorced parents are no different.

Divorced parents or those who are going through divorce and have children, usually have parenting plans which provide each other blocks of time to spend with the children. But what should one do if the direction from medical personnel is to stay in the home and not leave except for emergencies which means the children do not go back and forth between the households? On one hand, there is the parent who has primary custody and the child is staying with that parent but, the other hand, there is a parenting time order in place.

Just as all of us must face a major disruption in our lives as a result of the Corona virus and have to change our world view, parents must do this as well as and adjust how they co-parent with their ex-spouse. Now is the time to put acrimony aside.

One may communicate with anger if one cannot see the children. One may react in such a way that puts more stress on the other parent or the children themselves as a result of not being able to see them. Words matter-anger will not change where we all find ourselves.

This virus has presented a major social and family issue which is different for all families whether intact or not. Now is the time to adjust how one views one's "rights" to see the children and focus on the what is in their best interest and not, on whether or not one has face-to-face parenting time.

Just as authorities are asking every citizen to think about how our failure to practice social distancing may endanger others and expose them to the virus, so too must the non-custodial parent not focus on oneself but on the potential health danger exercising parenting time might pose. Children should not be exposed to the virus no matter how unintentional such exposure might be.

Thankfully, there are ways to continue to interact with your children, something which could not have happened 20 years ago. Parents should communicate with each other and consider that parenting time take place via Skype, Face Time or over the phone. There is no doubt that these ways of communicating are not the same as being with your children in person, however, now is the time to remember- it is in their best interest to be healthy and in both parents' best interest to stay healthy, too.

This too, shall pass.