

Counseling/New Ways for Families



Debra Dupree (MA, MFT #23250), is an accomplished Motivational Speaker, Mediator, Professional Coach, and Trainer with deep practical experience in diverse environments. She is an expert in relationships helping organizations and individuals better understand and manage interactions, enhance customer relations, and prosper from choice and change.

Getting professional help can be a personal and professional lifesaver. Debra's years of experience in dynamic humanism helps people in all walks of life. Getting in and staying in a relationship is one challenge... knowing when and how to move on is another! Learn to build quality relationships... with yourself AND others!

Here's hope for parents and children in HIGH CONFLICT divorce and parenting situations through **New Ways for Families (NWFF)**!

New Ways for Families is a structured parenting skills method with short-term counseling to reduce the impact of conflict on the children in potentially high conflict cases. It can be used whenever a parent or the court believes that high levels of conflict interfere with effective parenting in post-separation relationships and is effective at the start of a case or any time a parent feels that the parent conflict is impacting the child(ren) in a negative fashion.

This method emphasizes strengthening skills for positive future behavior (new ways), rather than focusing on past negative behavior – while still acknowledging it. It is designed to save courts time, to save parents money, and to protect children as their families re-organize in new ways after a separation or divorce, for married or never-married parents. There are four basic steps:

Step 1: Getting Started - Parents can agree to use New Ways, or a judge can order it while also making temporary parenting orders, support orders, and restraining orders. Then, each parent selects his or her own Individual Parent Counselor from a list of counselors trained in the New Ways method. Then, each parent prepares a Behavioral Declaration and a Reply Behavioral Declaration, which are the only declarations provided to the counselors, along with any related parenting orders, two business days before the counseling begins.

Step 2: Individual Parent Counseling - This includes 6 weekly sessions with a separate, confidential counselor for each parent using a Parent Workbook. Both parents participate in this counseling concurrently with their own counselor, with no presumptions about who is more difficult. The focus of these sessions is strengthening and practicing three conflict-reducing skills: *flexible thinking, managed emotions, and moderate behaviors*.

Step 3: Parent-Child Counseling - This step includes three sessions with each parent and their child/ren, alternating weeks over six weeks. The parents share the same non-confidential counselor. They each have their own Parent-Child Workbook for these sessions. The Parent-Child Counselor does not write a report, but can be called to testify at court. The focus of these sessions is having the parents teach their children the same three skills they learned in their Individual Counseling, hearing the children's concerns, and discussing the new ways their family will operate with the child(ren).

Step 4: Family (or Court) Decision-making - Finally, parents use their new ways skills to develop a lasting parenting plan with the assistance of their attorneys (if any), Family Court Services, a private mediator or a collaborative team. If they are unable to settle the case at this point, then they go to Family Court to report what they have learned. The judge will quiz each parent on how they would handle future parenting scenarios, based on their Behavioral Declarations. Then the judge will hear the case, which may include testimony from the Parent-Child Counselor. The judge then orders long-term parenting, support, and other orders, which could include long-term restraining orders, batterers treatment, drug treatment, parenting class, a psychological evaluation, Minor's Counsel, and/or a High Conflict Case Manager, etc.

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