



### ***Initial Expectations to Begin Court Ordered Reunification or Family Therapy***

We respect and take into consideration that any family is eager to begin the process once there is a Court Order for services. This information was prepared to assist attorneys and litigants to know what to expect and how to be a part of helping the process move more efficiently.

We are frequently asked how quickly Dr. Fletcher can schedule an appointment. We don't offer appointments until the steps outlined below occur:

- **The parties will need to contact Dr. Fletcher's office.** They can call the office at 972 612-1188 or email Dr. Fletcher's assistant at [admin@fletcherphd.com](mailto:admin@fletcherphd.com) to provide preliminary information to begin the process.
- **The signed Court Order needs to be provided to Dr. Fletcher by the attorneys before any information is sent to the parties.** The Court Order must be received from the attorneys, not the parties, to ensure that everyone is aware of what has been initially provided to our office. Dr. Fletcher will review the Court Order to make sure the expectations are clearly outlined regarding the Court's expectations. If there is something that is unclear, she will contact the attorneys for further clarification.
- **The Treatment Agreement is sent to the parties and the retainer is requested.** After reviewing the Court Order, Dr. Fletcher's assistant will send the Treatment Agreement to the parties by email and request the retainer for services to begin. The amount of the retainer is only decided after Dr. Fletcher reviews the Court Order. We do not take credit cards so the retainer will need to be provided by check, cash, or from the parties' online bill pay from their bank.
- **No appointments are offered until the signed Treatment Agreement is returned by both parties and the retainers are collected.** Typically it is not Dr. Fletcher's schedule that delays the process. The sooner Dr. Fletcher can receive the signed Treatment Agreements and the full retainer, the sooner an appointment can be scheduled.

We appreciate the support of the attorneys to assist the parties in returning the paperwork and providing the retainer in a timely manner.

Dr. Fletcher can provide a sample Court Order or talk with both attorneys about the case prior to the referral to assist in the opportunity for greater success for the parties. No specific information about a case should be provided by one attorney without the other attorney being involved in the communication.

Dr. Fletcher does not consult with either parent prior to the Court Order or prior to the initial appointments. Any questions before the referral is made need to be communicated through the attorneys, without discussing the actual case, to assist in protecting the integrity of Dr. Fletcher's role.

### **What Happens Once Appointments are Offered**

Appointments are scheduled with the following expectations:

- **Appointments for the parents:** Both parents are involved in therapy. Each parent is seen individually before any of the children are seen.
- **Appointments for the child(ren):** The child(ren) are seen individually before appointments will be scheduled for a parent or parents together with a child.
- **Consultation with attorneys:** Around the time that appointments begin with a parent together with a child, Dr. Fletcher will request a phone consultation with the attorneys to review the treatment plan. This consultation also provides an opportunity for the attorneys to receive feedback about their clients and ask Dr. Fletcher any questions.
- **Appointments with a parent and a child in Reunification Therapy:** In appointments for a parent together with a child, Dr. Fletcher sees the child alone briefly at the beginning of appointments. The parent then joins the session for the majority of the session time. At the end of the appointment, the parent is seen alone to continue to direct their progress.
- **What if more individual work is needed?** Once appointments with a parent and a child begin, it is expected that appointments will continue to be scheduled with the parent and child together. If individual appointments are needed beyond the limited time that Dr. Fletcher sees the parent and the child alone during the sessions, Dr. Fletcher will encourage individual needs be addressed with their established therapist or she will make a referral if there are needs better served in individual therapy while she continues Court Ordered Therapy.
- **Seeing parents together:** At times, Dr. Fletcher may request that the parents come together to discuss progress and needs. This is decided on a case-by-case basis and does not occur until individual appointments are held.
- **Consultation with other professionals:** If the parties already have individual therapists and/or a Parenting Facilitator, Dr. Fletcher will consult with other members of the team as necessary.

Most of the questions attorneys and their clients have regarding the goals and expectations in Court Ordered Therapy are addressed in the Treatment Agreement that is provided before services begin. Dr. Fletcher reviews the Treatment Agreement at length at the first appointment to make sure the parties have an understanding of what is expected and what will occur in the course of treatment. Parents are given the opportunity to review the Treatment Agreement with their attorneys before signing and can ask questions of Dr. Fletcher before the needs of the family are reviewed.