



Yes. They Shoot the Messenger in Child Custody/Access Cases

A parent called me asking for me to provide an assessment. I explained I do not provide court involved services anymore and [explained why](#). The caller asked for a referral to someone who did. I offered the name of a respected colleague.

The caller emailed thereafter and included in the email messages that had been posted about the colleague on the Internet. The postings portrayed my colleague quite terribly. The caller wanted to understand how I could refer to such a person. My reply was this:

In our profession, we all work with upset people in challenging situations. Our work influences or determines the outcome for their family.

At times some people take great exception to the outcome and turn their upset upon the service provider.

Custody and access work accounts for the greatest number of complaints to professional licensing bodies. Myself and all my experienced colleagues have dealt with these issues as part of our professional practice.

I can offer you other names, but each person will also have had complaints against them, some by Internet postings and some by complaints to the licensing body and some by both. However, all are respected within their profession by colleagues, courts and lawyers although all have also been complained about by former clients.

Whenever a third party (assessor, judge or arbitrator) influences or decides your fate, there is always the risk of an unfavorable outcome. That

is why to the degree possible, we suggest people find a negotiated solution.

All my colleagues and I have all been vilified by parents unsatisfied with the outcome of their dispute. That is a relatively unspoken professional hazard.

There is a lesson in this though for the general public. Regardless of the professional's credentials and credibility, you may not like the outcome of our involvement.

Do think twice when given decision making authority away.

In the alternative, if you keep control of decision making authority, you may arrive at an outcome you can at least live with, even if not fully satisfied. This frequently is better than rolling the dice. By retaining control of the outcome, you will know what you've got. Give it away, there is always risk.

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