

Mom #5  
Onalaska, WI 54650

Oct 5, 2020

RE: Ramsey County Child Custody Assessment Team Process Complaint

Dear Ramsey County and Minnesota Representatives and Officials,

Ramsey County is not appropriately serving women, mothers, and children. This particular case has multiple layers of abuse and mental illness. The children are caught in the middle. Over the years I have struggled watching how the Ramsey Family Court system rules on the children's best interests as it seems to be more trying to make it fair for both parents, including the abusive parents, rather than for the children's best interests.

My story begins on January 5th, 2011 when my ex was served an order of protection(OFP) on behalf of myself and our three children, then ages 2, 4, and 7. I was awarded full custody of the children and he was awarded supervised visitation. Despite being allowed to see the children more frequently while we lived in Minnesota, he did not take up the every other weekend visit after asking for more time with them in court. During this time, for a year and half, he never went to therapy as he was ordered to in court to receive help nor did he do anything to get involved in our children's therapy.

We went to court to obtain a divorce on March 8th, 2012, after he refused to accept the Social Early Neutral Evaluation proposal, which gave him the visits mentioned above. As we were waiting to go into court with Referee Street, the lawyers continued to reach agreements. I brought up my concerns of where I'd be able to live, as the house was under foreclosure. In addition, my ex was still on paid leave from the police department and possibly losing his job, as a woman there had obtained an order of protection from him for rape. Our lawyers spoke and he offered that I could move out of state with our children, in exchange for not asking for alimony or attorney fees. I agreed. I moved my kids and myself to Wisconsin on the last day of school, June 2012.

Within a year, he took me back to court in the fall of 2012, as he had lost his job (resigned) stating that an injury made it difficult for him to work. When I proved he had not returned to the workplace due to her order of protection, he changed his affidavit stating that he did not rape her for the intent of getting out of child support, but rather he had been too intoxicated.

Within 6 months, he took me to court again in 2013. I was to find 3 reunification therapists in Rochester, which I did, and he was to pick one of the three, via our court order. He refused to choose one and asked for many frivolous things, all of which were denied. The judge went back and forth on awarding me attorney fees, but in the end decided I would have to pay around \$20,000 for my own lawyer as my abusive ex-husband dragged his feet, and the judge assigned us a parent consultant to use.

When the reunification started our middle child, a daughter, had just entered the 2nd grade. She was the one who had been the scapegoat of his abuse out of the three kids, and the one who is possibly on the autism spectrum. After one visit with him and the reunification therapist she regressed to a baby-like state. She ripped out the hair from the top of her head, as dragging her around by her hair was one of the things he did to her when she was little. She was suddenly having bathroom accidents on a daily basis and when our doctor, Dr. Grube, saw her she was shocked. She called in a social worker, and they sent her to a trauma specialist at Gunderson, Anne Budzack. The trauma specialist got our daughter's team together consisting of teachers, therapists, etc. and they wrote a letter stating that our daughter should not be seeing him, which was granted and she no longer went to visitations. We were assigned a Guardian ad Litem who suggested her not visiting was in her best interest.

We went back to court on a regular basis during this time. It seemed that each time we returned to court, my ex would be asked to do something, to which he would either not completely do or do half heartedly. For example, he was required to start therapy, so he would set up a therapy appointment with a new therapist the day before the next court, or say he didn't remember that he was supposed to do something the court ordered him to do. During this time a parent consultant was assigned to the case and the reunification process was stopped as their dad refused to pay for her as the court ordered him to do. The parent consultant said that an area of concern was that their dad continued to not take initiative to get the help that was asked of him, but it had been almost four years of supervised visitations at this time, so decided that due to that, both my oldest and youngest started towards unsupervised visits anyways.

It was decided however, in order for my middle child to see him, her dad was to work with his therapist, while my daughter's therapist, Karla Fennie, would work with our daughter until the therapist determined they were ready to be reunited. Although they made a couple attempts at reunification, the work was only completed by our daughter, so she's never been reunited with him.

Unsupervised visits did start with our other two. These visits began as our oldest was finishing 5th grade and our youngest kindergarten. By 6th grade and 1st grade they were seeing him for

unsupervised overnight visits every other weekend. Shortly after the visits were established problems started again.

Our oldest would break down in tears after visits, not able to sleep and missing school many times on the Monday after as she would cry all night. She refused to talk to the therapist as she said the things she had mentioned to her previous therapist, while being reunited, were now being used against her and she was being punished for it by him. Her doctor ended up putting her on antidepressants to help her cope with the stress and the situation. Eventually we were able to convince her to talk to a therapist.

Our son also started to struggle and it gradually got worse. I enrolled him into therapy where he would scream about his dad and his visit to his dad's house. Our boy who had attended 2 years of 4 year old kindergarten and one year of regular kindergarten in Onalaska without a hint of violence was acting out both at school and at home. In school he got into trouble for hurting a couple of classmates while he was in 1st grade, something he'd never done before. On a Monday after what he called a bad visit he refused to write in his weekend journal, became extremely mad and slammed his desk top. He came home crying that he had such a bad weekend that he didn't want to even talk about it, much less write about it.

Second grade was even worse for him. He'd come home crying from visits more often than not. I started a full time teaching job that year, but would get repeated calls from after school programs on the days after his visits, as he'd refuse to do anything and he'd cry saying he had a headache.

While comforting him, I would also be dealing with our oldest breaking down at times. For example, she would come to me crying and show me a text from her dad, telling her how her step mom was cheating on him and they were done (Her cheating wasn't true). Our oldest would say that she'd have to make sure their dad didn't get too mad at her little brother and try to keep her brother calm while at her dad's house as her brother has some mental health/behavioral needs such as combo ADHD and at times can be a bit hyper and impulsive. These two would both refer to the oldest as his protector while at their dad's house.

The spring of our son's second grade year, the school called and said he'd mentioned killing himself, I knew then that things were getting bad. He'd come home upset over things like his dad telling him that he had no medicine for his being sick while on visits as his step mom took it as she was a bad person and didn't want him to have any if he got sick. I ended up finding out that despite going to court about a year earlier and his statements of what a great husband and father he was to his new wife and step kids, that he was repeating the same behavior with them. She left him with an order of protection as well. I found out that it's similar to what he had done to us. He had been threatening to kill her and her kids as well. I was scared! When I reported this, I was

told that just because he used to threaten to kill me and our kids on a regular basis by the time we left him, it didn't matter anymore as he was not currently threatening to kill our kids, only their step mom and her kids. I explained to them that their dad had threatened our lives numerous times and that I had proof from an internal affairs report that was done while he was being investigated with his police job for the rape incident.

The report which had findings that my ex engaged in acts of domestic abuse that resulted in the issuance of the January 5th, 2011 OFP against him in favor of his wife and three minor children, which included him threatening to kill his own children. He had minimized the threats that he admitted to in court when we obtained our OFP stating things like frustration that his four year old daughter was not in bed, he may have told me that he was going to kill the child. He assumed I understood his remark was "out of frustration" or even if he threatened to kill them when he was tired and frustrated he did not "hold a knife to the kids and say {he} was going to kill them." He went on to say that I had not objected to his remarks.

Despite his current threats and his prior threats, there was nothing Child Protective Services (CPS) could do, and therefore they would not be investigating. It didn't rise to a level of concern because threats like the ones above, even though made numerous times, were from before the kids were reunified. They were made in the past and no longer mattered, despite his current behaviors.

The following year, our oldest seemed to be doing better. She was talking to her therapist about issues, as she was diagnosed with severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD) and they wrote a letter to me, asking me to ask her not to go on visits with her dad, as it was too hard for her. It said she felt bad that she couldn't be there to protect her little brother, but she just couldn't handle it. She took a break from seeing my ex for almost ½ year. In the meantime, her brother was going off and on. He came back from a visit that September, right after turning 9, and tried to kill himself. Crisis was called as I stopped him from jumping off a railing over two flights of stairs at the local YMCA. He was screaming about his visit with his dad and how much he hated having to go and couldn't handle it anymore. The next day I was called to school to get him as he was talking about suicide. After I arrived he said in front of the school principal that his committing suicide was the only way for him to not have to see his dad.

After this incident, my son was informed of the center's policy on exchanges which is they are not made to go. If he felt he had a bad visit and came back extremely upset after that, he'd skip a visit or two until he was ready to try it again. This pattern went on until I received a letter from my ex's first cousin's wife, who is his lawyer, that he was once again taking me back to court. At this point we had gone so many times I had lost count. In court, we had the same judge that had not only given his second wife and kids their OFP, but had just renewed it as he continued to

harass her and violate it. With this in mind, a parent consultant was strongly advised and Barb Leiran was assigned.

There were visits during late summer 2019, where our son would return upset with his dad kicking his dog down the stairs for having an accident. He also came back from one visit with a fully loaded bullet from his dad's collection which his dad had despite it being illegal for him to have with his current OFP. **I was not happy with this, as bringing back a bullet after a visit with the man who had held me captive in handcuffs and threatened to end us with his police gun while I was pregnant years ago, brought back bad memories for me.** I told our son that I would have to let his dad know that his bringing home the bullet was not okay. Our son became scared about what his dad might do if he was mad next time he went to visit him. This led to the incident on November 1st. Which I will discuss later in my story.

As mentioned Ms. Barbara Leiran was assigned to be the parent consultant in our custody case in June 2019. At that time, the judge had just renewed my ex's most recent ex-wife's OFP for her and her kids and felt our case needed someone to review it. I thought Ms. Leiran was going to provide some much needed perspective on the case and advise actions that would be in the best interest of our children. Instead, in the course of my relations with Ms. Leiran, she showed total disregard to our children's safety, well-being, and mental health as well as badgering and belittling me as a parent. In this statement I will show examples of her negligence and indifference to our case.

Ms. Leiran's initial questions were about my abuse from my ex-husband. This is still quite emotional to talk about if you are a survivor of numerous sexual, physical and emotional abuse incidents. I gave her some examples of my past abuse, as well as the abuse to our children. I pleaded with her to have my ex-husband get the help he needs. I want our children to feel safe when they see him. If his behavior improved, it would also help manage and/or reduce their mental health symptoms and behaviors that have developed from the past physical abuse and the continuing mental abuse they endure on their current visits with him.

Besides the current mental abuse our children experience when visiting their father there are also other documented issues. Our kids have reported on multiple occasions that their father gets extremely drunk and belligerent while they are there, often drinking to the point of passing out. According to our oldest, he has also driven with them in the car after he's been drinking. Recently my ex was in an accident where he was charged with a DWI. The tests showed his blood alcohol was over 2.5 times the legal limit. These facts make me fear for our children's safety. I had reported this already to LaCrosse county CPS, however it again didn't rise to the level of concern and was told until he was caught driving drunk with them in the vehicle, as both DWIs were without them, nothing could be done. Ms. Leiran also informed me that my concerns

are irrelevant and could not be used to mandate my ex to change his behavior. She stated he has not been caught driving while intoxicated with the kids in the car so these reports cannot be taken into consideration. A Parent Consultant's first concern should be for a child's safety and would see that his DWI is an indicator of how heavily he drinks and would order him not to drink while he has our children in his custody. When she was assigned he had already been court ordered to receive alcohol treatment and had whiskey plates in MN for his drinking issues shortly before that.

After a visit last July our oldest daughter had a breakdown at Upward Bound and confided in the advisor. I've included a letter from that advisor. This letter was sent to Ms. Leiran as well. The letter talked about her dad getting passed out drunk and her being scared for her brother as my ex gets more violent when he's drunk. Again Ms. Leiran ignored all this evidence and continued to disregard our children's emotional and physical well-being. She has continually informed me that since they are not currently being physically or sexually abused there is nothing that can be done in this situation. She even made the comment that our kids need to "suck it up" and accept my ex's behavior as just bad parenting. She stated once again these reports cannot be used as requirements for mandated change or as a way to excuse our children from visitations.

I also talked to her about our kids' fear of his being violent. Since he knows he'll get caught abusing the kids he'll beat one of the dogs instead. He specifically makes them watch as an intimidation tactic and to exert his dominance and power over them. My son reported he even kicked the dog down the stairs with so much force the dog was airborne. This terrifies both kids, but especially our oldest as she was a victim of his prior abuse. At any moment it makes her feel like she could be the one being beaten again. For our youngest, not only does he feel frightened, but he also gets very upset and concerned for the dogs. However, he has been conditioned not to show any reaction as he's learned this will only make his dad angrier and make things even worse. He has to bottle those feelings up and then it all comes out when he gets home. That happens with our oldest as well. She has to put on a brave face for her brother and around other family, pretending like it's not that bad, but then breaks down when she gets home.

I took to recording the conversations between myself and Ms. Leiran on my phone. She let me know that animals are property. Although most people fall into the category of animal activist, lover, or pro animal, farmers hit babies over the heads when born and throw them into the burn pile. She also talked about her own dad training their puppy by scaring it, and although was not physically abusive to it, she felt as if he was hurting the puppy by scaring it. (She later tried to say she never said animals were property, and that that comment was taken out of context, but I have the recorded conversation).

I had conveyed to her that our own dog had been listed in our OFP as he had banged it's head into our carpet while we were married, telling me it should be my head instead. This is common

with behaviors his second wife and children witnessed by him, which was always done when he was angry and seemed to be done as an intimidation tactic.

I understand she is trying to uphold the letter of the law, but I also feel that as our Parent Consultant she should recognize these circumstances and make a clear case that my ex-husband is currently unfit to have unsupervised visitations until he gets help. She needs to see that these circumstances do not hold to the intent of the law and our children's safety and best interests should be of the utmost importance. Ms. Leiran has refused to speak to any of our children's mental health experts and deemed that our children are required to see their father on their scheduled visits. She has repeatedly questioned my ability as a parent and has insisted I let my children control me. She said this because I let my children express to the supervised exchange center that they don't want to see their father and therefore the center won't make them go on the visitation. Therefore I'm a bad parent for not forcing them to go and this was alienating them from their father. She specifically said that as a parent it is my responsibility to make them go even if it makes them "unhappy". This was after I provided information about a letter from our oldest daughter's therapist advising me to stop encouraging our daughter to go see her dad. This was after one of the horrifying examples listed above. The letter also talks about how she, the oldest, would feel bad about not going as she wouldn't be there to protect her brother from their dad, but she just couldn't handle going there at that time. However, I am the one being criticized as a bad parent for only trying to do what our child's mental health professional advised me to do.

Over the several months I've had to work with Ms. Leiran she continued to inform me that visits with their father are mandatory. If my children don't go, they will be required to make up the time with their father. She also stated that if I continue to allow these absences to happen, I could lose custody and the children would be required to live with their father full time. Despite my anxiety and apprehension, I continued to do as Ms. Leiran commanded and did my best to make our children understand that they needed to go on these visitations and see their father. I ended up calling BACA as our oldest broke down and cried hysterically when she found this out. Our youngest would throw a tantrum and scream that he was never going to go back there! I asked him what was so wrong with going. He cried about his dad never really caring about him and who he is. He was upset about his dad saying untrue things about me and how his dad had ignored him during time with him. He talked about being scared that one of these times, his dad would hurt him as he did the dogs. He talked about how his dad drank and didn't know what he was doing.

Then Friday, Nov. 1st when I was about to leave work, I got a call from the school counselor. Our son had mentioned to a classmate that he was thinking about whether he should kill himself or go to his dad's as he had to do. The classmate talked to staff, and they ended up with our son speaking to his school counselor. The school reported our son was thinking about suicide but our

son didn't have a plan as to how he would do it so didn't feel his life was in immediate danger at that time. Then after school our son went straight to a neighbor's home to play with her children as he has done numerous times. Our son feels very comfortable there and feels as if it's almost a second home. He arrived at her house in tears. He was very worked up and she had never seen him so distraught. Over the years, she has helped him work through smaller problems, but this was unlike anything she'd seen from him before. She tried to get him to talk about why he was so upset, he then exclaimed he was thinking he needed to kill himself rather than go to his dad's as he just couldn't handle it anymore. Seeing his level of distress and knowing his past behaviors she felt this was a true threat and made a call to a crisis hotline for advice. She also called me, and I arrived shortly after to pick him up. Our son was still very agitated and repeated to me his desire to kill himself rather than go to his dad's. He continued on to say his dad gets so mad at him even when he tries really hard to behave. I said I didn't know what to do, as I was court ordered to make him go to the visit. I tried to call and to talk to his mental health professionals but was unable to get a hold of either his psychiatrist or his therapist. I then called the parent consultant Barbara Leiran. I informed her about my son's threat of suicide and how worried I was. She told me that my son was being manipulative and was just trying to use this as an excuse to get out of going to his dad's. If I let this happen he would continue to use it to get his way and that I needed to let him know that I was going to be the off duty parent and his dad the on duty parent, and that if he still felt this way, he should tell his dad when he was with him. I let Ms. Leiran know that I understood that manipulation may be true sometimes, but that I was truly scared. I informed her of a previous credible attempt my son made to kill himself two years ago after a bad visit with dad. Ms. Leiran callously informed me that the previous attempted suicide was in the past and that we are moving forward. She proclaimed she is the acting judge in the case, and I must bring my son to the visitation center and he is required to go to his dad's.

Dumfounded, I asked Ms. Leiran to briefly go over the specific requirements of my son that evening with his suicide threats known and had my neighbor listen in to ensure I was hearing correctly. Ms. Leiran continued to say both my son and daughter had to go on the visit, including advising me to offer my oldest \$20 to help take care of her brother at their dad's since he was so worried about going then said she had to go so the call ended.

My neighbor was surprised with Ms. Leiran's advice. She couldn't believe this person was so adamant about the visitation despite all the evidence that it was detrimental to my children.

I gathered my son and went home. Our friend had gotten a name and number from the crisis line while I was trying to contact his specialists and Ms. Leiran. She called the crisis line for advice and they wanted me to call them back, so I did. From my statements of his behavior they sent a mental health professional to my home to have him evaluated. When the crisis worker arrived, my son was very dysregulated. He would calm down briefly and then get worked back up to the point of him shouting and swearing at her and rolling into a ball on the floor and banging his



head. He expressed some of ways he planned to kill himself such as jumping out of the van on the way to the center or finding a gun to go with the bullets he had found at his dad's house. I informed the crisis worker that Ms. Leiran was the acting judge and informed me he needed to go on the visitation tonight no matter what. The crisis worker felt my son was in severe distress and needed to be evaluated in the Emergency Room. Our son was evaluated at the ER mental health ward. My neighbor came with us and during that time she was asked to give a statement to the police. The doctor in the ER deemed he truly was a threat to himself and needed an extended evaluation, and they placed him on a Chapter 51 Hold since I insisted I must legally follow the court appointed parent consultant.

Our son was transferred to Rogers Memorial Hospital and spent 11 days there. This location is almost 3 hours away from my home. During this trying time Ms. Leiran informed me that although I had informed the Supervised Visitation Center and the visit was cancelled about 1.5 hours before it was scheduled, I had not properly notified my ex as to the reason. The center told me they would contact him and let him know the visit was cancelled. We were using Our Family Wizard for corresponding and I didn't have access to it while caring for my son at the hospital. The backup in that situation is my brother, but he wasn't home and couldn't be reached. Eventually, after the 7 hours+ of being in evaluations and discussions about my son, I was able to contact my brother and have him contact my ex. And yet, Ms. Leiran reprimands me and tells me it was my job to somehow contact my ex immediately if our son was in the hospital.

That night, my ex was informed what hospital to call with any questions he might have. The staff reported he did not call. The next day, I passed along more complete information to him including the name, location, phone number, and visiting hours at Rogers Memorial. My ex replied that he was busy working that weekend but would call them. (My ex claimed to be working yet he had a scheduled visitation with our kids that weekend and claimed in court this past summer that he had his weekends off). For the 11 days our son was in the hospital, our son was able to call several people during specified times. He called me several times as well as a few of our friends. Not once did he ask to call his dad, nor did my ex ever call to check up on him. I drove to Milwaukee from Onalaska 3 times, as well as staying overnight in the area for several days, instead of going back and forth. I accrued many unpaid days from work. I notified my ex regarding a parent meeting at the hospital immediately after it was scheduled, however he never called nor showed up for it. I would also like it to be known that when I talked with the treating psychiatrist at Rogers Memorial, where my son spent 11 days, doing group and individual sessions daily, the psychiatrist said that our son's actions that brought him to the hospital were not at all manipulative and should have not been treated as if they were.

In the meantime, Ms. Leiran informed me that my ex should not only be given compensation time due to his son not being with him, despite my ex being able to visit, but that it was my job to keep him updated on our son. I had sent my ex all the necessary information for him to take

the initiative to call, to speak with the staff, to speak with our son, to participate in the process, and to visit. After our son was discharged, I was ordered by Ms. Leiran to send my ex all the discharge information, despite the fact that he was fully capable of requesting that information on his own with the information I sent to him.

In retrospect, Ms. Leiran now claims that her comments about our son being manipulative was taken out of context. When asked what she meant, Ms. Leiran said that she was unaware that the police or crisis worker had been called. I explained that at the time I was talking to her that night I didn't know either. I was not the one who initially called the crisis line. I only reached out to them for advice after her uncaring insistence my children still go see their father despite being in danger. Ms. Leiran then said that her comment was also due to the fact that I had called her. She pointed out that if it was a true emergency, I should have called the hospital right away. She gave the example of if we had been hit by a car on the way to the visitation center, would I call the ambulance or her. I could not believe her audacity at comparing those two situations. I calmly explained that my child being hit by a car and the state he was in that night are two completely different circumstances.

November 15th, the same day as a scheduled visit and only a few days after my son returned from the hospital Ms. Leiran suspended the visits. She informed me via email her office was planning to speak with our children's mental health professionals and school counselors before making a decision on visits. However, that communication never took place. On Monday, November 11th, our oldest daughter's school counselor, Chrissy DeLong, emailed me asking me for the parent consultant's information as she had concerns about visits and my daughter's mental health, as my daughter had broken down in front of her. I sent a reply to her, including Ms. Leiran on that e-mail so she could see it. I was informed that Ms. DeLong had called Ms. Leiran leaving a message as well, however never heard back. Even with both sides requesting each other's info, no communication from Ms. Leiran was ever received.

Ms. Leiran sent another email on Tuesday, November 26th, (two weeks after cancelling and saying her team would be contacting school counselors and mental health professionals) allowing the next scheduled visit, just before Thanksgiving. I had previously called the supervised exchange center the prior Friday, November 22nd and Monday, November 25th to try to set up visits, in case they did occur even though Ms. Leiran had suspended just 2 weeks before. I asked Ms. Leiran if our oldest daughter was mandated to go, as she was not wanting to go. I was told yes, she was required to attend. When relaying this information to our daughter that night she again became quite upset. The next day, the day of the exchange, she broke down hysterically crying and even screaming about having to go. When I tried to comfort her, and asked what I could do to help, she didn't have any idea and just wanted the weekend to be done and over with already. I did call her therapist to see about getting her in and let the therapist know what was going on. The reason my daughter's anxiety concerns me so much is her history

of self-harm (cutting herself) which began when she started unsupervised visits. Having unsupervised visits caused her to remember all the pain from the abuse her dad had inflicted. Especially, when he acts like he did nothing wrong. Again, this information was relayed to Ms. Leiran and it was ignored.

On a couple occasions my daughter's therapist, Val, let me know that she tried to contact Ms. Leiran, the parent consultant, with concerns about our oldest daughter and Ms. Leiran had never responded. Our daughter then went to see her dad as the court ordered as I let her know that it was out of my control and I could not do anything to stop the visit.

After forcing my daughter to go on the visit in November for Thanksgiving, she cried and cried about going on future visits. Ms. Leiran decided that my daughter could miss visiting with her dad for work or school functions. Her dad and her now work out their own schedules. Despite this, my ex still emails me asking if I'm going to allow her to visit, or saying things like he thought there was an adult in our household. We are court ordered to communicate through Our Family Wizard due to my ex's continual harassment and put downs. Despite a court order to use Our Family Wizard and the judge ignoring my ex's continual proposals to stop using Our Family Wizard, the parent consultant insists we don't use it anymore. When he was emailing me telling me that she had said that we need to switch to 50/50 custody for the stay at home order this spring, she told me that I needed to learn to ignore him when he lies to me, instead of doing anything about the fact that he had been lying.

By February, the school noticed a huge difference in our son. I was called on a couple occasions to help out with him as he was upset after returning from visits. He would tell his teacher he had a bad visit, and would take many more breaks, especially right after visits. Classmates were getting upset with him telling them how bad his dad is and saying things that made them uncomfortable such as his dad getting very drunk and being inappropriate with his girlfriends in front of him on the living room floor. He also time travels as his therapist says, so he'd come back from a visit, where he said the dog seemed scared and would tell his classmates about his dad beating the puppy up even though he said he stopped doing it in front of him once he went to the hospital. He said he's still scared as he doesn't know when he'll start doing it again.

Our son even hurt a kid, threatening to break his arm one day, saying the kid reminded him of his dad and how much he hated his dad, so when this kid reminded him of his dad he hurt him. He told his counselor about how he wanted to kill his dad. Based on what he told his school counselor, she let me know she was reporting it as a concern to CPS. When I told Ms. Leiran about this, she asked me to write a complete proposal. To do this, I spoke to our son's CCS team (therapists, social worker, etc). They came up with the idea of suspending supervised visits until our son felt safe with his dad. The parent consultant however, stated that this is not an option. The fact that both our son and daughter have expressed a fear of their dad for his ongoing

behaviors is not a reason for suspending visits. It would not rise to that level and therefore they needed to continue going on visitations.

As we transitioned to online school, our son has made some comments while online as well as emailing his teacher for his assignment to send a sentence about how it is going to say that the cops will find his dad's dead body. The teacher reported this as well. On the days before visits during this time, our son will talk of killing his dad, including how he plans to do this. This has led to the cops being involved a few times as the school also has reported to them. We had a meeting and his behaviors were discussed. Then after talking to the parent consultant she let me know that despite our son saying that if he'd just be able to stop seeing his dad, his life would be fine, that his dad is not the reason for his behaviors. She decided that it is due to his being bullied at school, as he did briefly state that he and his friends get teased some times. This was discussed in the meeting I had had with the principal, counselor, teacher, social worker and his therapist, to which the idea that his perception is off and especially after visits is especially reactive. It seems that from this conversation the big area of concern was his after visits behavior, and his outbursts about his dad. The parent consultant, despite being told this, insisted that since he only sees his dad every other weekend, this couldn't be the concern and that it must be from bullying. She informed me to let his mental health providers and school know that bullying is the issue. When I did this, they suggested a meeting with her as well. They attempted to set up a meeting on the only time that worked for her, but she cancelled shortly before the meeting and it was postponed. As my son's social worker tried to reschedule, multiple dates didn't work, and then no time in the future. She has refused to meet with them all together for an hour or less to hear their concerns.

She also let me know that reunification therapy, that my ex was court ordered to do, doesn't work since the person has to be willing to do it. She also mentioned the cost that is associated with it. I find this hard as he has not had to pay what he should have paid for child support for years, I paid for 6 months of health insurance with no help from him when I was offered it, I have paid all their medical bills since Jan 2011, as well as when he last asked to see my taxes, I clearly showed him that I paid over 1,000 that year for the two kids daycare expenses and he only is court ordered to pay 144.00 of that, thus my paying about 90% of it. I'm sure with all this money he has not been paying to support his kids as he had been ordered to do, he could use it for this.

When the virus hit, the parent consultant sent a text saying that due to the virus, despite the fact that all 4 of us are continuing with our therapy, he shouldn't be expected to start this now. (It's been 7 years since he was initially ordered to attend reunification therapy). She did not speak to our middle daughter, nor to her therapist to see if she was ready to be reunited, however decided that he should start to have contact with her. To make it more complicated, she texted my 16 yr old, who was struggling with the online school and about to take a big exam to hopefully get college credits, to tell her that she will be in charge of handling this communication between

their dad and her sister. Our oldest again was hysterical and not wanting to do it. Our middle daughter has decided herself that she doesn't want to have anything to do with her dad until he handles visits with the other two better and they don't come home so upset so often. Our middle daughter also stated that since she had done her therapy work (which took a few years for her to get through and write her story about it all) he should have to do his work too. Our oldest daughter's therapist again reached out to Ms. Leiran, however she hasn't heard back at all. Our oldest daughter has also messaged the parent consultant saying she would like to talk with her about this issue, and has not gotten a response.

When the virus hit, the supervised visit center closed down temporarily with the stay at home order. Despite my ex missing the first visit in March to go to Vegas for his birthday, I was told that he needs to be able to see his son, as he hadn't seen him for a month due to his skipping his last visit. I was told as a victim of abuse, that I had to meet the man who raped me, held a gun to me, and physically abused me, in the parking lot, despite the fact that I don't feel safe doing this. This is the man who used to work part time for the coroner's office as a death investigator and would make comments to me that he would bury his first wife and that he knew how to get away with it due to his job and would even tell me where he'd be burying my body. I instead had a friend meet up with him. I did this several times before the center opened up again as I was told I had no other choice in the matter. I had to send our kids to see him in this pandemic. I am shocked by the lack of rights my kids and I have to feel safe, and what we must endure by the man who not only caused us to have PTSD, but to continue to cause us to be triggered by it as they don't require him to do what he is court ordered to do. I'd think that in this day and age, we would all have the right to feel safe and feel protected from our abuser. When I think about all the attempts I have made for what I feel is in the childrens' best interest, I can't help but think of a quote from a woman who has lost her own child after speaking out and the system failing her. "You wait until the child has been seriously harmed, and in my case dead, before the evidence reaches the threshold," MClLeod said. "You're playing Russian roulette with kids' lives in order to meet this unnecessary burden."

Please, in any sphere of influence affecting law, policy, and/or outcomes relating to the treatment and protection of abused women and children, stop preferring the rights of the abusive men and fathers over their survivor's rights. The right to swing a fist freely ends where another person's nose begins. Stop letting abusers walk all over survivors.

Sincerely,  
Mom #5