Agenda for a single, 4-Hour Workshop.

Program: No Longer Together, But Parents Forever

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 These are one four-hour sessions held in the Extension Office of the Chippewa County Court House. Individuals are given an information sheet from the Clerk of Courts office that lists the names and locations of five different agencies, including Extension, that offer a co-parenting program that meets the criteria for the court ordered mandate. We do have a break of about 10 minutes or so if parents desire. About two hours are devoted to A-C and the remaining two hours covering D-G. However, my classes are usually quite small and much easier to “tailor” to the needs of those participating adults. I also offer handouts on each of the areas that I cover in class for them to take home.

A. Introduction: parents; names and ages of children; what the class will involve; length of time, ground rules, confidentiality issues and letter of completion that will be sent to the Clerk of Courts.

B. Focusing on the needs of your child

 a. Goals and hopes for our kids

 b. How do you want them to look back on this time of their life

 c. Children Bill of Rights

C. Positive and Negative Elements of Co-Parenting

 a. Antagonistic

 b. Disengaged

 c. Competitive

 d. Supportive

 *Props: little case with magnifying glass (what does mom do all day?); camera (“take a snap shot of dad’s new girlfriend”); wallet: “ask your dad for some cash for milk money…”*

D. Effects of Divorce on our children (SMILE DVD) - discussion

 a. What can I do? (various situations of child reactions)

 b. Brain development – different stages

 c. Divorce versus death of parent

E. Effect of Divorce on Parents

 a. Grief (the stages of grief and a quote about it)

 b. Hostile communication leads to more trouble than anything else: (prop: jar of water with red glitter shook violently)

 i. Impact on children

 ii. Unsafe atmosphere for exchanges of children

 iii. More frequent return to court system for resolutions

 iv. Ways we can help prevent this? –(communication techniques)

 *Parents can role-play situations: ideas to handle this situation better? Businesslike communication*

F. Parenting Plans

 a. Definition of what the courts mean by Parenting Time versus Visitation

 b. What Parenting Plans can do in the long-run

 c. Where to find them and what to put in?

 d. Nuts and bolts of putting one together with the other parent

G. Evaluation and word of encouragement to everyone.