

Best Practices for CITs

Court-Involved Therapists (CITs) are vital in high-conflict family law cases, offering expertise to navigate emotional complexities, improve communication, and facilitate relational repair. Judges and attorneys benefit from understanding their role to enhance legal processes and outcomes through informed decision-making.

What is a CIT?

The AFCC Guidelines for Court Involve therapy define a CIT as “Any mental health professional providing psycho-therapeutic treatment of a parent, child, couple or family who is, at any time during the treatment, involved with the legal system.”

Best Practices for CITs



Training and Consultation

Therapists should receive specialized education and ongoing consultation specific to this population.



Collaboration

Siloed therapy, especially for individual therapists, is often counterproductive and not aligned with best practices.



Clinical NOT Forensic

Therapists do not express opinions about access (schedule, visitation, etc.), are not advocates for a specific outcome, and should not “investigate” or answer specific questions for the Court.



Multiple Hypotheses

Therapists should be mindful to consider multiple hypotheses for why the family's dysfunction is occurring, and understand their clients' presentation and reporting is influenced by the court process.

For Legal Pros

The Court Order

- Who Should Participate
- Fee Arrangement
- Establish The Team
- Regular Oversight

Intervene Immediately

- Assessment AND Treatment Concurrently (most of the time)
- “Reunification” is out; Evidenced-Based Family Systems Therapy is in

Therapist Role

- Only one role, not multiple
- Problems with siblings seeing the same therapist
- Clinical, not forensic

The Team

- Complex Families Need a Cohesive Team
- Importance of Team Leader like PC or Minor's Counsel
- Monitor for therapists overly aligned, who don't stay in their lane, or who won't team