

# PARENTING COORDINATION IN PRACTICE

– STRATEGIES TO NAVIGATE HIGH  
CONFLICT DYNAMICS



# Divorce in the eyes of a child - By Alyssa Gora

What has happened to my life?

I did all I could

I used to have a mom and dad

I always thought I would

There used to be a fight or two

But now it's more like hell

The fighting it would end back then

And sorrys ended well

The judges don't consider me

My wants are dead and gone

I am my parent's property

Their wants are what lives on

.



*Anne-Marie Cade*



# WHAT IS PC

Parenting coordination is a –

- child-focused dispute resolution process in which a certified mental health, legal or mediation professional assists coparents engaged in high conflict coparenting.
- assists parents to implement their parenting orders by facilitating the resolution of their disputes in a timely manner, educating coparents about children's needs.
- has elements of education, mediation and case management
- aimed at protecting children from ongoing conflict



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# APPOINTING THE PC

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This is a crucial part of the process – specifics in the Order important.

What is required for appointment is –

- Agreement of parties
- Court order

Set out things like what PC can do, term of appointment, purpose of appointment, fee arrangements



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# KEY FEATURES OF THE INTERVENTION

- Ongoing involvement – 6-24 months
- Court ordered
- Emphasis on dispute resolution – not re-litigation
- Mediation is about getting to agreement - PC is about making it work after getting to agreement



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# AUTHORITY OF THE PC

1. Changeovers, times, locations, vacations, holidays, transport, extracurricular activities, communication
2. Educational and referral function to therapists etc
3. Implementation and compliance with court orders
4. Third party contact – team approach
5. Make recommendations

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# WHEN IS PC APPROPRIATE

- Persistent conflict after orders
- Repeated court applications
- Disputes over logistics, holidays, day to day issues.
- Communication breakdown
- Exposure of children to conflict



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# ROLE OF THE PC

- Monitor and implement parenting orders
- Educate and coach parents on communication
- Help resolve disputes/mediate
- Document compliance and non-compliance
- Case management
- Report to court



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# WHAT A PC CANNOT DO

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- Does not deal with financial issues.
- Does not give legal advice.
- It's not therapy.
- Does not make changes to what is set out in the Order

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# CASES POTENTIALLY NOT APPROPRIATE FOR PC

- No parenting plan and court order in place
- Repeated violations of court orders
- Inability to pay
- Untreated mental illness
- Parent unwilling to participate
- Criminal background
- Severe DV

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# TYPES OF RESISTANCE AND CONFLICT

- Passive
- Active
- Emotional
- Manipulative

## MANAGING RESISTANCE

- Clear written protocols and timelines
- Parenting apps
- Motivational interviewing – what would change for your child if?
- Acknowledge emotions – redirect goals

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# COMPLEX INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS

- Use BIFF responses
- Avoid power struggles – calm and boundried
- Reframe issues around child's interests
- Establish and enforce code of conduct

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Authority clearly defined by agreement or court
- Non confidential
- Report to court
- Continuous professional development

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# CASE MANAGEMENT IN PC

- Streamlining communication
- Decision-making assistance
- Coordinating services
- Coaching and education
- Structured process & documentation
- Early intervention

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# COACHING AS AN INTERVENTION IN PC

- Streamlining communication
- Decision-making assistance
- Coordinating services
- Coaching and education
- Structured process & documentation
- Early intervention

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# PC REPORTS TO COURT

- Clarify issues addressed
- Summary of information gathered – background to issues
- Overview of dispute
- What was agreed to and what was not

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# PC INTERACTIONS WITH LAWYERS AND JUDGES

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- Interactions with lawyers important – more accountability
- Judges may want to appoint PC and close the case
- Define what communication is permitted in order of appointment
- Clarification from Court about communication with other professionals

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# COPARENTING AFTER DIVORCE

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Levels of engagement –

1. Conflicted 15% - 20 %.

2. Cooperative – 25%

3. Parallel – 40%

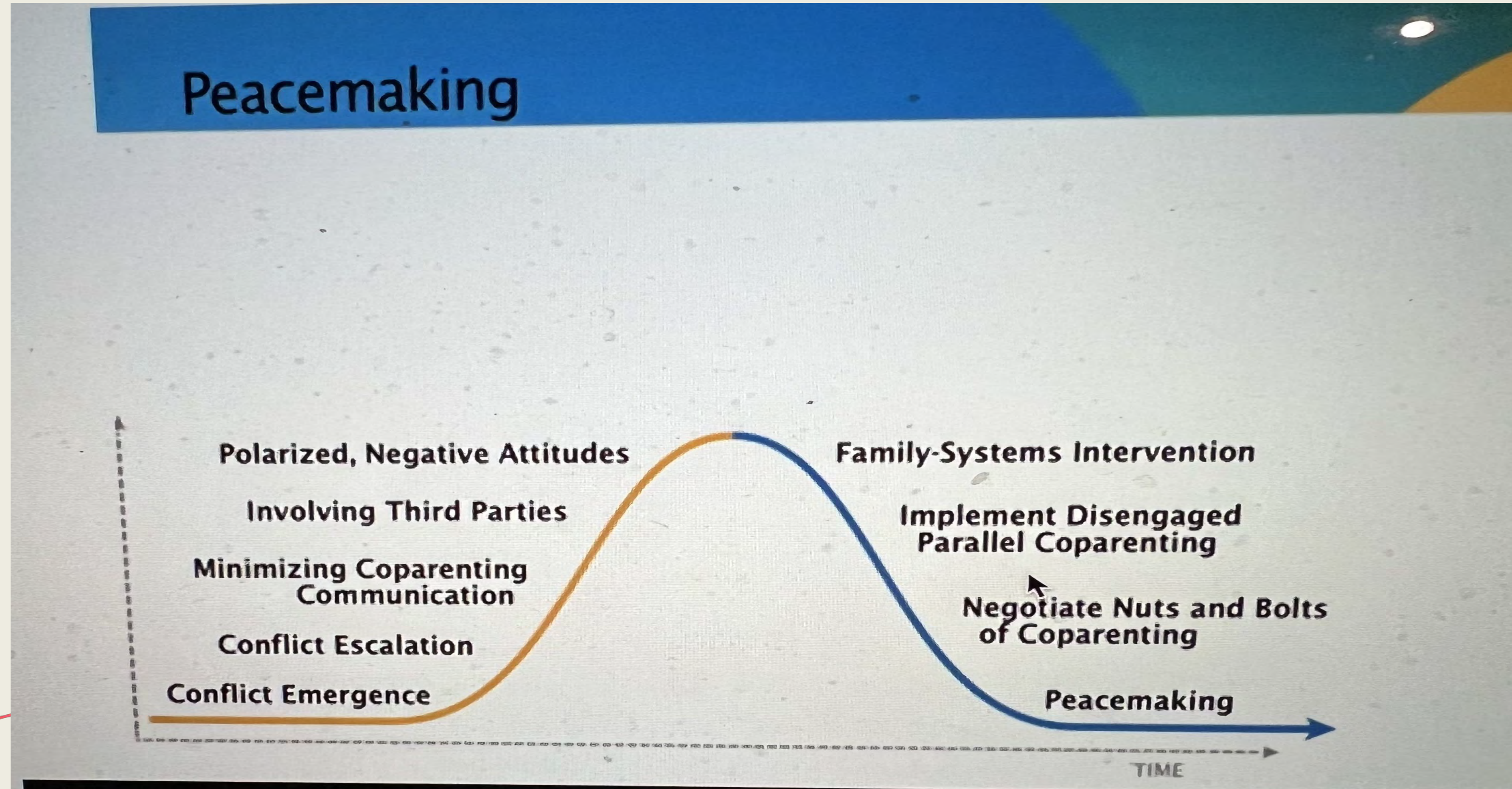


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# INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

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# CO-PARENT TRAINING

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- Let go of adversarial process
- Rules of engagement changing
- Manageability and protection
- Respectful communication and information sharing
- Monitor engagement
- Stay on agenda
- Focus on children

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# LEGAL & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PC

- Legal framework
  - Court appointment
  - Authority clearly defined
  - Term
  - Non-confidential
  - Reporting
- Ethical principals
  - Impartiality
  - Transparency
  - Competence
  - Child-centered focus
  - Avoiding dual roles

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“ Parents are the first teachers of children.

— Burmese Proverb

THANK YOU

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# HOW I CAN HELP YOU

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- **PC training –**
  - Webinars, upskilling on particular aspects of practice, on best practices, dealing with high-conflict parents, trauma-informed care, ethics, and real-life case scenarios.
  - Coach your team on how to navigate their PC practice
  - CPD - high conflict training, communication skills, neuroscience of conflict.
  - Divorce coach training
- **Supervision** - Mentorship & Peer Support
- **Practice Management:** how to set up a practice, pricing, client onboarding, how to talk to clients about PC, templates for practice, conflict assessment tools, and communication scripts.
- **Tech Tools:** Introduce or develop scheduling systems, shared document portals, secure messaging platforms.

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A series of overlapping, hand-drawn style wavy lines in shades of orange, red, and yellow, located in the top right corner of the image.

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