



High Road to Family Reunification (HRTR)

Overview of the High Road to Family Reunification Program

The High Road to Family Reunification Program (HRTR) is a coaching, educational, and skill-building workshop developed by Dorcy Pruter, the CEO and Founder of the Conscious Co-Parenting Institute, to assist families when the court, CPS/DCFS, or another legal entity has ordered children to be brought into protective separation from the allied parent and placed in the care of the other parent.

The purpose of this overview is to provide information about the program. This overview is NOT offering any opinion or recommendation on any specific matter.

The HRTR program is an appropriate option to consider when the Court, CPS/DCFS, or any other legal entity, with authority to determine the protection of a minor, has decided that a child needs to be placed in a protective separation from the allied parent; placed in the permanent custody of the targeted parent; and have restricted contact with the allied parent until certain conditions are met. In these situations, this program is one among a few options to help the family adjust to the court orders, CPS/DCFS interventions, and protective separation from the allied parent. The program will also work with the allied parent to help them integrate into the new family design, allowing the child to have a relationship with both parents, given that certain conditions are met.

The program requires the participation of both parents and children, before reintegration of the child and allied parent, after the protective separation period. The goal is shared parenting, with the fit parent to remain the permanent custodial parent, with all legal decision making. While the goal is shared parenting, it is not always achieved. It is understood and experienced, that not all allied parents, will participate in their portion of the program. Some will not be able to learn and master the skills necessary to keep their children out of the middle of the parental conflict. In those cases, monitored or supervised visitation continues after an appropriate protective separation, so the children can enjoy a relationship with and love both parents, without getting caught in the middle. This establishes continuity within the parenting and accountability for all members of the family, prevents splitting and alliance to one parent over the other.

This program was specifically designed to assist families when: children are emotionally cut off from a parent after the family is divorced or separated; when the Court, CPS/DCFS, or other legal entity with authority, requires that the child/ren be brought into protective separation and placed with the targeted parent or rejected family member chosen (if there is not another fit parent available) by the courts or CPS/DCFS. The guardian of the child restricts the child's contact with the allied parent for a period of time during the active phase of reunification. During that time, the allied parent is encouraged to work with a licensed professional in their local area

that will help them learn and integrate new skills that will help support the child in the new family paradigm and allow them a loving relationship with both parents equally.

It is important to understand that the High Road is **NOT** therapy and that the coaches are trained in coaching, skill building, educational, and problems solving techniques and doing any work on the possible or even diagnosed psychological issues of parents or the children. Any and all psychological issues are handled by a mental health provider, and in some cases, those mental health providers are recommending the High Road as a short-term skill building workshop during the transition to living with the new custodial parent or for when orders are changed temporarily. The High Road coaches work closely with mental health providers and should mental health issues arise, the mental health professional is called in to facilitate any mental health needs that would need to be addressed with the participating family members.

This program is also appropriate in recovered abduction cases and or run-away cases where the court has already determined the child/ren will be placed with the targeted parent. These cases are becoming more and more prevalent, and the High Road to Reunification is a solution to transitioning the children back to the targeted parent.

The High Road to Reunification is **NOT THERAPY OR COUNSELING**. While it is a solution for when the courts intervene and bring children into a protective separation, it is not any form a psychotherapy. It is a coaching, educational, and skill-building program, anchored in scientific research and education and coaching methodologies. The program is designed so parents and children learn and improve problem-solving and resiliency skills; learn effective communication skills and learn how to manage normal-range conflict in a family; and fosters a new family environment, where ALL members of the family are supported in reaching their highest potential. This includes the allied parent.

The courts have been bogged down with families struggling to make the transition from married life, as parents, to separated life, as co-parents or parallel parents. The High Road to Reunification program provides the solution that empowers the parents with the skills needed to get out of the back and forth he-said/she-said struggle and empowers the children with the skills needed to stay out of the middle of their parent's conflict, so they can freely love both parents.

The High Road to Reunification is four phases of an active protocol.

Phase 1. Family Stabilization- A 4-5 day coaching and educational workshop that involves the children and the targeted parent's participation, followed by a fun vacation of 3-7 days at or near the location of Phase One. Allowing for the opportunity for the family to continue to foster the rekindled bond and to seek help from the coach if need be.

Phase One is either in a hotel suite, or a vacation resort facility, resort style housing. When possible, a family vacation location that offers opportunities for fun and relaxation is preferred.

At the beginning of Phase One, one of the coaches meets with the child/ren; explains their role, the purpose of the program, and the ground rules; and will try to answer the child's questions. At

this time, the coaches/facilitators also evaluate the risk of dangerous or destructive behavior by the child that may require immediate attention.

The initial contact between the child and the targeted parent, during the program, happens in a structured and protected manner that controls the level of direct interaction.

Phase One facilitates the reconnection of the relationship between the parent and child; Phase One focuses on the present and not the past; Phase One is interactive and uses teaching modalities, that are age appropriate and utilizes modern day technology to expand the child's awareness and perspective and is presented in a fun relaxed environment, which has been proven to allow children to not only learn but also implement new skills effectively.

Once the child knows they are protected by the court, and understand that they are a protected class, they are visibly relieved and free to re-bond with the targeted parent and the workshop recovery moves swiftly in a fun, relaxed, gentle, safe, and loving environment.

The past remains in the past, and the family learns the skills needed to thrive in the new family paradigm, which allows for the children to be children and the parents to return to their natural state as parents. It is not necessary to rehash the past or even directly address the child's inappropriate behavior by trying to change the past behavior in any way and instead the focus is on learning new, positive and productive ways of communicating and solving problems within the family. This process allows for the child to resolve the underlying feelings of grief, guilt, fear, shame and sadness and restore the love that the child has for both of parents. This is not done by applying any therapeutic processes of rehashing past behaviors instead by teaching conflict resolution skills and effective communication skills. This allows for the participants to engage in interactive activities without the pressure of the past or the need to choose one parent over the other.

In other words, we do not focus on either parents' or child's past inappropriate behavior. We get to start with a clean slate. We focus on the present and future in the new family paradigm. They learn how to work together, as a family, in making decisions that benefit each other, both as individuals and as a family. The skill-building techniques are taught through various educational and coaching modalities, to ensure the family has mastered the skills, before leaving the workshop. The coaches provide guidance throughout the interactive process.

Phase One teaches how people make mistakes and how easily our memories and beliefs can be distorted. Children are taught, how distorted thoughts can lead a person down a path of treating others poorly, and the focus is on how to think for yourself and ask questions. This teaches children how to apply critical thinking skills. This is all done through a fun and interactive process. This allows for the relationship to be reestablished and then reinforced positively in the present and not through the past.

Phase One is not completed until it is evident that the parent and child/ren can manage their

interactions without the coach's assistance. After the completion of the workshop portion of Phase One, the custodial parent and child will take a mini-vacation and will be ready to move on to Phase Two with the trained professional, managing the maintenance care phases.

Phase 2. Family Maintenance- This phase lasts at least three months after Phase One, and longer depending on the family and the progress. In the Family Maintenance Phase, the family works with a family therapist or coach trained in the High Road to Reunification Maintenance Care methodology. These professionals are identified before Phase One starting to ensure proper follow-up and mastery of the skills learned in Phase One.

In Phase Two, the custodial parent and child/ren will work with one trained professional and the noncustodial parent will work with this same trained professional and possibly a mental health professional working directly with the non-custodial parent (in some cases there is only one trained professional working with the entire family. This is preferred but not always available). The two professionals work together to establish goals and reinforce the new family paradigm taught in the workshop. The trained professional working with the child/ren will determine the child/ren's readiness to reintegrate and will determine the amount of time the protective separation will be in place, with a minimum of 90 days, after the custodial parent and child/ren complete Phase One. This is determined in conjunction with the Court orders and progress of the family. There are milestones and demonstrative accomplishments and concrete tasks that are to be accomplished and mastered, by the noncustodial parent and the child/ren before monitored contact, supervised visits, and then in the best-case scenarios, unsupervised parallel parenting. Monitored contact is possible in this phase and is outlined in the Maintenance Phase protocol. The outline of the maintenance phase is provided upon request.

Phase 3. Family Reintegration- This phase happens when the noncustodial parent and child/ren have demonstrated the ability to master and apply, the concrete tasks in Phase Two. The maintenance care professional, for the child, will monitor and supervise visitation, at first. The professional will determine if the family is ready to move unmonitored and unsupervised visitation, with the noncustodial parent. The guidelines for understanding the child's readiness and symptoms are provided by leading child psychologist Dr. Craig Childress and will be provided upon request.

Phase 4. The New Family Paradigm- This phase happens, when the maintenance care professional for the child/ren, has observed their ability to successfully integrate into both homes and both parents are demonstrating their ability to facilitate the parallel parenting model, effectively; the custodial parent and child/ren demonstrate the ability to handle normal range parent-child conflict; the noncustodial parent has demonstrated the ability to parent under the parallel parenting model. **IF THE CHILD'S SYMPTOMS RETURN, IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CUSTODIAL PARENT TO CONTACT THE MAINTENANCE CARE PROFESSIONAL, TO DETERMINE, IF THE CONTACT NEEDS TO BE RESTRICTED.** The return of the child/ren's behaviors are an indicator that they are requiring more time to learn the skills they need to

be in a relationship with the non-custodial parent and/or the non-custodial parent needs additional time to master the skills needed to parent under the parallel parenting model. This

frees up the courts and allows the family to function, without additional intrusion and access to the help of trained professionals, who understand this special population with this family dynamic.

All four phases of the program are facilitated, by one or two, trained professionals; they are certified Conscious Co-Parenting and reunification coach's trained in family reunification and co-parenting coaching. They have been trained in understanding the complexities of a high-conflict divorce through teaching resiliency and conflict resolutions skills. These coaches and professionals are highly specialized in this particular family dynamic and understand the importance of restoring the relationships with both parents.

THE GOAL

- 1) Facilitate, repair, and strengthen the children's relationship with BOTH parents, starting with the targeted parent in the workshop.
- 2) Help children to avoid having to choose one parent over the other.
- 3) Empower children with the ability to strengthen their critical thinking skills and to discover and trust their intuition.
- 4) Strengthen the entire family's ability to manage their emotions and apply flexible thinking skills.
- 5) To introduce, reintroduce, or reinforce the bond between all family members.
- 6) Protect children from unreasonably rejecting a parent in the future.
- 7) Strengthen the parent/child existing relationship or severed relationship, by promoting compassion and positive communication skills.
- 8) Help the children maintain a balanced and more realistic perspective of each parent.
- 9) Teach children the skills of resilience and how they apply to their family.
- 10) Strengthen the family's ability to communicate effectively with each other and to resolve conflicts in a productive manner.
- 11) Teaching skills that focus on strengthening positive future behavior. The power of being present and not living in the past.
- 12) Teaching children truly how to think for themselves, listen to their hearts, and develop and use thriving skills.

13) Help children consider all of their options, helping them remember that they have choices and identifying those choices within their family. Help children understand that not all choices are appropriate for children.

14) Help children and parents understand why children are a protected class and the difference between protection and overprotection.

15) Help parents understand how children really feel about being in the middle.

16) ...and much more.

The families report that the program is fun, engaging, informative and helpful. Children especially enjoy the flow of the workshop and associate it to participating in a sleep-away type camp, or field trip, with activities that are interactive, relaxing, safe, and fun. At the end of the workshop (Phase One) most children report that they are relieved; felt the workshop was worth it; and would recommend it to other families if they needed it. Several children have reported they would like to do it again. Most children have reported they want their other parent to go to the workshop and learn what they learned. ALL children leave the workshop excited about the future.

We have successfully reunited children and parents through the High Road to Reunification Workshop across the globe. Our coaches are able to travel to a location where we don't have coaches, to facilitate the reunification workshop. We provide training to those in the local jurisdiction that are qualified and interested in providing phases 2-4 (if there is not someone in the local jurisdiction, we will provide the additional phases of the workshop via Skype or telephone for the family at the coaches published regular session rate. Travel costs are the family's responsibility, and often the travel cost of the coaches, to the family, is much more affordable than the entire family traveling to the coaches).

We have worked with children and adolescents who have unreasonable negative and rejecting attitudes about a parent. These children expressed irrational fear or hatred of a parent and in some cases have threatened violence or had been violent toward the parent or themselves; destroyed property; and/or threatened to run away or to commit suicide. Some have run away and attempted suicide. Some of these children have made false allegations of abuse towards the targeted parent.

This program continues to improve and incorporate what is learned from our experiences, when new information and research is available. To date, we have reunited families all over the globe, with a 100% successful completion of Phase One. Completion of Phase One of the program (the workshop and vacation portion) happens when the authentic child is recovered and the targeted parent and child have reinstated the loving bond, and are functioning in the normal range of parent-child relationship and interaction.

Of the families that have participated in the High Road protocol, 65% of the allied parents have successfully completed the maintenance phase of the program and have reintegrated in their

children's lives. Of that 65%, 35% have gone on to effectively parallel parent with unsupervised parenting time.

While the goal is shared parenting, we have found that in these types of families, it is the most effective when legal custody and decision making remains with the custodial parent to reduce, and sometimes avoid, conflict and putting the child in the middle.

PROTECTIVE SEPARATION

When the Court and/or CPS/DCFS consider the HRTR workshop an appropriate option for a family, usually the Court and/or CPS/DCFS will include directives and mandates, in the orders, that can contribute to the success of the workshop. When it is clear to the child and parents that the Court and/or CPS/DCFS expects the child/ren, with the coaches help, to repair the relationship with the targeted parent, and that the child's resistance or refusal to spend time with the parent, does not determine the outcome, the child realizes, that repairing their relationship to the target parent, is the only realistic option available. This provides the motivation the children need to participate in the program meaningfully. Most children ultimately, find the Court's Order, a relief. It relieves them from feeling that, they are responsible for having to make a choice of, one parent over the other.

In most cases, the behavior of the children, toward the target parent, has been defiant, haughty and arrogant, demanding, rude, and disrespectful. According to leading child psychologist Dr. Craig Childress, children feel relieved and safe when there is the appropriate hierarchy in the family. Parent is parent and child is child. When this family dynamic is restored, children are free to be children again and to rekindle the loving bond they have with both parents. When parent-child relationships and roles are restored, the child's positive behavior is reinforced effectively, the negative behavior is addressed and boundaries reinforced appropriately, children feel safe, loved, and cared for.

Often times when children that reject one of their parents display a sense of power and entitlement over that parent and others, they ignore court orders. Eventually, when the allied parent tries to enact authority over the children, they often and will eventually defy that parent, as well, and are then left to their own devices to navigate their unmanaged emotions and unhealthy attachments. If these children's demands are not met, they will often escalate their demands, threatening self-harm and harm to others, mainly at the target parent.

The HRTR program is more effective, and the possibility of the damaging behavior can be reduced or eliminated if the Court and/or CPS/DCFS makes it clear that the damaging behavior will not be tolerated by the court; will not result in the Court or CPS/DCFS giving into the child's demands; and instead, will likely result in the extension of the protective separation from the allied parent.

The success of the protocol often relies on the Court or CPS/DCFS, giving the parents the step-by-step instructions about when and under what circumstances the allied parent can regain contact with the children and the consequences for violating these instructions.

The Reunification Maintenance Care Professional, when needed, with the court or CPS/DCFS assistance, must carefully monitor and assess the child's relationships, with both parents, against the risk that premature or unsupervised contact with the allied parent that will undo the progress made in the High Road to Reunification Program. A list of the types of directives and mandates that courts have made in cases, where the family participated in the HRTR program is available after to initial consultation, and it is determined that the HRTR protocol, could be a viable option for the family.

THE COST OF THE PROGRAM

The cost of Phase One of the High Road to Reunification program is discussed on the intake call and when the family is qualified for the program. In addition to the cost of Phase One of the workshop, if one or more coaches require travel, the family is responsible for travel expenses; room and board; meals for the coaches; and the transport service to transport the children to the facility where the Phase One takes place. The cost of Phase Two through Four is determined by the coach/therapist/professionals facilitating those phases on the protocol (in some cases where Phases Two through Four are being facilitated by the local therapist, they can be covered by insurance, and this would need to be determined by the therapist and the client's insurance company). **Phase One and travel expenses are to be paid in full before traveling and the commencement of the program.** Depending on how the children are to be transported, the cost of transportation is a separate expense that will need to be paid for before the transportation of the children and arrangement are made between the transportation company and the custodial parent. Transportation company contact information can be provided upon request.

ABOUT DORCY PRUTER

Dorcy Pruter is a Certified Co-Parenting, Custody and Reunification Coach, Certified Family Conflict Mediator, Certified Co-Parenting Instructor and Certified Life Coach. Dorcy Pruter is the CEO and Founder of the Conscious Co-Parenting Institute, a company focused on attachment based "parental alienation" (AB-PA) reunification strategies and creating a world where children are free to love both parents. Dorcy provides coaching, training and reunification services, globally. Dorcy specializes in high-conflict divorce and custody cases involving pathogenic parenting ("parental alienation"). She has been doing this work for over ten years.

She is a pioneer in the field of Conscious Co-Parenting and Reunification Coaching and has led the development of the Conscious Co-Parenting Institute, specializing in Conscious Co-Parenting Classes; Coaching; Conscious Ways for Families; Custody Resolution Method; and High Road Family Reunification workshops across the U.S. and internationally. She is one of the most experienced co-parenting, custody, and reunification coaches in the world. She has also created the co-parenting Coach Training Academy where she is certifying coaches globally to do this work. Some of the other roles she serves for families going through divorce include:

1. Co-parenting mediator, testifying expert, co-parenting coach and consultant – in courts across the United States, Canada, Africa, Europe, Israel, the Netherlands, and Australia.
2. Expert testimony in custody situations, in jurisdictions across the U.S. Dorcy provides consultation services to forensic professionals, family law attorneys, and parents in the

context of child custody issues, reunification strategies, and high-conflict divorce solutions.

3. Written numerous articles and books, spoke at numerous, national and international venues, on topics such as *high-conflict divorce, co-parent coaching, parent/child alienation, co-parent consulting and family reunification*.
4. Created and taught the 10-Week Conscious Co-Parenting Course, which covers topics from parenting styles and managing a high-conflict divorce, to co-parenting and parallel parenting plans. This program includes a co-parenting handbook, a co-parenting workbook, and over 40 hours of online training videos and audios.
5. Has developed, a revolutionary program the Custody Resolution Method, which includes the creation of Behavioral Pattern timelines. These timelines are anchored in the case files and provides an easy-to-understand visual aid to assist lawyers, judges, custody evaluators, therapists, and others to identify and understand the patterns of behaviors, trigger events, and case history. This allows the professionals to see those common patterns of pathogenic parenting behaviors and the affect these behaviors have on the children. These timelines make it easy for the decision makers to order the protective separation, when appropriate.
6. Has certified marriage and family therapists, social workers, coaches, and instructors internationally, to teach the Conscious Co-Parenting 10-Week Co-Parenting Course.
7. Authored and published, "Stepping In," a Stepparents Guide to Conscious Co- Parenting.
8. Has authored the e-book, "I Love You Both," a guide to help children of divorce, love both of their parents.
9. Has developed Conscious Ways for Families, a conflict-resolution coaching program, for families going through a high-conflict divorce.
10. Has developed the High Road to Family Reunification program where the courts or CPS/DCFS deems it appropriate to remove a child from the home of an allied parent and place them in the home of the targeted parent. These workshops are offered globally.
11. Has certified Co-Parenting, Custody and Reunification coaches, worldwide.
12. Was a member of the United States of America Blended Family Association.
13. Graduate and Member of Coach Training Alliance.
14. Past member of the International Coaching Federation.
15. Member of the International Association of Coaches.
16. Member of Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC).
17. Member of Leading Women for Shared Parenting.
18. Member and Speaker at Parental Alienation Awareness Organization.
19. Member and frequent speaker at ISNAF.
20. Member of NPO.
21. Personally, facilitated or supervised all four phases of the High Road to Reunification protocol, with families globally.
22. Member of Academy of Professional Family Mediators (APFM).
23. Member of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals (IACP).

Dorcy has completed to following training as appropriate to working with Divorcing Families

1. 40 Hours of Divorce and Family Mediations Training - MTI Mediation Training International.

2. 40 Hours of Divorce and Family Mediations Training - Mosten Mediation Training
3. High Conflict Institute® - 12 hours of Understanding and Managing High Conflict Personalities in Legal Disputes.
4. High Conflict Institute® - 13 hours of Dealing with High-Conflict People in Separation, Divorce, and Co-parenting.
5. High Conflict Institute® - 6 hours of New Ways Conflict Resolution training.
6. High Conflict Institute® - 6 Hours High-Conflict Divorce Mediation Training
7. Certified Breakthrough Parenting® Instructor training 16 hours and is certified to teach Breakthrough Parenting®
8. Certified Active Parenting Instructor®
9. Completed Coaches Training Alliance® 6-month coaching certification course and is a certified coach.
10. Completed Coaches Training Alliance® 6-month Master coach training
11. Is a credentialed Master Certified Coach with over 15,000 hours of client coaching.
12. Experience with the International Coaching Federation.
13. Over 1,500 hours of logged mediation and co-parenting consulting hours.
14. A credentialed Master Certified Coach with over 15,000 hours of client coaching experience with the International Association of Coaches.
15. Attachment-Based Alienation training - Dr. Craig Childress 80 hours.
16. AFCC high-conflict resolution training and numerous workshops and training.
17. John Maxwell - Become a Coach and Leadership Coach Certification.
18. The Duncan Group Achieving Leadership workshops.
19. The Duncan Group Executive Leadership training conference.

For more information, please contact our office at 888-379-7279 or email at clientcare@coparentinginstitute.com. We look forward to serving you!