

Testifying in Court

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Preparing for Court

- ▶ Know the protocols of your local/circuit/district courts in terms of whether a file can be brought into the hearing
- ▶ Review your files before going to court
- ▶ Know the names and ages of the persons receiving services from you

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Preparing for Court, *cont.*

- ▶ If acceptable, print down your progress reports (documents already submitted to the courts) and highlight pertinent area, if given an opportunity, you want to share with the courts
- ▶ Prepare your clients for what you will be sharing in court so that your testimony is not a surprise to the client.
- ▶ Be prepared to answer questions in terms of recommendations

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Knowing the Typical Players in the Court

- ▶ Judge/Magistrate
- ▶ Child Welfare Attorney
- ▶ Investigator and or Dependency Case Manager, depending on the case proceeding/hearing/trial
- ▶ Defense Attorney
- ▶ Guardian Ad Litem
- ▶ Provider
- ▶ Clerk of the Court
- ▶ Individual/Family



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Preparing to Testify


- ▶ Dress appropriately as your appearance is important
- ▶ Be prepared to discuss your education and training experience
 - ▶ What is your degree in
 - ▶ Where were you educated
 - ▶ How many years have you been working in the field doing counseling
 - ▶ When and where did you get your training
 - ▶ Over the past 10 years how many counseling cases have you had
 - ▶ Be prepared to discuss requirements for your licensure
 - ▶ Be prepared to discuss any supervision and consultation you are getting on your cases

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Preparing to Discuss Your Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) Training and Experience

- ▶ Be able to discuss in detail:
 - ▶ Your training and experience related to early childhood
 - ▶ Your training and experience related to infant and childhood mental health
 - ▶ Your training and experience related to CPP and trauma
 - ▶ Requirements of Rostering for CPP clinicians, what does training entail and how long
 - ▶ Requirements of Rostered and additional training, consultation and supervision

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Preparing to Discuss Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

- ▶ Be able to discuss, what is CPP
- ▶ CPP is an intervention model for children aged 0-5 who have experienced at least one traumatic event and/or are experiencing mental health, attachment, and/or behavioral problems, including posttraumatic stress disorder
- ▶ CPP is a therapy that supports families strengths and relationships
- ▶ CPP helps families heal and grow after stressful experiences
- ▶ CPP is based on attachment theory but also integrates psychodynamic, developmental, trauma, social learning, and cognitive behavioral theories

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Preparing to Discuss CPP, *cont.*

- ▶ CPP respects family and cultural values
- ▶ CPP is conducted through a therapeutic process of sessions includes the child and parent or primary caregiver and the therapist
- ▶ CPP primary goal is to support and strengthen the relationship between a child and his or her caregiver as a vehicle for restoring the child's cognitive, behavioral, and social functioning



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Preparing to Discuss and Educate on

- ▶ CPP
- ▶ Early child development
- ▶ Impact of trauma on young children
- ▶ The voice of the child spoken through their behavior
- ▶ The importance of healthy relationships
- ▶ How healthy social and emotional relationships shape development

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Preparing Your Client for Your Testimony in Court

- ▶ Prepare your clients for what you will be sharing in court so that your testimony is not a surprise to them
- ▶ Share with your client, based on your progress report submitted to the courts, what you will be sharing in terms of their therapeutic progress
- ▶ Share with your client, what issues and concerns as it relates to their therapeutic progress
- ▶ Share with you client what are your recommendations going to be moving forward
- ▶ Process with the client their feelings about the information to be shared
- ▶ Process with the client why the information is being requested and how the information informs the court for their decision making

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Testifying Based on Your Progress Reports


- ▶ Testimony should be based on information submitted to the courts in your progress reports
- ▶ Progress reports should paint a picture that describes:
 - ▶ When services began
 - ▶ What is the compliance in of keeping scheduled sessions
 - ▶ Are there reasons for missed sessions
 - ▶ What are the therapeutic goals being worked on
 - ▶ What is the therapeutic progress made towards the goals
 - ▶ Are there issues and concerns that will hinder goal achievement
 - ▶ What are the recommendations moving forward. Remember recommendations should be clinical in nature. What does the child need, what does the parent need, how will these needs being met support the parent, support the child.



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Testifying and Handle Nervousness

- ▶ Expect to feel a little anxious
- ▶ Be prepared to answer the oath
- ▶ Avoid being overwhelmed by the courtroom setting
- ▶ Prepare ahead of time
- ▶ Control your voice
- ▶ Take a deep breath



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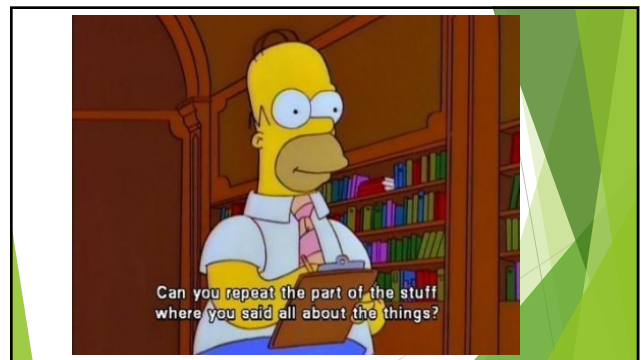
Remember, you are the best person in the courtroom to paint the picture of what has been happening in CPP!

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Every time you go into court to testify... **BE PREPARED** so you can hit your target!

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References

- ▶ Samantrai, K. (2004). *Culturally Competent Public Child Welfare Practice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning.
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