

Northeast Ohio Behavioral Health, Ltd.

Disclosure Statements Regarding Evaluations Involving Custody/Visitation Matters

The following points need to be clearly understood prior to the start of the evaluation process. Please sign and return the bottom portion of this document, while keeping the remaining portion for your records. Please ask any questions regarding the meaning of these statements, as well as additional questions that may arise during the assessment process.

1. Northeast Ohio Behavioral Health, Ltd. only performs evaluations regarding child custody/visitation matters at the request of the Court. All parties must participate, including spouses or companions who are involved in parenting activities. **If one party does not choose to become involved in the assessment, the assessment may continue, but recommendations regarding child custody/companionship cannot be made. At the discretion of the examiner, a report may not be issued unless data pertaining to both parties can be included. The examiner will seek consultation directly from the Court regarding this matter.**
2. Custody/visitation evaluations are used by the Court to help in the determination of the best interests of the children. The evaluator is appointed by the Court and assigned the task of gathering information that can be used in this determination. A comprehensive report will be compiled after all interviews and testing procedures are completed. This report will be submitted to the Court, and will contain recommendations regarding the resolution of the issues which prompted the request for the assessment. Information regarding data derived from the assessment of all parties involved will be integrated in this report.
3. Dependent on the procedures mandated by the Family or Domestic Relations Court that has ordered the evaluation, you may be asked to sign Release of Information forms so that a copy of the report can be sent to the Court, as well as to your attorney, and the attorney employed by your opposing party. If a Guardian ad Litem has been assigned, a Release will be requested so that the Guardian ad Litem can also receive a copy of the report. If the Court requires that the report be submitted only to Family Court Services (i.e. Summit County) or only to the attention of the Judge or Magistrate, the examiner will comply with this directive. However, the Court will typically make data from the report available to all legal counsel involved. **When the report is sent to the Court, it becomes a public document. Thus, assurance of confidentiality is limited.**
4. Given the important issues that are to be addressed in the evaluation, a great deal of information must be gathered. This typically requires an interview process with each parent, as well as psychological testing. Children are typically interviewed individually, as well as observed in interaction with both of their parents, scheduled separately. These procedures are modified depending on the age of the children and their ability to participate in the evaluation. **The design of your particular evaluation will be determined according to your situation.**

5. The completed report will not be released to the Court or any other designated parties until all fees have been collected. **The fee schedule for evaluations concerning custody/visitation matters is as follows:**

- **Each adult ordered to be involved in the assessment will be charged \$2700.00.**
- A **retainer** of \$1,000.00 is expected prior to the scheduling of the first appointment. **Any subsequent cancellations of scheduled sessions will be separately billed at \$140.00 per cancelled session.**
- Four to five interview sessions are conducted with each adult participant, with at least one of these sessions conducted with the child/children and the parent conjointly. During this conjoint session, parent-child interaction will be observed.
- The extent of each child's participation in the evaluation process will be determined by the examiner, and will be based on the child's developmental level and needs assessed by the examiner. At a minimum, each school-age or preschool-age child will be seen for one assessment session. If the examiner requires more time with a particular child to complete an assessment of the child's needs, additional sessions will be scheduled.
- If an adult participant is involved in a relationship with a significant other that lives within the residence or otherwise functions as a regular adult caregiver or step-parent for the children, one interview session will be conducted conjointly with the adult and his/her significant other.
- Psychological testing is conducted with each adult participant. Adult participants may schedule their testing session with NEOBH Support Staff. The administration of Psychological Testing does not require an office visit with the examiner, but must be completed in the NEOBH office setting.
- **If the psychological testing of a significant other is determined to be essential to the assessment process, an additional fee of 180.00 will be charged.** The fee for this additional testing will be assigned according to the division of fees that is outlined by the court.
- At the start of the assessment process, each adult participant will be asked to sign Releases of Information for the purposes of gathering data from outside sources that will assist the evaluation process. Each adult participant is welcome to bring in other data pertinent to the assessment process (i.e. calendars, journals, written logs, letters) that can help the examiner to understand the issues involved. **Data review shall be included within the assessment cost; however, this examiner reserves the right to limit the amount of data that can reasonably be reviewed without additional fees billed to the participant.**
- The examiner cannot be responsible for the copying or retention of data that is provided by parties involved in a custody evaluation process. Do not provide "originals" of any document, photograph, or recording. Any such data that is provided to the examiner will be destroyed at the point at which the evaluation is

completed. By laws, data that is not produced during the assessment process cannot be made a part of the Closed record. NEOBH will scan all documents that are produced during the assessment process, and an electronic copy will be maintained.

- The examiner may need to respond to inquiries from Family Court Services/Family Court Liaisons and individual attorneys regarding the process of the evaluation. In order to ensure the absolute clarity of this communication, it often must be put in writing, and submitted to all parties (Court, GAL, respective legal counsels). NEOBH reserves the right to bill additional fees for this additional work. **Letters and Phone Calls will be billed at \$50.00 per hour. Fees will be assessed to the party whose situation/actions requires documentation by letter, or may be divided between parties, dependent on circumstances.**
 - Report Submission: **Both parties involved in the Evaluation must pay all fees in full before a report will be produced and sent to the Court, respective legal counsels, etc.** Please be aware that the Evaluation Report is an extensive document. **Fees associated with the evaluation process must be Paid In Full no less than Two Weeks prior to the date when the Evaluation data is expected by the Court.**
 - **NEOBH and the Evaluator are not responsible for circumstances that may affect your custody situation.** It is assumed that the evaluation has been ordered by the Court, and that a completed assessment is expected by the Court. NEOBH cannot refund fees for services that have been rendered in the event your legal dispute changes in focus or resolves.
 - **Court time is billed separately in the event that Court testimony is required.** Court time is billed at \$200.00 per hour (inclusive of travel time) with a retainer of \$1000.00. This must be received Two Weeks prior to the Court hearing date. If Court time is scheduled, but does not occur for some reason, 1/2 of the retainer (\$500.00) shall be promptly refunded. NEOBH shall reserve the time to attend Court hearings. Please make sure that a Court appearance by the examiner is absolutely necessary. NEOBH has no control over what may/may not occur once time for a Court appearance is reserved.
6. A Court-Ordered evaluation for the purposes of offering recommendations regarding custody/visitation matters is not considered a “medically necessary” service by most insurance companies. There is no diagnosable condition, and treatment is not being provided. **Therefore, NEOBH cannot accept any insurance coverage for custody/visitation evaluations.**
7. Please state your understanding of how payment of fees will be handled in your evaluation (i.e. split between adult participants, proportions determined by the Court, etc.).

I have been given a copy of NEOBH's Disclosure Statement Regarding Evaluations Involving Custody/Visitation Matters. I understand that I may ask any questions about these statements as the assessment progresses.

Client

Date

Witness

Date