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REUNIFICATION THERAPY

As a Counsellor and Psychotherapist, I provide therapy both in person and by Zoom.

My therapy practice is evidence-based and trauma-informed. I often provide therapeutic support to separated families in high-conflict situations where there is little or no co-parenting in place, including where there have been allegations of domestic and family violence and where family members have been diagnosed with various neurodivergent mental health conditions such as Autism and ADHD.

I'll immediately stop (or adapt) my interventions at any stage if a client or child appears to be displaying a trauma response.

My flagship **Reunification Therapy** process addresses the refuse-and-resist dynamic between a child and rejected parent or caregiver ("unaligned caregiver") and supports the child to have a meaningful relationship with the unaligned caregiver (where this is appropriate).

Throughout Reunification Therapy I aim to determine whether the child's resistance to an unaligned caregiver comes from the genuine innate (and appropriate) safety needs of the child, or the child being influenced by the (often well-meaning) aligned caregiver.

Often times, the child is caught in the conflict between their caregivers, where the aligned caregiver claims (and projects) that the unaligned caregiver is clinically narcissistic, and the unaligned caregiver claims (and projects) that the aligned caregiver is engaged in parental alienation. However, very rarely is this actually the case. Generally, the reality is that the needs of the child haven't been met and their attachment to the unaligned caregiver is insecure (for various reasons).

I draw upon several modalities, such as Gestalt (including authentic presence and empty-chair work), existential (meaning making), experiential / felt sense (linking the mind and body for awareness and healing) and psychodynamic (such as exploring the effects of key relationships with caregivers and partners). My therapy practice is grounded upon The Paradoxical Theory of Change.

My aim is to support clients to work through any resistance or blocks that may be preventing their innate capacity to thrive by creating a safe space where every part of the client is welcome. This often involves shadow work and parts integration, exploring and resolving the causes of ongoing unwanted behaviour patterns. I bring warmth and humour to co-create a client-focused healing and growth experience.

Reunification Therapy isn't appropriate where there's any form of ongoing domestic and family violence between any of the family members involved.

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My Reunification Therapy process includes up to four stages and a minimum of eight hours of therapy sessions, including both individual and (if appropriate) joint sessions between the child and unaligned caregiver.

Stage 1 – Risk Assessment & Intake (with each caregiver separately)

Stage 1 is an individual Zoom session with each caregiver for up to one hour. I conduct a risk assessment and intake with each caregiver separately to determine whether Reunification Therapy is safe and appropriate in the particular circumstances of the family involved. This also includes psychoeducation and reality testing of the timeframe and likely outcome.

Stage 2 – Blocks of Reunification Therapy

Stage 2 consists of a minimum of two 4-hour blocks of Reunification Therapy. I spend the first block with the child and aligned caregiver in person, with the unaligned caregiver attending by Zoom. This is to minimise any resistance to attend from the child, as well as to manage any potential risk. If appropriate, during the second block I'll introduce the unaligned caregiver into joint sessions with the child. These may be in-person or by Zoom. However, it often takes several blocks before the child is ready to include the unaligned caregiver in joint sessions. I regularly liaise with all caregivers to provide updates and insights into the child's journey. After two blocks I can adopt a more flexible approach, depending on the particular needs of the family.

Stage 3 – Time between the child and unaligned caregiver outside of Reunification Therapy

Stage 3 involves the child spending time with the unaligned caregiver outside of Reunification Therapy. This may be supervised by myself or an agreed third party. The time is paced according to the needs of the child. For example, it may begin with attending a sporting event or other extra-curricular activity within eyesight of the child. Over time it may progress to short causal meetings in public places. It may then progress to extended one-on-one experiences.

Stage 4 (if required) – Ongoing Reunification Therapy

If Stage 4 is required I engage in ongoing Reunification Therapy. This would typically be 2-hour sessions either in person or by Zoom.