

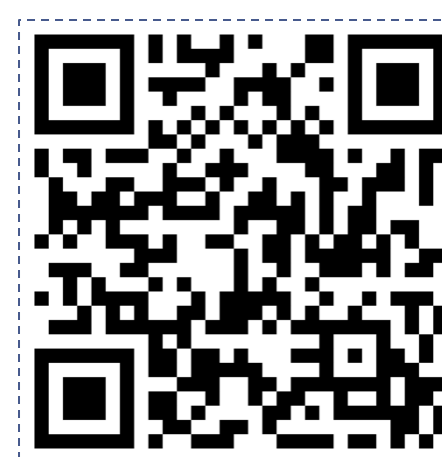
Introduction. Frequent and intense interparental conflict (IPC) is one of children's largest risk factors associated with parental divorce/separation^{1,2,4,5,6}. Many family courts mandate high-conflict separating/divorcing parents to attend educational programs, but these are rarely evaluated for efficacy⁶. Evidence-based interventions developed by researchers have been shown to decrease IPC, but these have yet to be adopted by courts due to many factors³. **The current project investigates family law professionals' criteria to select and implement parenting interventions for high-conflict families.**

Methods. N = 151 family law professionals completed a survey (*quantitative data*) and N = 9 completed semi-structured interviews (*qualitative data*) to provide detailed feedback on expectations/preferences for an intervention targeting divorced/separated high-IPC parents. Descriptive statistics were used for the survey responses. A thematic analysis was conducted on the feedback received from the interviews.

Survey Results. Although 96.81% (n = 94) indicated that there should be a program for high-conflict parents, only 64.04% (n = 114) of respondents indicated that there is currently a program for high-conflict parents in their local family court. When asked to describe an "ideal" high-conflict program, majority of respondents indicated that the program should be: **1) court-ordered, 2) paid by participating parents, 3) in-person, 4) include content on the effects of divorce on children and importance of reducing conflict, and 5) have an impact on reducing conflict and increasing parental cooperation.**

Future Directions. This project is the first step to developing and testing an intervention that effectively reduces IPC and can be readily implemented in the family court.

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Interview Results.

Category	Research Question
Topics, Skills, & Activities	What should a high-conflict program include?
Logistics and Constraints	What needs to be considered in the implementation plan?
Engagement	How do we engage parents in the process?
Contextual Considerations	What are different issues that might come up?

Theme 1: Focus on Child and Family Well-Being

Sub-themes: Effects on children, trauma-informed perspective, safety

The program should emphasize the impact of parental actions on children, with a trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate lens that prioritizes the safety and well-being of children.

"We're seeing a really high frequency of children wanting, attempting suicide depression, anxieties teen pregnancies, drugs.."

"Have some component of, you know, what are the consequences that typically children experience"

Theme 2: Fostering Effective Communication and Problem-Solving Skills

Sub-themes: Communication, decision-making, concrete strategies, co-parenting

Developing essential communication and negotiation skills, with emphasis on co-parenting dynamics, empathy, and effective problem-solving.

"When you talk about the strategies, I think part of that is how do you communicate and negotiate in a way that protects the children from parental conflict."

"The other thing is communication between the parents. So one parent will, you know, try to co-parent send out emails. The other one refuses to talk, refuses to respond, or they respond in a way that is triggering to the other parent."

Theme 3: Empowering Through Education and Skill-Building

Sub-themes: Understanding effects on children, resources, accountability, normalizing experiences

Providing educational content on child development, mental health, and relational dynamics, along with concrete resources and strategies to empower and validate participants.

"We give them the adverse childhood experiences research, give them resources to go look it up themselves so they can find it. But that's just another way to help them see that they play a role, they contribute..."

"Have them take ownership of themselves"

Theme 4: Integrating Practice into Everyday Life

Sub-themes: Practice is the program, skills application, self-reflection, personal stories

Emphasizing that progress is achieved through regular practice and reflection, encouraging participants to incorporate learned skills and insights into daily life.

"Whatever they are being taught there has to be some sort of homework activity because that's what gets them to practice. You have to do something I think like 10 times in order to make it a habit."

"We start with their why at the beginning and their why develops throughout the program, but their why is what they want to achieve for their kids."