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DR. ELAYNE TANNER
Registered Social Worker

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Q: My husband and I are going through a separation. My children would like their wishes known on matters regarding custody and access especially around the holidays. Do they need to hire a lawyer? How do we get that information into the court?

A: This is a very common situation and especially relevant when the children are primary and middle school aged. Parents are attempting to be amicable in the settlement and the children do not want to hurt either parent's feelings. The most unsettling thing for children about divorce is the concern that they do not know where they will be. They feel out of control. Having an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns to a neutral party alleviates much of their worry.

The good news is that you do not have to hire a lawyer. Lawyers are costly and most do not have any knowledge regarding interviewing children. Using my years of interviewing children and working with parents during the separation period, I am positioned to offer you a solution. A "Views of the Child" report that, unlike costly assessments, does not provide an opinion but rather, reports on what the children said, would meet your needs. I would meet with the children on one or more occasions and can, if desired, also meet with collateral sources such as teachers and grandparents in order to get a more complete perspective. Views of the Child reports are much quicker to carry out and prepare than full parenting assessments and so they are generally far less expensive. No witnesses are needed and so there is a further cost savings. These reports do not make recommendations but do report on the child's wishes. Views of the Child reports ensure that the children's voices are represented in court so that their opinions are heard. This is a far less expensive route than a custody and access assessment or a parenting report and does not pit one parent against the other. With a Views of the Child report everyone's voice is heard and everyone wins.

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Gerry Ross
H.B.Sc. PT, MCPA,
FCAMT

Q: I cannot sleep at night due to pain; I can manage all my daily activities without problem but as soon as I lay down, I toss and turn all night. What is wrong?

A: Sleep quality and quantity is essential in life. Occasionally our sleep position, pillow and/or mattress can be the problem. However, very often it is the activities or postures we use throughout the day that have a huge impact on our sleep quality. Inflammation is a component of pain that is present all day; however our other body systems are also rapidly working all day which can minimize the pain levels. At night when we settle into bed, everything slows down; however, the inflammatory response in your body continues to be active, causing pain and not allowing you to sleep. A physiotherapist in discussion with you and with a physical assessment can help you determine the cause of your night pain and provide strategies in the form of home remedies and hands on treatment to assist you in getting a good night sleep.

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