"Using Technology in Custody Litigation and Co-Parenting"

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Advanced Issues Facing Custody Litigators and Guardians ad Litem

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I. Introduction

Family law attorneys are used to dealing with challenging cases: two parents with such high conflict they cannot possibly say a civil word to each other, a client reporting the other party is always late for exchanges, a parent who has a drinking problem and might be drinking around the children, a litigant who wants to present hundreds of text messages in court…in screen shots, a party who is overwhelmed by the stress of litigation. Well now there is an app for that.

In recent years, society's reliance on technology and particularly apps has grown. The Apple App Store launched only ten years ago on July 10, 2008, with merely 500 third-party apps. Today the app store boasts over 2 million apps with over 500 people visiting the app store each week.[1] Americans now check their phones an average of 80 times per day, which is about every 12 minutes during waking hours.[2] U.S. users spend an average of five hours a day on their phones, including spending more time using apps than they spend watching tv.[3] With such an increase in app usage overall, it is no wonder so many apps have been developed that specifically target consumers in family law cases.

Apps benefit family law cases because they create better experiences for our clients, reduce our non-legal work, provide better evidence for our cases, keep lawyers relevant, and provide value for our clients. Apps can help clients with everything from coordinating parenting time schedules with their ex, managing stress during their case, and providing text message evidence in cohesive,

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[1] Silver, Stephen. "Apple Details History of App Store on Its Tenth Anniversary." *Apple Insider*. July 5, 2018 <https://appleinsider.com/articles/18/07/05/apple-details-history-of-app-store-on-its-10th-anniversary>

[2] SWNS. "Americans Check Their Phones 80 Times a Day: Study." *New York Post*. November 8, 2017. <https://nypost.com/2017/11/08/americans-check-their-phones-80-times-a-day-study/>

[3] Perez, Sarah. "U.S. Consumers Now Spend Five Hours Per Day on Mobile Devices." *Tech Crunch*. March 3, 2017. <https://techcrunch.com/2017/03/03/u-s-consumers-now-spend-5-hours-per-day-on-mobile-devices/>

admissible formats. In turn, this reduces some of the non-legal work performed by lawyers and their offices when working with people in family law cases—from reducing the number of phone calls and emails related to conflict between the parties that could be resolved with better communication and calmer emotions to saving staff from having to collate hundreds of pages of screen shots of text messages that are then still difficult to read because the screen shots overlap or cut off information. Apps can provide better evidence for court such as co-parenting apps with comprehensive, unalterable communication records and reports from alcohol monitoring apps. Alcohol monitoring apps also give parents peace of mind when alcohol abuse is an issue in the case.

Using technology is essential to stay competitive. Lawyers are now competing for clients against technology such as LegalZoom (online document preparation, subscription legal plans, and document review), LegalSpark (on demand brief consultations), Unbundled Attorney (matching service for limited scope representation), BEEAmicable Divorce (divorce settlement negotiation app), and Amicable Divorce (divorce coaching and negotiation app). While lawyers add significant value beyond what technology can offer, that value is not always apparent to clients who are comparing our hourly rates to the services these new technologies offer. Making sure we are keeping up with technology and suggesting it to our clients whenever it could be useful to their cases is one way we ensure we are providing visible value to them and serving them in the modern world they are used to in other areas of their lives.

While there are many apps that could be applied to family law cases, there are also apps that have been developed specifically for family law clients. Co-parenting apps assist in scheduling and communication between co-parents. There are also apps specifically for managing high-conflict communication, apps for logging missed parenting time, and an app for mediating

conflicts after the case is over. General family management apps could also be used in co-parenting cases as could many of Google's platforms. Parents can also be using daycare and school portals and video chat apps to improve their relationship with their children and/or help their case. Parents may want to be aware of tracking apps on their children's phones. For cases where substance abuse is an issue, there are remote alcohol monitoring and sobriety apps. When heated text messages are at issue, litigants can easily download them into one PDF with an app. There are apps for paying child support, apps for emotional support during divorce, and apps for general wellness that could benefit litigants in a contested custody case. More apps are being developed every day, and it is our job to ensure we are using them to benefit our cases and our clients.

II. Co-Parenting Apps

Co-parenting apps help busy or high-conflict parents effectively manage co-parenting their children. These apps provide shared calendars, messaging platforms, document and information sharing, and financial tracking. These tools can improve communication by making it easy for parents to send and receive information and consolidating it all into one platform rather than juggling texts, emails, social media, and other communication platforms. Because all the information is in one place, it provides evidence that is easily produced by the client, easily reviewed by the attorney, and easily presented in and digested by the court. While these platforms cannot stop parties from being nasty to each other (though some of them try), limiting communication to a special platform that parents access only when communicating about the children and knowing that the information is easily used by either side in court can encourage more respectful interactions.

a. Robust Co-Parenting Apps

There are plenty of robust co-parenting apps to choose from at a variety of price points. These apps provide comprehensive schedule, communication, and information management to facilitate co-parenting.

<u>Our Family Wizard</u>

Pricing: Starts at $99/year; discount bulk subscriptions available to practitioners; 30-day money-back guarantee; ToneMeter $10/year; scholarship program for litigants working with Legal Aid or a pro bono attorney; military discount.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android, KindleFire, Blackberry

Website: www.ourfamilywizard.com

Features: Shared calendar, a messaging board with optional ToneMeter to analyze the tone of your messages prior to sending, a complete record of messages can be downloaded, an expense log that calculates reimbursements for you and allows you to attach a receipt to expense entries, a payment system, a journal that allows for shared or private note taking, an info bank organized by section for sharing vital information as well as photos and documents, and free third-party, child, and professional accounts.

Take Away: Our Family Wizard is comprehensive, one of the most widely accessible across platforms, and is the only app to offer both tone monitoring and a payment system. The upfront price may be difficult for some folks, but it is the only app to offer scholarships and military discounts.

<u>2houses</u>

Pricing: AUD 13.25/month (approximately $9/month); 14-day free trial.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.2houses.com/en/

Features: Shared calendar, help defining the parenting time schedule, financial management system with payment invitations, shared journal for notes, photos, and video, with commenting features on journal entries, shared photo albums, information bank for important information and documents, shareable task and shopping lists, simple messaging tool which can be downloaded in one document. Markets itself as both a family management and co-parenting app. Available in English, French, Italian, and Dutch.

Take-Away: 2houses is comprehensive, although the messaging feature is basic, which may not be the best for high-conflict situations.

Fayr

Pricing: $4.99 per month or $199 for lifetime access; 20% discount code for lawyers to give their clients; 60-day free trial.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.fayr.com

Features: Shared calendar, in-app text messaging, expenses log in which receipts can be added to each entry, geo location log for voluntary check ins, file vault for photos and documents, private journal for notes to your calendar, parenting statistics report for parenting time and engagement through the app, and all records can be exported to PDF.

Take Away: Fayr is comprehensive, but the lack of a website platform may make this app less appealing to parents who prefer to work on the computer. The lifetime access price is a good deal. The GPS function is less commonly seen. The statistics reporting for engagement in the app and parenting time may cause more conflict than it reduces.

Coparently

Pricing: $9.99/month or $99/year; 30-day free trial.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android, Blackberry, Windows Phone, KindleFire

Website: coparently.com

Features: Shared calendar with acknowledge and approval system, messaging center in which you can attach files, expense log with automatic calculation of percentages and balance tracking, shared contacts directory, and guest user access for children and third-parties for the calendar and messaging center.

Take Away: Coparently offers good scheduling and communication features and is available on a wide variety of platforms. It does not seem to offer much document or information storage.

AppClose

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: appclose.com

Features: Shared calendar that syncs with your private personal calendar and allows schedule change requests, in-app text messaging with read receipts, expense tracker and reimbursement requests with ability to attach receipts, payment system for approved expenses, information bank for important contacts and shared information, scan and share documents, share and export text messages and reimbursement records.

Take Away: AppClose is comprehensive, but the messaging feature is extremely simplified. This may not be a great option for high-conflict parents due to the messaging feature

and its lack of a website, but it is the best free option. Combine it with Talking Parents for a totally free co-parenting app experience.

SmartCoparent

Pricing: Free for basic; $4.99/month to get features such as a payment platform, sharing documents, and third-party access; $9.99/month for professional plans which allow for creation of reports.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: smartcoparent.com

Features: Shared calendar with access for children, automatic payment requests and payment requests with ability to upload receipts and monitoring, payment ability through PayPal including partial payments and automatic payments, storage for documents, contacts, and basic information, chat messaging with the ability to attach documents and photos, message transcripts, private journal, payment reports, support budgeting dashboard, general budgeting tool, and child and third-party access.

Take Away: SmartCoparent is comprehensive and the only co-parenting app with a general budgeting tool, but it lacks a website, which may make the budgeting hard to review. This would be a great fit for parents also struggling with their new household budget after divorce.

Unbroken Homes

Pricing: Per family pricing at $9.99/month or $99.99/year; free trial.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.unbrokenhomes.com

Features: Activity timeline reflecting messages, events, and requests, shared calendar with schedule change requests, expense tracking with ability to attach receipts and allocate percentages,

data library to store contacts and medical and other important information, reporting for custody and expenses, and third-party access. The message feature seems to be somewhere between text and email in functionality and it is not clear if you can export messages.

Take Away: Unbroken homes offers a lot of features, but it is unclear whether messages can be exported and printed, making it a risk for high-conflict co-parents. The reporting function for expenses seems useful but for parenting time it seems likely to breed more conflict.

ParentScope

Pricing: $8.99/month or $89.00/year; $24 for an expert to set up your schedule based on your court order; discounts available for pro bono cases and exceptional circumstances.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.parentscope.com

Features: Shared calendar based on your court order, database for contacts, medical and school information, and court orders, text messaging including the ability to add photos and videos, expense tracking by uploaded receipts, option to contest reimbursement requests, reimbursement amounts and timelines based on your court order, payment confirmation through an uploaded copy of payment, and ability to generate reports for messaging, calendaring, and expenses.

Take Away: ParentScope has a lot of good features, although it uses text messaging instead of a more email-like platform for messaging. The fact that they will read your court order and set up your app settings pursuant to the order is unique.

b. Communication Co-Parenting Apps

In addition to comprehensive co-parenting apps, there are some apps that are solely messaging platforms. Sometimes a simpler solution is better for high-conflict couples, reducing overall interaction.

Talking Parents

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.talkingparents.com

Features: Messaging platform that allows exchange of PDFs attached to messages, but the content of PDFs does not become a permanent part of the record. Messages cannot be deleted and a complete record can be ordered for $3.99.

Take Away: Great for parents who just need a messaging platform. Combine it with AppClose for a totally free co-parenting app experience.

Divvito

Pricing: Basic is free; enhanced with tone control and exporting of messages is per couple at $96/year or $250 lifetime.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: divvito.com

Features: Messaging app that offers communication tips, allows you to vent your frustrations to a bot, highlights dates and times so you can add them to your calendar, you can download and print messages, bot will suggest revisions prior to sending if not appropriate, and messages do not appear in push notifications so they stay private from kids.

Take Away: For clients who just cannot communicate nicely to save their lives, this is the perfect app.

c. Co-Parenting Mediator App

Sometimes parties have issues they need to resolve after a case closes that they cannot resolve themselves but are not big enough to go back to court about. For these parents, an on-demand mediator through an app can help reduce conflict.

coParenter

Pricing: Free (pilot program).

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: coparenter.com

Features: Schedule negotiation with a co-parenting professional, scheduler syncs with your calendar, mediation for simple disputes, messaging with ability to send record to PDF, on-demand coparenting professional to help draft agreements, help draft emails and texts, mediate, coach, and advise, GPS check-in for exchanges, schedule change and other requests with accept or decline option, child profiles to store medical and school information, SoloMode for parents whose co-parents will not join allows them to still send messages through the app which appear to the other parent as a text message, and third-party access.

Take Away: coParenter is a great for parties that have lots of little disputes after an action is closed that they want to mediate and great for negotiating schedules in uncontested cases. It has many features of robust co-parenting apps except for a shared calendar.

d. Less Robust Co-Parenting Apps

While there are plenty of co-parenting apps on the market, not all of them provide a comprehensive tool kit for co-parenting scheduling and communication. Some of these apps have special features that may be appealing to your clients or your clients may already be using these apps and you will want to be familiar with them.

Custody Junction

Pricing: $47/year; 30-day free trial.

Platforms: website

Website: www.custodyjunction.com

Features: Shared calendar, notetaking for events and non-scheduled items, data reports on parenting time, tracks some expenses and child support in an event-based system, and parenting time and expense reporting.

Take Away: Custody Junction mostly functions like a Google calendar with a timestamp log for notes a user adds to an event. It does not seem to have much value for the price

Kidganizer

Pricing: $2.99/month.

Platforms: iOS

Website: http://kidganizer.com/

Features: Shared calendar, expense tracking with storage of receipts but unclear if you can send the receipt to the other parent, and third party access. Available in English, French, and Russian.

Take Away: Kidganizer has limited functionality compared to other co-parenting apps.

SharedCare

Pricing: $3.99/month.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://sharedcare.net.au/

Features: Shared calendar and change requests, expense and payment tracking with ability to export reimbursement requests, newsfeed for sharing photos and comments that also functions

as the messaging feature, percentage of care reports, health information database, and third party access. Available in English, Spanish, French, and German.

Take Away: SharedCare has some features common to more robust co-parenting apps, but the lack of a dedicated messaging feature is a big drawback. The features it does have function less than optimally.

Two Happy Homes

Pricing: Pay what you want pricing starting at $1/month.

Platforms: website

Website: www.twohappyhomes.com

Features: Shared calendar, noteboard for communication, track finances, online payments, storage for contacts and medical information, sharing and storage for photos and documents, and co-parent community forum.

Take Away: Two Happy Homes has some features common to other co-parenting apps, but the lack of information on their website as to how it actually works does not impart confidence. Since it also lacks mobile options, the functionality seems limited. The pay what you want pricing and community forum are unique.

ParentShip

Pricing: $3.99/month or $39.99/year, 30-day free trial.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://www.parentship.co/

Features: Shared calendar that integrates with your Google Calendar, child profiles for important information and contacts, and storage and sharing of documents and photos.

Take Away: ParentShip does not have as many features as more robust co-parenting apps and seems to be aimed more at sharing information with caretakers other than parents.

Custody Connection

Pricing: $2.99/year; synced calendar $9.99/year; 30-day free trial.

Platforms: iOS

Website: http://www.custodyconnection.com/

Features: Shared calendar with ability to request changes, child profile for important information, contacts, and medication schedule, and custody tracking and reporting.

Take Away: Custody Connection has more limited functions than many co-parenting apps, but the medication scheduling is unique.

III.   Other Technology Tools for Co-Parenting

Co-parenting apps are not the only tools available to parties in custody cases. Apps aimed at families and the general public can also be beneficial to co-parents. Sometimes people going through family law litigation are so stressed, they forget what is right at their fingertips. As lawyers, we can help them problem solve with simple solutions they may already be incorporating in their daily lives but have not thought to apply to their custody case.

a. Family Management Apps

Many co-parents may already be using family management apps that could continue to be appropriate for the family, especially if high-conflict communication is not a big issue. Family management apps often provide calendaring, shared lists, contacts, messaging, photo sharing, and access for children. Popular family management apps include SquareHub, Cozi, Skedi, and FamCal. If a family is already using a family management app that serves their purposes, it is probably better to stick with what the family already knows and likes. If additional tools are needed

such as more intensive communication platforms and monitoring or payment platform, an additional app can supplement the app that is already in place.

b. Google Platforms

Many clients also already use Gmail and related Google platforms that serve similar functions to co-parenting apps. Particularly for clients who are not tech savvy, Google platforms may be a more accessible and manageable option than apps. Gmail can print all emails from one sender once selected through an add on available through Google Sheets. Google Calendar allows for shared calendars and event invitations and edit requests. Google Photos allows for sharing photos and albums. Google Hangouts allows for messaging and video chat. Google Keep allows for shareable lists and notes. Google Drive allows for sharing of documents in several formats. Google Contacts allows you to share contacts.

Despite the broad functionality available to co-parents through Google platforms, there is a benefit to separating out co-parenting into platforms separate from the rest of their lives. For parents who respond poorly in the heat of the moment or find it stressful to communicate with the other parent, they may not want to be doing so on the platforms they are on constantly where they are interacting with the rest of their family, friends, and possibly coworkers. Having to access a specific app to deal with co-parenting issues helps ensure parents are focused on the children and in the right mental space to address co-parenting at that moment.

c. Apps Promoting Parenting Positivity

General parenting apps promoting family relationships can also be used in custody cases. Parents who want to reduce conflict could view these apps as a gesture of good will towards the other parent to start improving their co-parenting relationship.

Edukily

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://edukily.com/index-en.php

Features: Videochat that allows you to read stories, draw, and help your child with homework by displaying a shared screen during video calls, text messages, and voice notes.

Artkive

Pricing: Starting at 25 pieces for $60; app is free.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.artkiveapp.com/#home

Features: They send you a box which you fill with your children's art and you send back to them to be turned into professional photographs accessible through the app.

d. Video Chat

Video chat apps are extremely prevalent these days and can be used for parents when they are talking to children on the other parent's custodial time. They are particularly beneficial for younger children who are not proficiently verbal or may have trouble paying attention on phone calls and for long-distance parents who children do not get to see in person as frequently. Popular video apps include FaceTime, Skype, Facebook Messenger, and Google Duo. Parenting Plans should be update to ensure you are including video chat apps in all the phone call provisions. The same goes for text messages and social media platforms—communication provisions should be revised to include these forms of communication. Best practice is to include all forms of communication rather than limiting it to certain types of platforms as technology continues to develop.

e. Daycare Apps and School Portals

Schools and daycares are becoming increasingly tuned into technology (and to the desires of parents to be more connected and involved in their children's lives while in third-party care). Day care apps often provide videos and photos of children playing throughout the day and serve as communication and payment portals. School portals are a communication tool between parents, teachers, and administrators, provide access to school calendars and news, provide access to a child's records and grades, and provide access to homework assignments. Portals may be available for both parents and students. Parents in custody cases should make sure they are tuned into whatever platforms the school or daycare is using and that they are taking advantage of the features offered on those platforms to actively engage with the provider.

f. GPS Tracking Apps

Parents in contested custody cases should be aware of tracking apps that the other parent may install on the child's phone. Tracking apps may track both GPS location of the phone as well as phone activity. Apps may be hard to detect as they are designed to be hard for children to detect and turn off or remove. While these apps may be helpful tools for monitoring children's behavior, if co-parents are using a tracking app, both parents should know about and have access to the app so that healthy oversight of a child does not cross the line into monitoring activity in the other parent's household.

IV. Parenting Time Logging Apps

Sometimes a case is beyond productive co-parenting and one parent is simply not holding up their end of the bargain. For cases where one parent is repeatedly missing or withholding parenting time or repeatedly late on paying child support, the other parent may simply need to document the issues for court. Logging apps help parents create a record of what is happening.

Alimentor

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS

Website: alimentor.org/en/

Features: Parenting time tracking and reports that can be exported, expense and payment tracking with ability to attach receipts, log actual compared to planned parenting time and payments and custody calendar that can generate reports to send to the other parent.

Take Away: Alimentor is designed for logging behavior rather than trying to co-parent productively, which may be useful to some clients.

The Go Log

Pricing: $2.99/month.

Platforms: iOS

Website: http://thegolog.com/

Features: Custody calendar with ability to add notes and photos, parenting time tracker and timeline, expense tracking, payment tracking with ability to store pictures of receipts, behavior log, and reports for expenses, payments, and parenting time.

Take Away: The Go Log provides tracking and reports for parenting time and expenses, which can be helpful in certain cases.

Custody X Change

Pricing: One-time cost starts at $67 for lite edition; $147 for personal edition; and $297 for deluxe edition; $497 plus $97/computer for professional lite; $747 plus $197/computer for professional full.

Platforms: website

Website: www.custodyxchange.com

Features: Create parenting plans with a library of over 100 customizable provisions, export the plan schedule to your personal calendar, calculate percentages and hours of parenting time, custody and visitation journal, and compare actual and planned parenting time.

Take Away: Custody X Change has some logging features, but it is primarily aimed at helping parents come up with a custody schedule, including lots of overly complicated schedule suggestions.

V.   Alcohol Testing and Sobriety Support Technology

One of the most challenging issues to deal with in a custody case is when one parent has a substance abuse problem. The other parent constantly worries about the child while in the addicted parent's care. It may be difficult to prove in court that the parent actually has a problem. The court struggles to strike the right balance between ensuring the child has a relationship with the addicted or recovering parent and ensuring the child's physical safety. Luckily, new technology is making it easier than ever to address substance abuse issues in custody cases.

a.   Remote Alcohol Monitoring

Remote alcohol monitoring is handheld breathalyzer testing that sends the results to third parties such as the other parent or the guardian ad litem. Results can be received in live time, so one parent can rest assured the other parent is not drinking around the children. For the testing parent, these tests are much more convenient than testing at a facility. These tests are also much more frequent than testing at a facility, so the monitoring parent does not have to worry the other parent has started drinking between testing dates. Unfortunately, it does not seem like remote drug testing similar to remote alcohol testing has been developed yet for personal use, but for cases involving alcohol abuse, these tests provide significant piece of mind.

SoberLink

Pricing: $299-399 for testing device; $99-199/month for parenting time only (up to 20 days); $149-249 daily testing; 120 day commitment then month-to-month.

Platforms: Portable breathalyzer with facial recognition technology and tamper detection sensors.

Website: www.soberlink.com

Features: Remote alcohol testing with a professional grade portable device on a set schedule with text message reminders or a schedule determined by the user, does not provide randomized testing, live time results to multiple contacts by text and email, and summary daily and weekly reports.

BACtrack

Pricing: $79.99-$129.99/month; 14-day free trial.

Platforms: iOS with police-grade breathalyzer connected to a smartphone.

Website: www.bactrack.com

Features: On-demand by a designated person or randomized testing, real-time photo and location verified results, connections receive results through the app, and PDF reporting.

BI SL2

Pricing: $20/day with a maximum $75/ week; one-time set up fee of $50 and shipping fee of $35.

Platforms: Portable breathalyzer with facial recognition and tamper detection features.

Website: bi.com/products-and-services/sl2-alcohol-monitoring-device-remote-detection-system/

Features: Remote alcohol testing with customizable testing schedule with text alerts, real-time text or email alerts for positive or missed tests to designated recipients, daily, weekly, and monthly reports, facial recognition, and GPS logging. Monitored by Paymer Associates.

b. Drug Court Remote Breathalyzer Programs

Some drug court programs now offer remote monitoring similar to the programs listed above. These programs may be more acceptable to a judge or guardian ad litem due to familiarity and court involvement. Availability, pricing, and technology varies by court. Call your local drug court for details.

c. Other Alcohol Monitoring Options

Many other alcohol monitoring programs exist that are aimed at criminal cases, employers monitoring workplace compliance and safety, medical treatment and addiction recovery, and individual consumers who want to make sure they are below the legal limit to drive. While these companies may break into the family law field, until they do, it is probably best to work with the companies that already serve family law clients.

The availability of real-time remote monitoring does not mean you should exclude more comprehensive testing like hair follicle testing or fingernail testing to demonstrate a continuous period of sobriety.

d. Sobriety Support Apps

In addition to monitoring the parties who have an alcohol problem, we want to encourage the sobriety of those parties. We often have to have tough conversations with addicted or recovering clients regarding the impact of their addiction on their custody cases. We should also be offering them support resources to help maintain their sobriety and pass the alcohol monitoring tests that have likely been implemented in their case.

AA Big Book

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.aa.org/pages/en_US/alcoholics-anonymous

Features: Read the Big Book, the basic text for Alcoholics Anonymous, describing the recovery program, connect and discuss the Big Book with others in the program, find meetings in all 50 states, listen to AA and recovery podcasts and speaker tapes from meetings around the world, and sobriety calculator. For alcohol recovery.

I am Sober

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: iamsoberapp.com

Features: Motivational companion app for tracking your sobriety, sober clock and monetary calculator, milestone recognition, daily motivation, and daily pledge. For alcohol and drug recovery.

SoberGrid

Pricing: Free; supporting member options.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.sobergrid.com

Features: Track and share sobriety progress with the world's largest mobile sobriety community, 24/7 certified peer recovery coaching, geosocial networking to find sober people wherever you are with the option to remain anonymous, newsfeed and individual chat functions, and daily check-ins and quests to build sober habits. For alcohol and drug recovery.

NA Speaker Tapes and Addiction Recovery Audio

Pricing: $3.99/month; $6.99/three months.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Features: Narcotics Anonymous steps and traditions, daily readings, stories of recovery, 12-step workshops, and sober meditations and prayers. For drug recovery.

Pink Cloud

Pricing: $0.99/month; $4.99/six months; $9.99/year.

Platforms: iOS

Website: http://gopinkcloud.com/

Features: AA and NA meeting finder, sobriety tracker, daily checklist, and journal. For drug and alcohol recovery.

Clean Today and Sober Today

Pricing: Free, in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Andorid

Features: Meditations, clean/sober time tracking and monetary calculator, clean/sober time chips, and daily reflections. Clean Today for drug addiction recovery and Sober Today for alcohol addiction recovery.

VI. Apps for Downloading Text Messages

Clients love sending attorneys text message evidence and attorneys dread receiving those screen shots. It is a waste of time, and therefore of client funds, for someone in the attorney's office to compile the screenshots into a packet that is somewhat readable. Even once compiled, the screenshots overlap and cut things off making them difficult for anyone, such as the judge, to read them. If the conversations are cut off, they risk being inadmissible in court. Luckily, there are

several apps that with the click of a few buttons can download all of the text messages in one conversation into a PDF that is easily presentable in court.

Print Text Messages

Pricing: $3.99

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://www.printtextmessages.net/

Features: Saves text messages to PDF.

Email My Texts

Pricing: $4.90

Platforms: Android

Website: http://www.printmytexts.com/

Features: Send text messages to email, Evernote, or Dropbox.

Decipher Text Message

Pricing: $29.99; 30-day money-back guarantee.

Platforms: iOS

Website: deciphertools.com/decipher-textmessage.html

Features: Saves text messages to PDF including photos, videos, and attachments, recovers deleted text messages, and makes message history searchable.

VII.   Child Support Payment Apps

While not technically a custody issue, payment of child support can cause significant conflict between co-parents. Using payment apps helps avoid any confusion over whether child support has been paid, provides a clear record of payment dates and amounts in case it needs to be

used in court, and encourages on time payment since it is in a method convenient to the payor. Some platforms even extend credit to allow the payor to timely pay when they are short on funds.

Co-parenting apps reviewed above that include a payment feature: Our Family Wizard, AppClose, Smart Coparent, and Two Happy Homes.

SupportPay

Pricing: $14.99/month; $9.99/month paid annually.

Platforms: website

Website: supportpay.com

Features: Track expenses and payments and make payments through your bank account, Paypal, or manually.

DCSS on the go

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: childsupport.georgia.gov

Features: Make payments, upload documentation, submit forms, custodial parent management of direct deposit, view twelve months of payment history, schedule appointments, receive notifications, and access general information about DCSS.

PayPal

Pricing: Free; fees may apply when sending funds.

Platforms: website, iOS, Android

Website: www.paypal.com/us/home

Features: Send money online securely using the recipient's phone or email, transfer money between bank accounts and PayPal, can send money in different currencies, in-app digital line of credit, and direct access to your in-app account balance with debit and pre-paid cards..

Venmo

Pricing: Free; fees may apply when sending funds.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: venmo.com

Features: Online secure payments using the recipient's phone or email, transfer money between your bank account and venmo, and transaction fees waived for money sent with your bank account or debit card.

VIII. Divorce Support and Wellness Apps

Even when a family law cases is going well, it can still be one of the most stressful times in a person's life. Add in complex custody issues, and the case can be almost too much for some litigants to handle. The stress can affect their actions during the case, which in turn can negatively impact the case, or make them simply too burned out to deal with the process any more. Support and self-care can go a long way in helping a person get through the family law litigation experience. While these apps are not a substitute for professional therapy, they can supplement therapy or be a resource for people who simply do not have the time or funds to go to therapy during their case.

a. Divorce Support Apps

Divorce support apps are specifically targeted at helping people cope with the divorce experience, whether by building community, helping them talk to their children about it, or helping them manage their emotions.

Divorce Community

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://divorcecommunity.com/

Features: Community forum created by divorce attorneys as an emotional support tool to get you through divorce while working with legal counsel, post-divorce support, provides articles and information on dealing with divorce in positive ways, community connection, and support and encouragement.

The Divorce App

Pricing: Free.

Platforms: iOS

Website: http://drwoliver.com/

Features: Helping children cope with divorce by educating adults on what children are feeling at each stage based on their age, and activities for children to help them understand the divorce.

DivorceWorks

Pricing: $4.99

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: http://divorceworksmedia.com/

Features: Designed by psychologists to help with emotional awareness, provides a reference guide, emotional tracking, self-help quizzes, journaling, and tips to calm you down and comfort you.

b. Wellness Apps

The real world does not stop spinning just because someone is going through a custody case, and there are plenty of resources in that world that may even help them get through the case. On particularly stressful days, attorneys may even find they can benefit from these apps too!

Calm

Purpose: Meditation.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.calm.com

Features: Guided meditations for beginning and advanced meditators, bedtime stories for adults to promote sleep, guided lessons for mindful movement and gentle stretching, and music for focus, relaxation, and sleep.

Happify

Purpose: Mental health.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.happify.com

Features: Build resilience and emotional health by breaking patterns and building new habits based on positive psychology, mindfulness, and cognitive behavior therapy, science-based activities and games that provide you tools to overcome stress and negative thoughts, and happiness score tracking.

My Possible Self

Purpose: Mental health.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: www.mypossibleself.com

Features: Personalized self-help toolkit based on the issues you want to tackle, learning modules based on therapy models, daily emotion tracking, journal with emoji rating system that allows photo and video entries, and goal setting.

Daily Workouts Fitness Trainer

Purpose: Fitness.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android, and Amazon Apps

Website: http://dailyworkoutapps.com/

Features: 5-10 minute targeted workouts, 10-30 minute full body workouts, on-screen instructions and timer, and exercises you can do at home.

Asana Rebel

Purpose: Yoga.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Website: asanarebel.com

Features: Yoga for fat burn, strength, flexibility, balance, focus, breathing, and relaxation, personalized yoga workouts based on your goals designed to be done anywhere, track progress and share results, community, and chat with Success Team.

Color Therapy Coloring Number

Purpose: Relaxation.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS

Features: Coloring page library with themes and customizable coloring pages, community to follow, comment, and participate in challenges, and music.

Relax Melodies

Purpose: Sleep.

Pricing: Free; in-app purchases.

Platforms: iOS, Android

Features: Create a custom sleep mix with timer, guided exercises to help you fall asleep, and multi-day programs and single sessions on sleep-related topics. Doubles as a portable white noise machine.

IX.   Conclusion

Apps are not going to magically resolve your case or suddenly make high-conflict parents get along, but they can make the experience at least a little better for everyone involved. Whether it is facilitating co-parenting communications, logging parenting time violations, monitoring alcohol use, making it easier to pay child support, or providing emotional support, apps ease some of the challenges of a difficult experience. Just like the rest of our advice, apps are not a one-size fits all solution. We need to know what options are out there so that we can suggest apps that are relevant and timely to a client's specific needs.