

On-line Art Gallery Reveals Children’s Experience of Divorce *Kids’ Art-Making Encourages Expression of Feelings*

By Lawrence F. King, Attorney-Mediator

Mental health professionals (and many parents) have long understood how art can assist children to identify and express their feelings about their parents’ divorce or separation. Encouraging children to paint and draw validates their experience and emotions, and acknowledges the impact of divorce on their life and that of their family.



Colorado Center for Divorce Mediation™ and *Divorce in Denver Magazine* co-sponsor an on-line Kids’ Divorce Art Gallery, hosting the imagery of children’s experience of divorce.

Lawrence King, J.D. a Colorado family attorney-mediator and developer of the Center’s website, created the resource after contacting and collaborating with Boulder, Colorado art therapist, Sue Wallingford. Sue writes of her perspective, as an artist and expressive therapist:

For children, like their parents, divorce is often a traumatic and life-changing event. Unlike their parents, however, children often lack the verbal skills or emotional maturity adequately to process their feelings with words.

Art-making is an alternative that allows for the poignant communication of feelings. Art may portray inner thoughts and wishes of children that they can not otherwise easily access or express.

The difficult emotions that often accompany divorce take form in line, shape and color! As a result, children are able to make sense of what is happening in the changing landscape of their family and indeed, their world. Painting, drawing or other creating of art affords children a way literally to express, see and work through their experience of divorce.

Cyndee (Cyndee Rae, *Divorce in Denver’s* editor), Sue and I believed that the old proverb - “a picture is worth ten thousand words” - would hold true in this context as well.

The Gallery presently exhibits several powerful examples of Colorado kids’ divorce art. In one (“World War III”), Lizzy, a 12 year old girl, describes in symbols what it feels like when her parents fight. In another (“Crossroads”), Avery, a 10 year old boy, portrays the torn allegiances he feels in the midst of his parents’ divorce.

Readers and website visitors are encouraged to visit the gallery (www.ColoradoDivorceMediation.com/art) and listen with your hearts. Additional submissions are invited.

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