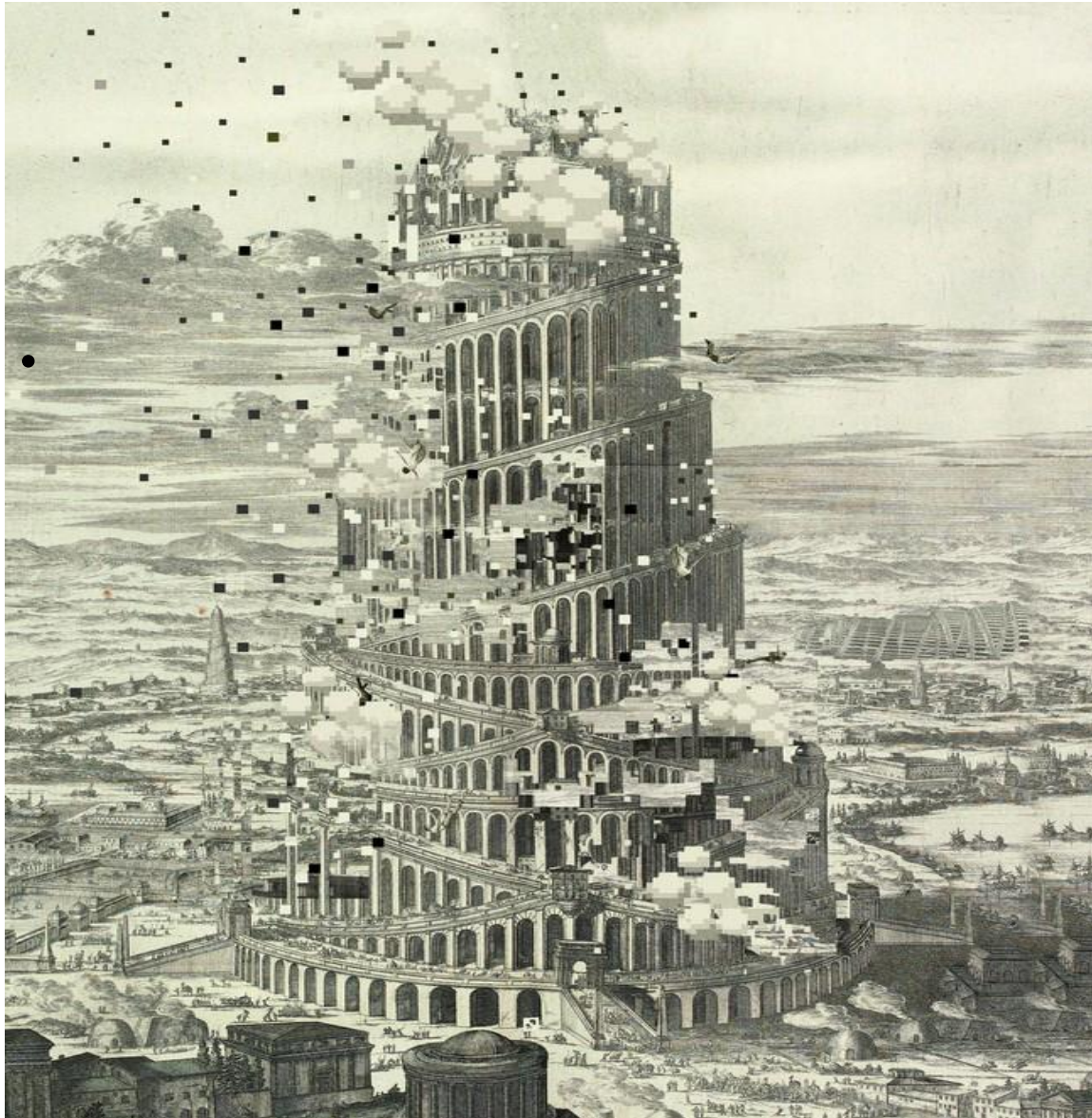

PARENT-CHILD CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS- CHALLENGES FOR 2025

Brian Adams EdD

James Cole, PhD



THE ATLANTIC: AMERICA OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

- Disregard for the Rule of Law
 - Governance by Executive Order
 - Loss of trust in Scientific Data
 - Loss of Respect for Authority
 - Emphasis on “Me” rather than “We”
-



POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN OVEREMPHASIS ON "ME":

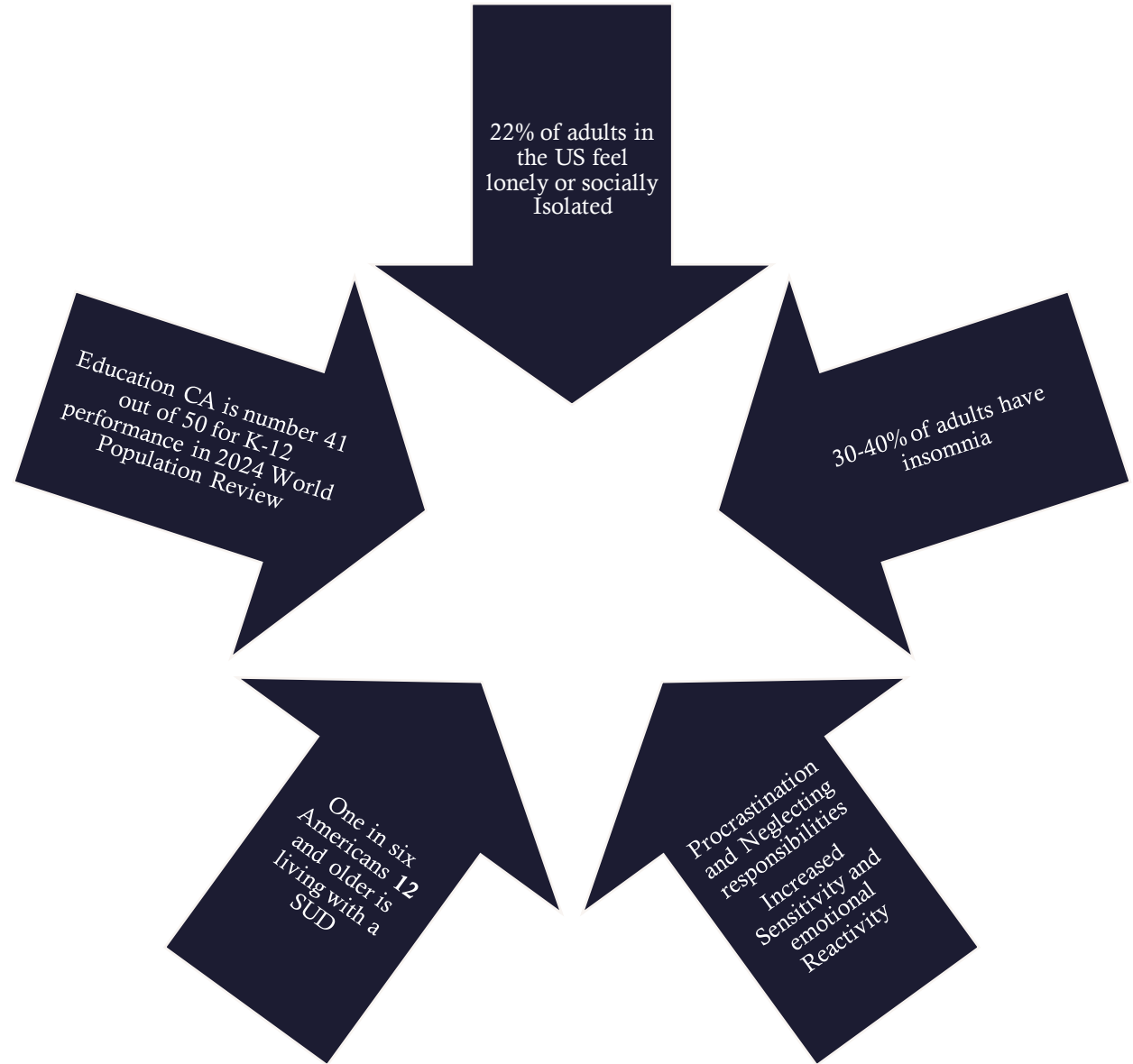
- **Reduced Empathy and Compassion:** An overemphasis on individual needs can lead to a lack of concern for others, potentially resulting in greater economic disparity and a lack of support for those less fortunate.
- **Difficulty in Cooperation:** A "me first" attitude can make it challenging to work together to solve problems, especially when dealing with issues that require collective action, such as climate change or social inequalities.
- **Social Polarization:** Individualistic values can contribute to a sense of division and make it harder to find common ground or compromise.
- **Increased Competition:** A focus on individual achievement can lead to a competitive environment where people are constantly striving to outperform others, potentially at the expense of collaboration and teamwork.



POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN OVEREMPHASIS ON "ME":

- **Erosion of Community:** A decline in "we" thinking can weaken social bonds and lead to a sense of isolation and detachment from the community.
- **Narcissism and Self-Centeredness:** Society's emphasis on celebrity, appearance, and narcissistic role models and leaders may be playing a part in the rise in self-centeredness.
- **Lack of Reciprocity:** An emphasis on "me" can lead to a lack of reciprocity, where individuals are more focused on what they can get from others rather than what they can contribute.

SIGNS OF STRESS IN SOCIETY



POST COVID INCREASE IN THE COST OF LIVING AS OF 2024



Consumer price
index for all items
has risen 21.2%



Food prices have
increased 23.6 %



Transportation
prices have
increased 34.4 %



Housing costs
have increased 23
%



A dozen eggs cost
83% more in 2024
than they did in
2019



A four-pound bag
of sugar costs
74% more than it
did in 2019

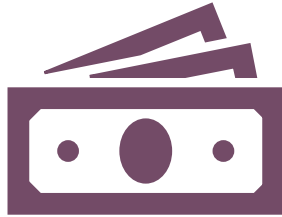


Laundry
Detergent has
risen \$1, but the
container is
smaller



AI search
overview

WAGES AND SALARIES



Wages and salaries increased 3.8 percent for the 12 months ending December 2024



The cost of benefits increased 4.9 % for the same 12-month period, and they increased 4.6 percent for the 12 months ending in December 2023



In California, wages are increasing, but they are not keeping up with inflation, workers purchasing power is declining

MENTAL HEALTH SINCE COVID

01

Since COVID,
depression and anxiety
are up 25 %
GLOBALLY

02

The effects of the
isolation and loss of
employment etc. from
COVID exacerbated
the symptoms of those
who already had a
mental health diagnosis

03

Women and youth are
the most heavily
affected, though the
effects affect everyone

THE EFFECTS ON THE FAMILIES WE WORK WITH

Large increase of disrespectful behavior in all aspects of what we do

Large increase in complaints due to what the mediator recommended because the mediator does not see the situation as the parent does.

Increase in disobedience to DVRO's and custody orders

Increase in child abuse and DVRO's due to increased mental health issues

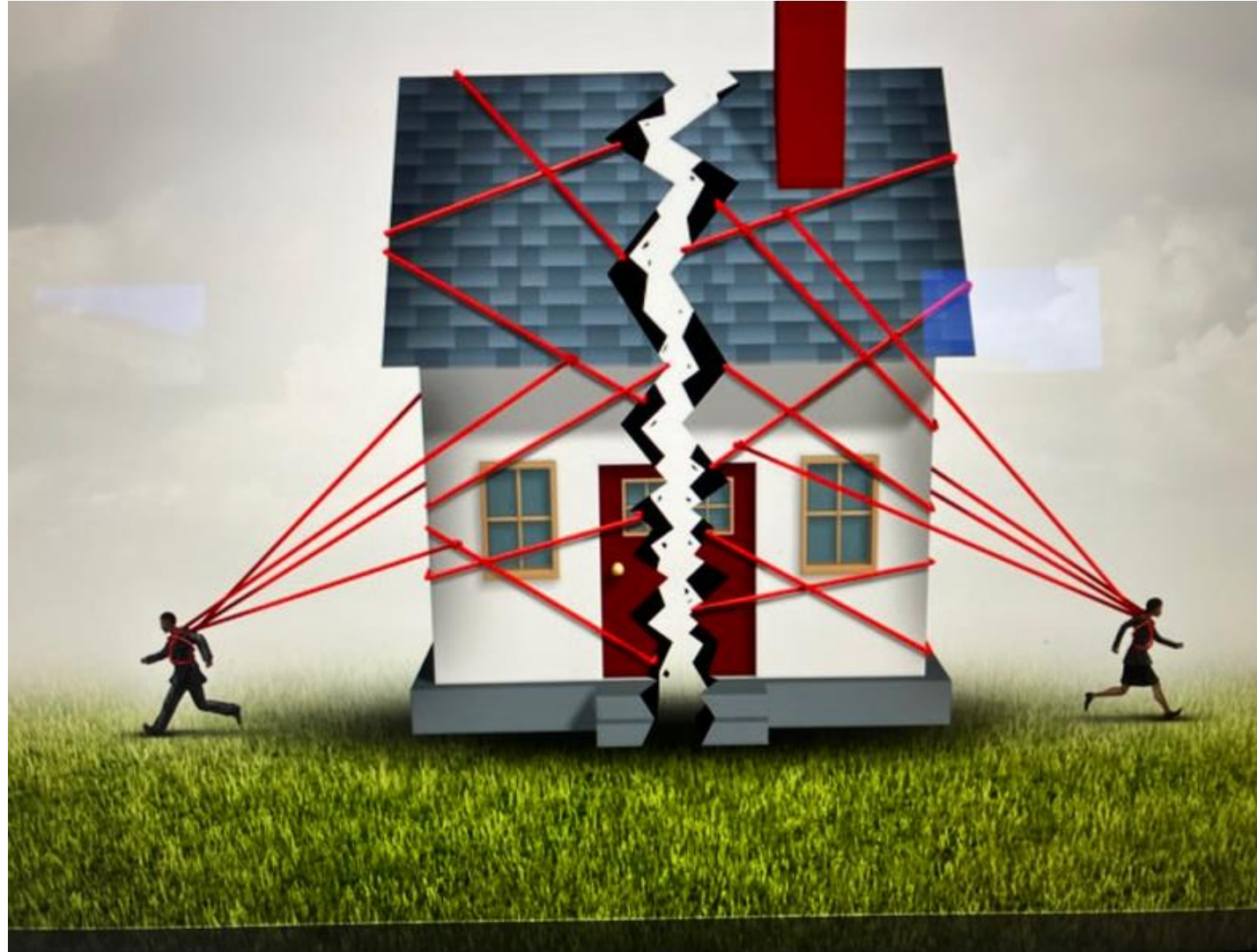
Seen not only in the family law work but in the probate work as well.

In 2019 the agreement rate for Mediations was 73%, in 2024 it was 29%



THE EFFECTS ON THE FAMILIES WE WORK WITH

- In order to get a clearer view of what is happening in the families, we now need to make several collateral contacts in most mediations to get the full picture of what is going on before we can make an accurate recommendation



WHAT WE ARE SEEING

Parties are not willing to negotiate, Black and White thinking

I'm not willing to give up one more thing

Lack of education on how their conflict affects the children, parenting, coparenting, and how their behavior affects the children

Strong denial of substance abuse problems

More Psychosis, which is a loss of touch with reality

THE EFFECTS ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE PARTIES SEEN IN THE MEDIATION OFFICE AND COURTROOM

- A father stating to the judge he would not obey the court's order, escalating to him being arrested in the hallway
- Increased need for the mediation department to warn the bailiffs in the courtroom about a parent, the need for extra bailiffs in the court room, and the mediator being unable to review the mediation with the parties in their office due to safety issues for the mediator
- Full changes of custody are happening much more frequently today than they were in 2019
- Mentally ill parties are experiencing much more pronounced symptoms
- Substance abuse issues and frequency are much higher
- There has been a large increase in the parties feeling entitled to what they want for custody and wanting to fully control the process.



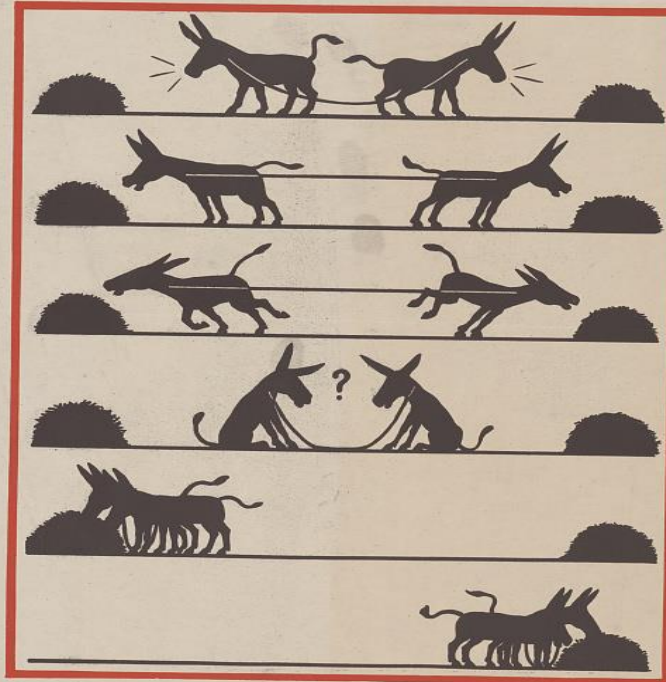
WHAT NOW?



- The bench, mediation department and the attorneys all need to work together on all cases to provide the best solution for the families
- All of us must continue to provide education and services that promote the families working together with the court system, rather than as combatants.
- Each one of us has strengths that can be amplified by working together to help the families resolve their custody issues
- While all three have certain restrictions that must be followed, all three are necessary and important, and we do a disservice to the families if we are only acting as silo's rather than a team.

'THE TWO MULES'

A fable for the Nations



MORAL :
CO-OPERATION
is better than Conflict†

These posters can be obtained from American Friends Service Committee 20 South 22nd Street, Phila. Friends Peace Committee, 304 Arch Street, Phila. National Council for Prevention of War 532-17th St., N. W.
Women's International League, 1524 Chestnut Street, Phila. Price 25 per hundred D.C., each postpaid