

## MORE INFORMATION

### NOW Foundation Family Law Resources:

<https://now.org/now-foundation/crisis-in-family-courts>  
Resources of all kinds compiled by NOW Family Law Committee.

### Families Against Court Travesties, Inc. (FACTs)

[www.FactsCourtWatch.org](http://www.FactsCourtWatch.org)

Educating and holding the Justice System accountable for its actions in Florida courts.

### Parental Rights Class Action:

[www.ParentalRightsClassAction.com](http://www.ParentalRightsClassAction.com). Join a national suit to challenge injustices in family court.

### Liz Notes: [www.thelizlibrary.org](http://www.thelizlibrary.org)

Women's legal and reference library on law, politics, motherhood and marriage.

### Justice for Children: [www.justiceforchildren.org](http://www.justiceforchildren.org)

Advocates for abused children failed by family courts or Child Protective Services.

### Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment &

**Appeals Project:** [www.dvleap.org](http://www.dvleap.org) Legal advocacy group that uses the courts to enforce accountability of abusive partners.

### Stop Family Violence: [www.stopfamilyviolence.org](http://www.stopfamilyviolence.org)

Advocates at the local, state and national levels to achieve peace and safety in the family.

The **National NOW Family Law Ad Hoc Committee** was created in April, 2004. This all-volunteer committee is comprised of parents, grandparents, activists, paralegals, organizers, attorneys, and advocates from across the nation who offer their collective experience in family law courts to aid NOW Foundation's efforts in promoting justice and equality for women.

The **Palm Beach County Chapter of the National Organization for Women** developed **FACTs, Inc.** in 2002, which is a court watch system of volunteers who observe courtroom proceedings, review the behavior of the judges and attorneys, and plan actions to address any problems. This was in response to the tremendous upsurge in cries for help from parents, with numerous calls asking for assistance and support concerning family law custody issues.

## JOIN US NOW!

### You can help fight the crisis in family courts.

We need court watchers and donations; either is welcome. Families Against Court Travesties, Inc. (FACTs) is a 501(c)(3) corporation. Donations are tax deductible but membership in FACTs, Inc. is free. Call us, contact us through our website: [www.FactsCourtWatch.org](http://www.FactsCourtWatch.org)

REGISTRATION#: CH51180A

COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OR AT THE WEBSITE [www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com](http://www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

## FACTs, Inc.

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Delray Beach, FL 33482

(800) 201-5560

[www.FactsCourtWatch.org](http://www.FactsCourtWatch.org)

[FactsCourtWatch@gmail.com](mailto:FactsCourtWatch@gmail.com)

[Facebook.com/FamiliesAgainstCourtTravesties](https://www.facebook.com/FamiliesAgainstCourtTravesties)

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To join Palm Beach County  
National Organization for Women,  
mail \$40 check to:

Palm Beach County NOW  
PO Box 7322  
Delray Beach, FL 33482



(888) 394-0004

[nowpbc@gmail.com](mailto:nowpbc@gmail.com)

[www.nowpbc.org](http://www.nowpbc.org)

(also available through PayPal)

## Crisis For Women in Family Court: What to Expect and How to Fight Back



Families  
Against  
Court  
Travesties

### Goals of Families Against Court Travesties, Inc. (FACTs)

- **Judges** who keep children's welfare above all
- **Lawyers** who encourage speedy, equitable resolution of their cases
- **Parents** who restrain their impulse for revenge and keep their child's emotional welfare above all
- **Children** who are allowed to maintain positive and continuous contact with both parents
- **Family courts** which adhere to the rules of evidence, due process and constitutional rights



Published in conjunction with National Organization for Women's Ad Hoc Family Law Advisory Committee and Palm Beach County NOW.

[www.FactsCourtWatch.org](http://www.FactsCourtWatch.org)

<https://now.org/now-foundation/crisis-in-family-courts>

[www.nowpbc.org](http://www.nowpbc.org)

## MYTHS

*“Good mothers don’t lose custody of their kids.”*  
*“Courts consider the best interest of the child.”*  
*“Family Courts adhere to the law.”*  
*“Courts protect children from abusers.”*  
*“Parents make children lie about abuse.”*

## A Crisis in Family Courts

*“Many standard custody court practices all err on the side of denying or minimizing domestic violence and child abuse. The result is that courts routinely place children in jeopardy.”*

*-Barry Goldstein, Stop Child Abuse Campaign*

There is a crisis for parents and their children in many of the family law courts of this country. Affirmed by experts and skilled court watchers, the existence of this crisis is verified by parents in every state who report injustice in their divorce and custody cases.

This is true especially for battered mothers trying to protect their children from abusive fathers who aggressively litigate against them, using family courts to stalk, harass, punish, and impoverish their former partners and children. Some fathers are aided by biased judges and court-appointed personnel, along with aggressive ‘men’s rights’ networks.

## Tips from the Front Lines

### Divorce and Custody Cases

**NOTE:** *These suggestions are not legal advice. There is no substitute for a qualified attorney.*

### Understanding the Process

- ✓ You cannot assume that the primary caregiver during the marriage will be awarded primary custody after the divorce.
- ✓ Be aware of possible time limits for responding to motions, appeals, and other legal papers.
- ✓ When appearing for a hearing on one motion or petition, do not expect a judge to allow you to offer testimony on another matter or file a counter petition at that hearing.
- ✓ Find out everything you can about the players in your case, the laws affecting your case, and what can happen to children in family law courts.

## Courts, Lawyers, Other Personnel

- ✓ Get a good attorney! Research her/his expertise in family law and get referrals.
- ✓ Public legal aid services can vary widely from state to state, and free help is hard to find. For legal help, information, or attorney referrals consider your local and state bar associations, legal aid programs, domestic violence programs or a nearby law school clinic.
- ✓ Be careful in agreeing to any court-appointed guardians, psychologists, therapists, parent coordinators, evaluators or other professionals associated with your case – especially ones you do not choose. Inform the court that you would like to obtain background information on these people and, if you can, submit the name of someone you choose.

## Domestic Violence and Safety

- ✓ If you are concerned for your safety or your child’s, ask about “address confidentiality programs”. State domestic violence programs should have this information.
- ✓ In some states, you can request temporary custody and support when requesting a protective order; you may need an affidavit.

## Custody, Visitation and PAS

- ✓ Be alert to the use of phony diagnostic terms such as **Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS)** and **Alienated Child**. Trying to protect your child from violence and molestation can be deliberately misconstrued as any of the above and cause you to lose your child. PAS has been debunked by all ethical psychological organizations, as a scientifically invalid syndrome.
- ✓ Try not to agree to “give up custody temporarily”, even for a short time. It can be harder to get it back. If the child is away long enough, the court’s jurisdiction can change to the new residence, putting you at a disadvantage.
- ✓ Cooperate with the guardian ad litem (GAL) and find peaceful, non-confrontational ways to stay in contact with your kids if you don’t have custody. Don’t disparage the other parent. Try to set up a schedule for calls or other contact.

## Documents and Evidence

- ✓ Keep a notebook and document whom you call, whom you speak with, what they say, and what occurs with the other parent.
- ✓ Keep all papers and information about your case; don’t give away originals.
- ✓ When filing a motion for relief, include all the evidence you intend to submit (pages from the transcripts, medical records, expert statements). Check local rules for guidance.
- ✓ When addressing the court in affidavits, keep your language clear and non-emotional. Have someone proofread your documents for clarity.
- ✓ Have 3 copies of documents with you at hearings (for the judge, opposing counsel and yourself). Loose leaf binders are a good way to keep documents organized.

## Self-Advocacy

- ✓ Ask permission to have an assistant sit with you in court to help you with locating paperwork.
- ✓ If your deposition will be taken, try to have both parents deposed on the same day.
- ✓ If financial information is requested for any hearing, ask to have all information exchanged on the same day, preferably before the hearing. This way you can review the information.
- ✓ If there is no written order signed by the **judge** and entered, it may **not** be binding, so check.
- ✓ Build a case timeline. Keep it updated.
- ✓ If you are involved in a parenting or home evaluation and want to present evidence to the evaluator, build four binders of copies: two for you, one for evaluator, and one for the other side.
- ✓ Keep all documents in files according to date.
- ✓ You can go to the courthouse or go to the court website to obtain files and make copies.
- ✓ Even though you have paid for legal expertise, no lawyer is perfect. No one knows your case better than you do. Advocate for yourself.

## Contact Information

**Families Against Court Travesties, Inc.**

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