

### **Scenario 5: Dan and Lucy**

Dan and Lucy married after a brief but intense romance. Dan, an ER doctor, has two children by a previous marriage. He sees them every other weekend. He describes his first wife as “difficult.” Dan was divorced for just a few months before marrying Lucy. Lucy, has a Ph. D. in environmental science and teaches college about 30 hours a week. Dan and Lucy were married for only about a year before their son, Evan, was born.

Both parents report that the relationship became conflicted shortly after they were married, especially after the birth of their son. Lucy appears somewhat anxious and passive. She has trouble articulating her needs clearly and tends to get off topic when pressured. Lucy describes that after their wedding, Dan became increasingly possessive and controlling. She says he ridiculed her friends and family and would not allow her autonomy in financial matters. She says Dan had unrealistic expectations of her as a mother and wife, was harshly critical of her when she wanted time away from him, and would withdraw or tantrum based on his mood and her compliance with his demands. She feels Dan resented Evan’s birth because of how it impacted her care of the home and time for him.

Dan is calm and respectful. He articulates his concerns well. He attributes his and Lucy’s relationship problems to Lucy having lost interest in him after they married. He admits he became somewhat contemptuous of her during the pregnancy due to her obsessive focus on her health symptoms and her weight gain. He maintains that she began to show obsessive compulsive characteristics, and freely shares his opinion that she suffers untreated mental illness.

Lucy shares concerns that Dan has a sexual addiction, reporting frequent viewing of internet pornography. She tearfully discloses that on several occasions he “forced” her to perform sexual acts she found humiliating. She claims she felt pressured to comply because of Dan’s escalating verbal diatribes and attacks, the effect on her self esteem, and his threats to take their son if she left.

Lucy is very concerned about Dan having any extended parenting time with their son. She describes Dan as highly judgmental of her, hostile, angry, and manipulative. She is concerned that he has done little parenting with their son and characterizes him as self-centered and neglectful during his parenting time.

She has multiple concerns in this area, and becomes emotional and disorganized when detailing her worries about leaving Evan in Dan's care.

Lucy proposes a parenting time schedule that would have their son spend time with his father three times weekly, but would delay overnight time with Dan until the child is 3 years old. She points to his continually changing work schedule as an impediment to agreement.

Dan asserts that he has spent a good quantity of parenting time with his son. He dismisses his wife's concerns, noting that he has helped raise two prior children who are doing well by all reports. He is concerned that Lucy is limiting his time with his son due to her anxieties rather than any realistic concerns about the child. He believes that their son would benefit from a graduated parenting plan that affords him regular overnights, leading to 50/50 care when the child turns 4 years old. Dan reports that he is willing to be flexible with Lucy in arranging the timing of his overnights, but wants a document that ensures him twice weekly overnights now based on his work schedule.