

If you have never retained a Forensic Psychologist

There are several matters to consider when retaining my services as a forensic psychologist:

My primary mission as a forensic psychologist is providing unbiased information to assist the trier of fact. The information may or may not help your case. However, my report will provide objective information that may very well help your case.

For most cases, I am retained by a party's attorney. A sample Attorney Retainer Agreement can be downloaded on my Practice webpage. When you retain my services as an attorney, my work product is protected information until you decide to divulge my report to the Court.

In some cases, such as child custody evaluations, the Court may appoint me to conduct an evaluation. An Attorney Retainer Agreement is not used in this instance.

Your client will be required to review my Statement of Understanding with you before the evaluation can begin. My request that you review the Statement of Understanding with your client is my effort to protect your client's rights while covering the process of the evaluation for both you and your client. A sample Litigant Statement of Understanding can be downloaded on my Practice webpage.

The cost of forensic services can be significant. A typical forensic evaluation can easily involve 15-20 hours of examination, research, collateral interviews, record review and report writing. Complicated cases and those involving multiple parties such as child custody evaluation can easily involve more time. Testimony in addition to the forensic report will add additional hours.

Due to the time considerations, I require a retainer except in the case where a government agency retains my services (e.g. Public Defender). My Attorney Fee Agreement contains this information, and can be downloaded on my Practice webpage.

The time involved for a forensic evaluation can be lengthy. A simple forensic examination (e.g. competency to stand trial or civil competency for guardianship) on a fast track might be accomplished in several weeks. A tort liability (e.g. independent medical examination) or child custody evaluation can easily take two to three months. Information on the type of information useful for the evaluation is contained on the Adult or Juvenile Forensic Information forms and Litigant Information Sheet that can be downloaded on my Practice webpage.

Collateral information is critical to forensic evaluations. This information may include school, work, and medical records. Interviews with various people may be essential. A home visit is often important. Providing adequate collateral information is important in the early phases of an evaluation if a timely report is desired. The litigant must sign releases to obtain most of this information. A sample Forensic Release of Information can be downloaded on my Practice webpage.

Whether my services are retained or appointed by the Court, I endeavor to keep all attorneys informed of the steps necessary to complete the evaluation in a timely manner. If you have any questions regarding forensic psychological procedures, please feel free to contact me by email or call my office.

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Forensic and Clinical Psychology