

**The Center for Trauma Free Living
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Case Name: Kassenoff

Date: March 19, 2023

Treatment Summary/Update

Over the last two months there has been progress with all three girls and their relationship with their mother. Healing is clearly occurring and it is vital that progress continue.

Charley's behavior and attitude during visits has been consistently quite positive for the most part over this time period. She has been having one 60 minute sandwich visit in the Larchmont community with her mother weekly. Additionally, she and JoJo have been having a 90 minute supervised dinner visit in Carmel twice per month. These visits have included one successful dinner visit in the Larchmont community due to this writer's schedule and one which was held in Carmel but each girl came in individually for half the time - this was due to JoJo needing some individual clinical time with her mother.

There continues to be an issue where Charley and JoJo won't get in the car with their mother but they are unable to articulate why. There are clearly no safety concerns as the girls have driven with their mother since this writer has been involved and Ally drives with her weekly and in fact other families have allowed their children to drive with Ms. Kassenoff. It is my strong clinical opinion that if Charlie and JoJo are given the clear message by their father that they are expected to/must get into their mother's car that they will do so. This issue seems to be about power and control more than anything else.

Ally's sessions with her mother have continued to go very well. She is very positive about their time together and asking/for looking for more time with her mother and less restrictions on contact (i.e. texting vs. email; going to her mother's home, longer visits) in each session. Ally openly speaks about sleeping over at her mother's home and actually has spoken about spending "half the week" at her mothers and "half the week" at her fathers. Ms. Kassenoff has visited with Ally weekly in the community, has met Ally's friends, and attends Ally's skating lessons. The two speak about high school,

college, the future, friendships in their twice monthly clinical sessions. One concern is that Ally has the sense that her mother does not have any decision making powers in her life but that her father makes all decisions. She talked about being already signed up for a Jewish summer camp program that she attended last summer and that she will be attending with Charlotte and that the "money" was already paid. It is vital for all three girls that this narrative be rewritten and that they understand that they have two parents and that their parents need to make major decisions together. They have not yet experienced any successful co-parenting in their lives so they are not even aware that it can exist.

JoJo continues to struggle more than her sisters at this point in the reunification process. However, even with her additional struggle she has had some very nice visits with her mother. She demonstrates a greater need for a longer transition time than her sisters so these short visits are particularly difficult for her in that by the time she has adjusted to being with her mother and begun to relax the visit is over.

Unfortunately, the day before this report was finalized JoJo was exposed to the police being called to the ice arena while both parents were there for her skating lesson. Ms. Kassenoff has shared her perception of what happened and Mr. Kassenoff again decided not to speak to this writer about these very serious events as he does not wish to pay for this writer's time. It is unfortunate that this is an ongoing theme as he is the children's primary caretaker at this point and his refusal to engage in the reunification/therapeutic work for financial reasons (for context a half hour clinical session would be charged at \$75) is not helpful to the process. I would recommend that Mr. Kassenoff schedule two half hour sessions with me per month (at minimum) to increase positive communication, provide the opportunity for him to receive psychoeducational information on effective coparenting, and allow him to provide his observations of his children before and after visits. Another theme that these sessions could address is that Mr. Kassenoff frequently asks his children what they would like in terms of days for visits/locations/hours in a way that is not developmentally appropriate for them and puts a great deal of pressure on them. This has attempted to be addressed via email but that has not been successful as it continues on a weekly basis. It is also very difficult for Mr. Kassenoff to not focus on court/financial issues in his contact with this writer despite numerous attempts to redirect him from these conversations as they are not part of this writer's role.

This writer recommends that JoJo have an additional solo clinical session this week prior to her dinner visit so that the events of Saturday's fiasco/police involvement can be discussed. It is critical that Mr. Kassenoff have a clinical session prior to that so this

writer is aware of what JoJo was told about the police being at her skating lessons and what precipitated such a call from Mr. Kassenoff's perception.

This writer continues to recommend that Ms. Kassenoff become more of a part of the girls' everyday life. I recommend she go to any/all doctor appointments/dentist appointments/school functions/hair appointments/extracurricular activities. It is important that the parents remain away from each other, when possible, and not allow their conflict to become evident to the girls or others at the activity. I recommend that Ally and Ms. Kassenoff be allowed to communicate at will at this point with no need to copy this writer on emails and with texting/phone calls/face times etc being a part of their everyday interactions. JoJo and Charlotte I believe should commence daily email communications with their mother and for the first two weeks these emails should be copied to this writer. If there are no issues at that point I believe they should also have the same ability and be encouraged by their father, the current custodial parent, to communicate with their mother daily via phone/computer/facetime as Ally.

It continues to be a standing recommendation and absolutely crucial that all three girls become engaged in regularly scheduled individual therapy asap and that releases be provided so that all clinicians can communicate with one another.

It is this writer's strong clinical opinion that this mother and her children are ready to spend more time together on a weekly basis. I believe that Ally should continue with her two times a month clinical session with myself and her mother. I believe visits should increase to one weekday dinner visit (2 to 3 hours) and one day visit (6 to 8 hours) per weekend. I believe that JoJo and Charley should begin to have a weekly dinner visit of 2 or 3 hours with their mother individually each week - these visits no longer need to be sandwich visits. They should have a clinical session with their mother and this writer twice per month. I clinically recommend that Ms. Kassenoff should have a joint visit with all three girls two/three times a month that should begin at 2 hours but increase in duration after two visits. For example, the first two joint visits be 2 hours and the third and fourth visit be 4 hours. These visits could include meals, outdoor activities as we enter into spring, going to the movies - anything that allows this mother and her daughters productive and positive family time as a group.

It is important to reiterate and clarify that these incremental steps in increased contact are not because this writer believes there is a safety issue with Ms. Kassenoff and her time with her children. That has not been alleged by anybody at this point. The issues seem to center around the adult conflict and the children believing they have the right to dictate and limit their time with their mother due to the long history of her having to play a very limited role in their life with very limited contact.

This writer would also like to reiterate that it is my clinical opinion that it is virtually impossible for these girls to verbalize a desire to see more of their mother or to even admit a visit goes well at this point. Ally has been able to do so to a limited degree but she has verbalized that it has "cost" her in her father's household to do so. The two younger girls are less likely to say anything positive at this point after they saw the impact doing so had on Ally. It is important to look at the reality of the visits and observe them with their mother to see the progress that has been made. Adults need to make the decisions in this case about increasing access and moving forward it is too much to expect these young girls to do so with their history.

If there are any questions, or more information is needed, I can be reached at the above number.

Jennifer Culley, LCSW