



Unfortunately, being a targeted parent or caregiver has thrust most of us outside the limits of what we thought possible from another person—weaponizing a child or children to gain control and harm. I think it safe to say that if we could travel back in time and warn our past selves this was coming most of us would have thought our present selves were nuts. It would be inconceivable that those in our lives we loved would actually go to the lengths they have gone to in order to harm us and keep control over those most innocent and vulnerable. Or, perhaps even more terrifying, that some have gone off the rails to the point where they actually truly believe we are dangerous and need to stop us from having any kind of relationship at any cost.

So what do we do? As I said previously it is crucial for us to not feed the story they are spinning. We have to be as close to perfectly calm as we can be because the slightest misstep or expression of upset can be twisted around and make things far worse. After over two and a half years, I am still hearing the remnants of how volatile I am because when I first realized I was being set up for false allegations I got visibly upset in front of my child.

What I am about to say here is not meant to be medical advice or a recommendation of any kind. I know it seems to be helping me and I am learning more about the myths vs. the realities of going this route.

In addition to the EMDR therapy I mentioned last time, my therapist thought it would be a good idea for me to go on an anti-anxiety medication. I told her I was worried that it might be used as ammunition by my ex wife's lawyer if I did. I was given the same answer by my therapist, the court ordered reunification therapist, and my friend who has been a family law attorney for over 20 years: **No. It is not something to be worried about.** In fact, the reunification therapist added in that oftentimes judges even look at not doing something like this to deal with the stress as a negative.

I have been on Lexapro for the last two months for anxiety and added in Wellbutrin about three weeks ago for depression. Ironically, after about four weeks taking the Lexapro things began to quiet down enough that I became aware of how depressed I was. So far, I have been lucky to have minimal side effects. The way I describe the experience is that the mental “pitches” have slowed down from 120 mph across the plate to 80. They are not happy pills. They do not remove me from my feelings, but they have helped turning a tidal wave that felt like it would drown me to large waves I can ride a little bit better. I really noticed it in court last week when I had to go in and defend myself against something they were trying to do. I was able to be calm enough to articulate what I needed to, and actually came up with a solution to make the issue go away. I commented to my therapist last week that I thought the medication would make me less present but it’s been just the opposite. The stress was making me less present and I need to be present more than ever.

I think my closing thought on this is that if this is something you, a therapist, and doctor agree might be worthwhile do it in conjunction with other therapies and calming techniques. I also think it’s important to get active in trying to help others in whatever way you can—it will help you to help others know they aren’t alone.

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