

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: A-2020-36**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SUSPENDING REQUIREMENT THAT  
BATTERERS' INTERVENTION PROGRAM PROVIDERS MEET WITH  
PARTICIPANTS IN-PERSON**

**WHEREAS**, on January 6, 2020, the undersigned Chief Judge Daniel B. Merritt, Jr. issued Administrative Order No. A-2020-02, "*Administrative Order Governing Batterer' Intervention Program Providers & Rescinding Administrative Order a-2017-54*"; and

**WHEREAS**, the attachment to A-2020-02, "*Fifth Judicial Circuit Batterers Intervention Program Administrative Policies and Procedures*" in Section II.D. requires: "Each session must be conducted and attended in person. Virtual and/or electronic attendance sessions are not permitted."

**WHEREAS**, the ongoing public health crisis due to the threat of COVID-19 has made in-person meetings impracticable, and the use of Virtual and electronic meetings more wide-spread; and

**WHEREAS**, Pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, and Section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the Chief Judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice;

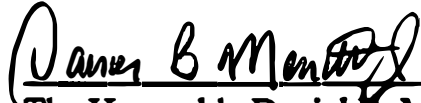
**IT IS THEREFORE, ORDERED and ADJUDGED that:**

1. Section II.D.1 of the attachment to A-2020-02, and incorporated therein, is hereby **SUSPENDED to the extent it prohibits Virtual and/or electronic attendance sessions.**
2. Section II.D.1 of the attachment to A-2020-02, and incorporated therein, is hereby **EXPRESSLY NOT SUSPENDED to the extent it prohibits purely audio sessions.** Purely telephonic sessions or sessions conducted in any manner which do not included real-time

face-to-face communications remain prohibited.

3. This order shall remain in full force and effect until such time as in-person sessions are no longer impracticable and further order of the Court.

**DONE and ORDERED** in Chambers at Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida this 31<sup>st</sup> of August, 2020.

  
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The Honorable Daniel B. Merritt, Jr.  
Chief Judge, Fifth Judicial Circuit