STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A24-1992

In the Matter of the Welfare of the Children of:
C. R. E. and H. R. E., Parents.

Filed June 9, 2025
Affirmed
Frisch, Judge

Houston County District Court
File No. 28-JV-24-412

Daniel B. McGuire, RAM Law PLLC, Roseville, Minnesota (for appellant-mother H.R.E.)

Suzanne M. Bublitz, Interim Houston County Attorney, Caledonia, Minnesota (for respondent Houston County Department of Human Services)

Karen Haugerud, Caledonia, Minnesota (guardian ad litem)

Considered and decided by Bentley, Presiding Judge; Frisch, Chief Judge; and Segal, Judge.*

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

FRISCH, Judge

Appellant-mother appeals the district court's order terminating her parental rights. She challenges the district court's (1) determination that statutory grounds exist for terminating her parental rights, (2) determination that termination of her parental rights is in the children's best interests, (3) imposition of a presumption that she is palpably unfit to

* Retired judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, serving by appointment pursuant to Minn. Const. art. VI, § 10.

parent, (4) alleged failure to conduct a meaningful and independent review of the evidence, and (5) evidentiary rulings. We affirm.

FACTS

Appellant H.R.E. (mother) and C.R.E (father) are the parents of M.G.E., S.C.E., and T.S.E.—the children who are the subject of this appeal. Mother was also a primary caretaker of father's three children from a previous relationship, S.E., P.E., and C.E. On July 30, 2024, law enforcement removed the children from the care of mother and father and placed them on a 72-hour hold based on reports of abuse, neglect, and endangerment. On August 8, respondent Houston County Department of Human Services (the county) petitioned to terminate the parental rights of mother and father, alleging that both parents were palpably unfit to parent and that the children had experienced egregious harm while under their collective care. The county also argued that reasonable efforts at reunification were not required. Following a hearing on the petition, the district court concluded that the county had made a prima facie showing that mother and father had subjected the children to egregious harm and that the children would be at risk of imminent physical damage or harm if they were released to the care of mother and father. The district court also determined that the county was not required to engage in reasonable reunification efforts.

The matter proceeded to a five-day bench trial. On the first day of the proceedings, father waived his right to trial and agreed to an involuntary termination of his parental rights. The district court thereafter heard testimony from 18 witnesses and received numerous exhibits into evidence.

On December 5, the district court issued a written order which included the following findings of fact. The district court found that both father and mother had subjected the children to numerous instances of abuse for several years. The district court found that father had engaged in "excessive and unwarranted physical, psychological and verbal punishment for the children." The district court acknowledged that mother "was also a target of emotional and physical abuse" by father. But the district court also found that mother "was a perpetrator of abuse," that she was "present for father's abuse of the children," that she "excused, condone[d] and assisted" father's abuse, and that she failed to "take action to remove herself and the children from the situation or seek outside help."

The district court determined that mother and father were palpably unfit to parent, that mother had subjected her children to egregious harm, and that termination of parental rights was in the best interests of the children. Based on these determinations, the district court terminated mother and father's parental rights.

Mother appeals.

DECISION

Mother challenges the district court's order terminating her parental rights to M.G.E., S.C.E., and T.S.E. "[A]ll parents have a fundamental right to the care, custody, and control of their children." *In re Welfare of Child. of G.A.H.*, 998 N.W.2d 222, 231 (Minn. 2023) (quotation omitted). An individual's parental rights may be terminated "only for grave and weighty reasons." *In re Welfare of M.D.O.*, 462 N.W.2d 370, 375 (Minn. 1990). A district court may terminate parental rights if it determines that "(1) at least one statutory ground for termination is supported by clear and convincing evidence,

(2) the county made reasonable efforts to reunite the family, [if required,] and (3) termination is in the child's best interests." *In re Welfare of Child of J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d 593, 600 (Minn. App. 2021), *rev. denied* (Minn. Dec. 6, 2021). Reasonable efforts to reunite the family are not required if the district court determines that the termination petition meets one of seven statutory exceptions. Minn. Stat. § 260.012(a) (2024).[1] A decision to terminate parental rights "must be based on evidence concerning the conditions that exist at the time of the termination" and is appropriate when "it appears that the present conditions of neglect will continue for a prolonged, indeterminate period." *In re Welfare of Child of F.F.N.M.*, 999 N.W.2d 525, 534 (Minn. App. 2023) (quotation omitted), *rev. denied* (Minn. Jan. 5, 2024).

We review the district court's ultimate decision to terminate parental rights for an abuse of discretion. *J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 600. "A district court abuses its discretion by making findings of fact that are unsupported by the evidence, misapplying the law, or delivering a decision that is against logic and the facts on record." *Woolsey v. Woolsey*, 975 N.W.2d 502, 506 (Minn. 2022) (quotation omitted). We review the district court's underlying factual findings for clear error. *J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 600. Factual findings "are clearly erroneous when they are manifestly contrary to the weight of the evidence or not reasonably supported by the evidence as a whole." *In re Civ. Commitment of Kenney*, 963 N.W.2d 214, 221 (Minn. 2021) (quotation omitted).

[1] The district court concluded that reasonable efforts to reunite the family were not required because the county had made a prima facie showing that both mother and father had subjected the children to egregious harm. Minn. Stat. § 260.012(a)(1). Mother does not challenge this conclusion on appeal.

Mother argues that the decision terminating her parental rights must be reversed, challenging the district court's (1) determination that statutory grounds for termination exist, (2) determination that termination is in the children's best interests, (3) imposition of a presumption that mother was palpably unfit to parent, (4) alleged failure to conduct a meaningful and independent review of the evidence, and (5) evidentiary decisions. We address each argument in turn.

I. The district court acted within its discretion in determining that a statutory ground exists for terminating mother's parental rights.

Mother challenges the district court's determination that at least one statutory ground exists to support termination of her parental rights. The county bears the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that a statutory ground for termination exists. *F.F.N.M.*, 999 N.W.2d at 534. We review the district court's determination of whether a statutory ground for termination exists for an abuse of discretion. *J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 600. And "we need only conclude that one ground is supported in order to affirm." *Id.* at 602. Mother argues that the district court abused its discretion in determining that two separate grounds for termination existed, that she had subjected her children to egregious harm, and that she was palpably unfit to parent pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(3), (5) (2024).[2] We disagree.

[2] At times, the district court's order erroneously cites Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(4), (6), as the relevant provisions. We note that the district court's citations are consistent with a previous iteration of the statute. *See* Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(4), (6) (2022). In 2024, the legislature twice amended Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1, ultimately removing subdivision 1(b)(3) and renumbering subdivision 1(b)(3)-(9). *See* 2024 Minn. Laws ch. 80, art. 8, § 27, at 333-34; 2024 Minn. Laws ch. 115, art. 18, § 38, at 1742-44.

We focus our analysis on the district court's determination that a statutory ground for termination exists based on egregious harm, as we may affirm a termination order if one ground for termination exists. *See J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 602. A district court may terminate parental rights if it finds "that a child has experienced egregious harm in the parent's care," and that the harm "is of a nature, duration, or chronicity that indicates a lack of regard for the child's well-being, such that a reasonable person would believe it contrary to the best interest of the child or of any child to be in the parent's care." Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(5). Egregious harm is defined as "the infliction of bodily harm to a child or neglect of a child which demonstrates a grossly inadequate ability to provide minimally adequate parental care." Minn. Stat. § 260C.007, subd. 14 (2024).

The district court based its egregious-harm determination on its findings that mother had perpetrated, assisted in, and failed to protect the children from numerous instances of abuse. The district court found that mother spanked her children "almost every day." Mother spanked T.S.E. as part of his potty-training routine using her hand, spoons, or spatulas, and sometimes "whack[ed]" T.S.E. on the head. On one occasion, T.S.E. received spankings from both father and mother, resulting in "six or seven purple and blue marks on his bottom." The district court found that in one instance, mother struck S.C.E. with a spoon, leaving "a red mark on his leg that was swollen the next day." On another occasion, mother "spanked [S.C.E.] so bad that he had a little round circle of black on his bottom."

The district court found that M.G.E. was the "primary child of the abuse." On several occasions, father threw M.G.E. into a pond even though M.G.E. could not swim. On one occasion, father took a piece of broken rod and hit M.G.E. on his bare skin

approximately 20 times, leaving "red and blue rod-like marks" and causing him to bleed. On another occasion, father "severely beat" M.G.E. while mother was in the house and then "dragged [M.G.E.] around by the ear while he was screaming, 'help me mommy.'" But mother did not intervene until father "grabbed a fruit knife from the kitchen and nicked [M.G.E.'s] ear." The district court found credible testimony from Dr. Cree Kachelski who opined that the abuse could have resulted in M.G.E.'s death and that M.G.E. had been subjected to "child torture."

We emphasize that mother does not contest the factual bases underlying the district court's determination that the children experienced egregious harm under mother's care. The district court found that a reasonable person would place their child's safety above their own safety and "not participate in or allow another parent . . . to abuse a child for several years physically, psychologically or emotionally." The district court further found that mother had "demonstrated that she is not a reasonable person by her own actions, and also by her failure to act over the years." Given these uncontested findings, which are well-supported by the record, we cannot conclude that the district court abused its discretion in its egregious-harm determination.

Although mother does not contest the district court's underlying findings of fact, mother contends that the district court's egregious-harm determination was nevertheless an abuse of discretion because it was father—not mother—who "severely beat the children" and that mother "did her best to intervene in [father's] punishment of the children." We acknowledge the difficult circumstances mother faced in trying to provide appropriate care and protection for her children. Dr. Sharon McNamara—a psychologist

retained by mother—testified that mother "was parenting in an atmosphere of coercion and control" and that father dictated "what was the right way or the right way to punish." The district court addressed this dynamic in its findings, acknowledging that mother was also a target of father's physical and emotional abuse. But this dynamic notwithstanding, the district court found mother had "excused, condone[d] and assisted" father's abuse and repeatedly perpetrated her own abuse over the course of several years. The district court also found that mother "had the means to leave [father] and bring her children with her," but she failed to contact human services, law enforcement, family, or friends to "ask for help so that she and the children could leave [father] and be safe." Mother does not argue that these findings are unsupported by the record. And the district court's egregious-harm determination is amply supported by witness testimony and other record evidence detailing numerous episodes of abuse experienced by mother's children.

We are also unpersuaded by mother's argument that father perpetrated the worst of the abuse and that mother's actions did not, on their own, amount to egregious harm. Under the statute, egregious harm is not limited to harm that a parent inflicts directly upon a child. Such harm need only occur while the child is "in the parent's care," Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(5), and encompasses circumstances in which "the parent either knew or should have known that the child had experienced egregious harm," *In re Welfare of Child of T.P.*, 747 N.W.2d 356, 362 (Minn. 2008). Here, both the district court's findings and the record reflect that mother—in addition to perpetrating abuse—knew that father was repeatedly subjecting the children to egregious harm over the course of several years, failed

to protect the children from such harm, and "excused, condone[d], and assisted" father's abuse.[3]

We therefore conclude that the district court acted within its discretion in determining that a statutory ground for termination based on egregious harm exists. And because "we need only conclude that one ground is supported in order to affirm," we do not address the district court's palpable-fitness determination.[4] *See J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 602.

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[3] In support of her argument, mother points to language from *T.P.* in which the supreme court stated that whether a parent "knew or should have known that a child experienced egregious harm is necessary, but not sufficient, to satisfy that statutory requirement," and that "[o]ther factors will be relevant to whether that requirement is met in a given case." *T.P.*, 747 N.W.2d at 362 n.4. But this language refers to scenarios involving a parent "who has not personally inflicted egregious harm on a child." *Id.* at 362. Here, however, the district court's order does not rely solely on mother's knowledge of abuse perpetrated by father as the basis for its egregious-harm determination. As previously explained, the district court relied on abuse perpetrated by both mother and father as well as abuse perpetrated by father in the presence of mother to support its conclusion that the county had met its statutory burden under the egregious-harm provision.

[4] Mother also argues that the district court erred in imposing a presumption that she is palpably unfit to parent. A statutory presumption of palpable unfitness to parent arises upon a showing that a parent's parental rights were previously involuntarily terminated or that their custodial rights were involuntarily transferred to a relative. Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 1(b)(3). The district court's order states that mother "failed to rebut the presumption of palpable unfitness." But there is no evidence in the record that mother previously had her parental rights involuntarily terminated or had custodial rights to another child involuntarily transferred to a relative, and therefore no statutory basis to impose a presumption of palpable unfitness to parent. Still, we question whether the district court actually imposed such a burden on mother since the district court's order otherwise analyzes the palpable-fitness determination in accordance with the proper burden of proof. The district court's order contains only one brief reference to the presumption of palpable fitness. And even assuming the district court erred, because we affirm the termination of parental rights based on the district court's egregious-harm determination, any such error was harmless. *See In re Welfare of D.J.N.*, 568 N.W.2d 170, 176 (Minn. App. 1997) (applying harmless-error analysis to affirm termination of parental rights).

II. The district court acted within its discretion in determining that termination is in the children's best interests.

Mother challenges the district court's determination that termination of her parental rights is in the best interests of the children. We review the district court's best-interests determination for an abuse of discretion. *J.H.*, 968 N.W.2d at 600. "Because the best-interests analysis involves credibility determinations and is generally not susceptible to an appellate court's global review of a record, we give considerable deference to the district court's findings." *In re Welfare of Child of J.K.T.*, 814 N.W.2d 76, 92 (Minn. App. 2012) (quotation omitted).

A district court must weigh three factors when conducting a best-interests analysis: "(1) the child's interest in preserving the parent-child relationship; (2) the parent's interest in preserving the parent-child relationship; and (3) any competing interest of the child." *In re Welfare of Child of A.M.C.*, 920 N.W.2d 648, 657 (Minn. App. 2018) (quotation omitted). "Competing interests include such things as a stable environment, health considerations and the child's preferences." *In re Welfare of Child. of K.S.F.*, 823 N.W.2d 656, 668 (Minn. App. 2012) (quotation omitted). If there is a conflict between the interests of the child and the parent, the interests of the child predominate. Minn. Stat. § 260C.301, subd. 7 (2024).

Although the district court did not conduct an explicit, factor-by-factor analysis to determine whether termination was in the best interests of the children, the district court's findings reflect consideration of the relevant factors. The district court found that the children had not expressed an interest in returning to mother's home. The district court

credited the testimony of the children's guardian ad litem (GAL), who testified that "none of the children have ever inquired about how their parents are" or asked about going home. The GAL further testified that the children wanted to "remain where they are" and that being removed from the home had given them "a sense of security." The district court also credited the testimony of psychologist Dr. Mollie Brady, who recommended that the children have no contact with mother and father because there would be no therapeutic value in such contact and because "it would likely be damaging to their mental health." Dr. Brady testified that the children could be "triggered" by exposure to a parent who acted as both a perpetrator and a witness to severe abuse. The district court acknowledged that mother "loves her children," but found that "[t]he children's best interests in growing up in a safe environment outweigh[ed] [mother's] interest in maintaining the parent-child relationship." For these reasons, we conclude that the district court acted within its discretion in determining that termination of mother's parental rights was in the children's best interests.

III. The district court did not err by failing to conduct a meaningful and independent review of the evidence.

Mother argues that the district court failed to conduct meaningful and independent review of the evidence because it (1) adopted the county's proposed findings "nearly verbatim," and (2) failed to make sufficient credibility determinations to enable appellate review.

A. Adoption of Proposed Findings

"[V]erbatim adoption of a party's proposed findings and conclusions of law is not reversible error per se." *Bliss v. Bliss*, 493 N.W.2d 583, 590 (Minn. App. 1992), *rev. denied* (Minn. Feb. 12, 1993). Although we "continue to recognize the acceptability of this practice," we have cautioned that "wholesale adoption of one party's findings and conclusions raises the question of whether the trial court independently evaluated each party's testimony and evidence." *Id.*; *see also In re Child. of T.A.A.*, 702 N.W.2d 703, 707 n.2 (Minn. 2005) ("While we have declined to adopt a blanket prohibition on [the district court's verbatim adoption of proposed findings], . . . our preference is for a court to independently develop its own findings." (quotation omitted)).

Mother argues that the district court adopted the county's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law "nearly verbatim, with minimal usage of its own skill and judgment." The substance of the district court's order belies this contention. Most notably, the district court's order includes a section entitled "Mitigating Considerations for Mother" that was not set forth in the county's proposed order. That section of the district court's order consists of 11 paragraphs and includes findings based on evidence submitted by mother regarding, among other things, mother's love for her children, her attempts to "defuse father's anger and stop his punishment of the children," and her own experience of father's physical and emotional abuse. This section also includes discussion of testimony provided by defense witnesses—such as Dr. McNamara—that is not included in the county's proposed findings. Additionally, while both the district court's order and the

county's proposed findings included a section entitled "Best Interests," the district court's order includes an additional paragraph of analysis not set forth in the county's submission.

Mother correctly notes—and the county acknowledges—that the district court adopted significant portions of the county's proposed order. But, as previously noted, even a district court's wholesale adoption of a petitioner's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law does not constitute per se reversible error. *Bliss*, 493 N.W.2d at 590. And here, the district court's order differed in significant ways from the county's proposed order, indicating that the district court independently evaluated the testimony and evidence presented by both parties. We therefore discern no abuse of discretion by the district court.

B. Credibility Determinations

"The district court must make sufficient findings to enable appellate review." *Hansen v. Todnem*, 908 N.W.2d 592, 597 n.2 (Minn. 2018). Mother argues that the district court failed to make sufficient findings to enable review because it did not make credibility determinations for three important witnesses: the children's maternal grandmother C.K., Dr. McNamara, and a social worker who testified for the county. We disagree.

Regarding C.K., while the district court did not explicitly assess her credibility in its order, it lauded C.K.'s credibility on the record commenting that she was "doing an excellent job of being genuine and credible." The district court also referred to C.K.'s testimony in its finding related to the abuse experienced by the children. The record therefore indicates that the district court assessed the credibility of C.K.'s testimony. *See Pechovnik v. Pechovnik*, 765 N.W.2d 94, 99 (Minn. App. 2009) (deferring to the district court's implicit credibility determination).

As to Dr. McNamara, in a section of the order entitled "Credibility of Witnesses," the district court noted that Dr. McNamara interviewed both mother and father, but the district court did not make an explicit credibility finding regarding Dr. McNamara's testimony. We read the totality of the district court's order to include an implicit credibility determination regarding Dr. McNamara's testimony in light of the discussion of that testimony in the context of mother's experience of abuse, recognizing her admission "that being a victim does not take away from a parental duty to protect one's children."

As to the social worker, the district court did not make an explicit credibility determination regarding her testimony or otherwise refer to her testimony in its order. But mother cites to no authority compelling reversal of the district court's termination order where the district court failed to make a credibility determination as to one witness. And here, the district court made explicit credibility determinations regarding the testimony of 17 other witnesses and implicit credibility determinations as to two other witnesses. These credibility determinations, along with the district court's other findings, are sufficient to enable appellate review and we therefore discern no abuse of discretion.

IV. The challenged evidentiary rulings do not warrant reversal.

Mother argues that the district court abused its discretion by admitting prejudicial evidence. We review the district court's evidentiary rulings for an abuse of discretion. *J.K.T.*, 814 N.W.2d at 93. Even if the district court erroneously admitted evidence, a new trial is warranted "only if the complaining party demonstrates prejudicial error." *In re Child of Simon*, 662 N.W.2d 155, 160 (Minn. App. 2003). Mother contends that the district court abused its discretion by admitting over her objection (1) exhibits 23 through 27,

(2) hearsay evidence elicited from a social worker, and (3) information protected by attorney-client privilege and the work-product doctrine. We address each evidentiary challenge in turn.

A. Exhibits 23-27

Exhibits 23 through 27 contain psychological evaluation reports of the children prepared by Dr. Brady. Mother argues that the district court abused its discretion in admitting these exhibits for two reasons: (1) the exhibits are not relevant because they repeat large portions of the petition to terminate parental rights and supporting probable-cause statement, and (2) the exhibits contain inadmissible hearsay.

Unless displaced by a statute or the Minnesota Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure, the Minnesota Rules of Evidence apply in juvenile-protection matters. Minn. R. Juv. Prot. P. 3.02, subd. 1. Under the rules of evidence, "[a]ll relevant evidence is admissible, except as otherwise provided by" law. Minn. R. Evid. 402. Evidence is relevant if it has "any tendency to make the existence of any fact that is of consequence to the determination of the action more probable or less probable than it would be without the evidence." Minn. R. Evid. 401. The parties cite no authority displacing these rules in the juvenile-protection context. While it is true that the challenged exhibits contain portions of the pleadings in this matter, they also contain clinical summaries; Dr. Brady's observations, recommendations, and diagnoses; extensive social-history information; and assessment data drawn from tests conducted by Dr. Brady. Mother does not contest the relevance of this information. We therefore conclude that the district court did not abuse its discretion in admitting this evidence as relevant.

Mother also argues that the exhibits contained inadmissible hearsay in the form of "numerous out of court statements made by many individuals." Hearsay is an out-of-court statement "offered in evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted." Minn. R. Evid. 801(c). Hearsay statements are generally inadmissible unless they fall under a recognized exception. Minn. R. Evid. 802. Again, the parties cite no authority displacing these rules in the juvenile-protection context. Assuming without deciding that the district court abused its discretion by admitting hearsay contained in the challenged exhibits, we conclude that any such error was harmless. The district court heard testimony directly from Dr. Brady as well as many of the collateral sources she relied upon in her reports. Had the district court excluded the exhibits, the evidence at trial would still have been sufficient to support the district court's findings. In sum, because admission of the exhibits did not prejudice mother, reversal on that basis in not warranted.

B. Social Worker Hearsay Testimony

Mother argues that the district court improperly admitted hearsay evidence when it allowed a social worker to testify that one of mother's stepchildren wanted to be adopted by his current caregivers. At trial, the social worker was asked on direct examination about the best-interests factor regarding relationships to current caretakers, parents, siblings, and relatives, as it related this stepchild.

Assuming without deciding that the trial court abused its discretion in admitting this testimony, any error was harmless for two reasons. First, the district court's order does not explicitly rely upon or otherwise reference the challenged testimony. Second, as discussed above, there is substantial evidence in the record apart from this testimony that adequately

supports the district court's best-interests determination, including testimony from the GAL that "none of the children have ever inquired about how their parents are" or asked about going home. The GAL also testified that two of mother's stepchildren reported that "their interest is in remaining outside of the home and not returning to the home." That testimony was received without objection. For these reasons, we conclude that mother was not prejudiced by the admission of the social worker's testimony regarding the stepchild's statement that he wanted to be adopted by his current caregivers.

C. Attorney-Client Privilege and Work-Product Doctrine

Mother argues that the district court abused its discretion by admitting information protected by attorney-client privilege and the work-product doctrine. The attorney-client privilege functions "to promote open and honest discussion between clients and their attorneys" by protecting from disclosure "communication[s] in which legal advice is sought or rendered." *Thompson v. Polaris, Inc. (In re Polaris, Inc.)*, 967 N.W.2d 397, 406 (Minn. 2021) (quotations omitted). "The work-product doctrine protects from disclosure an attorney's opinions, conclusions, mental impressions, trial strategy, and legal theories in materials prepared in anticipation of litigation." *Cook v. Trimble (In re Cragg)*, 998 N.W.2d 294, 302 (Minn. App. 2023) (quotation omitted), *rev. denied* (Minn. Feb. 20, 2024).

During the county's cross-examination of Dr. McNamara, the county attorney asked Dr. McNamara about a conversation she had with a social worker.[5] The county attorney

[5] Mother and father signed releases allowing Dr. McNamara and the social worker to exchange information.

asked: "Didn't you tell [the social worker] that it was both parents' attorneys' strategies . . . to say that [mother] was afraid of being harmed so she—when she tries to get along with [father]?" Mother objected and the district court overruled the objection. The county attorney repeated the question and Dr. McNamara replied that she did not recall the conversation. But when the social worker testified later that day, the county attorney made a similar inquiry about her conversation with Dr. McNamara regarding mother and father's trial strategy. Mother again objected, and the district court took a recess to consider its ruling on the objection. The district court ultimately sustained mother's objection.

Again, assuming without deciding that the district court's initial evidentiary ruling impermissibly allowed for the admission of protected information, we conclude that any such error was harmless for two reasons. First, the county attorney's question to Dr. McNamara did not elicit any substantive or prejudicial information. Dr. McNamara simply responded that she did not recall having such a conversation. Second, in sustaining mother's second objection to this line of questioning, the district court effectively reconsidered its prior ruling. For these reasons, we conclude that mother was not prejudiced by the district court's initial decision to overrule mother's objection to the county attorney's line of questioning regarding her trial strategy.

Affirmed.