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# NADEZHDA PENCHEVA-HASSE *v.* MICHAEL HASSE
# (AC 45268)

Elgo, Suarez and Seeley, Js.

*Syllabus*

The defendant appealed to this court from the judgment of the trial court dissolving his marriage to the plaintiff and making certain financial and custody orders. Following a trial, the court found, inter alia, that the defendant's financial disclosures were not credible, as he reported that he had an income of $612 per week, despite operating a thriving legal practice, owning several real estate properties, and spending $643 per week on his minor child's activities and care. Although the plaintiff requested that the court compare the defendant's bank records and tax statements to his financial disclosures to determine the defendant's earning capacity, the court declined to conduct what it claimed was a forensic audit without testimony from an expert witness skilled in such matters. In addition, the court found that the defendant had withdrawn large sums of money from his bank accounts during the pendency of the dissolution, totaling $342,000, in violation of the automatic stay. The court awarded the plaintiff a lump sum and the marital property and awarded the defendant a lump sum, in addition to the $342,000, which he withdrew during the litigation, as well as all the properties he solely owned before his marriage to the plaintiff. The court also ordered that the parties share joint legal custody of their minor child and ordered a shared equal parenting time custody schedule. *Held*:

1. Contrary to the defendant's claim, the trial court properly applied the child support guidelines: the court did not err in calculating the presumptive child support amount by improperly calculating the parties' incomes or err in its deviation from the child support guidelines, as the court properly determined the presumptive child support amount based on the parties' stated weekly incomes, did not rely on the defendant's potential earning capacity, and utilized its broad discretion to deviate from that presumptive amount on the basis of its finding that that amount would be inequitable and inappropriate because the parties would be enjoying a shared parenting schedule pursuant to the applicable state regulation (§ 46b-215a-5c (b) (6)) and because it found that the defendant's disclosures of his income were not credible and were understated; accordingly, the trial court properly exercised its discretion and ordered the defendant to pay the plaintiff $70 per week as child support and ordered the parties to divide equally any unreimbursed medical expenses.
2. The defendant could not prevail on his claim that the trial court's custody orders were not in the best interests of the minor child: although the defendant claimed that the split parenting schedule could interfere with the child's extracurricular activities because the plaintiff might inhibit the child's participation when she was scheduled to have time with the child, the trial court stated that it had fully considered the criteria of the applicable statutes (§§ 46b-56 and 46b-56c) and, on that basis, found that joint legal custody and a parenting schedule that provided equal parenting time was in the best interests of the child, and this court does not retry facts or evaluate the credibility of witnesses.
3. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in its orders related to property distribution: the distribution was not grossly disproportionate, particularly in light of the court's finding that the defendant violated the automatic orders by withdrawing $342,000 from marital assets during litigation, and, in considering the criteria set forth in the statute (§ 46b-81) regarding the division of marital property, as well as the defendant's advancing age and self-reported income deficiency, the trial court exercised its broad discretion to award the marital home to the plaintiff and to award all of the real estate the defendant solely owned prior to the marriage to him; moreover, contrary to the defendant's assertion, the trial court did not find that the defendant had dissipated assets, rather, that court found that the defendant was not credible in how he spent, used, or dissipated the $342,000 that he had withdrawn from bank

accounts during the pendency of the litigation, and, although the court concluded that the defendant violated the automatic orders by withdrawing this vast amount of money to prop up his solely owned real estate, the court did not make a downward adjustment in the defendant's share of the marital assets.

Argued February 6—officially released August 15, 2023

*Procedural History*

Action for the dissolution of a marriage, and for other relief, brought to the Superior Court in the judicial district of New London and tried to the court, *Shluger*, *J.*; judgment dissolving the marriage and granting certain other relief, from which the defendant appealed to this court. *Affirmed*.

*Michael Hasse*, self-represented, the appellant (defendant).

*Opinion*

SUAREZ, J. The defendant, Michael Hasse, appeals from the judgment of the trial court dissolving his marriage to the plaintiff, Nadezhda Pencheva-Hasse.[1] On appeal, the defendant claims that the court (1) improperly applied the child support guidelines, (2) abused its discretion in adopting the guardian ad litem's custody recommendations, and (3) abused its discretion in its property distribution orders.[2] We affirm the judgment of the court.

The following facts, as found by the court, and procedural history are relevant to our resolution of this appeal. The parties were married on December 4, 2009, in Key West, Florida. They are the parents of one minor child. On February 13, 2020, the plaintiff commenced this dissolution action with a return date of March 17, 2020. In her complaint, the plaintiff sought, inter alia, a dissolution of marriage, joint legal custody of their child, child support, alimony, and a division of property. On May 4, 2021, the court, *Shluger*, *J.*, commenced a trial that continued over four nonconsecutive days. On December 17, 2021, the court issued a memorandum of decision in which it made findings of facts and issued orders dissolving the marriage.

In its memorandum of decision, the court found that, at the time of the marriage, the plaintiff was twenty-four years old and a citizen of Bulgaria with few assets. The plaintiff came to the United States on a temporary visa and rented a room with other Bulgarian citizens in a home owned by the defendant. She began working at the law office of the defendant, and, while she was not paid a salary, she was given bonuses whenever he completed a successful case. In 2012, she was put on the payroll at a rate of $300 per week. At the time of trial, the plaintiff was working at Home Depot earning $448 per week gross and $366 per week net.

The court found that, at the time of trial, the plaintiff had the following assets. She had accounts in Bulgaria totaling $12,000, a Liberty Bank account totaling $7000, a Navy Federal Credit Union account totaling $57,000, and a PayPal account with a balance of $500. She also owned a property in Bulgaria valued at $12,000 without a mortgage.

The court found the defendant to be fifty-one years old at the time of marriage and a prominent attorney. He was the sole proprietor of a busy criminal and personal injury law practice and served as appointed counsel in the federal court system. He maintained a law practice in New London and Puerto Rico. The court further found that the defendant "claim[ed] to earn only $612 per week as gross income from what appears to be a thriving legal practice. His April 30, 2021 financial affidavit showed that he earned $1730 per week in profits. Curiously, the [defendant] showed gross receipts

on his tax return for 2017 of $537,000, gross receipts for 2018 of $441,000, and gross receipts for 2019 as $410,000. According to his tax returns, he never had 'profit' in excess of $36,000 per year." The court did not find the defendant's financial disclosures credible and specifically found that he "understat[ed] his income." The court noted that "[i]t strains the credulity of the court that this experienced and capable trial attorney earns no income and is, in fact, working at a loss. And, while earning no income, he spends $115 per week for his son's activities, $152 per week for his child's camps, $326 per week for his child's private school, and $50 per week for his child's allowance or, [in total], $643 per week ($33,436 per year)."

As additional assets, the court found that, prior to the marriage, the defendant owned numerous parcels of real estate. He owned a three-family home in Mystic, three condominiums in Puerto Rico, a condominium in Bulgaria, and two office condominiums in New London. The court found the value of the real estate to be approximately $1.4 million but that the properties were encumbered with mortgages of "an undisclosed amount." At the time of judgment, there was a marital residence, which was purchased after the marriage, located in Mystic with a value of $325,000 and without a mortgage.

The court further found that, just prior to, and during the pendency of, the litigation, the defendant withdrew large sums of money from his bank accounts. Just prior to the commencement of the dissolution action, the court also found that the defendant had a bank account with the Navy Federal Credit Union with a balance of $496,000, and, at the time of trial, the balance in the account was $250,000. The court further found that, at the commencement of the litigation, the defendant had a bank account at Chelsea Groton Bank with an approximate balance of $102,000, and, as of June 15, 2021, the account balance was approximately $35,000. In addition to the Navy Federal Credit Union and the Chelsea Groton Bank accounts, the court found that the defendant had a Liberty Bank account totaling $2000, a retirement account at the Navy Federal Credit Union totaling $65,000, a life insurance policy valued at $3000, and a Voya stock account valued at $3000. The court found that the defendant failed to adequately explain "how he had used, spent, or dissipated" these funds. The court concluded that the defendant had "violated the automatic orders[3] by withdrawing vast sums of money from his bank accounts . . . ." (Footnote added.)

The court further found that, although the defendant had had numerous orthopedic surgeries and suffered pain from increased activity, at the time of trial he was in good health and was still able to work full-time and to manage his real estate investments here and abroad.

At trial, the plaintiff argued and urged the court to find that the defendant had a much greater earning

capacity than what he was reporting as his actual income. She argued that the court should simply compare his stated income and expenses to the several years of bank records and tax returns that were submitted as exhibits. The court, however, declined to conduct what it claimed to be a forensic audit without testimony from an expert witness skilled in such matters.

The court found, however, that, "utilizing [his] stated gross [income of] $612 and the [plaintiff's] stated gross income of $448 per week, the presumptive child support would be $128 per week from the [defendant] or $94 per week from the [plaintiff]. The court further found that "applying this figure would be inequitable and inappropriate because [the parties would] be enjoying a shared parenting schedule and because the court [found] the [defendant's] figures to be highly suspect and unreliable."

The court made the following relevant findings regarding the child. The child attended private school and was a good student. The plaintiff and the defendant supported the child in a plethora of interests including hockey, baseball, piano, guitar, and the arts. The parties were good, loving parents to the child and were both highly bonded with him. Prior to the dissolution of the marriage, "[t]he child [did] very well without either parent having more time than the other or [either parent] having final decision-making authority." The defendant was heavily involved with the child's extracurriculars and coached the child's hockey team. The defendant's relationship with the child was more of a peer, while the plaintiff had established a more structured parent-child relationship. The court found her to be more likely to ensure that the child focused on his schoolwork.

The guardian ad litem recommended that it was in the child's best interest that the court order a shared parenting plan in which the child would spend equal time living with each party. The guardian ad litem recommended that in week one the plaintiff would have the child from Sunday at 9 a.m. until Wednesday at 9 a.m., and in week two, the plaintiff would have the child from Thursday at 9 a.m. until Sunday at 9 a.m.

In its December 17, 2021 memorandum of decision, after stating that it "fully considered" the criteria of General Statutes (Rev. to 2021) § 46b-56[4] and General Statutes §§ 46b-56c, 46b-62, 46b-81, 46b-82 and 46b-84, "the [applicable rules of practice] as well as the evidence, applicable case law, the demeanor and credibility of the witnesses, and arguments of counsel" and setting forth the relevant law, the court issued the following relevant orders. It ordered that the parties share joint legal and physical custody of the child and ordered that, in week one, the plaintiff "shall have the child from Sunday at 9 a.m. until Wednesday at 9 a.m. and the [defendant] shall have the child from Wednesday

at 9 a.m. until Sunday at 9 a.m." In week two, the court ordered that the plaintiff "shall have the child from Sunday at 9 a.m. until Thursday at 9 a.m. and the [defendant] shall have the child from Thursday at 9 a.m. until Sunday at 9 a.m." The court further ordered that "the parents shall share the summertime with the child in two week blocks to permit [the child's] trips to Bulgaria with the [plaintiff] . . . or frequent hockey camps with the [defendant]." In the event of a conflict with the summer vacations, the court ordered that "the [plaintiff's] schedule shall take priority in odd years and the [defendant's] schedule shall take priority in even years." The court ordered the defendant to pay the plaintiff $70 per week in child support and the parties to divide any unreimbursed medical, optical, ophthalmological, psychological, orthodontic, dental, or work-related day care costs equally.

The court ordered that the defendant quit claim all of his rights, title, and interest in the marital residence to the plaintiff, who was to be solely responsible for all the expenses associated with the home. Additionally, the court ordered that the defendant was to retain the remaining real estate, his bank accounts, brokerage accounts, and retirement accounts, his law practice, and his life insurance policy. On the basis of this division of assets, the court determined that the plaintiff's share of the marital estate was $425,000 and the defendant's share was $832,500, plus the $342,000 that the defendant withdrew from his bank accounts during the pendency of the litigation. The defendant's total share of the marital estate was, therefore, $1,174,500. This appeal followed.

We begin by setting forth our standard of review in dissolution matters. "An appellate court will not disturb a trial court's orders in domestic relations cases unless the court has abused its discretion or it is found that it could not reasonably conclude as it did, based on the facts presented. . . . The trial court's findings are binding upon this court unless they are clearly erroneous in light of the evidence and the pleadings in the record as a whole. . . . [T]o conclude that the trial court abused its discretion, we must find that the court either incorrectly applied the law or could not reasonably conclude as it did. . . . In determining whether a trial court has abused its broad discretion in domestic relations matters, we allow every reasonable presumption in favor of the correctness of its action." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Ray* v. *Ray*, 177 Conn. App. 544, 551–52, 173 A.3d 464 (2017).

I

We first address the defendant's claim that the court improperly applied the child support guidelines. See General Statutes § 46b-215b. He argues that the court erred in calculating the presumptive child support amount by improperly calculating the parties' incomes

and erred in its deviation from the child support guidelines. He further argues that the evidence in the record did not support a finding of his earning capacity. See footnote 2 of this opinion. We are not persuaded.

Before turning to the merits of the claim, we set forth the following legal principles. Although, as we have stated previously, the trial court is vested with broad discretion in domestic relations matters, with respect to child support "the parameters of the court's discretion have been somewhat limited by the factors set forth in the child support guidelines." *Colbert* v. *Carr*, 140 Conn. App. 229, 240, 57 A.3d 878, cert. denied, 308 Conn. 926, 64 A.3d 333 (2013). Section 46b-84 (a) provides in relevant part that "the parents of a minor child of the marriage, shall maintain the child according to their respective abilities, if the child is in need of maintenance. . . ." General Statutes § 46b-215a provides for a commission to oversee the establishment of child support guidelines, which must be updated every four years, "to ensure the appropriateness of criteria for the establishment of child support awards . . . ." "In support of the application of these guidelines . . . § 46b-215b (a) provides: 'The . . . guidelines issued pursuant to [§] 46b-215a . . . shall be considered in all determinations of child support amounts . . . . In all such determinations, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the amount of such awards which resulted from the application of such guidelines is the amount to be ordered. *A specific finding on the record that the application of the guidelines would be inequitable or inappropriate* in a particular case . . . shall be required in order to rebut the presumption in such case.' " (Emphasis in original.) *Moore* v. *Moore*, 216 Conn. App. 179, 190–91, 283 A.3d 994 (2022).

Moreover, "[§] 46b-215a-5c (a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies provides in relevant part: 'The current support . . . contribution amounts calculated under [the child support guidelines] . . . are presumed to be the correct amounts to be ordered. The presumption regarding each such amount may be rebutted by a specific finding on the record that such amount would be inequitable or inappropriate in a particular case. . . . Any such finding shall state the amount that would have been required under such section and include a factual finding to justify the variance. Only the deviation criteria stated in . . . subdivisions (1) to (6), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section . . . shall establish sufficient bases for such findings.'[5]

"Our courts have interpreted this statutory and regulatory language as requiring three distinct findings in order for a court to properly deviate from the child support guidelines in fashioning a child support order: (1) a finding of the presumptive child support amount pursuant to the guidelines; (2) a specific finding that application of such guidelines would be inequitable and

inappropriate; and (3) an explanation as to which deviation criteria the court is relying on to justify the deviation." (Footnote altered; internal quotation marks omitted.) Id., 191–92.

"Under the guidelines, the child support obligation first is determined without reference to earning capacity, and earning capacity becomes relevant only if a deviation from the guidelines is sought under § 46b-215a-5c (b) (1) (B) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. . . . [Section] 46b-215a-3 (b) (1) (B) [of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, now § 46b-215a-5c (b) (1) (B)] allows deviation from the guidelines on the basis of a parent's earning capacity. . . .

"Given this regulatory framework, a court errs in calculating child support on the basis of a parent's earning capacity without first stating the presumptive support amount at which it arrived by applying the guidelines and using the parent's actual income *and* second finding application of the guidelines to be inequitable or inappropriate." (Citations omitted; emphasis in original; internal quotation marks omitted.) *Keusch* v. *Keusch*, 184 Conn. App. 822, 829, 195 A.3d 1136 (2018).

In the present case, the court, in applying the child support guidelines, found the presumptive child support amount utilizing the defendant's stated income of $612 per week and the plaintiff's stated income of $448 per week. The court did not rely on an earning capacity finding as the defendant argues. Utilizing those figures, the court found that the presumptive child support amount would be $128 per week from the defendant or $94 per week from the plaintiff. Having established the presumptive child support amount pursuant to the child support guidelines, the court specifically found that such amount was inequitable and inappropriate because the parties would be enjoying a shared parenting schedule pursuant to § 46b-215a-5c (b) (6) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies and because it found the defendant's disclosures of his income not credible and understated. Exercising its discretion, the court ordered the defendant to pay the plaintiff $70 per week as child support and ordered the parties to equally divide any unreimbursed medical, optical, ophthalmological, psychological, orthodontic, dental, or work-related day care costs.

On the basis of our review of the record, we conclude that the court properly determined the presumptive child support amount based on the parties' stated weekly incomes and utilized its broad discretion to deviate from that presumptive amount based on recognized deviation criteria established by the child support guidelines.

II

The defendant next claims that the court's custody

orders were an abuse of its discretion. Specifically, he argues that the court's custody orders were not in the best interests of the child.[6] We are not persuaded.

"The authority of a trial court to render custody, visitation and relocation orders is set forth in . . . § 46b-56 (a), which provides in relevant part that [i]n any controversy before the Superior Court as to the custody or care of minor children . . . the court may make or modify any proper order regarding the custody, care, education, visitation and support of the children . . . . [Section] 46b-56 (c) directs the court, when making any order regarding the custody, care, education, visitation and support of children, to consider the best interests of the child, and in doing so may consider, but shall not be limited to, one or more of [sixteen enumerated] factors.[7] . . . The court is not required to assign any weight to any of the factors that it considers. . . .

"Our standard of review of a trial court's decision regarding custody [and] visitation . . . orders is one of abuse of discretion. . . . [I]n a dissolution proceeding the trial court's decision on the matter of custody is committed to the exercise of its sound discretion and its decision cannot be overridden unless an abuse of that discretion is clear. . . . The controlling principle in a determination respecting custody is that the court shall be guided by the best interests of the child. . . . In determining what is in the best interests of the child, the court is vested with a broad discretion. . . . [T]he authority to exercise the judicial discretion under the circumstances revealed by the finding is not conferred upon this court, but upon the trial court, and . . . we are not privileged to usurp that authority or to substitute ourselves for the trial court. . . . A mere difference of opinion or judgment cannot justify our intervention. Nothing short of a conviction that the action of the trial court is one which discloses a clear abuse of discretion can warrant our interference." (Citation omitted; footnote added; footnote omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *M. S.* v. *P. S.*, 203 Conn. App. 377, 396–98, 248 A.3d 778, cert. denied, 336 Conn. 952, 251 A.3d 992 (2021).

The defendant avers that the split parenting schedule ordered by the court may prevent the child from participating in activities, which span both of the parties' allocated times and is, therefore, not in the child's best interests.[8] Specifically, the defendant argues that, without safeguards to ensure that the child participates in his extracurricular activities, the plaintiff may interfere with the child's participation when she is scheduled to have time with the child. Additionally, he argues that the court failed to consider the child's preferences and the dispositions of the parents to understand and meet the needs of the child. This, he asserts, further demonstrates that the court's custody orders were not in the

best interests of the child.

The defendant's assertion that the court's custody orders are not in the best interests of the child due to the court's failure to consider factors set forth under § 46b-56 (c) is unavailing. In its memorandum of decision, the court noted that it had "fully considered the criteria of . . . [§§] 46b-56 [and] 46b-56c . . . as well as the evidence, applicable case law [and] the demeanor and credibility of the witnesses . . . in reaching the decisions reflected in the orders that [it] issue[d] in [its] decision." On that basis, the court ordered the parties to share joint legal custody and ordered a parenting plan that provides equal parenting time with each party. The court found that to be in the best interests of the child. "The defendant essentially requests that we reweigh the evidence in his favor. [W]e do not retry the facts or evaluate the credibility of witnesses." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Anketell* v. *Kulldorff*, 207 Conn. App. 807, 848, 263 A.3d 972, cert. denied, 340 Conn. 905, 263 A.3d 821 (2021).

Accordingly, we are not persuaded that the court abused its discretion in its custody orders.

III

The defendant next claims that the court abused its discretion in its orders related to property distribution. Specifically, the defendant argues that the court did not consider the defendant's lifelong financial contributions in obtaining the assets prior to the marriage, as it is required to do, and that the court incorrectly found that the defendant dissipated assets.[9] We are not persuaded.

"In dissolution proceedings, the court must fashion its financial orders in accordance with the criteria set forth in . . . § 46b-81 (division of marital property) . . . ." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Riccio* v. *Riccio*, 183 Conn. App. 823, 826, 194 A.3d 337 (2018). Pursuant to § 46b-81 (c), the court "shall consider the length of the marriage, the causes for the annulment, dissolution of the marriage or legal separation, the age, health, station, occupation, amount and sources of income, earning capacity, vocational skills, education, employability, estate, liabilities and needs of each of the parties and the opportunity of each for future acquisition of capital assets and income. *The court shall also consider the contribution of each of the parties in the acquisition, preservation or appreciation in value of their respective estates.*" (Emphasis added.)

"While the trial court must consider the delineated statutory criteria . . . no single criterion is preferred over others, and the court is accorded wide latitude in varying the weight placed upon each item under the peculiar circumstances of each case. . . . A trial court . . . need not give each factor equal weight . . . or recite the statutory criteria that it considered in making its decision or make express findings as to each statu-

tory factor. . . .

"Importantly, § 46b-81 (a) permits the farthest reaches from an equal division as is possible, allowing the court to assign to either the husband or wife all or any part of the estate of the other. . . . On the basis of the plain language of § 46b-81, there is no presumption in Connecticut that marital property should be divided equally prior to applying the statutory criteria. . . . Additionally, [i]ndividual financial orders in a dissolution action are part of the carefully crafted mosaic that comprises the entire asset reallocation plan. . . . Under the mosaic doctrine, financial orders should not be viewed as a collection of single disconnected occurrences, but rather as a seamless collection of interdependent elements." (Citations omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *Riccio* v. *Riccio*, supra, 183 Conn. App. 826–27. As previously noted in this opinion, we "will not disturb a trial court's orders in domestic relations cases unless the court has abused its discretion or it is found that it could not reasonably conclude as it did, based on the facts presented." Id., 825.

In the present case, the court specified in its memorandum of decision that it considered the criteria set forth in § 46b-81 and the evidence before it. "[W]hen a trial court states in its memorandum of decision that it has considered the factors listed in § 46b-81 (c) in fashioning an order distributing marital property, the judge is presumed to have performed [his or her] duty unless the contrary appears [from the record]." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Kammili* v. *Kammili*, 197 Conn. App. 656, 672, 232 A.3d 102, cert. denied, 335 Conn. 947, 238 A.3d 18 (2020).

In its memorandum of decision, the court found that the defendant did not want to pay alimony or child support and that he wanted to retain the real estate that was his before the marriage, the marital home, his bank accounts and his retirement accounts. The court concluded that, based on the defendant's advancing age and the curious and sudden income deficiency, it was fairer and more appropriate to order a property settlement rather than a long-term alimony order. The court further concluded that the defendant had a greater opportunity than the plaintiff to relocate to another residence. On that basis, the court exercised its broad discretion to award the marital home to the plaintiff and to award all of the real estate that the defendant owned prior to the marriage to him.

The defendant further asserts that the court erred when it determined that he dissipated assets. Contrary to the defendant's assertion, the court did not find that he dissipated assets. Rather, the court found that the defendant was not credible as to "how he had used, spent, or dissipated $342,000 from . . . two [bank] accounts during the pendency of the litigation." The court noted that "it appears that the defendant has been

making sizable withdrawals to prop up his solely owned real estate from the bank accounts, which money would normally be divisible marital property." Although the court concluded that the defendant violated the automatic orders by withdrawing this vast amount of money to prop up his solely owned real estate, the court did not make a downward adjustment in the defendant's share of the marital assets. The court allowed him to retain all of his solely owned property. Moreover, as the court noted, the plaintiff's total share of the marital estate was $424,000 and the defendant's share was $832,500, without accounting for the $342,000 withdrawn in violation of the automatic orders.

Consequently, we conclude that the court did not abuse its discretion in its orders related to the property distribution as the distribution was not grossly disproportionate, particularly in light of the court's finding that the defendant violated the automatic orders by withdrawing $342,000 from marital assets. Having considered the defendant's arguments in support of this claim, we conclude that he has failed to demonstrate that the court's orders distributing assets were an abuse of its discretion. In reaching this conclusion, we are mindful that, even if a different conclusion as to how the parties' assets should have been distributed could have been reached, "[t]here is no set formula the court is obligated to apply when dividing the parties' assets and . . . the court is vested with broad discretion in fashioning financial orders." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Kent* v. *DiPaola*, 178 Conn. App. 424, 441–42, 175 A.3d 601 (2017).

The judgment is affirmed.

In this opinion the other judges concurred.

[1] The plaintiff did not file a brief or otherwise participate in the present appeal. On November 22, 2022, this court ordered that the appeal be considered on the basis of the defendant's brief, the defendant's oral argument, and the record only.

[2] Although the defendant raises fourteen claims in his statement of issues, he addresses only eleven of those claims in his brief to this court. He claims that the court erred in calculating the presumptive child support in violation of the child support guidelines; failed to identify the mandatory child support obligation; erred in its calculation of the parties' incomes; erred in finding his imputed earning capacity; erred in its calculation of the plaintiff's income and should have deviated from the child support guidelines on the basis of the defendant's extraordinary educational expenses for the child and his extraordinary medical expenses; erred in treating the defendant's pendente lite expenses as dissipation; erred and abused its discretion when it found that the defendant understated his income; erred in its property division by awarding the plaintiff the marital home and personalty; abused its discretion when it issued custody orders that are not in the best interest of the child; and violated his constitutional rights to due process, abused its discretion or otherwise erred in not considering several motions filed by him pendente lite and not conducting the trial so that he could hear the proceedings. Additionally, the defendant claims that the "[plaintiff] proffered false and unreliable evidence to support her [claim that the] defendant's intemperance is conduct requiring equitable consideration in the discretion of this court and remand." The defendant does not purport to raise an error of law or fact on the part of the trial court with respect to this claim.

Before analyzing the defendant's claims, we note that he has raised numerous claims that are inadequately briefed, are germane only to another claim that is inadequately briefed or are inadequately articulated to warrant review. "As appellate courts repeatedly have cautioned, [m]ultiplying assignments

of error will dilute and weaken a good case and will not save a bad one. . . . The effect of adding weak arguments will be to dilute the force of the stronger ones." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Kammili* v. *Kammili*, 197 Conn. App. 656, 657–58 n.1, 232 A.3d 102 (quoting *State* v. *Pelletier*, 209 Conn. 564, 566–67, 552 A.2d 805 (1989)), cert. denied, 335 Conn. 947, 238 A.3d 18 (2020); see also *LeBlanc* v. *New England Raceway, LLC*, 116 Conn. App. 267, 280 n.4, 976 A.2d 750 (2009) ("a multiplicity of issues can foreclose the appellant's opportunity to provide a fully reasoned discussion of the pivotal issues on appeal"). In the present appeal, we decline to review two of the defendant's claims because they are inadequately briefed. Specifically, we decline to review the defendant's claims that the court violated his due process rights and that the plaintiff proffered false and unreliable evidence to support her claim of the defendant's intemperance. As to the claim that the court violated his due process rights by not considering several pendente lite motions, the defendant has not identified the motions the court allegedly did not consider. With respect to his claim that the court conducted the trial in a way that he could not hear the proceedings, he devotes, at best, no more than a few sentences and provides no legal analysis. "[W]e are not required to review issues that have been improperly presented to this court through an inadequate brief. . . . Analysis, rather than mere abstract assertion, is required in order to avoid abandoning an issue by failure to brief the issue properly." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *In re James O.*, 160 Conn. App. 506, 527, 127 A.3d 375, aff'd, 322 Conn. 636, 142 A.3d 1147 (2016).

We understand the defendant's appeal to challenge the court's child support, child custody, and property distribution orders. For the sake of clarity and consistency of analysis, we have reorganized and restated his claims consistent with their substance as set forth in the defendant's brief. We will address them in turn.

[3] Practice Book § 25-5 sets forth various automatic orders upon service of a dissolution complaint and provides in relevant part: "(b) . . . (1) Neither party shall sell, transfer, exchange, assign, remove, or in any way dispose of, without the consent of the other party in writing, or an order of a judicial authority, any property, except in the usual course of business or for customary and usual household expenses or for reasonable attorney's fees in connection with this action. . . ."

[4] We note that § 46b-56 was amended by the legislature in 2021 during the events underlying this appeal. See Public Acts 2021, No. 21-78, § 9. All references herein to § 46b-56 are to the 2021 revision of the statute.

[5] "The criteria enumerated in § 46b-215a-5c (b) of the regulations are: (1) Other financial resources available to a parent . . . (2) [e]xtraordinary expenses for care and maintenance of the child . . . (3) [e]xtraordinary parental expenses . . . (4) [n]eeds of a parent's other dependents . . . (5) [c]oordination of total family support . . . [and] (6) [s]pecial circumstances. . . . Shared physical custody is considered a special circumstance that justifies deviation when (i) such arrangement substantially: (I) reduces expenses for the child, for the parent with the lower net weekly income, or (II) increases expenses for the child, for the parent with the higher net weekly income; and (ii) sufficient funds remain for the parent receiving support to meet the needs of the child after deviation; or (iii) both parents have substantially equal income. . . . The [b]est interests of the child is also considered a special circumstance that justifies deviation." (Citation omitted; internal quotation marks omitted.) *Moore* v. *Moore*, supra, 216 Conn. App. 191 n.5.

[6] The defendant also contends, in one sentence of his appellate brief, that the guardian ad litem's parenting plan was "simply adopted by the court in an improper delegation of its authority to someone who presented and relied on facts that were unsupported in the record." He provides no authority in support of this argument nor an explanation as to why the court's decision to adopt the recommended parenting plan was an "improper delegation of its authority." To the extent that this is an attempt to claim that the court improperly delegated its authority, it is inadequately briefed. We, therefore, decline to address it. *Margarum* v. *Donut Delight, Inc.*, 210 Conn. App. 576, 580, 270 A.3d 169 (2022) ("[w]e consistently have held that [a]nalysis, rather than mere abstract assertion, is required in order to avoid abandoning an issue by failure to brief the issue properly" (internal quotation marks omitted)).

[7] General Statutes (Rev. to 2021) § 46b-56 (c) provides: "In making or modifying any order as provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the court shall consider the best interests of the child, and in doing so may consider, but shall not be limited to, one or more of the following factors: (1) The temperament and developmental needs of the child; (2) the capacity and the disposition of the parents to understand and meet the needs of the

child; (3) any relevant and material information obtained from the child, including the informed preferences of the child; (4) the wishes of the child's parents as to custody; (5) the past and current interaction and relationship of the child with each parent, the child's siblings and any other person who may significantly affect the best interests of the child; (6) the willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage such continuing parent-child relationship between the child and the other parent as is appropriate, including compliance with any court orders; (7) any manipulation by or coercive behavior of the parents in an effort to involve the child in the parents' dispute; (8) the ability of each parent to be actively involved in the life of the child; (9) the child's adjustment to his or her home, school and community environments; (10) the length of time that the child has lived in a stable and satisfactory environment and the desirability of maintaining continuity in such environment, provided the court may consider favorably a parent who voluntarily leaves the child's family home pendente lite in order to alleviate stress in the household; (11) the stability of the child's existing or proposed residences, or both; (12) the mental and physical health of all individuals involved, except that a disability of a proposed custodial parent or other party, in and of itself, shall not be determinative of custody unless the proposed custodial arrangement is not in the best interests of the child; (13) the child's cultural background; (14) the effect on the child of the actions of an abuser, if any domestic violence has occurred between the parents or between a parent and another individual or the child; (15) whether the child or a sibling of the child has been abused or neglected, as defined respectively in section 46b-120; and (16) whether the party satisfactorily completed participation in a parenting education program established pursuant to section 46b-69b. The court is not required to assign any weight to any of the factors that it considers."

[8] In its memorandum of decision, the court noted that "[t]he parties are not very far apart on their custody and access proposals. Each of them is seeking an order of joint legal and physical custody, and each parent is seeking approximately one day more than the other of access."

[9] In his brief, the defendant also argues that "[the] court must determine at the outset which of the parties' resources are subject to division. In this case, [this] step was not undertaken." He cites no authority to support this argument and provides no analysis applying the law to the facts of this appeal. We, therefore, decline to address it further. *Margarum* v. *Donut Delight, Inc.*, 210 Conn. App. 576, 580, 270 A.3d 169 (2022) ("[w]e consistently have held that [a]nalysis, rather than mere abstract assertion, is required in order to avoid abandoning an issue by failure to brief the issue properly" (internal quotation marks omitted)).