



ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

Message from the Executive Director

Perhaps it is because I am of "a certain age," but I find myself struggling to recall a time in my adult life when there has been so little trust and confidence in institutions designed to support and protect the public. This includes law enforcement, television news, politicians of all stripes and the courts. Family courts are not exempt. We know there are dissatisfied customers and AFCC members have been working for more than 50 years to improve services. From the development of mediation, parent education, parenting coordination and guidelines to promote better practice, to our most recent initiative that focuses on improving information and access to court services. The challenge is that every time we think we've succeeded we are tested, yet again.

And these are not 9-5 projects, because that's when AFCC members are busy with their day jobs. I know, because I see the email exchanges and conference calls that take place over the lunch hour, late at night and on weekends. These same hours are used by our chapter leaders who spend time building local networks, our many partner organizations, and so many AFCC members who are working on their own initiatives. We know there is more to do (when is there not?) and we are working hard to get there. And as we progress, please know AFCC is grateful for your contributions, your spirit, your leadership, your devotion to children and families and, last but not least, the many nights and weekends you give. We especially appreciate that you do so as a part of the AFCC family.

Happy holidays, and wishing you all a little bit of downtime in 2015.

Peter Salem
AFCC Executive Director

New Orleans Program Available Online, Registration

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
VOL. 9 NO. 12
DECEMBER 2014

AFCC Conferences



AFCC 52nd Annual Conference

May 27–30, 2015
*Children in the Court System:
Different Doors, Different
Responses, Different Outcomes*
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
New Orleans, Louisiana
[Program Brochure, Online
Registration](#)

**Special Thanks to 52nd
Annual Conference Diamond
Sponsor**
[OurFamilyWizard.com.](#)

Open

AFCC 52nd Annual Conference

Children in the Court System:

Different Doors, Different Responses, Different Outcomes

May 27-30, 2015, Hilton New Orleans Riverside

The AFCC 52nd Annual Conference Program Brochure is now available online! Online conference registration and hotel reservations are also available on the AFCC website. Printed copies of the conference brochure will be mailed in January to AFCC members and colleagues. Now is the time to begin planning your attendance. There are over 90 sessions to choose from, with more than 200 presenters, including leading legal, mental health and dispute resolution practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

[Read the Conference Program Brochure](#)

[Register Today](#)

[Hotel Reservations](#)

Submit a Poster Proposal—Deadline February 7

AFCC is accepting proposals for posters to be exhibited during the annual conference. Students, lawyers, mental health professionals, and academics are invited to propose posters concerning innovative interventions, initiatives, new programs, legal or policy changes, and/or research. **The deadline to submit a proposal for a poster is February 7, 2015.**

[More information](#)

[Submit a poster proposal](#)

Apply for a Scholarship—Deadline March 1

Conference scholarships are available to assist recipients with the cost of conference attendance. Scholarships include registration for a pre-conference institute, the conference, attendee meals, networking functions, and a certificate of attendance. A limited number of stipends to help recipients offset the cost of travel and lodging will be awarded.

The deadline to apply is March 1, 2015.

[More information](#)

[Apply for a scholarship](#)

Ask the Experts

Ten Tips for Client Engagement

Bill Eddy, LCSW, JD, CFLS, San Diego, California

Clients today want to be positively engaged with their professionals and to play an important role, yet many of them tend towards negative engagement and many professionals are tempted to respond negatively as well—especially when they have “high conflict” clients.



AFCC-AAML Conference

October 1–3, 2015

Capital Hilton

Washington, DC

AFCC Regional Training Conference

November 5–7, 2015

Hyatt Regency Columbus

Columbus, Ohio

AFCC 53rd Annual Conference

June 1–4, 2016

Sheraton Seattle Hotel

Seattle, Washington

AFCC 54th Annual Conference

May 31–June 3, 2017

Sheraton Boston Hotel

Boston, Massachusetts

AFCC Training Programs



Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination: Helping High Conflict Parents Resolve Disputes

Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA

These tips can be used to help engage clients in thinking about problem-solving rather than reacting, whether you are a therapist or lawyer with an individual client, or a mediator with both parents. Judges and custody evaluators can use these principles to the extent possible, even when talking about past behavior problems. By focusing clients on these simple steps for future problem-solving, some become more engaged and less defensive. Bill Eddy will present a full-day pre-conference institute on this topic titled, *Client Engagement Skills for High Conflict Families*, at the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference in New Orleans.

[Read more](#)

Basic and Advanced PC Trainings in Chicago—March 2015

AFCC, in collaboration with [Loyola University Chicago School of Law's Civitas ChildLaw Center](#), is pleased to announce two new training programs, *Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination: Helping High Conflict Parents Resolve Disputes*, with Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA, March 9-10, 2015, and *When Nuts are Loose and Bolts Don't Fit: Advanced Practices in Parenting Coordination*, with Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD, March 11-12, 2015. Continuing education credit is available. AFCC members receive a substantially reduced rate on registration. Additional registration discounts apply when you register for both trainings. See the training brochure for details, including presenter bios and timed agendas.

[More information](#)

[Register today](#)

AFCC Board Endorses Eldercaring Guidelines

At the meeting of the AFCC Board of Directors in San Antonio last month, the board unanimously approved an endorsement of the recent [Guidelines for Eldercaring Coordination](#) developed by the Association for Conflict Resolution Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination. The task force was co-chaired by Linda Fieldstone (former AFCC President) and Sue Bronson (immediate past ACR Elder Section Co-Chair). The task force used the established process of parenting coordination as a model to develop a coordination process specific to the unique needs of elders. The guidelines are available on the AFCC website under Resource Center, [Practice Guidelines and Standards](#).

ACR Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination Seeks Project Sites

The ACR Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination is seeking project sites to introduce eldercaring coordination to the courts. A project site

March 9–10, 2015
Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

[More information](#)

When Nuts are Loose and Bolts Don't Fit: Advanced Practices in Parenting Coordination

Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD
March 11–12, 2015

Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

[More information](#)

AFCC Chapter Annual Conferences

Texas Chapter Annual Conference

New Findings on Infant Overnights and Relocation
January 23, 2015

Tarrant Family Law Center
Fort Worth, Texas

[More information](#)

Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference

Current Issues in Family Court: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
January 30–31, 2015

Staybridge Suites
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

[More information](#)

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

Tomorrow is Here: Confronting the Challenges of the Modern Family

February 6–8, 2015
Sedona, Arizona

[More information](#)

California Chapter Annual Conference

Inventing the Future: Getting Ahead of the Curve for California's Families

February 6–8, 2015

Westin South Coast Plaza Hotel
Costa Mesa, California

[More information](#)

is defined as: one judge, or judges, in a specific circuit, jurisdiction, county or province, who refers at least six families who will participate in eldercaring coordination.

[Read more](#)

Give to the AFCC Scholarship Fund

Help others attend AFCC conferences by giving to the AFCC Scholarship Fund online or with your registration for the annual conference. If you have not yet given this year, please consider giving today. Every gift—\$100, \$50, \$25, any amount that feels right to you—brings us closer to our goal. Receiving your gift by the end of 2014 will help us plan for next year, and will provide US taxpayers with a deduction for the 2014 tax year.

[Donate online today](#)

[Thank you to this year's donors](#)

Conference Audio and Materials Available

Access to audio recordings of plenary sessions is a benefit of AFCC membership and audio from last month's 11th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations, *Examining Unintended Consequences*, is available. [Log in and listen](#) to audio recordings of the Opening Session, *Town Hall Meeting: Examining the Unintended Consequences of Child Custody Evaluations*, with Aaron Robb, PhD, Hon. Dianna J. Gould-Saltman, Jeffrey P. Wittmann, PhD, Leslie Ellen Shear, JD, CFLS and Moderator: Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD; and the General Session, *The Activities and Roles of Consultants: How Many is too Many?* with David A. Martindale, PhD, ABPP, Milfred "Bud" Dale, PhD, JD, Robert A. Simon, PhD, S. Margaret Lee, PhD, and Moderator: Robin M. Deutsch, PhD.

Audio recordings of all conference sessions are available for purchase either as a discounted package or individually through [Digital Conference Providers, Inc.](#) AFCC has a limited number of USB drives containing symposium session handouts available for purchase. The cost is \$20 for members and \$40 for non-members, shipping charges will apply. To order, call the AFCC office at 608-664-3750 or email [Elliot Bartz](#).

Member News

James T. McLaren, Columbia, South Carolina, has been named President of [American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers](#) (AAML). Since his admission as an Academy Fellow in 1994, he has held titles as a vice president, first vice president, and president-elect. He has served on various committees, both as a member and chair, and

Washington Chapter Annual Conference

Shared Parenting

Predicaments:

Washington's Policy and Practice Concerns

March 7, 2015

Washington Athletic Club
Seattle, Washington

[More information](#)

Alberta Chapter Annual Conference

Professionals at the

Crossroads: Helping Families and Children Access the Legal System

April 9–10, 2015

Providence Renewal Centre
Edmonton, Alberta

[More information](#)

Oregon Chapter Annual Conference

The Rising Tides of Shared Parenting

April 10, 2015

The Grotto Conference Center
Portland, Oregon

[More information](#)

Australia Chapter Annual Conference

Building Bridges:

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Family Law

August 14–15, 2015

Sydney Shangri La Hotel
Sydney, Australia

[More information](#)

Join AFCC

Are you a member?

[Join](#) or [Renew](#)

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in the field of family law and in your practice. [Read more about member benefits.](#)

received the Fellow of the Year Award from the AAML in 2007 for his work on a wide range of national issues.

Philip Stahl, Queen Creek, Arizona, traveled to Singapore, where he trained custody evaluators, judges, and attorneys representing children on a range of psycho-legal issues affecting child custody decisions and met with policy-makers considering reforms in the Singapore family law system. He followed this by traveling to Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney, Australia, where he presented workshops to attorneys and mental health professionals titled, *A Quartet of Challenging Issues in Family Law Disputes*. Dr. Stahl will also begin teaching a course at Arizona Summit Law School in Phoenix, titled *Psychology in Family Law*.

In Memoriam— Leonard G. Florescue

Leonard G. Florescue, matrimonial and family lawyer, and past co-president and founding member of the New York Chapter of AFCC, died November 26, 2014, after a long illness. Lennie was a partner at Blank Rome LLP in New York City for twenty years. He relocated to Rochester, where he joined the firm of Chamberlain D' Amanda and lived happily with his beloved wife Marilyn only a few miles from his grandchildren, triplets.

In Memoriam—Wayne Graves

Wayne Graves, clinical and forensic psychologist, and longtime AFCC member, died December 5, 2014. Wayne was a loving and beloved husband and father, and a compassionate friend and psychologist. He graduated with a PhD from the University of Toledo, concentrating his education on clinical psychology. Wayne developed an interest in forensic psychology during his employment at Court Diagnostic and Treatment Center, as Director, and over the years, provided evaluation, diagnostic and educational services to the legal community in northwest Ohio.

[Read more](#)

AFCC Presenter Runs to Raise Money for Mediation

Lorig Charkoudian, Executive Director of [Community Mediation Maryland](#), recently ran 67 miles to raise money for inmates' families to take a shuttle from Baltimore to correctional institutions in Hagerstown and Westover, so they can meet face-to-face for a mediation session. The costs for the shuttle are \$40 and \$47. Community Mediation Maryland runs a conflict resolution program that helps reconnect inmates with their families and repair relationships through mediation. One mediation session reduces the risk of

Ask the Experts

Is there a topic you would like to see covered by an AFCC Ask the Experts piece?

[Suggest a topic](#)

AFCC Chapters

Network and share your interdisciplinary view of family court matters on the local level. There are currently chapters in the following states, provinces, and country:

Australia
Alberta
Arizona
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Florida
Illinois
Indiana
Louisiana
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Missouri
New Jersey
New York
Ohio
Ontario
Oregon
Texas
Washington
Wisconsin

[Add an AFCC Chapter to your membership](#)

AFCC Networks

New Zealand

The opinions expressed in articles published or linked to in the *AFCC eNEWS* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions

recidivism by 10 percent, and three sessions by 22 percent. The two-hour sessions are voluntary and are offered 6-12 months before an inmate's release. Families can receive up to three sessions. Dr. Charkoudian will present a session, *What Works in Child-Access Mediation: Qualitative Analysis of Observed Sessions*, at the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference in New Orleans.

[Read more](#)

AFCC Publication of the Month Innovations for Self-Represented Litigants

This volume of the *Innovations* series presents a variety of creative and effective approaches to serve self-represented litigants. Chapters describe innovative methods for providing self-help services in rural and urban communities, judicial education, case management, technology to help SRLs prepare court documents, and a mediation program operated using pro bono attorneys and law students. Bonnie Rose Hough and Pamela Cardullo Ortiz co-edited this volume. Featured authors include: Stacey Marz, Kathleen Dixon and Margaret Little, Robert Rubinson, Claudia Johnson, Hon. Fern A. Fisher, and Mr. Justice Harvey Brownstone. Members receive 15% off AFCC publications.

[Order online today](#)

Call for Nominations—AFCC Awards

Nominate a colleague or a program for one of the following AFCC awards by March 15, 2015. Awards will be presented at the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference in New Orleans. The John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award recognizes outstanding contributions and/or achievements by AFCC members; the Stanley Cohen Research Award, sponsored by the Oregon Family Institute, recognizes outstanding research and/or achievements in the field of family and divorce; and the Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award recognizes innovation in court-connected or court-related programs created by AFCC members.

[More information](#)

AFCC Board of Directors Nominations

The AFCC Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for individuals to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors. Recommended individuals must be AFCC members and have an interest in and knowledge of AFCC and its work. Nominations must be received by January 31, 2015, in order to be considered by the committee prior to the election at the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference, May 27-30, 2015, in New Orleans. The term is three years, beginning July 1, 2015, and

of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

Readers are welcomed and encouraged to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues.

[About the AFCC eNEWS](#)

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afcc@afccnet.org

concluding June 30, 2018. If you or a member you know is interested, please send first and last name, contact information, resume and a letter of intent to the AFCC Nominating Committee, c/o AFCC, 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719, or via email to afcc@afccnet.org.

Family Law in the News

The Divorce Surge is Over, but the Myth Lives On

Claire Cain Miller, courtesy of the New York Times

Divorce rates increased in the 1970s and 1980s, but in the last 20 years they have dropped. It is no longer true that the divorce rate is rising, or that half of all marriages end in divorce. It has not been for some time. Even though social scientists have tried to debunk those myths, somehow the conventional wisdom has held.

[Read more](#)

Census Bureau Proposes Dropping Some Marriage and Divorce Questions

D'Vera Cohn, courtesy of Pew Research Center

The Census Bureau has proposed dropping a series of questions about marriage and divorce from its largest household survey of Americans, touching off a debate about the usefulness of such data.

[Read more](#)

Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination

ACR is a professional organization enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution.

THE ACR TASK FORCE ON ELDERCARING COORDINATION IS SEEKING PROJECT SITES TO INTRODUCE THE PROCESS OF ELDERCARING COORDINATION TO THE COURTS:

Eldercaring Coordination focuses on reducing the level of conflict in families regarding the care and safety of an elder, so that the elder and family members can more productively address the issues at hand and work with others in their support system to provide legal advice, guidance and care.

**Modeled after parenting coordination, a successful child-focused alternative dispute resolution process.*

Project Site is defined as: one judge, or judges, in a specific circuit, jurisdiction, county or province, who refers at least six families who participate in eldercaring coordination.

Purpose of Eldercaring Coordination

- Help manage high conflict family dynamics so that the elder, family and stakeholders can address their non-legal issues independently from the court;
- Ready the elder and family to work with collaterals regarding services such as legal representation, individual/family therapy, medical, psychological or psychiatric evaluation or mediation to address the care and needs of the elder, avoiding delays and resulting in better decisions;
- Promote the self-determination of the elder to the extent of his or her ability as fully as possible;
- Promote safety by monitoring situations at high risk for abuse or neglect;
- Provide a support system for the elder and family during times of transition, and
- Free judicial time by addressing matters for which other dispute resolution processes are unavailable or ineffective

ACR Guidelines for Eldercaring Coordination were endorsed by AFCC on November 6, 2014 and are posted at:

www.afccnet.org/Resource-Center/Practice-Guidelines-and-Standards

The Guidelines include supportive instruments to assist in the development of programs and Pilot Project sites:

- Ethical Guidelines for Eldercaring Coordination
- Eldercaring Coordination Training Guidelines and Protocols Court Rule Proposal Template
- Pilot Project Proposal Template, including Standardized Forms
- Eldercaring Coordination Project Assessment Component/Pre- and Post Surveys for Elders, other participants and the Eldercaring Coordinator that will be used by Project Evaluation Team

The ACR Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination will:

- Provide consultation to the Project Site to assist in the development of the project;
- Facilitate the first training for those qualified to become Eldercaring Coordinators to remain available in Project Site areas for service; and
- Connect Project Site with Research Team to enhance the development of the eldercaring coordination process.

Please contact ACR Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination Co-Chairs for more information:

Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed.
305-349-5589
Lfieldstone@jud11.flcourts.org

Sue Bronson, LCSW
414-841-6689
sbronson@wi.rr.com



ASSOCIATION OF
FAMILY AND
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eNEWS

Ask the Experts Ten Tips for Client Engagement

Bill Eddy, LCSW, JD, CFLS, San Diego, California

Clients today want to be positively engaged with their professionals and to play an important role, yet many of them tend towards negative engagement and many professionals are tempted to respond negatively as well—especially when they have “high conflict” clients. These tips can be used to help engage clients in thinking about problem-solving rather than reacting, whether you are a therapist or lawyer with an individual client, or a mediator with both parents. Judges and custody evaluators can use these principles to the extent possible, even when talking about past behavior problems. By focusing clients on these simple steps for future problem-solving, some become more engaged and less defensive.

- 1. Forget about insight.** This is who they are and efforts to make them a better person with on-the-spot “constructive” feedback often creates more defensiveness and an unnecessary power struggle. Just focus on addressing what action steps to take now about the problems at hand.
- 2. Focus on the future.** Talking about a client’s past behavior triggers defensiveness and resistance to change. As much as possible, it’s better to talk about desired future behavior rather than criticizing the past behavior.
- 3. Communicate in ways you want your client to mirror.** Researchers say that we have neurons in our brains which “mirror” the behavior of others. So rather than mirroring their frustration, fear or anger, it’s better for us to act in a way that we want our clients to mirror us—especially showing them empathy and educating them, rather than showing anger.
- 4. Teach clients to ask you questions.** Rather than making brilliant decisions for our clients, we need to engage them in asking us questions as much as possible, to help them prepare to make proposals and decisions themselves.
- 5. Teach clients to set the agenda.** Whether you are meeting individually, in mediation, in a group meeting or otherwise, teach clients to think about and list items for the agenda. The more they are thinking about what to do, the less they are thinking about blaming and complaining.
- 6. Educate clients about their choices and possible consequences.** This approach keeps more responsibility on their shoulders and gets them thinking. Repeatedly remind them: “It’s up to you.”

7. Have clients make lots of little decisions. Whether we are providing mediation, counseling, advocacy or judging, we need to give clients practice in making as many decisions as possible (e.g., who goes first, changing topics, when to take breaks, etc.)

8. Teach clients to make proposals. Rather than taking the lead, we need to ask clients to form proposals and test them out on their lawyers, counselors or others, to prepare positively for negotiations, rather than focusing on negative arguments about the past. This includes who will do what, when and where.

9. Teach clients to ask questions about each other's proposals. Rather than quickly saying "No" to proposals, teach clients to ask questions to help them form their next proposals. This can turn an angry exchange into an analysis of what's important to each party.

10. Teach clients to reply to proposals by saying "Yes," "No" or "I'll think about it." This encourages clients to stay focused on thinking about proposals and making new proposals, rather than just reacting to proposals. If a client says "No" to a proposal, then it's their turn to make a new one.

Bill Eddy is a lawyer, therapist, mediator and the President of [High Conflict Institute](#). He developed the High Conflict Personality Theory (HCP Theory) and has become an international expert on managing disputes involving high conflict personalities and personality disorders. He provides training on this subject to lawyers, judges, mediators, managers, human resource professionals, businesspersons, healthcare administrators, college administrators, homeowners' association managers, ombudspersons, law enforcement, therapists and others. He has been a speaker and trainer in over 25 states, several provinces in Canada, Australia, France and Sweden.

He is also the developer of the [New Ways for Families](#) method of managing potentially high conflict families in and out of family court. He is currently developing a method for managing potentially high conflict employees titled New Ways for Work.

Bill Eddy will present a full-day pre-conference institute on this topic titled, *Client Engagement Skills for High Conflict Families*, at the AFCC 52nd Annual Conference in New Orleans, May 27-30, 2015. He will also present a workshop with Marsha Kline Pruett and Lisa Matthews, *Two Program Models and Research on Parenting and Co-parenting Skills*. See the [conference program brochure](#) for full session descriptions and schedule.



Association of Family and Conciliation Courts
New York Chapter



December 3, 2014

Dear AFCC-NY Members:

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With heavy hearts we regret to inform you of the passing of AFCC-NY Past Co-President Leonard G. Florescue, Esq. Lennie made significant contributions to our Chapter as a founding board member and by serving as an animated Co-President along with Steven Demby, Ph.D. Most recently he attained the status of an honorary board member and co-chaired our 2013 Upstate Conference in Rochester along with Kelly Ciccone, Esq. Notably, Lennie was a revered lawyer who concentrated in the areas of matrimonial and family law. He was a Partner at Blank Rome LLP in New York City for twenty years until he relocated to Rochester. In Rochester, he joined the firm of Chamberlain D'Amanda and lived happily with his beloved wife Marilyn and resided only a few miles from his grandchildren who are triplets.

Sadly, Lennie transitioned after a long illness this past Thanksgiving Eve. He was laid to rest on December 1, 2014. The family intends to celebrate his legacy sometime in May 2015 with a memorial service that will be held in Rochester. Information about the memorial service will be distributed at a later date.

Cards and condolences can be sent to Lennie's family. The address is 24 Creek Ridge, Pittsford, NY 14534. There will be a condolence gift sent to Lennie's family on behalf of our Chapter.

Sincerely,

Hon. Jane Pearl and Karen B. Rosenthal, Esq.