



ASSOCIATION OF
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eNEWS

President's Message

Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP

As I round the last lap of my presidential term, I am aware more keenly than ever of our responsibility to invigorate a younger, newer, professional membership within the organization. The vast majority of organizations heavily populated by the Baby Boomers are finding that subsequent “age and stage” groups, including the Millennials coming into leadership, are less apt to get deeply involved in organizations during the years in which they are finding their professional footing, making a name for themselves, and – if they choose to do so – having families. One of my presidential initiatives is to launch a successful new group within AFCC with an eye toward future leadership building through outreach and mentorship. [Read more.](#)

AFCC 54th Annual Conference

Registration Rates Increase May 1

Make your plans to attend the AFCC 54th Annual Conference, *Turning the Kaleidoscope of Family Conflict into a Prism of Harmony*, May 31-June 3, 2017 in Boston. To take advantage of early registration savings, registrations must be received electronically or postmarked on or before May 1. [Register today!](#)

Additional Hotel Rooms

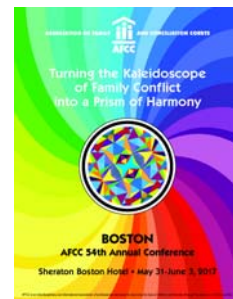
The AFCC room block at the Sheraton Boston Hotel is sold out. AFCC has arranged for rooms at the Copley Square Hotel. For more information, [click here.](#)

Support AFCC by Donating to the Silent Auction

The annual AFCC Silent Auction is a great opportunity to support the organization’s work and special projects and initiatives. The auction will be held on Friday evening, June 2 at 5:30pm just before the Annual Banquet. Donate an item and attend the auction to bid! You do not need to attend the conference to give. Past auction items include vacations, jewelry, sports memorabilia, the

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER
VOL. 12 NO. 4
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Upcoming AFCC Conferences



[AFCC 54th Annual Conference](#)

Turning the Kaleidoscope of Family Conflict into a Prism of Harmony
May 31-June 3, 2017
Sheraton Boston Hotel
Boston, Massachusetts

Diamond Sponsor



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Thank You Conference Sponsors

A special thank you to our **Diamond Sponsor:** [OurFamilyWizard](#); our **Platinum Sponsors:** [Esdaile, Barrett, Jacobs & Mone](#), [Stable Paths](#), [Schmidt & Federico](#), and [AppClose](#); our **Gold Sponsors:** [OnlineParentingPrograms.com](#), [Center for Divorce Education](#), [Transitioning Families](#), and the [Suzie S Thorn Family Foundation](#); and our **Silver Sponsors:** [William James College](#), [Boston Law Collaborative](#), [Tony Pelusi & Associates](#), [Lee & Rivers](#), and [Verrill Dana](#). To see a full list of all conference sponsors, [click here](#).

Ask the Experts: Top Ten Tips for Interviewing Collateral Sources

Kathleen McNamara, PhD and Beth Lieberman, LCSW

Gathering collateral data is a critically important component of child custody evaluations. Here are ten tips for conducting interviews with collateral sources. [Read more.](#)

AFCC Fall Conference in Milwaukee

Beneath the Surface of High Conflict and Troubled Families
November 2-4, 2017
Hyatt Regency Milwaukee

Call for Proposals

The AFCC Conference Committee is seeking proposals for 90-minute workshop sessions. Share your work with the interdisciplinary community of family law professionals who attend AFCC conferences. Proposals must be received using the online form by **May 15**. The program brochure and online registration will be available July 2017. View the call for proposals. [Submit online.](#)

AFCC-AAML Conference

Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation and Settlement
September 14-16, 2017
Westin San Diego

The conference brochure is now available and registration is open to AFCC and AAML members.

[Read the brochure and pick your workshops](#)
[Register today](#)

Give to the AFCC Scholarship Fund

AFCC Chapter Conferences

[Ontario Chapter Annual Conference](#)
Breaking Down Barriers: Targeting Resources to Meet Families' Needs
October 19-20, 2017
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

AFCC Webinar Series

LGBTQ Clients and Family Law in a Post-Obergefell Era
Allan Barsky, JD, MSW, PhD
June 20, 2017 1:00pm Eastern

Save the Date

[AFCC-AAML Conference](#)
Advanced Issues in Child Custody: Evaluation, Litigation and Settlement
September 14-16, 2017
Westin San Diego
San Diego, California

[AFCC Regional Conference](#)
Beneath the Surface of High Conflict and Troubled Families
November 2-4, 2017
Hyatt Regency Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Are you an AFCC member? [Join](#) or [Renew](#)

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 of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts.

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There is still time to contribute to the AFCC Scholarship Fund! The AFCC Scholarship Fund helps colleagues attend the annual conference, to hear from world renowned speakers in their field, and network with other professionals. This year, AFCC is giving more than 50 scholarships to deserving applicants! If you have not already given this year, [please consider giving a gift today](#). Thank you to all the AFCC members who have already donated, know that your gift reaches many.

Member News

Professor Barbara Atwood recently received the Peter Economidis Award for Lifetime Achievement and Contribution to Family Law from the Foundation of Family Justice.

Amy Wechsler of the AFCC New Jersey Chapter was awarded the AFCC New Jersey Chapter Phil N. Sobel Award, named for one of the Chapter's Founding Members to recognize her work in the field of family law and the chapter.

Robert Emery, Social Science Editor of Family Court Review, has been awarded the Cavaliers' Distinguished Teaching Professorship from the University of Virginia for 2017-2019. The Chair is the highest teaching award at the University and it recognizes an eminent scholar for outstanding undergraduate teaching.

J. Herbie DiFonzo has been selected as Teacher of the Year by the Class of 2017 for Hofstra University. Congratulations, Herbie.

Chapter News

[Meet Jennifer Wheeler](#), President of the **Washington Chapter**

The AFCC Family Court Services Resource Guide

Check out the [AFCC Family Court Services Resource](#), a collection of services, programs, practices, and processes that provide help to families with divorce, separation, never married, adoption, and paternity issues. We are hoping that the Resource Guide will widen the accessibility to, and options for, family court-related non-profit or public sector services, and inspire the development of new ideas within the family court community. [Send in your application now!](#) Each month, the AFCC eNEWS will be highlighting an excerpt from the Resource Guide to spark your innovative and creative ideas! [Read more](#).

Thank You Staff of Family Court Review

AFCC thanks the [outgoing staff](#) for their hard work producing the Family Court Review (FCR), the interdisciplinary journal of AFCC. We would also like to introduce the [incoming staff](#) of FCR and encourage submissions. The FCR editors are looking for submissions on all aspects of family law, family courts, and the resolution of family conflict, from fields related to family law. [Learn more about the guidelines, submission review process, and submit an article.](#)

Comedy Improv, Mediation and Collaborative Practices

Gregory Firestone, PhD

Dr. Firestone will present a pre-conference institute, Getting to “Yes, And”—Learn Comedy Improv and More to Enhance Your Mediation and Collaborative Skillset at the AFCC 54th Annual Conference in Boston, May 31, 2017 and [here explains a bit about their interface.](#)

Save the Date

Practice Development Institute

ABA Chicago Headquarters

July 14-15, 2017

This two-day workshop on July 14-15 in Chicago, led by Forrest “Woody” Mosten, provides a practical model for implementing client-centered peacemaking strategies in your profession, including unbundled legal services and innovative dispute resolution tools. [Learn more.](#)

Membership Notice of AFCC Board Nominations

At the AFCC membership meeting, Saturday, June 3, 2017, the following individuals will be nominated to serve on the AFCC Board of Directors for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2017 and concluding June 30, 2020: Hon. Linda Fidnick, Dr. Leslie Drozd, Dr. Ann Ordway, Dr. Milfred Dale, Prof. Stacey Platt, and Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman.

The AFCC Executive Committee is elected by the board of directors. For informational purposes, the following individuals have been nominated for positions on the executive committee:

President Elect: Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman; Vice President: Dr. Matthew Sullivan; Secretary: Dr. Larry Fong; Treasurer: Ms. Mindy Mitnick. Ms. Annette Burns and Dr. Marsha Kline Pruett automatically become President and Past-President, respectively, per AFCC bylaws.

AFCC Bylaws

At the AFCC membership meeting, Saturday, June 3, 2017, the

AFCFC members will be asked to approve changes to the bylaws related to AFCFC Chapters. The changes have been approved by the AFCFC Board of Directors. [Click here](#) to review bylaws changes.



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President's Message

*Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP
Northampton, Massachusetts*

As I round the last lap of my presidential term, I am aware more keenly than ever of our responsibility to invigorate a younger, newer, professional membership within the organization. The vast majority of organizations heavily populated by the Baby Boomers are finding that subsequent “age and stage” groups, including the Millennials coming into leadership, are less apt to get deeply involved in organizations during the years in which they are finding their professional footing, making a name for themselves, and – if they choose to do so – having families. One of my presidential initiatives is to launch a successful new group within AFCC with an eye toward future leadership building through outreach and mentorship.

Our new professional group has a name! The AFCC E2M Network. E2M stands for early to mid-career. The group members are generally in their first ten years of practice. You will see buttons saying “Ask me about E2M” at the AFCC Annual Conference in Boston. E2Ms, board members, and other interested souls will be wearing the buttons to announce the new group and begin discussions about the role of younger members in the organization. The E2M group will have several networking and planning events at the Annual Conference: (1) a Dine-Around on Thursday evening; (2) tables at Thursday Luncheon; and, (3) a planning meeting on Friday, June 2 at 7:15 am. There are about twenty E2Ms from across North America that have expressed interest in joining the group's activities in Boston or in the near future.

Our two AFCC Fellows are taking charge of this initiative. Liana Shelby and Kristin Doeberl will be at the Board meeting, and will be presenting together at the conference on June 1 at 1:30 pm on the topic of reunification therapy. Please come support their foray into AFCC presentations and learn about what they are interested in.

To share this new initiative symbolically and practically, the remainder of this message will be the result of a joint effort between myself and the fellows. Below I ask them some questions to introduce themselves and the exciting ideas they have for E2M.

Liana and Kristin, tell us about what you are doing in the field of Family Law currently and what you hope to do in the next 15 years.

Liana: My first exposure with Family Law and parenting issues occurred while I completed my pre-doctoral internship in Fairbanks, Alaska. During that year, I had the opportunity to work with the Office of Children's Services, helping to reunify children who had been removed from their parents' care due to neglect or abuse. I also conducted parental fitness evaluations that were used to help determine whether children needed to be removed from their parents' care. Last year, during my postdoctoral fellowship in Massachusetts, I worked under the supervision of Robin Deutsch and Christina Harms conducting GAL (child custody) evaluations, care and protection assessments, and writing guardianship reports.

Over the next 15 years, I hope to continue to work within the area of family law by continuing to do GAL and other forensic evaluations in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. My current area of interest is reunification therapy, and my long-term goal is to develop my knowledge and skills to help reunify families that are estranged from abuse, neglect, and alienation.

Kristin: I am a family law attorney at Verrill Dana, LLP in Boston, Massachusetts. My practice focuses on assisting clients with issues in all areas of family law. I negotiate and draft prenuptial, separation, and modification agreements, and represent clients in sophisticated divorce, custody, removal, international child abduction, modification, and contempt proceedings. I also advise clients on issues impacting the LGBTQ community.

Professionally, over the next 15 years and beyond, I look forward to continuing to help clients through often painful and tumultuous family circumstances with respect and dignity, and to grow my practice. I truly love this work and feel fortunate for the opportunity to effect positive change every day.

What are some of your ideas for E2M?

Liana: It's been really exciting chatting with other E2M members about their wants and needs insofar as early career development and mid-career maintenance and expansion. First, I'm hoping to create both online and local communities to provide socializing, networking, and consulting opportunities for the E2M members. One of my favorite things about AFCC is the opportunity to meet and connect with people all over the world that I would not normally be able to meet, and learn from them. Second, I would like to see us provide newsletter articles, webinars, or conference workshops geared toward E2M topics such as financial wellness, balancing family and work life, building a practice, and diversifying your career. The nice part about the group being early to mid is that I, as an early career psychologist, get a chance to hear about future challenges and opportunities from mid-career members to help me better prepare. Third, I'm hoping that AFCC can provide leadership trainings as well as opportunities for leadership within

AFCC. I know that many members are in my same position of never having been a committee or board member before within an organization, and getting the chance to learn from senior members has been invaluable. Finally, some future goals that I envision for the E2M group include establishing a formal mentoring program (both between senior and E2M members, as well as E2M members and student members) and outreach to graduate students to encourage new members to join.

Any additional thoughts from the legal/judicial fields, in particular, about how AFCC can support new professionals?

Kristin: The global, interdisciplinary nature of the AFCC network of professionals is an invaluable resource. Fellow members are always willing to take your call to bounce around an idea, or to refer you to another AFCC member in your desired jurisdiction for assistance with a case. These automatic connections would not exist without AFCC. Keeping this camaraderie and sense of community strong is one of the best ways AFCC can continue to support new professionals.

What challenges do new professionals face being and staying involved with AFCC at this time in your career and life?

Kristin: Only having 24 hours in a day! Having just had a baby, I can attest to the endless demands on my time, both personally and professionally. Countless other young professionals experience this critical time in their career and life similarly. Between meeting high client and case demands, building one's practice, and attempting to prioritize family time, it is often challenging to find even a moment for anything else...let alone sleep! Two keys to the continued engagement of young professionals in the very taxing work we all do are: (i) finding professional environments, whether it be employers or leadership within professional associations, that appreciate and support the unique struggles facing young professionals; and (ii) effectively leveraging the flexibility – relative to many other professions – inherent in the practice of family law.

What can those of us who have been around for a while do to help E2M succeed?

Liana: I think the best thing that senior AFCC members can do is –if they know of anyone that would benefit from the group – to let them know the E2M group exists. The other thing that experienced members can do is to be open to being resources for E2M members. I'm really fortunate that I did my postdoc under Robin and Christina and can still rely on both of them for guidance and support; by being part of this network, E2M members have access to senior members through other E2M members that they may not have felt comfortable contacting before.

What do you find most satisfying about AFCC thus far? What would you hope to see in terms of growth and change?

Liana: The most satisfying aspect of AFCC is the helping, welcoming nature of the senior members that I've had the opportunity to meet since joining AFCC. I've really appreciated the advice, guidance, and invitation to be involved over the past year of being a member. I hope that incoming members to AFCC get to have a similar

experience (if they want it) that I've had. This work can be so demanding and challenging that it's invaluable to have those resources and connections.

The future of AFCC belongs to all of us, but it is as much – if not more – in the hands of new professionals as it is in ours. Their energy and creativity will take what we have put into motion – ADR interventions, research, guidelines for practice, scholarship, and more – and take it to the next level. I hope to be an important part of their becoming leaders in AFCC, just as Janet Johnston, Andy Schepard, Arline Rotman, and countless others did for me.

The input of E2Ms will be increasingly important in a time of rapid change and unimagined opportunities and challenges to our field and to families, more broadly. They are up to the challenge. And I hope they will be able to look back and recount all of the ways that AFCC prepared them for what they face and what they will achieve.



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Ask the Experts: Top Ten Tips for Interviewing Collateral Sources

Kathleen M. McNamara, PhD and Beth Lieberman, LCSW

1. Begin with the end in mind

Collaterals assist in corroborating or refuting the parties' claims, provide information about family members' functioning, and shed light on available sources of support for the children. Collaterals who have direct knowledge of the family provide the most useful information. Consider a wide range of sources.

2. Talk to multiple and balanced sources of information

Multiple sources are necessary to fully explore alternative hypotheses. Invalid conclusions are more likely when too few sources are relied upon. Balanced input is also important. For example, if you interview extended family members on one side, it is usually wise to interview extended family members on the other side.

3. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of using questionnaires

Questionnaires are efficient. Answers to the same questions from multiple sources can be directly compared. Respondents can thoughtfully prepare their answers. Additionally, a permanent record of the collateral's statement is created. On the other hand, boilerplate questions may not tap the most important information, and unknown others may "assist" in writing answers. Spontaneity and discussion are absent. Consider conducting brief follow-up interviews, either in person or by telephone, with collaterals who respond to questionnaires.

4. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of conducting interviews

Interviews provide the opportunity to establish rapport with respondents, which may lead to more robust information. Closed, open, and probing questions may be asked and discussion can occur. On the downside, collaterals may not give well thought out answers to unexpected questions or questions requiring detailed recall. Additionally, unless the interview is recorded, there is no documentation of the collateral's input,

aside from the interviewer's notes, which may be disputed later. Summarize the collaterals' answers to ensure you have accurately heard their input, and consider recording interviews to mitigate the risk of recanted statements later.

5. Obtain authorization from the parties to contact collateral sources

Unless you have explicit authority to obtain collateral input per your order of appointment or by statute, obtain written authorization from the parties to contact collateral sources.

6. Inform collaterals of how their input may be used and that it will not be kept confidential

It is wise to provide this information in writing and obtain the collateral's signature to document their informed consent before they provide input.

7. Be prepared

Prior to conducting interviews, read relevant records and documents, know the issues, and prepare your questions. Schedule interviews in advance so you and the collateral can be prepared and situated in an appropriate location for the interview.

8. When weighing collateral input, consider the neutrality of the source

Those closest to the family are generally viewed as less credible due to alignments with one side or the other. On the other hand, those closest to the family are often privy to day-to-day interactions and may have the most salient and critical information. Collaterals who are more distant, including professionals, are generally viewed as more objective and credible, but their direct knowledge of the family may be more limited.

9. When weighing input, consider the possibility of "neutralized" input

Be mindful that some collaterals who possess critical knowledge may be reluctant to provide it and may "neutralize" it. Reasons might include fears that their input may damage relationships with family members, fears of retaliation, discomfort with court involvement, unpleasant memories from their own divorce, or concerns that their input will be misquoted or misused.

10. Pursue further information until sufficient information has been gathered

It is incumbent upon the evaluator to determine whether sufficient information has been obtained.

Kathleen McNamara is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Fort Collins, Colorado. She works extensively with court-involved families as a custody evaluator, parenting coordinator, and therapist for high conflict families.

Beth Lieberman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker practicing in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Her practice focuses on working with parents and children in high-conflict

divorce situations, including performing parental responsibilities evaluations, individual and family therapy, and parent coordination. She is the current president of the Colorado chapter of AFCC.



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Meet Jennifer Wheeler, President of the Washington Chapter

Jennifer Wheeler, PhD received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Washington, completing both pre-and post-doctoral training in criminal and civil forensic evaluation and treatment. She has worked in institution-based treatment settings in Washington State, including Echo Glen Children's Center, Twin Rivers Sex Offender Treatment Program, and the McNeil Island Special Commitment Center. She has published numerous articles and chapters on a variety of topics, including forensic psychology, sexual behavior, abuse/violence, and couple therapy. She has served on the board of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), and served two terms as president the Washington Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (WATSA). Dr. Wheeler is currently president of the Washington State chapter of the Association for Family and Conciliation Courts (WA-AFCC). Dr. Wheeler maintains a private practice in clinical and forensic psychology in Seattle, WA.



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Comedy Improv, Mediation and Collaborative Practices

Gregory Firestone, PhD

Gregory Firestone, PhD, a nationally recognized psychologist and mediator, was founder and director of the University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative for more than 20 years and has been studying comedy improvs and performing for the past three years. Dr. Firestone will present a pre-conference institute, Getting to “Yes, And”—Learn Comedy Improv and More to Enhance Your Mediation and Collaborative Skillset at the AFCC 54th Annual Conference in Boston, May 31, 2017 and here explains a bit about their interface.

What drew you to the practice of mediation? My first job after completing my clinical psychology training was as an Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of South Florida. Within a couple of years, I started getting requests to serve as a custody evaluator. Although I actually enjoyed the role, I came to see the limitations of divorce litigation and decided that I wanted to be part of a process helping parents make their own decisions rather than a process which makes decisions for them. I had the good fortune to speak with John Haynes in the early 1980’s and this confirmed my desire to become a mediator. I haven’t looked back since.

How did you first connect with AFCC? I attended my first AFCC conference in the mid 1990’s and was immediately hooked on the collaborative nature of the organization, wonderful members and the high quality of the AFCC conference presentations. Not long after that, I was asked to serve on the AFCC Board and did so for about five years. I also have had the pleasure to serve on the Editorial Board of Family Court Review and in 2000, Judge Hugh Starnes and I recruited professionals from around Florida to start the Florida Chapter of AFCC, which is now one of AFCC’s largest chapters.

How did you get involved with comedy improv? I was looking for something new and different and on a lark signed up for a local improv course I found on the Internet. I had a few experiences performing improv right before college and thought it would be fun to try again. After one class, I was certain I wanted to make this a part of my life and have been studying and practicing comedy improv for the past four years. The highlight of my training was taking a weeklong improv intensive course with Chicago Improv Olympic (now called iO), and I had the opportunity to study with iO faculty including Charna Halpern, one of the legends in the improv field. I was drawn to improv because it was creative, collaborative and fun. Improv practices and performances challenge you

to be present and focused entirely upon what's happening and you never know where things will go.

At the last AFCC annual conference, you taught an improv and collaboration workshop that got great reviews. How did you feel about last year's workshop? I was thrilled to see how many people were learning and laughing at the same time. Unlike a lot of more traditional training, improv training creates a lot of energy and people become very involved in the process. The feedback I got told me that folks were understanding mediation and collaboration concepts in a deeper way and better understanding how they could improve their collaborative skillset. I also think the improv format enabled attendees to be open to learning new ideas and also more likely to remember what they learn.

Have you been performing comedy improv? Yes, I've been performing for about three years including a number of locations in Tampa Bay where I live and have also performed in New York, Seattle, and Miami. The highlight of my career was performing at the Upright Citizen's Brigade theatre in New York during a Del Close Marathon. Many of the acts before and after my improv troupe performed included much more talented comedy and improv professionals, but somehow we held our own. I still have an enormous amount to learn, but having the opportunity to perform has given me a better sense of what connects with an audience and what makes them laugh.

What does comedy improv have to do with collaboration? Imagine walking on stage with six to eight performers and, after only getting a suggestion from the audience, performing a skit for anywhere from five minutes to an hour without any discussion or planning among your fellow performers. Improv performers have developed a great set of guidelines to enable them to collaborate on the spot. Of course it's improv, so sometimes the guidelines can be broken, but generally the rules help performers optimally work together a highly cooperative manner. For example, one guideline is to always respond in a "Yes, and" manner and avoid saying "No" or "Yes, but." In other words, you honor what was said by your fellow performers ("Yes") and then add ("And") something new. If a scene partner said "we made it to the moon," an appropriate response would need to accept that we're on the moon and then add something else such as "Yes and I can't believe the moon is really made of cheese."

What can mediators and collaborative professionals learn from comedy improv? An often-quoted phrase in improv classes is "Don't bring a cathedral into a scene. Bring a brick. Let us build together." Del Close coined this phrase to say that no one person should force their idea of a scene or skit upon the other performers. This relates directly to the work of both mediators and collaborative professionals where the parties, in mediation or a collaborative process, must work with each other to build their agreement piece by piece. For the mediators and collaborative professionals, it means that we must listen better to the parties' stories (their bricks) and not attempt to force our idea (cathedral) of what their ultimate agreement should be. This is just one small example of how comedy improv and collaboration share so much in common.

What does comedy improv bring to training mediators and collaborative professionals? Improv exercises are a great way to learn interpersonal skills that are

extremely useful to collaborative professionals. As an example, an improv exercise I use when teaching mediators about neutrality is to ask them to tell a story in a small group with each member only adding one word at a time to the story. After four or five words, many trainees tell me that they decided what the story was about only to be disappointed that the next person's word took the story in a different direction. They come to realize how easy it is to become attached to their idea of what the story should be about and be tempted to drive the story in the direction they want it to end. It's not much of a stretch to realize that when mediating a divorce or engaging parties in a collaborative divorce, a professional may have an idea how the agreement should develop and similarly be tempted to steer the parties to the mediator's or collaborative professional's idea of what the parties should do. When people engage in such an improv exercise, they more easily can see how they are affected personally and better understand the challenges of maintaining neutrality in their work.

Has comedy improv changed you personally? Yes, improv has gotten me to see the value to being more open to new experiences and to be more present in the moment. Leaning toward "Yes" allows one to be more receptive to new ideas and new opportunities. Being more attentive to what's going on in any moment, makes one a much more engaged and enables one to act with greater intent. Improv also makes one able to listen more deeply.

Will attendees in your pre-conference institute learn how to perform comedy improv or how to be collaborative? Actually, they'll learn both. While the institute goal is to improve their skills as mediators and collaborative professionals, the vehicle for doing this is to learn some of the improv skills that apply to the work of mediators and collaborative professionals.

Gregory Firestone, PhD is President of Global Resolutions LLC (aka My Florida Mediator) and previously served as Director of the University of South Florida Conflict Resolution Collaborative (aka USF Mediation Institute). He has played an instrumental role in shaping alternative dispute resolution (ADR) law, rules and policy at the state and national level through his continuous service on standing alternative dispute resolution committees of the Florida Supreme Court for more than two decades (including seven years as Vice Chair of the Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution Rules and Policy Committee); service as Official Observer (on behalf of the Association for Conflict Resolution and the Academy of Family Mediators) to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (aka Uniform Law Commission) Uniform Mediation Act Drafting Committee for three years; active leadership in various ADR professional organizations; court consultation and mediation training throughout the U.S and internationally; and numerous publications and presentations.

Greg currently serves on the Editorial Board of Family Court Review and has received numerous awards including the 2012 Florida Supreme Court Excellence in Alternative Dispute Resolution Award, 2012 Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Presidential Award, and 2002 Association for Conflict Resolution Presidential Award.

He is an Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) Advanced Practitioner mediator, mediation trainer, and licensed psychologist and has maintained a private mediation practice since 1984. Dr. Firestone has lectured and published widely in the field of mediation and is coauthor of Mediation Works: Make it Work for You, a family mediation orientation video produced by the Florida Supreme Court Dispute Resolution Center.



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The AFCC Family Court Services Resource Guide

Check out the [AFCC Family Court Services Resource](#) a collection of services, programs, practices, and processes that provide help to families with divorce, separation, never married, adoption, and paternity issues. We are hoping that the Resource Guide will widen the accessibility to, and options for, family court-related non-profit or public sector services, and inspire the development of new ideas within the family court community. [Send in your application now!](#) Each month, the AFCC eNEWS will be highlighting an excerpt from the Resource Guide to spark your innovative and creative ideas!

eParenting® is an innovative program initiative from University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs. Currently, most programs for parents about digital media focus on the potential negative effects of its use (e.g., cyber-bullying and online predators) and how parents can protect their children from such dangers. While these programs are valuable, they ignore the many positive aspects of digital media, including the ways that it can contribute to a child's and family's development, enhance the parent-child relationship and provide tools that can strengthen and extend childrearing skills.

eParenting® Co-Parenting is a 2 hour, face to face curriculum, developed for divorced or separated parents to empower their use of digital media as a positive tool supporting their parenting role. Rather than focusing on the potential negative effects digital media and dangers of the internet (e.g., cyber-bullying and online predators), the eParenting curriculum focuses on how digital media can be used to enhance parenting skills and build a secure connection between children and all their parents and caregivers. The curriculum also helps parents understand normal child growth and development in the context of divorce and separation.

eParenting® adapted the co-parenting class to be delivered via 8 weeks of text messages sent directly to parents' phones. Parents can also access the content of the text messages via the blog site. Preliminary results show that the program can increase parents' knowledge and use of digital media and provide developmentally appropriate strategies for parents of infants to teens. Participants received 2-3 text messages per week totaling 22 text messages over eight weeks. Each text included a brief topic introduction followed by a short URL link to connect the parents to a full eParenting® Co-Parenting article online. The majority of parents (75%) said that the eParenting® texts were useful.

Online blog posts or articles can be accessed by parents anytime and anywhere. Text messages deliver the information to the parents instead of waiting for parents to seek it out on their own. The content of the online program (blog posts, articles) is applicable to co-parents no matter their location. For more information, click here: [AFCC Family Court Services Resources](#)

Inclusion in AFCC Family Court Services Resource Guide does not imply endorsement of programs or services by AFCC. Inclusion in the resource guide indicates that the program meets the criteria listed on the previous page, based on information provided by the program. AFCC cannot warrant the accuracy of information about these programs or services and shall not be liable for any losses caused by such reliance on information. The AFCC Family Court Services Resource Guide is provided for convenience, and all users of this guide are encouraged to do independent research in choosing a program or services.

Bylaws changes 2016

XV. Chapters, Chapter Council, Affiliated Organizations and Foreign Corporations.

(A) Chapters.

The Board of Directors shall authorize the establishment of Chapters ~~within the United States or Canada,~~ and shall promulgate standards for approving Chapters as it deems appropriate.

(1) Purpose of Chapters.

The purpose of a Chapter shall be consistent with those of the Association and shall be expressed in its bylaws. Any Chapter bylaws shall be subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

(2) Membership.

Members of Chapters must be members of the Association.

(3) Charter.

Upon compliance with the requirements of the bylaws and approval of the Board of Directors, a charter shall be issued to a Chapter by the Board of Directors.

(4) Revocation of Charter.

A Chapter charter may be revoked by the Board of Directors for failure to comply with Chapter requirements as established by the Board of Directors, changes in bylaws that bring the Chapter into conflict with the Association, fiscal impropriety, or failure to comply with legal obligations.

(5) Fees for Services.

The Board of Directors shall be authorized to assess fees for services provided to the Chapters by the Association.

(B) Chapter Council.

There shall be a Chapter Council composed of the President of each Chapter or the Chapter President's designee. The Chapter Council shall be chaired by a person appointed by the President of the Association.

(1) Meetings.

An annual meeting of the Chapter Council shall be held at the time of the annual meeting and conference of the members of the Association and the Board of Directors, and at such other times as determined by the Chair.

Meetings other than the annual meeting may be conducted in person, or through the use of a conference telephone or other communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can communicate with each other, as may be determined by the Chapter Council or by the Chair.

(2) Provisional Chapters.

When a Chapter is granted provisional status, the provisional Chapter may designate a person to serve on the Chapter Council, but the delegate shall be without vote.

~~(C) Affiliated Organizations.~~

~~—————The Board of Directors may authorize the establishment of member organizations outside the United States and Canada that may be entitled to use the Association's name.~~

~~—————Such organizations may be charged a fee as determined by resolution of the Board of Directors, and shall receive such benefits, from time to time, as are determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.~~

~~(D) Foreign Corporations.~~

~~—————The Board of Directors may, by resolution, authorize the establishment of foreign corporations using the name of the Association that shall have charitable purposes consistent with the purposes of the Association.~~