

AFCC eNEWS



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IN THIS ISSUE

- President's Message
- 14th Symposium on Child Custody
- AFCC Flash Webinar Series
- Ask the Experts: Steven Bradley
- AFCC Special Webinar Series Wrap-Up
- Webinar Corner

President's Message

Larry Fong, PhD

On July 1, 2020, I became the 58th president of AFCC. I am the sixth Canadian AFCC President and the first Canadian mental health professional; I am also of Chinese heritage. I proudly join my predecessors and the current dedicated members of the Board in serving AFCC.



This long history of AFCC might not be known to newer members. [Read more.](#)

Join Us for the 14th Symposium on Child Custody

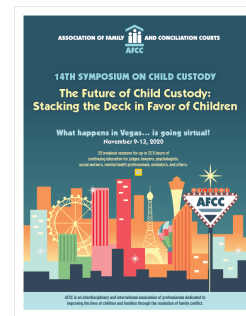
The Future of Child Custody: Stacking the Deck in Favor of Children

November 9-13, 2020

(or November 10-14, depending on your time zone)

14th Symposium on Child Custody

November 9-13, 2020



(or November 10-14, depending on your time zone)

Thank you to our conference sponsors!

Diamond Sponsors



What happens in Vegas ... is going virtual! To protect the safety and wellbeing of all participants as COVID-19 continues to impact live events around the world, AFCC has switched the format of the 14th Symposium on Child Custody.

The symposium will consist of two pre-symposium institutes, 20 workshops, and two plenary sessions, held online November 9-13 (or November 10-14, depending on your time zone).

[Read the conference program](#) brochure for more information and make plans to join us! Registration goes live in early August.

Apply for a scholarship

Thanks to generous donations from AFCC members, AFCC is able to provide a limited number of scholarships to the virtual symposium. Scholarships include one pre-symposium institute, conference registration, and a certificate of attendance. The application deadline is Tuesday, September 29, 2020. [Apply online](#).

Coming Soon: AFCC Flash Webinar Series on Parenting Coordination

The July 2020 special issue of *Family Court Review*, edited by Debra K. Carter, PhD and Linda Fieldstone, MEd, will hit the mailboxes of AFCC members soon. AFCC is excited to announce a flash webinar series on parenting coordination, sponsored by [Online Parenting Programs](#), featuring four webinars presented by authors of *FCR* special issue articles. *Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more information!*

Tuesday, August 25, 2020 – 5:00pm ET

Parenting Coordination in Cases Involving Intimate Partner Violence

Presented by Leslie M. Drozd, PhD, Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP, and David A. Donner, JD

Thursday, August 27, 2020 – 5:00pm ET

Effective Use of Parenting Coordination: Considerations for Legal and Mental Health Professionals

Presented by Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD, and Annette Burns, JD

Tuesday, September 1, 2020 – 5:00pm ET

Enhancing Efficacious in Parenting Coordination

Presented by Debra K. Carter, PhD, and James McHale, PhD

Thursday, September 3, 2020 – 5:00pm ET

Voices or Ghosts? The Place of Children in Parenting Coordination

Presented by Lorri Yasenik, PhD, John Graham, LLB, and Linda Fieldstone, MEd



Platinum Sponsors



AFCC Chapter Conferences

Florida Chapter Annual Conference

Begins September 24, 2020
Held virtually

Indiana Chapter Annual Conference

October 2, 2020
Carmel, Indiana

Illinois Chapter Annual Conference

October 2, 2020
Chicago, Illinois

Ontario Chapter Annual Conference

October 16, 2020
Held virtually

Texas Chapter Annual Conference

November 5-6, 2020
Austin, Texas

Arizona Chapter Annual Conference

January 22-24, 2021
Sedona, Arizona

Learn More

Ask the Experts: Family Law in a Digital World: Online Abuse and Harassment

Steven Bradley, *OurFamilyWizard.com*

Resource of the Month

The COVID-19 Crisis as a Catalyst for Change

Ontario Family Law Reporter
Joanna Radbord

Originally published in the Ontario Family Law Reporter, Volume 34, Release 1 © LexisNexis Canada Inc. 2020.

Working in family law, many of us have heard stories about or have been brought digital records of abusive text messages, social media posts, GPS location tracking, and so much more. For most professionals, this can become overwhelming and daunting, especially when trying to best understand or represent your client.

Today, many of us store more private information in our phones and other electronic devices than we do in our own homes. [Read more.](#)

AFCC Special Webinar Series on Parent-Child Contact Problems Concludes

AFCC concluded its special webinar series, which featured authors from the April 2020 Special Issue of *Family Court Review* on Parent-Child Contact Problems. AFCC members can [view recordings](#) of all webinars in the series for free!

Webinar Series by the numbers

- 16 webinars
- 28 presenters from 5 countries
- 6,496 session registrations
- 1,367 individual registrants
- 1,440+ minutes of webinar content delivered and recorded

Many thanks

AFCC thanks all presenters (listed below) for sharing their time and knowledge, as well as AFCC staff members Kelly Bienfang, Patrick Sommer, and Gina Wentling for their behind-the-scenes work to ensure that the webinar series ran smoothly.

- Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD
- Rebecca Bailey, PhD
- Nicholas Bala, JD, LL.M.
- William Bernet, MD
- Jacky M. Campbell, LL.B., LL.M.
- Francine Cyr, PhD
- Frank Davis, PhD
- Robin Deutsch, PhD, ABPP
- Leslie Drozd, PhD
- Barbara Fidler, PhD
- Benjamin D. Garber, PhD
- Robert Geffner, PhD
- Elisabeth Godbout, PhD
- Lyn Greenberg, PhD, ABPP
- Taina Laajasalo, PhD
- Demosthenes Lorandos, PhD, JD
- Judge Philip Marcus, LL.M. (Ret.)
- Joan Meier, JD
- Madelyn Milchman, PhD
- Stacey Platt, JD
- Karine Poitras, PhD
- Shely Polak, PhD
- Linda Popielarczyk, MSW, RSW
- Aaron Robb, PhD, LPC-S
- Michael Saini, PhD
- Hon. Robert A. Schnider (Ret.)
- Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD
- Richard Warshak, PhD

Recommended Reading: *The COVID-19 Crisis as a Catalyst for Change*

In a July 2020 *Ontario Family Law Reporter* article, "The COVID-19 Crisis as a Catalyst for Change," author Joanna Radbord explores the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity for action and change in the family court system. Though the article discusses family courts in Ontario, it covers a wide range of diverse issues related to COVID-19 that AFCC eNEWS readers will find relevant. [Read more](#).

Originally published in the Ontario Family Law Reporter, Volume 34, Release 1 © LexisNexis Canada Inc. 2020.

AFCC Webinar Corner

Sociopaths: The Con Artists of Family Law

Bill Eddy, LCSW, Esq.

August 19, 2020 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US

Registration closes on August 18, 2020 at 9:00am Eastern Time US.



Parents with sociopathic behavior appear to be increasing in family law cases. They are extremely deceptive and sometimes dangerous, as well as lacking empathy and remorse. They may be child abusers or partner abusers, yet they are skilled at misleading professionals and claiming to be victims of abuse. This session will present the fundamental characteristics of sociopaths, using the *DSM-5* criteria for antisocial personality disorder. Common dynamics of their cases in family counseling, family mediation and family courts will be discussed. Common patterns of misleading professionals will be analyzed and ways to identify them early will be presented.

Registration

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$50

Certificate of Attendance

Members: \$15

Non-Members: \$20

Continuing education credit is available for lawyers, judges, social workers, counselors, and other professionals. [Learn more](#).

Register today!

Stay tuned for September's webinar:

Dealing with Difficult Clients: Whose Side Are You on Anyway?

Jeff Soilson, JD

September 16, 2020 | 1:00-2:00pm Eastern Time US

[Register now!](#)

AFCC Judicial Officers Webinar Series

Family court judicial officers are frequently faced with issues that require proficiency in substantive issues that are typically associated with the mental health profession. To help bridge this gap, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts has produced [a series of webinars](#) presented by interdisciplinary teams of judicial and mental health professionals and designed specifically for judicial officers. These webinars are provided free of charge.

This month's featured judicial officers webinar:

Intimate Partner Violence

Hon. Ramona Gonzalez and Leslie M. Drozd, PhD

Chapter News

Jennifer E. Joseph, the new president of AFCC's Minnesota chapter, is an attorney; however, her practice focuses solely on providing neutral services in family law matters. Ms. Joseph specializes in helping parents resolve custody, parenting, and coparenting disputes through her work as a mediator, parenting coordinator, parenting coach, custody evaluator, and SENE (social early neutral evaluation) provider. Ms. Joseph is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School. In addition to her private ADR practice, she serves as an adjunct professor of family law at Mitchell Hamline School of Law and provides training through the Mediation Center. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Overcoming Barriers, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to rethinking parent-child contact problems.



Member News

Hon. Susan B. Carbon, AFCC member in Manchester, New Hampshire, is the 2020 recipient of the Judith S. Kaye Award for Judicial Excellence, awarded by the ABA Commission on Domestic & Sexual Violence. Judge Carbon is the Presiding Judge of the 9th Circuit Court -- Family Division in Manchester, NH. Originally appointed in 1990 to the New Hampshire District Court, she served until 2010 when she was appointed by President Barack Obama to be Director of the Office on Violence Against Women at the United States Department of Justice. Upon return to New Hampshire, she was reappointed to the New Hampshire Circuit Court. Judge Carbon is Past President of both the New Hampshire Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Congratulations, Sue!



Hon. Randall D. Fuller, AFCC member in Delaware, Ohio and judge of the Delaware County Common Pleas Court, Domestic Relations Division, has been elected vice president of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges. Fuller was elected in 2016 to be the first judge of Delaware County's newly unified Domestic Relations Division. His first term began on Jan. 1, 2017. He subsequently became a board member of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges in November of 2017. Fuller has served as a board member for the Ohio chapter of AFCC since July 2019 and currently holds the council representative and president-elect positions. Congratulations, Randall!

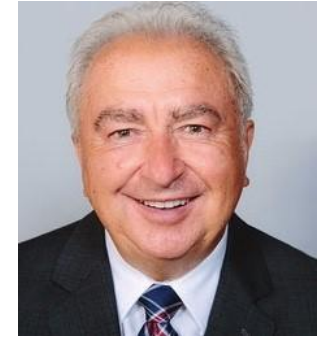


Madam Justice Andrea Himel, AFCC member in Toronto, Ontario, has been appointed a Judge of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario, Family Court Branch. Prior to her appointment, Justice Himel was a sole practitioner with a focus on family law, mediation, child protection, and children's law and a Dispute Resolution Officer at the Toronto and Hamilton

courts. She is a past-president of the Ontario Chapter of AFCC and was Co-Chair of the Conference and Research/Policy Committees. She was a major contributor to the development of the AFCC-O's *Parenting Plan Guide and Template*. Justice Himel has been a frequent presenter at AFCC and has published articles in the *Family Court Review*. Congratulations, Andrea!



Hon. Emile Kruzick, AFCC member and former AFCC President in Toronto, Ontario, has been appointed by the Government of Ontario to the Ontario Review Board. The Ontario Review Board (the "ORB") has jurisdiction over individuals who have been found by a court to be either unfit to stand trial or not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder. The Board is an independent tribunal established pursuant to the Criminal Code of Canada which sits throughout the province of Ontario. Emile Kruzick continues his practice of mediation, arbitration and case management with Amicus Chambers in Toronto, Ontario. Congratulations, Emile!



Do you have a notable achievement to share? Email [Gina Wentling](#) with your story and a professional head shot (JPEG or PNG preferred), if you have one, to be featured in next month's Member News!

Therapeutic Jurisprudence Scholars' Convening Postponed; Publishing Opportunities Are Still Available

The University of Baltimore School of Law Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts (CFCC) and the International Society for Therapeutic Jurisprudence (ISTJ) announced the postponement of the Therapeutic Jurisprudence Scholars' Convening. Originally scheduled for October 9-10, 2020 in Baltimore, the event has been postponed to 2021 (dates TBD) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Publishing opportunities associated with the event, however, will continue as planned. The *University of Baltimore Law Review* will publish a symposium issue devoted to therapeutic jurisprudence scholarship, and *Family Court Review* will publish a special issue (July 2021) consisting of articles focused on family law/therapeutic jurisprudence topics. [Read the postponement announcement](#) or contact [Professor Barbara Babb](#) for more information.

AFCC eNEWS

The *AFCC eNEWS* is the monthly e-newsletter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. The *eNEWS* provides up-to-date information for professionals including practice tips, international news, and the latest initiatives in family law and conflict resolution. The *AFCC eNEWS* is provided at no charge to you; anyone can subscribe. [Subscribe here.](#)

AFCC members are free to share eNEWS content.

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President's Message

Larry Fong, PhD

On July 1, 2020, I became the 58th president of AFCC. I am the sixth Canadian AFCC President and the first Canadian mental health professional; I am also of Chinese heritage. I proudly join my predecessors and the current dedicated members of the Board in serving AFCC.

This long [history](#) of AFCC might not be known to newer members. The first AFCC conference was held in Los Angeles in 1963 with fewer than 30 attendees, and the first issue of the publication now known as *Family Court Review* was also published that year (it was all of 10 pages in length). We will return to Los Angeles in 2023 to celebrate our 60th anniversary.



It is worth remembering that our rich history of volunteerism comes from all corners of the association, and includes individual members, chapter leaders, current and previous Board members, presidents, committee and task force members and chairs, *FCR* contributors, and conference and webinar presenters, all of whom demonstrate a strong commitment to AFCC. Even under the current circumstances, AFCC membership swelled to nearly 6,000 members worldwide this year, which is an incredible achievement.

For all that AFCC members have experienced over the last 58 years, none of us have seen anything like the effects of the novel coronavirus on our families, communities, businesses, life, and health. Truly, this virus has reshaped our lives, and it has reshaped our world. It comes with rules that at times can be unclear. Fear and doubt abound. Inaccurate information and remedies to the problem arise when uncertainty is so high. With uncertainty, we fear that things will change in some way we do not want or understand. We fear that things will not change as we feel they need to. These fears are replicated, even exacerbated, with many families we serve, who experience difficulties in parenting, at a time when their own family status is in a state of flux.

Our focus on being effective agents of change—those who assist our families to embrace transition—becomes more challenging and complex. It is important during these trying times, that as professionals in the field, we ensure care for ourselves at least as much as we do for others.

AFCC has made changes due to this uncertainty, moving our continuing education programs from face-to-face to online and adapting meetings, programs, and staffing along the way. We will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

In the midst of the pandemic, George Floyd was unjustifiably killed by police officers in Minneapolis, MN, spurring protests throughout the world. Like many organizations, AFCC [issued a statement](#) urging AFCC members and all family law professionals to take action to support equality and human dignity for all.

AFCC is also looking inside the association, reviewing our vision for the future as it relates to this inclusivity. AFCC will need to reflect upon and review its protocols to ensure that systemic racism is clearly understood and challenged. Changes may be necessary.

I want to wish good health to AFCC members and other professionals in the field as well as their families and loved ones. I want to wish safety to every person we influence. Best wishes and good health to you and your special and significant others during this trying time.



Family Law in a Digital World: Online Abuse and Harassment

Steven Bradley

Working in family law, many of us have heard stories about or have been brought digital records of abusive text messages, social media posts, GPS location tracking, and so much more. For most professionals, this can become overwhelming and daunting, especially when trying to best understand or represent your client.

Today, many of us store more private information in our phones and other electronic devices than we do in our own homes. This includes heart rate and medical information (accessed through a fitness watch), banking and password information, and even personal pictures you would never display in your home. If an abusive party were to gain access to these devices, we all can imagine how harmful it could become.

The most common mistake that I see many professionals make is a lack of validation to their clients that a problem may exist, merely because they don't understand what they are hearing or think that it's simply not possible. The most frequent strategy that abusers will use is to make their targets/victims seem as though they are not credible or that they may have an underlying mental health issue. Abusers will target their victims in such a way that everything your client may discuss with you sounds like complete paranoia rather than fact. For instance, a client may tell you that the government is watching them because their abuser has made them believe this is true.

If your client brings information to you that sounds nearly impossible, yet is adamant that it is occurring, maybe what the client is saying *is* true. Before disbelieving your client, I recommend that you do some research. Search online for terms or scenarios that your client described. You may actually find many similar stories and see how others have dealt with the abuse. If you cannot find anything in your research, I encourage you to reach out to a technical professional or a law enforcement cybercrimes specialist. It is quite possible that something criminal may be occurring; today there are many laws being written to protect all of us from online abuse or harassment.

Below is a list of ten key topics to discuss with your clients who find themselves in a situation where technology might be used to cause harm or create conflict. Understanding these points can also be beneficial to anyone who simply wants to learn how to protect themselves online.

If you would like a printable version of these ten key topics, please [download the PDF](#).

Top Ten Technology Topics to Discuss with Clients

1. **Trust your instincts** *If your client suspects that the abusive person knows too much, it is possible that their phone, computer, email, driving, or other activities are being monitored.*
2. **Plan for safety** *Navigating technology is a vital step in safety planning today. Make sure you discuss with your clients what technologies are being used such as: online dating, social media, Bluetooth, GPS, On-Star, and more.*
3. **Change passwords** *Advise your client to change all account passwords that may disclose information about their location or activities. Don't forget about changing security questions on accounts, especially if the abusive party knows the answers.*
4. **Check cell phone settings** *If your client is using a smartphone, check the location services in the Settings menu to see if the phone is giving away their location. Also ask your client to turn off Bluetooth when it's not in use. This can prevent the abusive party from monitoring or installing malicious software on the phone.*
5. **Consider using a donated or new cell phone** *If your client's cell phone was provided by the abusive party, ask if they are willing to switch to a new phone. When making or receiving private calls or arranging escape plans, try not to use the phone provided by the abusive party, as it may be monitored.*
6. **Use a safer computer** *If an abusive party has access to your client's computer, they might be monitoring that device's activity. Ask your client to use a different computer when searching for help, looking for a new place to live, making travel plans, etc. Public computers at libraries, community centers, or internet cafés can be a safer (and cheaper) option.*
7. **Search for your client's name on the internet** *Use popular search engines like Google, Spokeo, or Bing to see what information is public about your client. Start your search by entering your client's first and last name in quotations followed by the city and state. This will help avoid irrelevant information from duplicate names. Don't forget to also view the "images" portion of the search engine to see what pictures may be public.*
8. **Update privacy settings on all social media accounts** *Talk to your client about updating their privacy settings for any and all social media accounts they use. It may be important to update some of these settings to ensure that your client's location is not being compromised or that harmful information is not being shared.*
9. **Ask about your records and data** *Many court systems and government agencies are publishing records online. Ask agencies how they protect or publish your records and request that court, government, post office, and others seal or restrict access to your files to protect your and your client's safety.*
10. **Consider optional phone services** *Using services like Google Voice may be a better alternative in keeping your personal phone numbers safe. With services such as these, you can sign up for one phone number and have that number forward calls and messages to up to five different phones. That way, if your client's phone number is compromised, they can log in and change one phone number rather than having to contact the phone companies and changing many.*



Steven Bradley has an extensive law enforcement career focusing on investigating crimes against persons, specializing in sex crimes, child abuse, domestic violence, and crimes against the elderly. He was recruited by the FBI to start a taskforce that would investigate technology and cyber related crimes. After returning from the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA, he began combating many types of technology crimes including child pornography, cyberstalking, financial exploitation, and apprehending child predators. Later in his career, Steven began working with state coalitions, and local domestic violence/sexual assault centers on bridging the gaps between law enforcement and community partners to better support survivors and victims. It was there that Steven led many group discussions and trainings on proper investigative techniques and working together for offender accountability. As part of the Our Family Wizard professional team, Steven further promotes the empowerment and healthy communication between separated and divorced parents via technology. Steven is nationally recognized as an expert on law enforcement's response to intimate partner violence, abuse of the elderly, and stalking/cyberstalking. As an international trainer for over 25 years, Steven is known for his real-world practical education and has provided training throughout the globe on many related topics.