

## AFCC 61st ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# Coping with Transition: Individual, Family, and Beyond



**BOSTON**

**Sheraton Boston Hotel**

**June 5-8, 2024**

**[afccnet.org](http://afccnet.org)**

AFCC is an interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children and families through the resolution of family conflict.

# AFCC 61st ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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AFCC Massachusetts Chapter  
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National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges



## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

AFCC strives to offer a wide range of conference sessions highlighting different research, advocacy positions, policies, practices, programs, procedures, and ideas. Some programs may be evidence-based while others may report on works in progress, emerging practices, or policy initiatives. The goal of the conference is to enhance learning while encouraging respectful inquiry, discussion, and debate consistent with AFCC organizational values. AFCC does not necessarily endorse or support the opinions of conference presenters. The AFCC Exhibit Forum includes a variety of vendors promoting services and products. AFCC does not necessarily endorse or warrant vendors' products, services, or views.



# Coping with Transition: Individual, Family, and Beyond

Boston, Massachusetts | Sheraton Boston Hotel

June 5-8, 2024

The work of family law, mental health, and dispute resolution professionals is endlessly impacted by transition on an individual, family, and community level. These include the transition from an intact family to one that lives in two homes; children's transition between developmental stages; transitioning gender; transitioning to new statutes, processes and professional roles; transitioning in or out of a career; moving, which requires a transition between communities and parenting time plans; and transitioning to new relationships, marriages, and new family forms. Join AFCC to explore the role of transition in and out of our work.

## CONFERENCE TOPICS INCLUDE:

- AFCC Peace Talks: Depolarizing by Example
- Gender Identity and Transitions
- Revising the Family Mediation Model Standards
- Allegations of Abuse and Alienation in Family Court
- Mediation and Artificial Intelligence
- Litigation Abuse
- Advanced Challenges in Family Mediation
- Protecting Yourself and Your Practice in the Cyber World
- The Truth About Kayden's Law
- In-Camera Interviews in Hague Abduction Convention Cases
- Screening for Intimate Partner Violence
- Intersection of ACEs and Alcohol Use Disorder
- Applying the Voice of the Child
- Why Won't Some People Retire?
- Child Inclusive Parenting Coordination
- Neurodiverse Parents in Family Court

### Amazing Networking Opportunities!

Whether this is your first or 21st AFCC conference, this will be an extraordinary networking opportunity. Connect with colleagues at the Welcome Reception; New Member, Developing Professionals, and First Time Attendee Orientation; International Reception; Thursday night's Taste of Boston; and of course the famous AFCC Hospitality Suite. Daily yoga and meditation are also offered each morning! See the back of the brochure for more details on these events.

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Open Forum and Dine-Around

AFCC's DE&I Committee will sponsor an open forum for informal discussion for individuals who identify as members of underrepresented communities on Thursday at 5:00pm. This will be followed by the DE&I Committee dine-around. These activities provide a safe space to share experiences, provide support, and offer solutions.

### An International Faculty

This year, conference presenters will be coming from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Singapore, United Kingdom, and the United States to offer perspectives on our work from around the world.

### Judicial Officers

Special programs for judicial officers include a Judicial Officers Forum, focusing on the voice of the child, along with a pre-conference institute on addressing cross allegations of abuse and alienation.

### Continuing Education Credits

Earn up to 20.5 hours of continuing education for psychologists, lawyers, mental health professionals, social workers, mediators, and others. Certificates of Attendance are included in the conference registration fee! See continuing education details on page 20.

### Conference Scholarships Available

There are a limited number of conference scholarships available! Scholarships cover the cost of registration for one pre-conference institute and the full conference, including a certificate of attendance. Some scholarship recipients will receive travel stipends based on need and their cost of attendance. For more information, please see page 20 or visit [afccnet.org](http://afccnet.org).

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## AFCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## INVITATION FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Family Law Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to invite you to join AFCC in Boston's Back Bay for the AFCC 61st Annual Conference, June 5-8, 2024, at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. The conference theme this year is Coping with Transition: Individual, Family, and Beyond. We will be examining a wide variety of transitions and the challenges they incur for family members and professionals alike.

Our keynote will feature transgender activist, author, and speaker Tina Madison White, who will share her inspiring personal and familial evolution and the barriers and successes along the way. We will also unveil the AFCC Peace Talks, a nearly year-long experiment in bringing together professionals with markedly different perspectives on parent-child contact problems to explore how we can have productive, respectful conversations about issues that have become all too divisive in recent years.



The conference program is loaded with nearly 90 sessions that examine a wide range of challenges and transitions, including substance use disorder, intimate partner violence, cross allegations of abuse and alienation, child sexual abuse in custody matters, stepfamily dynamics, mediation, LGBTQ+ families, parenting coordination, and working with children, whether during in camera interviews, parenting coordination, or other contexts, and much, much more. AFCC will also be celebrating a transition of its own, as we welcome a new (yet to be named) executive director and bid farewell to Peter Salem, our executive director and AFCC staff member since 1994. Bring your dancing shoes and join us for the celebration at the Friday night banquet.

If you are new to AFCC, you'll find many opportunities to meet and network with colleagues, including receptions, meals, Thursday night dine-arounds, and the famous AFCC Hospitality Suite. AFCC leadership and staff will be there to make sure you get connected.

The annual conference has provided me with indispensable learning immersion and professional inspiration for more than twenty years. I would not miss it. I hope you'll agree, and I look forward to seeing you there.



Stacey E. Platt  
AFCC President

# Conference at a Glance



## TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2024

6:00pm–8:00pm Conference Registration

## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2024

7:30am–6:00pm Conference Registration

8:00am–9:00am Coffee and Rolls for Institute Registrants

8:00am–5:00pm Exhibit Forum

9:00am–5:00pm Pre-Conference Institutes

10:30am–10:45am Break

12:00pm–1:30pm Lunch on your own

12:00pm–5:00pm AFCC Board of Directors Meeting

2:45pm–3:00pm Break

5:00pm–6:00pm New Member, First-Time Attendee, and Professional Development Orientation

6:00pm–7:00pm Welcome Reception

7:00pm–8:00pm AFCC Awards Ceremony

9:00pm–12:00am AFCC Hospitality Suite

## THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2024

6:15am–6:30am Meditation

6:30am–7:15am Yoga

7:30am–8:30am Chapter Council Meeting

7:30am–5:00pm Conference Registration

7:30am–5:00pm Exhibit Forum

7:45am–8:45am Coffee and Rolls

8:45am–10:00am Opening Session

10:00am–10:30am Break

10:30am–12:00pm Workshops 1-10

12:00pm–1:30pm AFCC Luncheon

1:45pm–3:15pm Workshops 11-20

3:15pm–3:30pm Break

3:30pm–5:00pm Workshops 21-30

5:00pm–6:00pm International Attendee Reception

5:00pm–6:30pm DE&I Open Forum

Evening Taste of Boston

9:00pm–12:00am AFCC Hospitality Suite

## FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2024

6:15am–6:30am Meditation

6:30am–7:15am Yoga

7:15am–8:15am AFCC Committee Meetings

7:30am–5:00pm Conference Registration

7:30am–5:00pm Exhibit Forum

7:30am–8:30am Coffee and Rolls

8:30am–10:00am Workshops 31-40

10:00am–10:30am Break

10:30am–12:00pm Plenary Session

12:00pm–1:30pm Lunch on your own

12:00pm–1:30pm FCR Editorial Board Meeting

12:00pm–1:30pm Chapter Presidents' Lunch

1:45pm–3:15pm Workshops 41-50

3:15pm–3:30pm Break

3:30pm–5:00pm Workshops 51-60

6:30pm–11:00pm AFCC Annual Banquet

## SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024

6:15am–6:30am Meditation

6:30am–7:15am Yoga

7:30am–12:30pm Conference Registration

7:30am–12:30pm Exhibit Forum

8:00am–9:00am Coffee and Rolls

8:00am–9:00am AFCC Membership Meeting

9:15am–10:45am Workshops 61-70

10:45am–11:00am Break

11:00am–12:30pm Workshops 71-80



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2024 | 9:00AM–5:00PM

## 1. Protecting Yourself and Your Practice in the Cyber World

This institute focuses on providing mental health professionals with a framework for proactive protection of themselves and their businesses from cyber-harassment and licensure complaints. Presenters will address preventive measures and strategies for ethical and legal responses to such circumstances, including protection of professional reputation and practice, and action steps to buffer oneself from the stresses should these situations occur. Additionally, this program will address management of reviews and other activities published on social media websites as well as in formal licensure complaints. Case examples will be provided to illustrate ethical and legal considerations, and simple steps for response and management. Pro-active self-care measures will be offered.

**Reneau C. Kennedy, EdD**, Honolulu, HI

**Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD**, Center for Law, Brain & Behavior, Boston, MA

## 2. Advanced Challenges in Family Mediation

Mediation remains at the heart of an evolving family dispute resolution field. As new opportunities—such as use of technology—arise, there remain longstanding issues that create challenges for even the most experienced mediators. This institute will address four critical issues for practicing mediators: (1) use of technology and artificial intelligence; (2) cases involving intimate partner violence; (3) managing emotional dynamics in the mediation process; and (4) involving children in the process. Presenters will provide practical strategies for traversing potential landmines in this interactive program.

**Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM**, Univ. Arkansas-Little Rock Bowen School of Law, Little Rock, AR

**Robert E. Emery, PhD**, Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

**Susan E. Guthrie, JD**, Chair-elect, ABA Section of Dispute Resolution, Chicago, IL

**Donald T. Saposnek, PhD**, Family Mediation Services, Aptos, CA

## 3. Should Children Participate in Family Law Processes? Consider the Brain

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by every country except the US, states, “Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.” This program will examine current research on child and adolescent brain development and its impact on decision making, and the effects of substance use on adolescent brains, to improve participants’ understanding of when and how a child can express their views for consideration in juvenile and family law matters. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of AFCC.

**Hon. Amy Lyn Blake**, Boston, MA

**Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP**, Newton, MA

**Robert Kinscherff, PhD, JD**, Center for Law, Brain & Behavior, Boston, MA

**Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD**, Center for Law, Brain & Behavior, Boston, MA

## 4. Trans Children and Youth in the Family Court System

Transgender children and youth are among the most vulnerable served by family court professionals. Participants in this institute will learn about the legal, social, spiritual-religious, medical, and psychological challenges faced by transgender children and youth, and their family members, and how more affirming and supportive experiences can be fostered. Topics will include: (1) gender affirming care; (2) relevant laws and precedents regarding transgender rights and health care decisions; (3) addressing conflicting laws when there are inter-jurisdictional disputes; (4) legal, social, and psychological impacts of anti-trans movements; (5) evidence-based standards and expert testimony regarding gender-affirming care; and (6) working with others to support gender-affirming care and transgender rights. This institute will provide the opportunity for small-group discussion of case situations, ethical-legal conflicts, and practical approaches to concerns that may arise in practice. In collaboration with the International Academy of Family Lawyers.

**Allan E. Barsky, PhD, JD**, Florida Atlantic Univ., Boca Raton, FL

**Lavanya Regunathan Fischer, LLM, LSE**, Delhi, India

**John McKendrick, KC**, Outer Temple Chambers, London, United Kingdom

**Hon. Dianna J. Gould-Saltman (Ret)**, Los Angeles, CA

**Brandy Brown, DSW, LCSW**, Transform and Rise Up LLC, Saco, ME

## 5. Child Sexual Abuse in Custody Cases

This institute will focus on the considerable challenges of addressing allegations of child sexual abuse in the context of child custody litigation. The program will explore cutting-edge research, law, policy, and practice from the bench to the bar, and for mental health practitioners involved in various forensic capacities. Presenters will explore how to understand what is true about allegations, recognizing the various levels of unsupportable claims, how to analyze facts, and how to make good decisions and recommendations. Topics include: missteps due to misconceptions; context for understanding when and how reports of abuse arise in custody matters; assessing reports of abuse; assessing professionals’ qualifications and work product; custody arrangements depending on the outcome of reported abuse.

**Seth L. Goldstein, JD**, Law Offices of Seth Goldstein, Monterey, CA

**Mindy F. Mitnick, MEd, MA**, Edina, MN

**Commissioner Joanne Brown (Ret.)**, Sonoma, CA

## 6. Judicial Officer’s Institute Strategies for Domestic Violence and Alienation Allegations in Parenting Disputes in Family Court

**Registration for this institute is limited to judicial officers only.**

Family court judicial officers are challenged daily in dealing with allegations of domestic violence and alienation. Often, there is limited evidence presented to the court at the outset of the legal proceedings. The challenges are accentuated when one or both parents represent themselves, a common situation in most family law cases. This institute will provide a review of the current research as well as emerging assessment and intervention strategies. Part 1 will focus on critical questions and potential evidence to gather in exploring multiple hypotheses about the dynamics in the family to address what happened and what impact it is having on the parents and children. Part 2 will move from potential court findings to differentiated court remedies including counselling support for the parents and children.

**Peter Jaffe, PhD**, Western Univ., London, ON, Canada


**Matthew J. Sullivan, PhD**, Santa Cruz, CA

**Barbara Jo Fidler, PhD**, Toronto, ON, Canada

**Hon. Anne Hirsch (Ret)**, Olympia, WA

**Katreena Scott, PhD**, Western Univ., London, ON, Canada

# AFCC 61st Annual Conference



## Coping with Transition: Individual, Family, and Beyond

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2024

7:30am–6:00pm	Conference Registration
8:00am–9:00am	Coffee and Rolls for Institute Registrants
8:00am–5:00pm	Exhibit Forum
9:00am–5:00pm	Pre-Conference Institutes
10:30am–10:45am	Break
12:00pm–1:30pm	Lunch on your own
12:00pm–5:00pm	AFCC Board of Directors Meeting
2:45pm–3:00pm	Break
5:00pm–6:00pm	New Member, First-Time Attendee, and Professional Development Orientation
6:00pm–7:00pm	Welcome Reception
7:00pm–8:00pm	AFCC Awards Ceremony
9:00pm–12:00am	AFCC Hospitality Suite

*"Attending the conferences invigorates and energizes me in such a way that I can return home to my work with a renewed sense of hope, a fresh look, and concrete ways to improve my work. Every year that I attend my relationship and connections with other attendees deepen."*

### THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2024

6:15am–6:30am	Meditation
6:30am–7:15am	Yoga
7:30am–8:30am	Chapter Council Meeting
7:30am–5:00pm	Conference Registration
7:30am–5:00pm	Exhibit Forum
7:45am–8:45am	Coffee and Rolls
8:45am–10:00am	Opening Session

#### Opening Keynote:

**Welcome:** *Stacey E. Platt, JD*, AFCC President

#### **Gender Identity and Transitions: Personal, Spiritual, Legal, and Social**

In the spirit of this year's conference theme, Coping with Transitions, participants will be invited into the personal and profound story of a transgender woman detailing her journey of transition. Tina Madison White will share a narrative of her personal and familial evolution, including the many aspirations, challenges, successes, and revelations she has navigated. Allan Barsky will facilitate discussion anchored by the principles of cultural humility and an ethnographic approach: valuing Tina as an expert in her own life, striving for an authentic understanding of her lived experience, and critically reflecting on his own values, beliefs, and preconceptions. This session is not intended to provide a universal story or common strategies for working with transgender clients and family members. Rather, it is intended to exemplify a process of attentive, compassionate, and respectful listening—a core method for all family dispute resolution professionals.

**Tina Madison White**, Madeira, Portugal

**Moderator: Allan E. Barsky, PhD, JD**, Florida Atlantic Univ., Boca Raton, FL



10:00am–10:30am Break

10:30am–12:00pm Workshops 1-10

## 1. Curing Your Sleepless Nights: Practical Tips for Working with Resist/Refusal Dynamics

Do you sometimes wonder why you accept cases involving resist/refusal dynamics? Do you lie awake at night feeling defeated without a plan for working with these difficult families? This workshop will provide practical, effective strategies for client and case management, de-escalation of chaos, and managing resistance. The presenters will go beyond theories to provide practical tools and valuable resources that professionals can use effectively in these cases.

**Christy Bradshaw Schmidt, MA, LPC**, Coppell, TX

**Susan Fletcher, PhD**, Fletcher & Assoc. Psychological Services, Frisco, TX

**Victoria Harvey, PhD**, Frisco, TX

**Lawrence Jay Braunstein, JD**, Braunstein & Zuckerman, White Plains, NY

## 2. The Making of a Persuasive Expert in Reports and Testimony

Parenting plan evaluation reports and testimony must be admissible to be considered by the court, and persuasive to be relied on by the court. Using the AFCC *Guidelines for Parenting Plan Evaluations*, the AFCC *Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence*, and the psycho-legal literature addressing reports and testimony, this workshop will provide attendees with practical suggestions on how to make reports and testimony authoritative and persuasive.

**Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP**, San Diego, CA

**Hon. Bruce G. Smith**, Newcastle, NSW, Australia

## 3. Pros, Cons, and Ethics of Using Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) technology can complement one's knowledge and effort, which frees them to spend more of their time working with clients, negotiating divorce agreements, going to court or settling cases. However, because of the rush to use AI, sufficient time may not have been taken to understand and explore all the possibilities involved with using such technology. In this interactive session, attendees will explore the pros, cons, and ethical concerns when looking to use advanced technologies in your practice.

**Steven Bradley, MBA**, OurFamilyWizard, Tallahassee, FL

**Hon. Maggie Trahan Simar**, Saint Martinville, LA

## 4. Parenting and Substance Use Disorder: Reflections on Family Treatment Court

This presentation focuses on the Franklin Family Wellness Court and will cover how a drug court model works within a family court context and how the court approaches contact between a parent with substance use disorder and children. The presenters will discuss the lessons they have learned about co-parenting with substance use disorder since the treatment court began in 2016.

**Hon. Kathleen A. Sandman**, Greenfield, MA

**Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD**, Center for Law, Brain & Behavior, Boston, MA

**Alexandra S. Flanders, JD**, Greenfield, MA

**Daniel Baldner, BS**, Greenfield, MA

## 5. Retirement on Trial: Why Won't Some People Retire, or Even Talk About It?

Join this workshop for the screening of the documentary, *Retirement on Trial*. Set in the context of a court trial and motorcycle journey, this captivating and humorous film documents one lawyer's struggle to find guidance in preparing himself for the significant psychological life transition of retirement. The workshop will stimulate both self-reflection and public discourse on this often-feared transition and the many opportunities it presents. The 50-minute documentary is followed by a panel discussion, including AFCC members who are wrestling with retirement.

**Stephen Herman, LLB**, Vancouver, BC, Canada

**Evelyn Neaman, MA**, Neaman Consulting, Vancouver, BC, Canada

**Hon. Ramona A. Gonzalez**, La Crosse, WI

**Sherry Cassedy, JD, MA**, Santa Cruz, CA

## 6. Impasse: Why it Happens and How to Fix It

This workshop will explore the areas in which impasse can affect a file. Presenters will examine common areas for impasse such as the marital home, pensions, parenting, and more. While exploring the areas of impasse, presenters will discuss creative and tried and true methods to move even the most stubborn client off their position and into their goals and interests.

**Carrie Heinzl, CDF**, Fairmore Family Law Financial Solutions, Oshawa, ON, Canada

**Russell Alexander, LLB**, Collaborative Lawyers, Whitby, ON, Canada

**Jonathan Paynter, RSW**, Restorative Family Mediation and Counseling, Peterborough, ON Canada

*"AFCC has the best conferences regardless of in person or online. The presenters are always professional, and experts trained and highly experienced in the field. I promise you everyone who attends AFCC conferences will always come back again and again. Every presentation is a good one and I always have a hard time deciding which one to attend."*





## 7. Intimate Partner Violence: Unintended Consequences for Children

The transition from COVID isolation to life back in the community, creates the uneasy reality that the incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV) both their number and severity, spiked when everyone was behind closed doors. What are the short and long-term effects on children witnessing IPV? What can a community do to confront the problem and tamp down violence in the home, the schoolyard, and all public places? Experts involved in this cutting-edge research and promoting the establishment of No Hit Zones offer insight and solutions.

**Karen A. Myatt, JD**, *Seaglass Law & Mediation, Gloucester, MA*  
**Catherine Taylor, PhD**, *Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA*  
**Stacie Schrieffer LeBlanc, JD, MEd**, *UP for Champions, New Orleans, LA*

## 8. The Role of In-Camera Interviews in Hague Abduction Convention Cases

Judges are increasingly interviewing children during Hague Abduction Convention proceedings in the United States, yet there remains a lack of guardrails to ensure this less formal process protects the child, the parents, and the integrity of the proceeding. Presenters will discuss situations where judges are more likely to interview children, the drawbacks that have borne out in US litigation when children are interviewed, and the potential for guidelines to assist judges in the US and abroad.

**Melissa A. Kucinski, JD, MA**, *MK Family Law, Washington, DC*  
**James A. Netto**, *The International Family Law Group, London, United Kingdom*  
**Jonathan W. Lounsberry, JD**, *KD Trial Lawyers, Spartanburg, SC*  
**Hon. Dianna J. Gould-Saltman**, *Los Angeles, CA*

## 9. The Use and Misuse of Apology in the Search for Family Forgiveness

Apology and forgiveness are time and empirically based practices for healing interpersonal injury. Examining forgiveness provides an innovative approach for assessing anger, bitterness, resentment, and relationship aversion related to interpersonal injuries, and empirically based interventions for replacing hostile emotions with prosocial motivation. Apology probes the intricacies of family members mutually seeking to ease inner turmoil and identify a shared future informed by the past. The workshop provides practical suggestions for how to promote family trust when the motivation for apology and forgiveness is low.

**John A. Moran, PhD**, *Key Biscayne, FL*  
**Robin M. Deutsch, PhD, ABPP**, *Newton, MA*  
**Leslie M. Drozd, PhD**, *Seattle, WA*  
**Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP**, *Smith College, Northampton, MA*

## 10. Parenting Coordination as an Ameliorative Measure in Cross-Border Conflicts

Children and adolescents caught in cross-border custody disputes face the risk of losing contact with one parent, leading to severe consequences. This workshop aims to address the challenges families encounter in such situations and examine the merits of a modified family mediation model that includes parenting coordination, despite its jurisdictional and practical challenges. This workshop will discuss global initiatives promoting international family mediation using the Hague Conventions as a guide and explore the benefits and challenges of using parenting coordinators to ensure children's safety and implement resolutions in cross-border custody disputes.

**Debra K. Carter, PhD**, *The National Cooperative Parenting Center, Bradenton, FL*  
**Connie Capdevila Brophy, PhD**, *Collegi Oficial de Psicologia de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain*  
**Wendy O. Hickey, JD, MA**, *Brick, Jones, McBrien & Hickey, Needham, MA*

**12:00pm–1:30pm** AFCC Luncheon

**Presiding: Stacey E. Platt**, *AFCC President*

**1:45pm–3:15pm** Workshops 11-20

## 11. Screening for Intimate Partner Violence

Participants in this workshop will examine several different screening protocols: MASIC, a behaviorally specific screen designed for mediation; the Intimate Partner Violence Risk Identification Assessment tool and user guide; and the SAFeR protocol and mediation guide. Participants will discuss how the protocols can be used by family dispute resolution professionals to help their clients identify appropriate processes. The primary focus will be mediation; however, screening in processes including arbitration, early neutral evaluation, and parenting plan evaluations will be briefly discussed.

**Kelly Browe Olson, JD, LLM**, *Univ. of Arkansas-Little Rock Bowen School of Law, Little Rock, AR*

## 12. Litigation Abuse: Understanding Its Dimensions and Appropriate Responses

Litigation abuse is conduct that misuses the family court process and causes emotional or financial harm to the other party. It may be motivated by a desire to gain an unfair advantage or to control a former partner, or it may be a result of mental health issues. It may cause victims to agree to outcomes that impoverish them or expose them and their children to risk. Both men and women engage in litigation abuse, albeit in different circumstances. Recommendations will be provided for how professionals can identify and should respond to these cases.

**Nicholas Bala, JD, LLM**, *Queen's Univ., Kingston, ON, Canada*  
**Hon. Tom Altobelli**, *Sydney, NSW, Australia*  
**Justice Jim Williams**, *Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, Family Division, Halifax, NS, Canada*



### 13. Herding Cats: Setting Goals in Resist/Refuse Cases

Families engaged in therapy and the family court system, as well as the providers who support them, must concurrently navigate a legal timeline imposed by the court and a therapeutic timeline needed for successful treatment. Presenters in this workshop will explore the benefits and logistics of employing an interdisciplinary team approach of attorneys, parenting coordinators, and clinicians to family therapy to navigate these timelines more seamlessly—which are often at odds—and support families in effective conflict resolution while at the same time, permitting each individual professional and the team itself to achieve maximum effectiveness.

**Premela G. Deck, JD, PhD**, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA  
**Tony Pelusi, JD**, Tony Pelusi & Associates, North Andover, MA  
**Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP**, Smith College, Northampton, MA

### 14. Shared Residence, Interparental Conflict, and the Father-Child Relationship

This workshop will investigate various aspects of shared residence research in Norway. Presenters will explore the ways in which different residence arrangements for children moderate the effect of destructive conflict on the father-child relationship in Norway, and will examine the extent to which interparental conflict changes over time in different residence arrangements, particularly in vulnerable families.

**Sarah Hoegler Dennis, PhD**, Univ. of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN  
**E. Mark Cummings, PhD**, Univ. of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN  
**Tonje Holt, PhD**, Norwegian Institute for Public Health, Oslo, Norway  
**Linda Larsen, PhD**, Norwegian Institute for Public Health, Oslo, Norway

### 15. Best Practices in Online Learning: How to Design Programs for Using New Skills

Since the pandemic, online instruction has proliferated. Quickly getting instructional material out with online programs, including Zoom classes, often meant principles of instructional design were not considered. In the field of co-parenting education, online programs were developed without knowledge of effective instructional design. The consequences have been that parents were not able to retain the information soon after the classes. Since teaching skills have been identified as more important and effective than providing information, the methods used to teach skills are varied and most do not follow best instructional design practices. This workshop will evaluate commonly used online programs and rate them according to best practices.

**Donald A. Gordon, PhD**, Center for Divorce Education, Ashland, OR  
**Michael R. Eubanks, MEd**, Center for Divorce Education, Athens, OH

### 16. Working Constructively with Emotions in Family Law Negotiations

Whether a professional trying to settle a case out of court, or a participant in a judicial settlement conference, mediation, or collaborative case, intense negative emotions in family law negotiations are inescapable. This workshop will teach participants a proven and easy-to-use method for working constructively with difficult emotions. This begins with recognizing that every negotiation in family law without exception consists of two negotiations—the legal negotiation and the emotional negotiation—and then focuses on changing mindset, goals, and methods to match the different demands of each negotiation.

**Stephen H. Sultmeyer, JD, PhD**, JAMS, San Francisco, CA

### 17. The Model Standards of Practice for Family and Divorce Mediation – Revisited

It has been more than twenty years since the last revision of the Model Standards, and an AFCC and American Bar Association task force is in the process of updating them. Participants in this session will explore proposed changes, provide feedback, and have an opportunity to make suggestions for the revisions. Participants will: (1) review the Model Standards; (2) explore ways that family and divorce mediation have changed since the last revision; and (3) evaluate proposed modifications and updates to the Model Standards.

**Donna Erez-Navot, JD**, Reporter, Univ. of Florida Levin College of Law, Gainesville, FL  
**Susan E. Guthrie, JD**, Chair-elect, ABA Section on Dispute Resolution, Chicago, IL  
**Stacy D. Heard, JD**, Co-chair, The Law Office of Stacy Heard, Seattle, WA  
**Nancy Ver Steegh, JD, MSW**, Co-chair, Mitchell Hamline School of Law, St. Paul, MN

### 18. What Works (and What Doesn't) for Kids and Adults in "Blended Families"

After divorce comes recoupling, creating a fundamentally different family form that often creates challenges for all involved, including that recoupling often intensifies ex-spouse tension. Children struggling with losses, loyalty binds, and the pace of change may be unwelcoming of new stepparents. Stepparents may be pulled prematurely into discipline. Many of these issues contribute to resist/refuse difficulties. Navigating stepfamily dynamics with a first-partner family map only adds to pain, shame, and blame. This workshop will give solid evidence-based information about what works (and doesn't) to meet blended family challenges.

**Patricia L. Papernow, EdD**, Hudson, MA



## 19. When Trauma Influences Professional Processes

Professionals working with families in conflict in legal and therapeutic matters are not immune from their own trauma histories. What professionals do with those trauma histories matters to their own lives and how they work with our conflicted family clients. Using a combination of trauma research, including the ACEs study, case examples, and discussion, this workshop will help professionals: (1) understand the impact of trauma on co-parenting, parent-child relationships, and extended family relationships; (2) learn what they may contribute to the impact of client trauma on their parenting and co-parenting; and (3) discover how trauma may impact relationships with their clients.

**Joseph Noble, MA**, *The Bridging Center, Edina, MN*  
**Lori L. Thibodeau, MA**, *The Bridging Center, Bloomington, MN*  
**Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA**, *Uptown Mental Health Center, Edina, MN*

## 20. Evaluators, Guardians Ad Litem, Parenting Coordinators: Love Them or Leave Them?

Family law processes have come under enormous scrutiny in recent years. This session will examine the roles of parenting plan evaluators, guardians ad litem, and parenting coordinators in child custody cases and address several questions: Do these professionals improve outcomes for children and families? What costs are involved? Are the processes fueling the litigation fire or helping resolve issues? And what is the impact on the role of the judge and judicial fact-finding? Presenters from across disciplines will explore these provocative questions and encourage audience feedback and participation.

**Richard Ducote, JD, LLM**, *Covington, LA*  
**Hon. Ramona A. Gonzalez, La Crosse, WI  
**Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD**, *Riegler, Shienvold & Associates, Harrisburg, PA*  
**Jeffrey P. Wittmann, PhD**, *Child Custody Forensics, Albany, NY***

3:15pm–3:30pm	Break
3:30pm–5:00pm	Workshops 21-30

## 21. Voice of the Child: What Is It? How Is It Applied? Guidelines for Eliciting

With growing attention to the rights of the child, this workshop will explore the mechanisms of obtaining a child's input into a parenting plan post-separation and divorce. Specific topics to be addressed include incorporating a child's voice, how different jurisdictions consider the input of children of various ages and stages, specific techniques and considerations when soliciting children's input, and assessing the quality of the data. Presenters will discuss the benefits and drawbacks and provide suggestions of potential means to mitigate risks.

**Shely Polak, PhD**, *Mackenzie Clinic, Concord, ON, Canada*  
**Shawn McCall, PsyD, JD**, *San Francisco, CA*  
**Michael E. Zalev, LLB**, *Epstein Cole, Toronto, ON, Canada*

## 22. Trial Consultation in Family Law: Services, Opportunities, and Ethical Perils

Trial consultants serve attorneys in their efforts to present their best case and work behind the scenes, supporting law firms by analyzing forensic reports, assisting with the development of direct and cross examinations, gathering research, and preparing witnesses. Providing such services can also present ethical peril, and there is controversy about what some consultants are willing to do. This program will examine the ethical and procedural contours of work by trial consultants.

**Jeffrey P. Wittmann, PhD**, *Child Custody Forensics, Albany, NY*  
**Eric Y. Drogin, JD, PhD**, *Harvard Medical School, Hingham, MA*

## 23. Transgender Youth: Supporting Parents in Disputes About Their Transgender Kids

Transgender youth are under attack in statehouses, courts, and communities across the country, and many families are struggling to support their transgender children. This session will provide an overview of the national legal context in the rapidly changing area of transgender youth rights. Presenters will provide reliable information about transgender health care, as it can be challenging to glean truth from myth in today's environment. Participants will learn insights and best practices on supporting parents in legal custody disputes involving transgender children as well as access to health care.

**Patience W. Crozier, JD**, *GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, Boston, MA*  
**Mason J. Dunn, JD**, *Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce, Tewksbury, MA*  
**Mandy S. Coles, MD, MPH**, *Child and Adolescent Trans/Gender Center for Health, Boston, MA*  
**Jessica P. Greenwald O'Brien, PhD**, *SD Family Services, Canton, MA*

## 24. Culture vs. The Court: The Case for Culture as a Customary Factor to Consider

This workshop explores the case for making culture a customary factor for consideration in parenting plan evaluations. The presenter will examine the definition of culture, the role of culture in factors relevant to parenting evaluations and best interests of the child standards, parenting differences and similarities across cultures, parenting laws, ethical guidelines, examples of cultural bias in cases, and how to create a cultural profile of a family.

**Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP**, *Brooklyn, NY*



## 25. Neurodiverse Parents in Family Court: Challenges for Family Law Professionals

Neurodiversity and major mental health issues in parents pose complex challenges for family law judges, attorneys, and mental health professionals. Following an overview of the benefits of a neurodiversity framework, the presenters will examine legal approaches to representing such parents. Then, factors regarding judicial determination of time-share and decision-making responsibilities will be considered. Relevant issues for court-involved mental health professionals will also be addressed, including avoiding automatic negative presumptions about parenting ability based on a parent's neurodiverse condition.

**Daniel B. Pickar, PhD, ABPP**, Santa Rosa, CA  
**Hon. Linda Fidnick (Ret.)**, Leverett, MA  
**Alexander D. Jones, JD, MSW**, Brick, Jones, McBrien & Hickey, Needham, MA

## 26. Technology, Authenticity, and Evidentiary Issues in Child Custody Cases

Child custody evaluators, attorneys, and judges regularly confront issues regarding the validity and authenticity of information that is provided to them. Increasingly, this information is in the form of a text message, an email, a video, or a digital recording. But with the advancements in technology, how can anyone be sure that the evidence provided is authentic and reliable? This workshop will address how child custody evaluators, attorneys, judges, and technology experts confront the issue of authenticity by using forensic methodology.

**Chris Mulchay, PhD**, Asheville Testing, Asheville, NC

## 27. Using New Ways for Families Counseling with Parent-Child Contact Problems

This session will explain and demonstrate how the New Ways for Families Counseling method specifically addresses parent-child contact problems (resistance or refusal to see one parent) with a future focus regardless of the cause. Each parent learns skills to reduce conflict behavior, in six individual counseling sessions: managed emotions, flexible thinking, moderate behavior, and checking yourself. Then each parent teaches the children the same skills in three separate parent-child counseling sessions without the parents necessarily being together. This method is compatible with domestic violence treatment programs and alienation counseling.

**Bill Eddy, MSW, JD**, High Conflict Institute San Diego, CA

## 28. All Shook Up: Ethical Considerations in Transitions with High-Conflict Families

High-conflict families in transition present countless challenges to attorneys, mental health professionals, mediators, and the court. Chief amongst them are ethical considerations that differ by profession. This workshop will focus on different profession's ethics codes, with a focus on the future transition of American Psychological Association to a transformational new ethics code, and how professionals can prevent themselves from being placed in ethically compromising positions. Ethical decision-making models will be applied to real-life situations, with a focus on ensuring the family's conflict does not bleed into the professionals' ethical obligations.

**Lindsay Childress-Beatty, JD, PhD**, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC  
**Daniel A. Bloom, JD**, Bloom Lines Alexander, Atlanta, GA  
**Nancy A. McGarrah, PhD**, Cliff Valley Psychologists, Atlanta, GA  
**Dawn R. Smith, JD**, Evolve Family Law, Atlanta, GA

## 29. Gaining Control Amidst Intimate Partner Violence, High-Conflict Couples, and Addiction

This session will examine how family dispute resolution processes can benefit couples with a history of intimate partner violence (IPV), allowing each party to have power and control over the outcome of their divorce and their future, rather than placing their fate in the hands of a judge. Presenters will focus on how to navigate the challenges and tailor the team-approach for productive outcomes in high-conflict scenarios. Participants will gain insight into recognizing indicators of IPV, fostering safe communication, and prioritizing safety and empowerment.

**Beth F. McCormack, JD**, Beermann LLP, Chicago, IL  
**Jason N. Sposeep, JD**, Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP, Chicago, IL

## 30. Judicial Officer's Forum: The Voice of the Child

This session, open only to judicial officers, will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the challenges of bringing the child's voice into legal proceedings. The program will focus on the testimony of children, judicial interviews, reports, and other methods of integrating the child's voice into the process. Participants will have the opportunity to share their own processes, ask questions, and address specific challenges, such as intimate partner violence and a child's refusal to spend time with a parent.

**Hon. Dolores A. Bomrad (Ret.)**, Hartford, WI  
**Hon. Kevin M. Duffan**, Virginia Beach, VA  
**Hon. Herman G. Walker, Jr.**, Anchorage, AK  
**Kathleen McNamara, PhD**, Fort Collins, CO

5:00pm–6:00pm	International Attendee Reception
5:00pm–6:30pm	DE&I Open Forum
Evening	Taste of Boston
9:00pm–12:00am	AFCC Hospitality Suite



## FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2024

6:15am–6:30am	Meditation
6:30am–7:15am	Yoga
7:15am–8:15am	AFCC Committee Meetings
7:30am–5:00pm	Conference Registration
7:30am–5:00pm	Exhibit Forum
7:30am–8:30am	Coffee and Rolls
8:30am–10:00am	Workshops 31-40

### 31. Adversity to Growth: Children's Experience of Family Transitions

Parental separation is one of the most difficult transitions for children to navigate. This workshop will take a closer look at conflict, family restructuring, and how parental separation impacts children at different developmental stages. Participants will gain an understanding of the developing brain of the child, their developmental needs and how professionals can assist in establishing structures that help children in this process, and assist them in moving through adversity towards growth.

**Alyson G. Jones, MA**, Alyson Jones & Associates, West Vancouver, BC, Canada

**Simmi Brar, JD**, Alyson Jones & Associates, West Vancouver, BC, Canada

### 32. The Montreal Model for Parenting Coordination and its Application

This workshop will provide participants with an overview of an integrated model for providing parenting coordination services to co-parents experiencing high conflict following a separation or divorce. A theoretical framework will be presented along with the model's direct application in a government sponsored program designed to provide free services to thirty families referred by the Superior Court of Montreal. Mandatory co-parenting workshops for parents will also be presented as well as training modalities for parenting coordinators.

**Dominic A. D'Abate, PhD**, Consensus Mediation Center, Saint-Léonard, QC, Canada

**Karine Joly, MSW**, Consultation-Mediation KJ Vaudreuil-Dorion, QC, Canada

**Veronique Collard, LLB**, Collard & Eustace, Montreal, QC, Canada

### 33. Tending to the Wellbeing of Those Who Look After Others in the Courtroom

Family law professionals working at the front-end of the family law system have the closest contact with litigants thus exposing themselves to the risk of stress, burnout, vicarious trauma, and mental health issues. Protecting their well-being requires a multi-faceted, interdisciplinary, evidence-based, policy-driven, institutional approach. Interventions must be personal and organizational. Culture change, strong leadership and effective communication is critical. In this workshop, the presenters will share practical strategies for supporting the wellbeing of frontline family law professionals and the organizations in which they serve.

**Hon. Tom Altobelli**, Sydney, NSW, Australia

**Robyn Bradey, B.Soc.Stud.**, RB Counselling & Consultancy Services, Sydney, NSW, Australia

### 34. New Opportunities Widen Our Lenses from Young to Older

The world is rapidly transitioning to an older population, and professionals have an opportunity to respond with understanding and inclusion knowing each generation affects the others. This workshop will address how practitioners can better accommodate older families, encouraging positive intergenerational benefits. Together, participants will explore constructive and ethical practices, the impediments that maintain a narrow focus, and how to broaden professional lenses to benefit young and older alike.

**Linda B. Fieldstone, MEd**, ACR/FLAFCC Elder Justice Initiative on Eldercaring Coordination, Miami, FL

**Sue Bronson, LCSW**, ACR/FLAFCC Elder Justice Initiative on Eldercaring Coordination, Milwaukee, WI

### 35. Lausanne Trialogue Play in Child-Parent Rejection: The Italian Systemic Approach

This hands-on workshop will explore the nuances of family dynamics through the lens of the Italian systemic-relational approach. Learn how the innovative Lausanne Trialogue Play (LTP) technique can be employed in parenting coordination to address relational dysfunction in high-conflict families, including those facing the devastating reality of a child rejecting a parent. Using case studies and video analysis, the presenters will delve into the effectiveness and practical application of LTP in parenting coordination, offering a transformative perspective on familial relationships.

**Conny Leporatti**, Associazione Coordinazione Genitoriale Sistemica, Empoli, Florence, Italy

**Francesca Lemmi**, Associazione Coordinazione Genitoriale Sistemica, Empoli, Florence, Italy



### 36. Post Separation Abuse: Parenting After Divorce for Custody Evaluators

Domestic abuse rarely ends when a couple breaks up. Post-separation abuse includes common tactics such as threats and pressure, verbal, and economic abuse, renegeing on agreements, sabotaging the other parent's life, and litigation abuse. Domestic abusers also manipulate children post-separation, including undermining the other parent's authority, abusing the other parent through visitation and calls, and using children to track and control the protective parent. The presentation also describes lesser-known tactics such as spiteful disregard and counter-accusations. Participants in this workshop will learn how domestic abusers' common parenting deficits affect children at different developmental stages. Finally, the presenters will recommend best practices in evaluating custody when allegations of domestic abuse are present.

**Lisa A. Fontes, PhD**, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA  
**David Adams, EdD**, EMERGE, Malden, MA

### 37. Accounting for Relational Histories and Diverse Contexts in Divorce Education

This workshop will address how and for whom current divorce education programs work or might be improved. Data from two distinctive multi-program data collection efforts, as well as the Coparenting Through a Pandemic qualitative study, and the Resilience Among Divorced Families dataset will be shared. The panel will provide a synthesis of findings from these investigations, and their overall meaning in the broader context of divorce education programming. Presenters will conclude with implications for program developers, researchers, and court officials about the future of divorce education.

**Luke T. Russell, PhD**, Illinois State Univ., Normal, IL  
**Anthony J. Ferraro, PhD**, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan, KS  
**Melinda S. Markham, PhD**, Kansas State Univ., Manhattan, KS

### 38. What if It's a Zebra: Spotting and Effectively Managing Exceptions in Families

The saying "When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras" acknowledges that it can be a waste to search for zebras, and the family law community has become increasingly competent at identifying and effectively handling "horses." But zebras exist and treating them like horses can cause harm. This workshop will examine biases and the tools to overcome them, analyze real-life scenarios from both legal and mental health perspectives, and discuss how to inform the court that there is a zebra in the room.

**Deborah C. Link, MA**, Ascend Family Institute, Minneapolis, MN  
**Elizabeth Drotning Hartwell, JD**, Best & Flanagan, Minneapolis, MN  
**Karolina Brekken-Hoerl, JD**, Best & Flanagan, Minneapolis, MN

### 39. Virtual Visitation: Navigating Screens, Schedules, and Sippy Cups with a Smile

This workshop will focus on emerging trends in virtual parenting including the latest technology practitioners are utilizing and recommending for their clients. The presenters will review the history of video visitation, the shortcomings of conventional video calls, the development of specialty software, and how practitioners can use this technology to improve outcomes for the parents they work with. The presenters will also explore room for innovation and how these tools will develop in the future.

**Kevin Dorsey, BA**, OurFamilyWizard, Minneapolis, MN  
**Bradley Benedetto, JD**, Benedetto Law, PLLC; OurFamilyWizard, Troy, MI  
**Aaron D. Robb, PhD**, Forensic Counseling Services, Frisco, TX  
**Susan Fletcher, PhD**, Fletcher & Associates Psychological Services Frisco, TX

### 40. Families in Transition Services from Sorting, Parenting Education, and Beyond

Consider the transformative power of parent education, with a deep dive into two programs that have been promoted statewide in Arizona, and nationally. Marrying research with real-world judicial experience and enriched by insights from the frontlines of Arizona's Conciliation Court services, this session offers a holistic view of helping families transition through conflict, signposting innovative solutions ahead.

**Joi M. Hollis, PhD**, Family Center of the Conciliation Court, Tucson, AZ  
**Karey L. O'Hara, PhD**, Arizona State Univ., Phoenix, AZ  
**Hon. Ronda R. Fisk**, Phoenix, AZ  
**Alicia K. Davis, JD**, National Center for State Courts, Chicago, IL  
**Hon. Bruce R. Cohen**, Phoenix, AZ

10:00am–10:30am	Break
10:30am–12:00pm	Plenary Session

Welcome: **Michael A. Saini, PhD**, AFCC President Elect

### Depolarizing by Example: AFCC Peace Talks on Parent-Child Contact Problems

This plenary focuses on an innovative peace talk strategy to break down polarization of issues related to parent-child contact problems (PCCP) by emphasizing collaborative dialogue. This transformative approach will be showcased among experts across the continuum of perspectives, who will examine the many factors to consider in assessing and intervening in PCCP. Presenters will discuss their substantive analyses along with methods to improve understanding, communication, and collaboration. This session will provide a roadmap for family law professionals to effectively address complex contact problems, foster cooperation, enhance professional and public education, develop needed resources, and ultimately benefit the well-being of children and their families.

**William Bernet, MD**, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN  
**April Harris-Britt, PhD**, AHB Center for Behavioral Health and Wellnes, Durham, NC  
**Peter Jaffe, PhD**, Western Univ., London, ON, Canada  
**Hon. Denise McColley (Ret.)**, Napoleon, OH  
**Stacey E. Platt, JD**, AFCC President, Chicago, IL  
Moderator: **Michael A. Saini, PhD**, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada



<b>12:00pm–1:30pm</b>	Lunch on your own
<b>12:00pm–1:30pm</b>	FCR Editorial Board Meeting
<b>12:00pm–1:30pm</b>	Chapter Presidents' Lunch
<b>1:45pm–3:15pm</b>	Workshops 41-50

## 41. The Truth About Kayden's Law

This presentation addresses a new federal law, Kayden's Law, which incentivizes state law changes aimed at improving adjudications of custody cases involving physical and sexual abuse allegations. The presenters will describe the actual contents of the law and its underlying purposes, along with commonly heard distortions of the law that will be identified and corrected. Some of the challenges underlying its drafting, and states' responses to it will be discussed.

**Joan Meier, JD**, George Washington Univ. Law School, Washington, DC  
**Madelyn Milchman, PhD**, Upper Montclair, NJ

## 42. Shedding Labels: All Diagnoses Are Not Created Equal

The AFCC *Guidelines for Parenting Plan Evaluations* recommend that professionals involved in custody cases be aware of the overuse and misinterpretation of diagnostic terms. Unfortunately, these concerns are heightened when inaccurate media presentations use diagnostic terms inaccurately. It is not long before these inaccuracies find their way into the courtroom where they can be used against a parent or children in harmful ways. The purpose of this presentation is to explore this problem at an advanced level. The presenters will discuss the needs of the legal system for finality, the emerging research on the diagnostic classification system, and the pitfalls of selected diagnostic terms.

**Elisa Reiter, JD**, Calabrese Budner, LLP, Dallas, TX  
**Michael C. Gottlieb, PhD**, Dallas, TX  
**Jeffrey C. Siegel, PhD**, Dallas, TX

## 43. Child's Voice, Court's Choice: Two-way Communication between Children and Judges

Australian family law requires the wishes of children to be considered when determining their best interests. There is a conundrum in that mature minors are involved and live through the complex court process but receive little, if any, direct communication from the court. Limiting their involvement is designed to limit harm; however, not talking to them can also be harmful. This presentation uses three examples to highlight the issues around children's voice being heard and their needs to understand what is happening.

**Philip S. Watts, PhD**, Mindstate Psychology, South Perth, WA, Australia  
**Rachel V. Oakeley, LLB, LLM**, Inglewood, WA, Australia

## 44. Me, Mediation, and AI

This session begins with practical tips for using large language models, AIs like ChatGPT, Bard, Claude, and more, to manage administrative tasks, synthesize complex information, market a practice, and draft agreements. Participants will walk away from this training with a clear plan for jumpstarting, revising, or streamlining the mediation process. With all this technology available: What is actually needed? How is it used? What are the ethical ramifications? What are clients expecting? How can you get ahead of the AI tidal wave?

**Colin Rule, MPP**, Mediate.com and ODR.com, San Jose, CA  
**Clare E. Fowler, EdD**, Mediate.com, Eugene, OR

## 45. Family Triage in Action: Judicial Perspectives Across the Country

Experience a deep dive into family court triage with a distinguished panel of judges. This session offers a comprehensive exploration, shedding light on the transformative effects of triage across varied jurisdictions. From enhanced operational efficiency and uplifted staff morale to improved party engagement, discover the multifaceted benefits of this strategy. Attendees will gain a rich mosaic of insights, encompassing success stories, challenges, and invaluable recommendations, ensuring a holistic understanding of triage's potential in the justice system.

**Hon. John D. Casey**, Boston, MA  
**Hon. Keven O'Grady**, Olathe, KS  
**Hon. Michael A. Albis**, East Haven, CT  
**Alicia K. Davis, JD**, National Center for State Courts, Chicago, IL

## 46. Accounting for Safety and Resiliency When Crafting Parenting Plans

This session will focus on safe and appropriate parenting plans when domestic violence is present in a parenting case or civil protection order. Presenters will discuss Ohio's model as it answers the following questions: How do the dangerousness factors impact the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities? How do domestic violence acts relate to the statutory best interest factors? How does the presence of domestic violence impact meaningful allocation of parental rights and responsibilities, and enforcement of parenting time arrangements?

**Alexandria M. Ruden, JD**, Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH  
**Hon. Diane M. Palos**, Cleveland, OH



#### 47. The Intersection of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Alcohol Use Disorder

In this transformative workshop, the presenter will delve into the intricate dynamics of alcohol use disorders and adverse childhood experiences within family courts. Participants will gain insights into the effects of parental alcohol use disorders on children’s well-being, the tools for balanced decision-making, and the significance of maintaining familial bonds. Armed with performance data and advanced alcohol monitoring technologies, this session underscores a judicious approach to ensure children’s safety and foster resilient futures. Join us for an enlightening exploration, championing informed decisions in the family court system.

**Aaron D. Robb, PhD**, Forensic Counseling Services, Frisco, TX

#### 48. The Art and Science of Collaborating with Parenting Time Professionals

Parenting time professionals are important team members for court-involved families facing parent-child contact challenges. Well-trained, qualified parenting time professionals can provide a range of services to families that require supervised parent-child contact as determined by the court. Case examples will be used to outline and inform the participants about the range of supervised parent time services available, the limitations of the parenting time professional, how best to collaborate with them, and what training and qualifications could be considered when choosing a provider.

**Howard D. Yaffe, MSW**, Brookline, MA

**Lori L. Wymore-Kirkland, MPA**, Fairfax County Supervised Visitation and Exchange Program, Fairfax, VA

**Joe Nullet, BA**, Supervised Visitation Network, Jacksonville, FL

#### 49. Bending or Breaking? Viewing the Impact of Cultural Differences through Developmental Science

Parents often struggle after separation to support cultural differences that they were able to blend when they were together. Post-separation and especially in high-conflict custody matters, feelings and values become polarized. The children in transition are often challenged to adjust to these differences, on top of the typical stressors associated with living in two homes. This workshop will explore ways in which parent’s differing cultural values can impact children’s adjustment from a risk and resilience framework and through the lens of developmental science.

**April Harris-Britt, PhD**, AHB Center for Behavioral Health and Wellness, Durham, NC

**Nolanda Y. Robert, MS**, Online Parenting Programs, Edgewood, MD

#### 50. How to Conduct Custody Evaluations So Abusive Litigation is Less Likely

Domestic abusers often misuse the courts to control, impoverish and exhaust their ex-partners for years after the relationship has ended. This is litigation abuse, a form of domestic violence, not “high conflict divorce.” This presentation helps participants distinguish between litigation abuse and legitimate attempts by an aggrieved spouse to redress wrongs through the courts. It also suggests approaches for conducting and writing custody evaluations that diminish the likelihood of litigation abuse.

**Lisa Fontes, PhD**, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

**Lori Bassinger, JD**, Beverly, MA

3:15pm–3:30pm

Break

3:30pm–5:00pm

Workshops 51-60

#### 51. Moving Towards Consensus on Parent-Child Contact Problems: A Discussion

Post separation parent-child contact problems appear to be increasing in frequency in high-conflict families. It has also come to dominate debate and dialogue in family law, and much controversy remains. The presenters, who reflect different viewpoints, will have an open conversation about post-separation parent-child contact problems and seek to find common ground, common language, and common understanding of how to conceptualize and intervene in these challenging cases.

**William Bernet, MD**, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN

**Benjamin D. Garber, PhD**, Family Law Consulting, Nashua, NH

**Ashish S. Joshi, LLM**, Ann Arbor, MI

#### 52. Lying and Deception in Family Court Ordered Assessments: Who Knew?

Determining facts and establishing truth is one of the fundamental purposes of the family court process. Being able to distinguish facts from false allegations, vexatious accusations, and misrepresentations is a task necessary to accurately determine best interests. This session examines whether self-report questionnaires and the detection of lying and deception by parents in court ordered assessments are related to risk or best interests in any meaningful way. Discussions about the utility of assessing credibility in family court will be undertaken and psychological and legal perspectives will be provided.

**Robert C. Rowe, PhD**, Family Court Clinic, Kingston, ON, Canada

**Nicholas Bala, JD, LLM**, Queen’s Univ. Faculty of Law, Kingston, ON, Canada





### 53. Relative Plausibility and Inference to the Best Explanation in Child Custody Cases

This workshop will articulate an operational model for best interests of the child tasks and objectives, then demonstrate how to organize data into an explanation-based theories of components and the totality of the case. Five explanation-based reasoning models will be presented: (1) The Story Model; (2) Scenario (Anchored Narrative) Theory; (3) Hybrid (Argumentation & Explanation) Theory; (4) Narrative Coherence Theory; and (5) Relative Plausibility and Inference to the Best Explanation.

**Milfred Dale, PhD, JD**, Topeka, KS

### 54. Creating a New Dynamic: Secrets and Successes in Co-Parent Coaching

Parents enter the courtroom burdened by a history of negative relationship patterns characterized by defensiveness, positioning, and blame. In this interactive workshop, presenters from the Delaware County, Ohio Domestic Relations Court, will showcase their co-parent coaching program and the approach that breaks through entrenched patterns of behavior, creating a new relationship dynamic suited for co-parenting.

**Amy Armstrong, MSW**, Delaware County Domestic Relations Court, Delaware, OH

**Hon. Randall D. Fuller**, Delaware, OH

### 55. Unravelling the Puzzle: Exploring the Impact of Child Trauma on Development

This presentation will address how professionals can provide informed and effective support for children in the court system, promoting their welfare, and ensuring justice is served in a developmentally appropriate and sensitive manner. The presentation will call on audience participation with interactive dialogue.

**Darren A. Mort, LLB**, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

**Stella Laletas, PhD**, Monash Univ., Melbourne, VIC, Australia

**Joplin Higgins, LLB**, Joplin Higgins Family Law, Maitland, NSW, Australia

### 56. Online Meetings with Children: Is it a Thing?

If there was one lesson learned from the pandemic, it was how to pivot. In-room service approaches had to move online. Meeting with children proved to be a bit harder. The pandemic offered opportunities to develop new approaches for safe and meaningful online meetings with a child. Children who live in rural and remote locations may now benefit from the lessons of 2021. Through video examples, this workshop outlines three strategies for consideration in determining how, when, and why an online meeting with a child might be the best option.

**Lorri A. Yasenik, PhD**, International Centre for Children and Family Law, Calgary, AB, Canada

**Jonathan M. Graham, LLB**, International Centre for Children and Family Law, Summer Hill, NSW, Australia

### 57. Shared Parenting in the USA, Europe, and Australia: Recent Insights

This workshop explores (1) the latest prevalence data on shared-time parenting ("joint physical custody") from the USA, Europe, and Australia; (2) predictors of shared-time parenting in Europe; and (3) data on the number and nature of transitions between parents with shared-time arrangements. The central thread running through the papers is that the legal and the gender equality context matter but only to a certain extent.

**Daniel Meyer, PhD**, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

**Bruce M. Smyth, PhD**, Australian National Univ., Canberra, ACT, Australia

**Robert E. Emery, PhD**, Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

### 58. Yes, Chef! Balancing Leadership and Coordination in the Family Court Kitchen

Parties in family court encounter numerous professionals whose roles are to help the family transition away from conflict. How these professionals work together can have an impact on families. This workshop will help practitioners: (1) recognize their role in the multiple systems in which they operate; (2) share information effectively and appropriately with other members of the system; (3) address issues within the "uber-system" before they derail the family's work; and (4) identify when how the practitioner can assert leadership in the "uber-system" regardless of the practitioner's role.

**Jennifer E. Joseph, JD**, Saint Paul, MN

**James J. Street, JD**, Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell, Maplewood, MN

**Jennifer McBride McNamara, MA**, Touching Trees Counseling and Relationship Services, Eagan, MN

### 59. Child-Centered Facilitative Mediation

Parenting peace is paramount for healthy child development. Child-centered mediation is an optimal process for parents to restructure and redefine their higher-conflict relationship to a more collaborative and peaceful co-parenting affiliation. Unlike litigation, mediation fosters collaboration and reduces toxic stress for the children, which leads to far healthier outcomes for children. This workshop will describe the unique ways a child-centered facilitative interest-based mediation process helps parents create child-centered parenting plans and practice effective co-parenting communication. The workshop will include lecture, case studies, group engagement, concrete tools, and discussion.

**Benjamin A. Stich, LICSW, MEd**, Mediation and Family Services Wayland, MA

**Vicki L. Shemin, JD**, Fields & Dennis, Wellesley, MA



## 60. Intimate Partner Violence Common Factors: Legislative and Empirical Considerations

Courts and mental health professionals continue to pay greater attention to the presence of intimate partner violence, domestic, and family violence within relationships. However, differences have arisen across jurisdictions, including differing term definitions, conceptualizations, and understanding. Using a blended approach, this presentation provides a focus on legislative and scientific considerations. The purpose is to promote a greater understanding and application of the common factors underlying these important concepts to family matters with direct application to on-going work.

**Terence S. Singh, PhD, ABPP**, Alberta Forensic Psychology,  
Calgary, AB, Canada

**Hon. Nancy A. Flatters (Ret.)**, Calgary, AB, Canada

## SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024

6:15am–6:30am	Meditation
6:30am–7:15am	Yoga
7:30am–12:30pm	Conference Registration
7:30am–12:30pm	Exhibit Forum
8:00am–9:00am	Coffee and Rolls
8:00am–9:00am	AFCC Membership Meeting
9:15am–10:45am	Workshops 61-70

## 61. Revised Guidelines for Psychological Evaluations in Child Protection Matters

This workshop provides an overview of the American Psychological Association's newly revised Guidelines for Psychological Evaluations in Child Protection Matters. New developments that prompted this revision will be reviewed in detail, including those related to racial bias concerns, the impact of structural racism, multicultural considerations, kinship placement, and updated research. Participants will discuss innovations across various types of court-ordered child protection evaluations. Advice concerning child as well as adult assessment methodologies will be explored in detail, with a particular emphasis on the importance of effective communication with evaluatees, attorneys, and the courts.

**Helen T. Brantley, PhD**, Chapel Hill, NC

**Eric Y. Drogin, PhD, JD**, Harvard Medical School, Hingham, MA

**Jemour A. Maddux, PsyD, ABPP**, Newark, NJ

## 62. The Use of Tort Law in Family Law Cases With IPV and Coercive Control

In family law cases, tort claims arising from abusive conduct in an intimate partner context have traditionally been advanced through certain well-established causes of action: assault, battery, and intentional infliction of mental distress. Yet these categories may not be sufficiently subtle, sensitive, or nuanced to be able to address the various kinds of abusive conduct seen in family law cases. The presenters in this session will make the case for the expansion of tort law remedies to open more avenues of redress and justice for survivors of family violence and coercive control.

**Brian J. Burke, LLB**, Burke and Co., Toronto, ON, Canada

**Mary-Jo Maur, LLB, LLM**, Queen's Univ., Kingston, ON, Canada

6:30pm–11:00pm AFCC Annual Banquet

Bring your dancing shoes and join us in celebrating the retirement of AFCC Executive Director, Peter Salem.

# SAVE THE DATE!

## AFCC 16th Symposium on Child Custody

### November 14-16, 2024

Hilton Downtown Columbus  
Columbus, Ohio





### 63. Family Intervention in a Politicized Environment: What Tools Do We Still Have?

In addition to the usual complexities, custody disputes are now occurring against a background of professional and political polarization, widespread dissemination of questionably reliable science and snippets of selective information, and ill-conceived legislation with significant unintended consequences. This increases risks to children and impedes access to services for children and families who are already more vulnerable to developmental, medical, and mental health problems. The presenters will discuss recent developments, along with strategies for providing, justifying, and ordering effective services. Models and tools for early intervention will be addressed.

**Lyn R. Greenberg, PhD, ABPP**, Los Angeles, CA  
**Hon. Bruce R. Cohen**, Phoenix, AZ  
**Krista V. Nash, JD**, Nash Family Law, Arvada, CO

### 64. Innovations in Singapore's Family Justice Landscape

The family justice landscape is always evolving in tandem with the changing profile and needs of the population. Singapore's population is aging; it also has a small population with a substantial number of immigrants due to its interconnectedness to the global community. As a result, family issues can be complex and as such, innovative solutions are required to deal with the varied needs of the families. This workshop discusses the needs of the population and presents some ideas and examples which showcase how Singapore deals with these issues.

**Meng Chung Lee, MSc, MBA**, Family Justice Courts, Singapore  
**Sophia T. Ang, MS**, Family Justice Courts, Singapore

### 65. Engaging Fathers to Strengthen Families

This interactive workshop will highlight new "#dadication" resources and best practices for engaging, recruiting, and serving fathers. The new resources and products were created to uniquely increase the services for fathers and families. Intentionally serving fathers to address their personal and family needs in a holistic and nurturing format builds fathers that succeed as parents. These practices and strategies come from the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, a federally funded resource under the US Department of Health & Human Services focused on serving fathers, families, and practitioners.

**James R. Worthy, II**, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, Reston, VA  
**Eugene Schneeberg**, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, Reston, VA

### 66. Step-Parenting, Restructured Families, and Parent-Child Contact Problems

This presentation will explore the complexities of remarriage for divorcing adults with children. Second marriages with children fail at a high rate, and it is often due to parenting and child-focused issues. Issues to be addressed will include the development of realistic expectations for the restructured family, appropriate parenting practices, high-conflict situations, and parent-child contact problems.

**Marcy A. Pasternak, PhD**, Watchung, NJ  
**Sharon Ryan Montgomery, PsyD**, Morristown, NJ  
**Tamsen Thorpe, PhD**, Morristown, NJ

### 67. Queer Families in the Court System: From Youth to Adults

One area of family law which has not received as much attention as it should is how to address queer families as it relates to gender in custody cases, including both youth and adults. This workshop will explore how to overcome the bias that some attorneys and courts have regarding genderqueer persons. Setting up appropriate parenting plans for genderqueer youth, including the necessary supports and how gender affirming treatment will occur will also be discussed.

**Hon. Lynda B. Munro (Ret.)**, Munro Dranginis, Woodbridge, CT  
**Beck Fineman, JD**, Ryan Deluca, Bridgeport, CT  
**Leslie I. Jennings-Lax, JD**, Reich & Truax, Bridgeport, CT  
**Louise T. Truax, JD**, Reich & Truax, Southport, CT

### 68. Child Inclusive PC: A Seven-Step Framework: What Are You Telling my Parents?

Child inclusive parenting coordination is a practice that includes the voices of children as an integral part of the process. Learn about a seven-step framework with accompanying structured tools for on-record child inclusion in a safe and meaningful way.

**Lorri A. Yasenik, PhD**, International Centre for Children and Family Law, Calgary, AB, Canada  
**Jonathan M. Graham, LLB**, International Centre for Children and Family Law, Summer Hill, NSW, Australia

*"AFCC conferences are essential to maintaining a high-level set of tools relevant to my practice. The topics are current, the materials are always excellent and savable, and the presenters are the top in our interrelated professions."*



## 69. Parenting Coordination: Timing of Meetings and Managing Conflict Using Neuroscience

The presenters will discuss their research, including data collected from parents and parenting coordinators on what is the best time to begin the parenting coordination intervention and what the optimum number of meetings with the parents should be to ensure success of the process. They will discuss the assessment of the level of conflict to enhance the efficiency of the intervention. The usefulness of using neuroscience techniques to help parents navigate inter-parental conflict and improve communication will also be explored.

**Yoa Sorek, PhD**, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, Jerusalem, Israel  
**Idith Honigman, MSW**, Modi'in Makkabbim-Re'ut, Israel  
**Elena Giudice, PhD**, Italian Association of Parenting Coordination, Milan, Italy  
**Anne-Marie Cade, LLB, LLM**, Divorce Right Pty Ltd, Caulfield, VIC, Australia

## 70. Relationships at Risk: Securing Legal Ties between Children and LGBTQ+ Parents

Now is the time to protect LGBTQ+ families. Parentage, a legally recognized relationship between a child and their parent(s), ensures that children can maintain critical bonds and access numerous protections. In this workshop, presenters will discuss paths to LGBTQ+ parenthood, the US patchwork of protections, and current efforts to protect LGBTQ+ families. Presenters will discuss the benefits of secure attachment and intersections with the family regulation system. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the legal risks LGBTQ+ families face and steps to protect children and parents.

**Margaret B. York, JD**, Family Equality, New York, NY  
**Douglas NeJaime, JD**, Yale Law School, New Haven, CT  
**Shaplaie Brooks, BA**, Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, Providence, RI  
**Jordan J. Budd, BA**, COLAGE, Providence, RI

10:45am–11:00am	Break
11:00am–12:30pm	Workshops 71-80

## 71. Contemporary Families: Millennials, Gen Z and Family Court

Millennials and Gen Z account for almost half the population of the US, yet they are often misunderstood by family court professionals. This workshop will focus on the historical, societal, and economic factors which have impacted these generations as they have entered adulthood and started their own families. Trends in family formation will be discussed, including the long-ranging impact of COVID. Finally, case studies will be examined to better understand the impact of these changes on families from a generational lens.

**Lilly D. Munro, MSW**, Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago, IL

## 72. Navigating the Court Process: Pathways and Procedures for Better Outcomes

Navigating the family court process is stressful; meeting the acute and longer-term needs of families (the customers) is essential. Experience the force of collaboration to enhance the integral components of family court processes and court procedures for case management, triage, self-represented and use of technology. Let's throw out the life preserver to families struggling to survive their family court experience!

**Peggie A. Ward, PhD**, Baltimore, MD  
**Linda B. Fieldstone, MEd**, Family Resolutions, Miami, FL  
**Hon. Sandy Karlan (Ret.)**, Karlan Resolutions, Miami, FL

## 73. Children of High-Conflict Divorce at School: The Experiences of Teachers

This session will provide unique insights on how ongoing parental conflict can place school-aged children at risk of adjustment difficulties and mental health problems. The workshop will present the findings, implications and recommendations from the latest school-based research exploring children of divorce. This program is aimed to firstly facilitate an inter-disciplinary discussion and provide the audience with the opportunity to explore the implications of the findings in their own professional context, and secondly to explore how they might work with school settings to identify, support, and monitor children impacted by on-going parental conflict before, during, and after separation.

**Stella Laletas, PhD**, Monash Univ., Melbourne, VIC, Australia

## 74. The Dream Team: Helping with Transition Using the Collaborative Law Process

Collaborative law uses a team approach with a collaborative coach, attorneys trained in collaborative law, and often a financial neutral. This process empowers parties to reach a comprehensive settlement. The workshop will show how to use a collaborative law process to help parties transition from a one family unit and restructure, so it is healthier for families. Participants will learn how a team of coaches, financial professionals, and collaboratively trained attorneys can resolve disputes in a kinder and gentler way.

**Debra L. Smith, JD**, Watertown, MA  
**Linda Cohan, MSW**, Gloucester, MA  
**Susan M. Miller, CPA, CDFA**, The Colony Group, Wellesley, MA  
**David M. Bilodeau, JD**, Goldstein & Bilodeau, PC, Newton, MA



## 75. Attachment Matters: Understanding the Parent-Child in the Context of Parental Separation

Using observations, interviews, and psychometric measures to better understand parent-child relating in the context of parental separation. This workshop provides a relational framework to assess and formulate parental attunement (mutuality, reciprocity, and synchronicity), misalignment, adaptability and reflective functioning in parent-child interactions in order to reduce adverse factors and to support better outcomes for both children and parents.

**Fiona J. Darroch, MPsy**, *The Relationspace, Sydney, NSW, Australia*

## 76. Safer Storage in Custody Litigation: Reducing Firearm Risks for Families

Firearm violence—suicide, homicide, unintentional shootings—is impacting families and professionals. This horrifying reality is of particular concern in family law: in 2022, more than twice as many minors were killed or injured in domestic violence shootings in the US than in school shootings; between 2019 and 2021, there was a 65% increase in the number of minors killed or injured in domestic violence shootings nationwide. Presenters will share best practices for safety planning and how to talk with clients about this complicated issue. This session will include legal information, safe storage options, key parenting plan provisions, and survivor perspectives.

**Julia F. Weber, JD, MSW**, *Masa Consulting Group, San Francisco, CA*  
**Hon. Sherrill A. Ellsworth (Ret.)**, *Newman Lake, WA*  
**Lesley Hu**, *Pierce’s Pledge, San Francisco, CA*

## 77. Navigating the Minefield of Supervised Parenting Time

Supervision of parenting time is a common component of safety planning for non-intact families, intended to be transitional until one can parent safely and appropriately on his or her own. The role of the supervisor while monitoring visits often varies. Supervision reports are often relied upon by factfinders in the legal process. This panel will examine the strengths and weaknesses of this tool, and the myriad impacts of supervision on children, the allegedly compromised parent, and the trajectory of a case within our legal system.

**Gina J. Calabro, JD**, *Brick, Jones, McBrien & Hickey, Needham, MA*  
**Kristin S. Doeberl, JD**, *Verrill, Boston, MA*  
**Jessica P. Greenwald O’Brien, PhD**, *SD Family Services, Canton, MA*  
**JuLee R. Colella, MSW**, *Marblehead, MA*

## 78. We Hear, But Do We Listen? Point C and the Child’s Voice During Divorce

“Point C” was released to the public as a free educational resource and since its release, supported by multiple organizations. This panel will discuss the potential use of Point C in helping resolve transitional issues and will focus on constructive ways professionals can not only hear, but listen to the voice of the child coping with parental dysfunction. The panel will also discuss challenges when the child has significant emotional vulnerabilities and/or developmental disabilities.

**Lynn B. Norcia, JD**, *Starr, Gern, Davison, Rubin, Roseland, NJ*  
**Mark Singer, EdD**, *Livingston, NJ*  
**Hon. Lawrence R. Jones (Ret.)**, *Albuquerque, NM*  
**Joni Jones, RN**, *Albuquerque, NM*

## 79. Addressing the Shortage of Mental Health Providers in Family Law

There are several factors in the last ten years that have had a significant impact on the practice of evaluating parenting plans, parenting fitness, parenting coordination, parenting plan mediation, reunification therapy, and the variety of special problems often connected to the disintegration of the family. Addressing the shortage of qualified mental health providers in family law requires a multi-faceted approach. Come join this interactive discussion of possible solutions to this problem.

**Lori M. Comallie-Caplan, MA**, *Comallie-Caplan Counseling, Coaching and Consultation, Las Cruces, NM*  
**Marc A. Caplan, PhD**, *Marc A Caplan, PhD and Associates, Las Cruces, NM*

## 80. The Power of Semantics in Problem-Solving: Words to Conquer Conflict

“What you have to say is important, so say it in a way others can hear you.” This session will examine the interplay between thoughts, verbalization, speech, and representation. The presenters will teach participants to effectively address their approach to language to shift the client conflict and provide a “how to” guide to steer client’s emotions and interpersonal dialog reflecting client empowerment and mutual resolution. This is a new outlook on the use of language to create a successful approach to conflict as opposed to conflict avoidance.

**Jamie C. Niesen, MA, MS**, *Niesen Resolution Services, Worthington, OH*  
**Jennifer R. Szeghi, MA**, *Successful Parenting, Cincinnati, OH*

# Important Conference Information



## CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS

A certificate of attendance is included with the conference registration fee. Attendees will receive their certificate by July 15, 2024, via email. The certificate will verify attendance at conference sessions and may be used to apply for continuing education credits with the registrant's accrediting institution. Attendees must sign in and out of sessions to be eligible for credit. A list of conference sessions eligible for continuing education credit will be posted on the conference portal and will be updated regularly.

**Psychologists:** AFCC is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. AFCC maintains responsibility for this program and its content. The program is eligible for up to 20.5 hours of continuing education for psychologists. AFCC is also approved to sponsor continuing education for psychologists licensed to practice in the state of New York.

**Mental Health Professionals:** An application for continuing education approval from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) will be submitted for up to 20.5 CE credits; however, individuals will need to verify approval with their credentialing or licensing boards. If you are a LMFT, LPC, or other mental health professional, you may use the AFCC certificate to verify attendance at conference sessions and apply for continuing education credits with your accrediting institution.

**Massachusetts Parenting Coordinators:** An application for continuing education approval for Parenting Coordinators in Massachusetts will be submitted.

**California Custody Evaluators and Mediators:** Applications will be submitted to the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts. The views expressed in the program are those of the faculty and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Judicial Council of California or the Administrative Office of the Courts.

**US Lawyers:** An application for accreditation of continuing legal education activity will be submitted for continuing legal education in the following states: Minnesota, Vermont, New Hampshire, Ohio, and North Carolina. Attorneys from other states may use the AFCC certificate of attendance to verify attendance and apply for credit in their state. California attorneys must self-report hours at their recertification. However, California will accept credits approved by other jurisdictions, including Minnesota, since this conference is presented outside the state of California.

**Ontario Lawyers:** An application will be submitted to the Law Society of Ontario to accredit the educational program content for Continuing Professional Development, or CPD, for lawyers.

## CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

The AFCC scholarship committee will offer a select number of scholarships for this conference. Scholarships include registration pre-conference institute and conference registration, meal functions (welcome reception, luncheon, and annual banquet tickets), access to the AFCC hospitality suite, and a certificate of attendance. A limited number of scholarships may include stipends to help offset the cost of travel and accommodations for recipients. Preference for scholarships with stipends will be given to applicants with higher travel costs, international applicants, and those who demonstrate financial need. The scholarship application is available on the AFCC website, [afccnet.org](http://afccnet.org). **The scholarship application deadline is March 11, 2024.** Recipients will be notified by the end of March.

## EXHIBIT FORUM

The Exhibit Forum will be open during conference hours and provide an opportunity to meet face-to-face with representatives to discuss your needs and the products and services they offer. If you are interested in an exhibit table or other advertising opportunities, please contact AFCC Program Associate, Abby Rebholz at [arebholz@afccnet.org](mailto:arebholz@afccnet.org) or 608-664-3750.

## AFCC HOSPITALITY SUITE

Join AFCC conference attendees for an informal networking event and refreshments Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00pm–12:00am. Please wear your name badge. The hospitality suite location will be included in attendee emails and on the conference portal.

## TASTE OF BOSTON

Join your colleagues on Thursday, June 6, 2024, for a no-host dine-around group of 8-10 people. AFCC will make reservations at several local restaurants and participants must sign up before 1:30pm on Thursday. Space is limited! Restaurant menus and sign-up sheets will be available in the conference registration area Thursday morning. Participants are responsible for all food, beverage, and transportation costs.

## MEDITATION AND YOGA

Start your day in the right frame of mind for concentration and learning! Join AFCC colleagues for morning meditation and yoga. Meditation is from 6:15am–6:30am followed by yoga from 6:30am–7:15am, Thursday-Saturday mornings. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one.

# Registration and Travel Information

## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

**AFCC Members Save up to \$180 on Registration Rates:** Register and pay by March 26, 2024, to receive the lowest rates for the conference! Not a member, yet? Join AFCC by taking advantage of the New Membership Special then register for the conference at the AFCC member rate.

**AFCC Membership Special:** Join AFCC when you register for the conference and receive a twelve-month membership for \$150 — a \$10 discount — and save up to \$180 by registering at the AFCC member rate! It pays for itself! To join AFCC, simply select the new membership special on the registration form. The new membership special rate is only available to first-time AFCC members.

**Pre-Conference Institute Registration:** Includes attendance at one pre-conference institute, refreshment breaks, and printed institute materials. *Pre-conference institute registration is a separate fee from the full conference registration.*

**Conference Registration:** Includes all conference sessions, electronic access to conference materials, certificate of attendance, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, annual banquet, entertainment, and access to the AFCC hospitality suite. *Pre-conference institutes require a separate registration fee.*

**Spouse/Guest Registration:** Available only to a spouse or significant other accompanying a full-conference registrant, not a business associate or staff colleague. Includes plenary sessions, opening reception, luncheon, annual banquet, entertainment, and access to the AFCC hospitality suite.

**Conference Presenter Registration:** Available only to conference presenters and includes all conference sessions, electronic access to conference materials, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, annual banquet, entertainment, and access to the AFCC hospitality suite. *A separate registration fee is required for presenters who wish to attend a pre-conference institute.*

**Full-Time Student Registration:** Includes all conference sessions, electronic access to conference materials, and access to the hospitality suite. Meal functions are not included; however, meal tickets may be purchased separately. Registration must include proof of full-time student status. *A separate registration fee is required for pre-conference institutes.*

**Additional Luncheon and Banquet Tickets:** The luncheon is included in the conference registration fee. Additional luncheon tickets are available for \$75. The annual banquet is also included in the conference registration fee. Additional banquet tickets are available for \$115. Additional meal ticket prices reflect the estimated cost to AFCC.

**Certificate of Attendance:** AFCC will provide a certificate of attendance for all conference attendees. Certificates will only reflect sessions for which the attendee has signed in and out.

**Session or Presenter Changes:** AFCC reserves the right to make changes to the conference program, including (but not limited to) changes to the content and speakers in the published event schedule, or canceling sessions, should unforeseen circumstances arise.

**Audio/Video Recording:** Personal audio or video recording or photographing of sessions is not permitted.

## TRAVEL AND LODGING INFORMATION

### HOTEL INFORMATION

Sheraton Boston Hotel  
39 Dalton St.  
Boston, MA 02199  
Phone: 617-236-2000

Steps from the Shops at the Prudential Center, the Sheraton Boston Hotel is a retreat in the heart of Boston's Back Bay. Explore the iconic cobblestones, revolutionary landmarks, boutiques, and high-end shops that invite you to explore, work, relax, and play in one of America's significant cities. Hotel information is available at [www.sheratonbostonhotel.com/](http://www.sheratonbostonhotel.com/). For more information regarding restaurants, sites, or activities, please visit <https://www.bostonusa.com/>.

Make your reservations today! The Sheraton Boston Hotel is offering a special group rate to AFCC conference registrants of \$245/night for single and double occupancy rooms. On May 14, 2024, any unreserved rooms in the AFCC block will be released and the special group rate will no longer be guaranteed. **The AFCC room block frequently sells out well before rooms are released, so please make your reservations early!** AFCC conference attendees are responsible for making their own hotel arrangements. Reserve your room today by calling 1-888-627-7054 and request the AFCC special rate or reserve online by visiting <https://book.passkey.com/event/50707228/owner/250/home>.

### GROUND TRANSPORTATION

A taxi from the Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) to the Sheraton Boston Hotel costs approximately \$45 and takes 20 minutes, depending on traffic. Taxis are at each terminal on arrivals level. The Back Bay Logan Express provides transportation to and from the airport. The cost is \$3.00 each way to Prudential Center, which is adjacent to the Sheraton Boston Hotel. Buses depart every 30 minutes from each terminal from 6:00am–10:00pm. You can purchase tickets online. [Click here.](#)

### PARKING

Parking fees at the Sheraton Boston Hotel are currently \$70 per day for valet parking with unlimited in/out privileges. The hotel also offers an electric car charging station.

### CLIMATE

In early June, temperatures in Boston may range from the low 70s to low 80s. Try as we might, for several decades we have been unsuccessful in getting hotels to manage temperatures in meeting rooms. Therefore, please bring a light jacket or sweater, just in case.

# CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

AFCC 61st Annual Conference • June 5–8, 2024 • Boston, Massachusetts  
Register online at [afcnet.org](http://afcnet.org)

**Please type or print clearly.** This form may be duplicated.

First Name (Dr./Mr./Ms./Judge) \_\_\_\_\_ M.I. \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_

First Name or Nickname (as you would like it to appear on your name badge) \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Profession \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have dietary restrictions or other special needs? Meals Access Other Please provide details: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Rates	Paid by March 26	Paid by May 13	Paid after May 13
Please check the appropriate amount(s) when making your selections and enter your total at the bottom			
<b>AFCC Membership Special</b>			
Join AFCC for 12 months at a reduced rate and register at AFCC member rates!	__\$150	__\$150	__\$150
<b>Pre-Conference Institute Registration Rates</b>			
Full Day Institute Registration – AFCC Member	__\$160	__\$170	__\$185
Full Day Institute Registration – Non-member	__\$225	__\$240	__\$255
<b>Conference Registration Rates</b>			
Conference Registration – AFCC Member	__\$525	__\$550	__\$575
Conference Registration – Non-member	__\$640	__\$665	__\$690
Conference Presenter Rate – AFCC Member	__\$325	__\$350	__\$375
Conference Presenter Rate – Non-member	__\$365	__\$390	__\$415
Full-time Student Rate – AFCC Member <i>(ID required. No meals included.)</i>	__\$175	__\$225	__\$250
Full-time Student Rate – Non-member Includes a one-year AFCC student membership! <i>(ID required. No meals included.)</i>	__\$225	__\$250	__\$275
<b>Other Registration Rates</b>			
Additional Luncheon Ticket	__\$75	__\$75	__\$75
Additional Banquet Ticket	__\$115	__\$115	__\$115
Spouse/Guest Registration Rate <i>(Meals and plenary sessions only.)</i>	__\$265	__\$265	__\$280
Scholarship Fund Donation	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

### Method of Payment

Registration must be paid in full prior to attendance.

\_\_\_\_ Payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed (US currency only please.)

\_\_\_\_ Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my:  Visa  MasterCard  
 Discover  American Express

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Billing ZIP/postal code \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

You may register online at [afcnet.org](http://afcnet.org)  
or return the completed form and payment to:  
AFCC • 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719  
Phone: 608-664-3750 • Fax: 608-664-3751  
[afc@afcnet.org](mailto:afc@afcnet.org)

**Cancellation Policy:** Transfer of registration to another person may be done once, at any time without a fee. All requests for refunds must be made in writing. Written notice of cancellation received by fax, sent, and confirmed by email, or postmarked by May 6, 2024, will be issued a full refund minus a \$75 service fee. Written notice received after May 6, 2024, will have the \$75 service fee deducted and the balance issued as a credit for future AFCC conferences, webinars, trainings, or membership dues. No refunds or credits will be issued for cancellations received after May 20, 2024.

### Institute Selections - Wednesday, June 5, 2024

If you have registered for an institute, please check only one of the following boxes:

#### Pre-Conference Institutes 9:00am–5:00pm

- 1. Protecting Yourself and Your Practice in the Cyber World
- 2. Advanced Challenges in Family Mediation
- 3. Should Children Participate in Family Law Processes? Consider the Brain
- 4. Trans Children and Youth in the Family Court System
- 5. Child Sexual Abuse in Custody Cases
- 6. Judicial Officer's Institute **(Limited to Judicial Officers)**

### Conference Workshop Selections

Seating is not guaranteed and will be first-come, first-served. Your selections will ensure that sessions with more attendees are scheduled in larger meeting rooms.  
*(Please write in one workshop number per time slot)*

Thursday, June 6	8:45am–10:00am	Opening	Yes	No
Thursday, June 6	10:30am–12:00pm	1–10	_____	_____
Thursday, June 6	1:45pm–3:15pm	11–20	_____	_____
Thursday, June 6	3:30pm–5:00pm	21–30	_____	_____
Friday, June 7	8:30am–10:00am	31–40	_____	_____
Friday, June 7	10:30am–12:00pm	Plenary	Yes	No
Friday, June 7	1:45pm–3:15pm	41–50	_____	_____
Friday, June 7	3:30pm–5:00pm	51–60	_____	_____
Saturday, June 8	9:15am–10:45am	61–70	_____	_____
Saturday, June 8	11:00am–12:30pm	71–80	_____	_____

Please indicate which meal functions you will attend:

*(1 ticket for each meal function is included in all conference registrations except for student registrations)*

- Luncheon Thursday, June 6 12:00pm–1:30pm
- Banquet Friday, June 7 6:30pm–11:00pm