



**AFCC** Association of Family  
and Conciliation Courts

# **63rd Annual Conference**

## **What Lies Beneath Hidden Forces Shaping Families in Transition**



**Seattle**  
**May 27-30, 2026**

**[afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference](http://afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference)**

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

# What Lies Beneath

## Hidden Forces Shaping Families in Transition

Seattle | The Westin Seattle  
May 27–30, 2026

Family transitions are never just about logistics. Beneath the surface, underlying forces shape the experience: cultural expectations, psychological wounds, and unconscious motivations to name a few. As the world becomes more complex, family law professionals are called to deepen our understanding of these hidden layers to serve families more justly and compassionately. Join us in Seattle, as we uncover what lies beneath the surface of family transitions and explore emerging practices to respond with empathy, integrity, and skill.

### Conference Topics Include

Parenting Coordination Tools, Models, and Innovations  
Impacts of AI and Technology on Parenting and Practice  
Trauma-Informed Practices  
Interviewing Children  
Intimate Partner Violence & Coercive Control  
Parenting Plan Evaluations  
Parent Education

High-Conflict Cases and Strategies for Reducing Escalation  
Evidence and Hearsay  
Parent-Child Contact Problems  
Court-Involved Therapy  
Neurodiversity and Special Needs  
Substance Use  
Culture and Bias

### Amazing Networking Opportunities!

Connect with colleagues at the Welcome Reception; New Member, Developing Professionals, and First Time Attendee Orientation; International Reception; Thursday night's Taste of Seattle; and of course, the famous AFCC Hospitality Suite. Yoga and meditation are also offered. See page 23 for more details on these events.

### DE&I Open Forum and Dine-Around

AFCC's DE&I Committee will host 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 opportunity. 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, Singapore, South Africa, and the United States to offer perspectives on our work from around the world.

### Judicial Officers

Special programming for judicial officers includes the Pre-Conference Institute examining strategies for IPV and PCCP allegations. Several conference sessions will feature topics and emerging research directly relevant to judicial decision-making in family law cases.

### 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 22.

### About the Conference

AFCC strives to offer a wide range of conference sessions highlighting different research, advocacy positions, policies, practices, programs, 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 Exhibit Forum includes a variety of vendors promoting services and products. AFCC does not necessarily endorse or warrant vendors' products, services, or views.

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## Invitation from the President

Dear AFCC Colleagues,



I am privileged and delighted to invite you to AFCC's 63rd Annual Conference, which will take place May 27 – 30, 2026, at the Westin Seattle in the "Emerald City," the beautiful Pacific Northwest city of Seattle, Washington, on Puget Sound.

This year's theme, What Lies Beneath, Hidden Forces Shaping Families in Transition, highlights our commitment to digging deeper to find effective strategies for working with the families we serve. As the conference brochure points out, family transitions are never about logistics alone. Beneath the surface, underlying forces shape the experience: cultural expectations, psychological wounds, and unconscious motivations, to name a few. As the world becomes more complex, we, as family law professionals are called to deepen our understanding of these hidden layers to serve families more justly, with compassion and integrity.

The nearly 90 Conference presentations, including pre-conference institutes, workshops, the keynote, and plenary, provide many opportunities to acquire practical tools and learn effective strategies to help families reach creative, workable, forward-thinking solutions.

We are especially honored to welcome James Kimmel, Jr., J.D., Yale School of Medicine, as our keynote speaker, discussing the fascinating and timely topic of, The Science of Revenge and Forgiveness: Using Neuroscience to Resolve Family Conflicts. Revenge and forgiveness are mammoth topics in this world today and fit with our conference theme in that they are often underlying forces shaping families in transition. Mr. Kimmel developed the behavioral addiction model of revenge and the brain disease model of revenge addiction as public health approaches for preventing and treating violence, and founded Revenge Anonymous (RA), a worldwide self-help 12-step program like AA/NA for recovering from revenge addiction. He has made the study of revenge and forgiveness his life's work.

I hope to see you in Seattle!

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Hon. Dolores A. Bomrad (Ret.) Commissioner  
President, AFCC



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# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

### Tuesday, May 26, 2026

5:00PM-7:00PM	Early Registration/Check In
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### Wednesday, May 27, 2026

7:30AM-6:00PM	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
3:00PM-3:15PM	Break
5:00PM-6:00PM	New Member and First-Time Attendee Orientation
6:00PM-7:00PM	Welcome Reception
9:00PM-12:00AM	AFCC Hospitality Suite

### Thursday, May 28, 2026

6:15AM-7:15AM	Meditation & Yoga
7:30AM-8:30AM	Chapter Council Meeting
7:30AM-5:00PM	Registration
7:30AM-5:00PM	Exhibit Forum
7:45AM-8:45AM	Coffee and Rolls
8:45AM-10:00AM	Opening Keynote
10:30AM-12:00PM	Workshops 1-10
12:00PM-1:30PM	AFCC Luncheon & Awards Ceremony
1:45PM-3:15PM	Workshops 11-20
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 Seattle
9:00PM-12:00AM	AFCC Hospitality Suite

### Friday, May 29, 2026

6:15AM-7:15AM	Meditation & Yoga
7:15AM-8:15AM	AFCC Committee Meetings
7:30AM-5:00PM	Registration
7:30AM-5:00PM	Exhibit Forum
7:30AM-8:30AM	Coffee and Rolls
8:30AM-10:00AM	Workshops 31-40
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
3:30PM-5:00PM	Workshops 51-60
5:30PM-Evening	AFCC Evening Celebration
9:00PM-12:00AM	AFCC Hospitality Suite

### Saturday, May 30, 2026

7:30AM-12:30PM	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
11:00AM-12:30PM	Workshops 71-80

*"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."*



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

**Wednesday, May 27, 2026**

**9:00AM-5:00PM Pre-Conference Institutes**

### **1. Missing the Mark: The Under Addressed Role of Stepfamilies**

Stepparents play pivotal roles in raising children while stepfamily dynamics powerfully impact children's wellbeing. Nonetheless, stepparents, and evidence-based guidance about meeting stepfamily challenges remain almost completely absent from court-ordered co-parenting, custody evaluations, family therapy orders, and books on parenting plans. This can often lead to children and families receiving less than ideal support when family dynamics are challenging. This institute will provide an overview of what makes stepfamilies different and provide guidance on how therapists, PCs, and evaluators can best serve these families.

**Premela G. Deck, JD, PhD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA**

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

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

### **2. Control the Controllables: How to Stay Sane and Thrive in our Family Law Related Work**

Sometimes family law is unkind. Those circumstances are outside of our control. How we respond to unfair circumstances within family law is within our control. This program will combine principles of self-reflection, somatic bias awareness, stress management, and internal control of the many feelings, behaviors, boundaries, and attitudes that will help us maintain our integrity and compassion as we help our clients. The presenters will provide specific tools you can implement to support your professional life to feel fulfilling and manageable.

**Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP, Marina del Rey, CA**

**Hon. Bruce R. Cohen (Ret.), High Conflict Institute, Scottsdale, AZ**

**Rebecca M. Stahl, JD, LLM, Phoenix, AZ**

**Become an AFCC member and save up to \$200 on this conference! Members receive discounted registration at all AFCC events, with opportunities to save even more by attending throughout the year.**

### **3. Hearing the Voice of the Child: What Children Know and How They Tell Us**

This institute, intended for all family law professionals, focuses on processes to facilitate inclusion of the voice of the child. We will explore interview and non-interview approaches that help children feel heard when parents, professionals and the courts are making decisions about them. This institute is intended to expand participants' knowledge and skills to assist children in participating in developmentally appropriate processes.

**Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA, Uptown Mental Health Center, Minneapolis, MN**

**Hon. Denise McColley (Ret.), Napoleon, OH**

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

### **4. Revenge and Repair in Two Parts:**

#### **The Nonjustice System: Using a Virtual Courtroom of the Mind to Help Resolve Family Conflicts**

People who have grievances (real or imagined) want to be heard, want accountability, and, often, want revenge. For some, this can lead to acts of family violence. The Nonjustice System (NJS) is a highly realistic, easy-to-use scripted role play of a virtual courtroom of the mind that allows victims to put anyone on trial for anything they've ever done to them or those they love, giving them an opportunity to be heard, hold the perpetrator to account, and safely gratify and release revenge urges. This highly interactive workshop includes application of the role play, the NJS script, and access to the online version of the NJS, (the Miracle Court App).

**James Kimmel, Jr., JD, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT**

#### **Reenactment as the Missing Piece for Genuine Repair**

For traumatized parents, the craving for revenge often represents something deeper: the compulsion to replay, master, and rewrite unresolved wounds. Forced interventions can backfire because they recreate the exact dynamic these parents are stuck in. The professionals can become part of the reenactment rather than helping them out of it. This experiential workshop will engage participants to actually feel the pull of grievance and frustration of forced compliance before learning an alternative approach. The presenters will help participants recognize reenactment patterns often misread as "resistance," understand why forgiveness is impossible until reenactment needs are addressed, and apply a practical decision tree for sequencing interventions that move families from grievance toward genuine repair.

**Leslie M. Drozd, PhD, Seattle, WA**

**Jennifer Harrison, PsyD, ABPP, Burlingame, CA**



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### 5. Judicial Institute: Addressing IPV, Coercive Control, and Litigation Abuse

**Registration for this institute is limited to judicial officers only.**  
AFCC and NCJFCJ bring you this institute for judges and judicial officers. Explore obvious and subtle nuances of IPV, coercive control, and litigation abuse and focuses on judicial interventions and management techniques. The panel will emphasize the importance of identifying risk as soon as possible, and achieving the critical balance between safety, appropriate outcomes, and judicial expediency. An IPV dynamic in a family isn't always obvious. Even highly trained professionals sometimes are pulled into a vortex of *he said, she said*, and without hard evidence, the nuances through which one partner intimidates and controls the other can be missed. Assessment must continue throughout the process and across methodology to uncover dangerous forces at work just beneath the surface. During and after separation, aggressors may view the court as a playground and court proceedings as a game, and as opportunity to further control the survivor and perpetuate the abuse. Judges are called upon to not only manage this complex dynamic, but to put an end to it.

**Hon. Rosemary Collins (Ret.), Rockford, IL**

**Hon. Kathleen Quigley, Pima County Superior Court, Tucson, AZ**

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

**Tracy Shoberg, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN**

### Thank You to Our Conference Sponsors!

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### 6. Navigating the Promise and Peril of Parenting Coordination

The promise of parenting coordination lies in its ability to reduce entrenched conflict, foster more effective parental communication, and ultimately help parents develop a sustainable coparenting alliance. This training will explore both the charted and uncharted waters of parenting coordination practice, including the essential scaffolding for effective practice and the seven core components of successful parenting coordination interventions. Participants will gain access to a practical toolkit of strategies and techniques while examining common pitfalls and perils faced by parenting coordinators. Through enactment-based role play, attendees will learn to navigate complex, high-conflict cases and maintain forward movement throughout the parenting coordination journey.

**Debra K. Carter, PhD, The National Cooperative Parenting Center, Bradenton, FL**

**Dana Dean Doering, ARNP, Cedar City, UT**

**David Goldman, MAEd, LMHC, Fulcrum Center for Change, Bellingham, WA**

**Caroline J. Plummer, LMHC, Seattle, WA**

**5:00PM-6:00PM**

**New Member and First-Time Attendee Orientation**

**6:00PM-7:00PM**

**Welcome Reception**

**9:00PM-12:00AM**

**AFCC Hospitality Suite**

**Looking to get more out of your AFCC conference experience?**

Register for a full-day pre-conference institute to take a deeper dive into one of the six topics above.



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## May 27-30, 2026

**Thursday, May 28, 2026**

<b>6:15AM-7:15AM</b>	<b>Meditation &amp; Yoga</b>
<b>7:30AM-5:00PM</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>7:30AM-5:00PM</b>	<b>Exhibit Forum</b>
<b>7:45AM-8:45AM</b>	<b>Coffee and Rolls</b>
<b>8:45AM-10:00AM</b>	<b>Opening Keynote</b>

### **Opening Keynote: The Science of Revenge and Forgiveness: Using Neuroscience to Resolve Family Conflicts**



Revenge plays a primary role in family conflicts. Brain imaging studies over the past 20 years reveal that our brains on revenge look like our brains on drugs. Other brain imaging studies show that internal decisional forgiveness acts as a sort of “wonder drug” reversing this process. By understanding the science of revenge and forgiveness, family court judges, practitioners, policymakers, and mental health professionals can gain crucial insights into the motivations behind the actors in family conflicts and how to help them in new and powerful ways.

**James Kimmel, Jr., JD**

*Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, CT*



### **10:30AM-12:00PM Workshops 1-10**

#### **1. Neutrality on Trial: When Evaluator Assumptions Shape Best Interest**

The “best interests of the child” is the cornerstone of custody decision-making, and evaluators are tasked with translating these factors into practice. This workshop examines how assumptions about parenting, credibility, and stability shape how considerations regarding best interests are applied in real cases. Through interactive activities and case examples, attendees will reflect on how evaluator assumptions can influence evaluation outcomes. The session provides practical tools to strengthen objectivity and accuracy, helping evaluators to make recommendations that are both defensible and responsive to the diverse realities of family systems.

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

**Terry Singh, PhD, ABPP, Calgary, AB, Canada**

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

**Maria A. Young, MA, LMFT, Menlo Park, CA**

#### **2. SLIC: Setting Limits and Imposing Consequences for Parents and Professionals**

A new technique for setting limits and imposing consequences will be presented and discussed in depth. Professionals will learn how to teach this approach to clients and use it themselves—as mediators helping parties negotiate agreements with built-in consequences; as judges imposing consequences on uncooperative litigants; and as lawyers and therapists setting limits in high-conflict cases. This session will be based on the speaker’s new book *SLIC Solutions: Setting Limits and Imposing Consequences in 2½ Steps*.

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

#### **3. A Conversation from the Frontlines: A Rookie Meets a Veteran**

Feeling overwhelmed by forensic work? You’re not alone—and you don’t have to go it alone. Join a seasoned pro and a newer clinician as they share beginner’s pitfalls, real-world tips, evidence-informed strategies, and confidence-building insights. Learn how to quiet the fear, find your footing, and connect with the circle of professionals who have your back. Whether you’re just starting out or wondering how to mentor others, this session delivers practical tools, honest encouragement, and a reminder: support is out there—you just have to be willing to ask!

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

**Julie L. Futrell, PhD, Dallas, TX**

#### **4. Beyond the Black Box: How to Use AI to Build Public Trust**

Family courts can set up artificial intelligence (AI) projects that deliver value without eroding trust in those services. The panelists will demonstrate methods for implementing practical guardrails and processes (from scoping and governance to evaluation and sunsetting), transparent approaches to address data use, and ways that openness, through sharing methods, AI models, and easy-to-understand documentation, builds goodwill.

**Hon. Tom Albobelli, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Sydney, NSW, Australia**

**Simon A. Goodrich, BA, Portable, Collingwood, VIC, Australia**

*“I find attending AFCC Conferences necessary to both improve and maintain the quality of my work within the realm of family law. The opportunities to listen to, speak with and engage with the leading experts in the field are essential to establishing the relationships required to seek consultation throughout the year between conferences.”*



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### 5. Advancing Family Court: Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based Innovations

Family courts may miss how trauma, mental health, and interpersonal violence shape parenting, courtroom behavior, and case outcomes, producing unfair, harmful results. This session includes a trauma-centered analysis and evidence-based strategies to improve early intervention in domestic relations cases. Drawing on the Triage Implementation Blueprint, IPV screening guidance, a Triage Tracking Dashboard, and the Building Understanding series, presenters map a usability-informed framework. The session includes an expert panel, concrete tools, a facilitated discussion of challenges, and data tools to support equitable, timely decisions.

**Jo M. Hollis, LPC, PhD, Maricopa, AZ**

**Alicia K. Davis, JD, National Center for State Courts, Chicago, IL**

**Staci Pratt, JD, LLM, Univ. of Colorado Law School, Boulder, CO**

**Brittany N. Rudd, PhD, Univ. of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL**

### 6. SAFeR Enhanced

The National Legal Center for Children and Domestic Violence updated the SAFeR approach to specifically screen and address coercive control in child custody decision-making cases. SAFeR: Enhanced has specific worksheets that take a closer look at how coercive controlling tactics impact the protective parent, the children, and the parenting of the abuser with recommended responses that specifically account for coercive control.

**Tracy Shoberg, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN**

**Diana Griffin, JD, Battered Women's Justice Project, Saint Paul, MN**

### 7. Family Lawyer as Peacemaker: Cultural Fluency, Innovation, and Family Resilience

How can family law professionals truly meet families where they are? Presenters explore culturally responsive, peace-centered approaches to family conflict. Drawing from their forthcoming ABA book, this session blends practical tools, real-world case insights, and cross-disciplinary strategies for working with families across faiths, languages, and traditions. Participants will learn to integrate peacemaking habits, process design innovations, and cultural humility to support lasting, dignified outcomes.

**Forrest S. Mosten, JD, La Jolla, CA**

### 8. Caring Dads: Helping Abusive Father's Change

This Caring Dads workshop is an opportunity for professionals to explore best practices when working with fathers who cause harm to their families. This workshop will include an overview of what the Caring Dads program is, as well as front line practice tools to learn how to engage abusive fathers to change their behaviors through a domestic violence informed lens.

**Hon. Sharon Kalemkarian, San Diego Superior Court, San Diego, CA**

**Sarah Webb, MSW, RSW, Caring Dads, Toronto, ON, Canada**

**Hon. Lia N. Stuhlsatz, Rhode Island Family Court, Providence, RI**

### 9. It's Just a Phone, or Is It? Managing Technology to Reduce Co-Parent Conflict

Mobile devices may appear harmless, but in two-household families experiencing high conflict, they can become powerful tools for manipulation and control. This interdisciplinary presentation introduces the concept of technological triangulation—when a parent uses digital communication to pull children into adult conflicts, or to extend control in the other parent's home, to the detriment of co-parenting. With case examples and practical strategies, family law professionals will learn effective legal and therapeutic interventions to this challenging problem.

**Natalie J. Malovich, PhD, Aspen Mediation, Salt Lake City, UT**

**Samuel J. Sorensen, JD, Hawkes Quam & Sorensen, Salt Lake City, UT**

### 10. Aligning Professionals: A Guide to Roles in Parent-Child Contact Cases

This workshop introduces a practical written guide for aligning legal and mental health professionals' strategies for working with families experiencing parent-child contact problems. Participants will explore how differing ethical duties and advocacy roles can be coordinated to promote child well-being and family stability. Through case examples and collaborative frameworks, the session demonstrates how professionals can integrate diverse perspectives, improve communication, and avoid working at cross-purposes. Attendees will gain concrete strategies for fostering shared goals and unified, interdisciplinary approaches to complex family dynamics.

**Premela G. Deck, JD, PhD, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA**

**Patrick A. Fleming, PhD, Northampton, MA**

**Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, Hampden Probate and Family Court, Hampden, MA**

**Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP, Smith College, Northampton, MA**



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

12:00PM-1:30PM

AFCC Luncheon  
& Awards Ceremony  
Workshops 11-20

### 11. Interviewing Traumatized Children

Traumatized children present unique challenges to professionals who interview them. The presenters will look at the impact of trauma on the developing brain, including children's cognitive and emotional processing, and use that information base to explore how to establish rapport, how to construct questions, and how to prevent re-traumatizing these children. This workshop is intended for family law professionals who interview children as part of their role and practice.

**Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA**, Uptown Mental Health Center, Minneapolis, MN

**Jordan L. Hart, PhD**, St. Louis Park, MN

### 12. Looking in the Mirror: Five Questions for Ensuring Optimal Custody Evaluations

Experienced evaluators are familiar with wishing they could turn back the clock on how they assessed a particular family. Challenging cross-examination experiences that amplify procedural weaknesses can intensify feelings of regret. A proven peer model will be distilled into five incisive questions that evaluators can be asked or can ask themselves at each stage of developing, executing, and testifying to facilitate reliable, valid, and defensible assessments. Considerable emphasis will be placed on adaptability during assessments, preparation for testimony, and post-trial self-critique.

**Jeffrey P. Wittmann, PhD**, Albany, NY

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

### 13. The Hidden Truth: The Things Your Clients Don't Say

In family law, what clients don't disclose — hidden assets, private communications, and past conduct — can be more damaging than what they do. Whether they omit, minimize, or just simply lie, this presentation will discuss what to do when a client's secret surfaces, how to reframe the narrative, and preserve credibility. This is a discussion into how to coax clients into sharing the details that the devil may be in, how to prepare them for potential exposure, and how to identify gaps in the narrative before opposing counsel exploits it.

**Scott Friedman, JD**, Friedman & Mirman Co., LPA, Columbus, OH

**Kathleen McNamara, PhD**, Fort Collins, CO

### 14. Parenting Plans and PPE Recommendations-Drafting with Specificity and Accountability

What do parenting plans, parenting plan evaluation (PPE) recommendations, and court orders all have in common? Although different, these documents have varying degrees of detail. In a high-conflict case, none may be specific enough to avoid future disputes. Parents who are guided by parenting plans or custody orders with accountability provisions may experience more successful coparenting. This workshop will provide attendees with concrete ideas for drafting detailed provisions that create accountability and that are easily interpreted, implemented, and thereby enforced.

**Michèle M. Bissada, JD, CFLS**, Signature Resolution, Silicon Valley, CA

**Ariella Goodwine Fisher, MS, LMFT**, San Mateo, CA

### 15. Mind the Gap: Generational Shifts in Understanding Children in Family Courts

Family court professionals, predominantly from Baby Boomer and Generation X cohorts, apply frameworks developed decades ago to serve Generation Z and Alpha children who navigate fundamentally different developmental contexts. This presentation examines how generational gaps create invisible barriers to effective practice, then provides immediately implementable solutions. Participants receive modified assessment protocols, updated interview frameworks distinguishing coached language from genuine social-emotional competency, generation-bridging communication templates, and contemporary parenting plan provisions. Through interactive exercises and case analysis, attendees gain practical tools for adapting established practices to reflect today's digitally-native, autonomy-aware children while honoring foundational clinical wisdom.

**Jennifer Harrison, PsyD, ABPP**, Therapy Partners of the Peninsula, Burlingame, CA

**Leslie M. Drozd, PhD**, Seattle, WA

### 16. Nuts and Bolts of Relocation Child Custody Evaluations

This workshop will provide a comprehensive review of child custody relocations, from the legal underpinnings to existing literature, through the entire evaluation process, and then to the key rules governing relocation evaluation reports. With California law as the example, participants will hear both the legal and mental health perspectives on this critical issue.

**Michelene Insalaco, JD**, San Francisco, CA

**Kenneth B. Perlmutter, PhD**, Palo Alto, CA

**Frank W. Davis, Jr., PhD**, Berkeley, CA



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### 17. Practical Tools for Professional Objectivity in Mental Health Interventions

What does professional objectivity really look like? Families can be adversely affected when professionals fail to consider the full range of factors influencing their functioning or apply mismatched interventions. Increasing polarization, both within professional discourse and amongst families, contributes to divergent definitions of appropriate procedures and inconsistent practice. This presentation examines the meaning of professional objectivity and its implications for ethical and effective service delivery. Presenters will offer practical tools for recognizing and minimizing bias, maintaining balanced perspectives amid complex family dynamics, and providing services with professional objectivity.

**Lyn R. Greenberg, PhD, ABPP**, Los Angeles, CA

**Shely Polak, PhD, AccFM**, Mackenzie Clinic, Vaughan, ON, Canada

### 18. A Decision-Making Model for Including Children in Parenting Coordination

This workshop introduces an application of decision-making for child inclusion in parenting coordination (PC) using an expanded version of the Child-Centred Continuum Model. Considering the varied presentations of parents in combination with child inclusion, participants will examine the value, weight, timing, safety and type of feedback to parents and decision-makers. Participants are invited to review a practical decision-making tool for use in their PC practices.

**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, Sydney, NSW, Australia

### 19. High Stakes, Broken Bonds: Gambling, Separation, and Family Law

This workshop examines how gambling addiction contributes to marital breakdown, financial instability, and custody challenges. Presenters will explore the psychological, relational, and legal complexities that arise when a gambling disorder intersects with divorce, including its impact on custody evaluations. Attendees will be presented with tools to recognize signs of gambling problems, assess risks to children, and support families in transition. The session integrates current research with practical strategies for family law professionals, offering a framework to address one of the most hidden but impactful addictions affecting divorcing families.

**Martin E. Friedlander, JD**, Brooklyn, NY

**Eric E. Friedlander, MS, PsyD(c)**, Woodmere, NY

### 20. Reframing the Paradigm: Parenting Plans in the Context of DV & Family Court

This session explores safety focused parenting plans when domestic violence is present. Presenters will discuss Ohio's model as it answers the following questions: How do the danger/lethality factors intersect with the best interest factors? How does the presence of domestic violence and the use of coercively controlling behavior detrimentally impact the meaningful allocation of parental rights and responsibilities and the enforcement of parenting time arrangements? Are there specific interventions that should be considered when crafting parenting plans?

**Hon. Diane M. Palos**, Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court, Cleveland, OH

**Alexandria M. Ruden, JD**, The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH

**3:30PM-5:00PM** **Workshops 21-30**

### 21. Truth, Lies, and Identity: How Narratives Shape Children's Well-Being

The stories we tell children about their situation fundamentally shape their identity and mental health. When parents separate, children face a crisis of meaning: Which version is true? How do they integrate competing narratives from beloved caregivers? What happens to their identity when the foundational story of their family changes? Learn tools to manage the delicate balance between protection and transparency, understand when silence harms, when truth heals, and how to craft age-appropriate narratives that preserve children's psychological integrity.

**Philip S. Watts, MApp Psych, PhD**, South Perth, WA, Australia

### 22. Therapeutic Justice in the Family Justice System: From Ideal to Practice

Internationally, there have been broad shifts towards a non-adversarial, problem-solving, and multidisciplinary approach that focuses on the family's well-being. The Family Justice Courts of Singapore have formally adopted the overarching philosophy of therapeutic justice (TJ), giving consolidating language to the international trends. Five years after the formal adoption of TJ, presenters explore how TJ has been translated from an ideal to practice from the perspective of the judges, family law practitioners, and family law academics.

**Tricia Ho, LLM, LLB**, Univ. of California-Berkeley School of Law, Berkeley, CA

**Kai Yun Wong, LLB**, Dentons Rodyk, Singapore

**Hon. Yarni Loi**, Family Justice Courts, Singapore

**Grace Yim, MSW**, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore



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### 23. Considerations for Military Families in Juvenile and Family Court with NCJFCJ

This panel from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges discusses the unique needs and special considerations of military-connected families involved with juvenile and family courts. Courts often must navigate complex cases due to multiple deployments or families living with traumatic injuries, as well as addressing jurisdictional issues for youth offenses committed on a military installation, and cross-enforcement of civil and military protection orders. Collaboration needs to increase between state courts and military installations to resolve case processing issues and to enhance delivery of services to military service members and their families.

**Hon. Kathleen Quigley**, Pima County Superior Court, Tucson, AZ

**Hon. Terri B. Jamison**, Franklin County Domestic Relations & Juvenile Court, Columbus, OH

**Cheri M. Ely, MA, LSW**, NCJFCJ, Reno, NV

**Martha-Elin Blomquist, PhD**, NCJFCJ, Reno, NV

### 24. Unmasking Coercive Control: Defining Patterns of Abuse in Practice

The subtle, cumulative, and often invisible nature of coercive and controlling violence (CCV) makes it difficult to define and address in both legal and mental health contexts. The panelists will review current legal understandings of CCV and introduce a novel framework of CCV which operationalizes its specific factors and permits practitioners to distinguish between various CCV sub-types. The presentation will conclude with practical application of the CCV framework to specific case studies, to demonstrate the process of identifying particular sub-types of CCV.

**Terry S. Singh, PhD, ABPP**, Alberta Family Psychology, Calgary, AB, Canada

**Melissa Hendry, PhD**, Alberta Family Psychology, Calgary, AB, Canada

**Traci Bannister, LLB**, Calgary, AB, Canada

### 25. Testing, Testing...1-2-3: What Those Cups Don't Tell You About Child Custody

Family courts often rely on drug testing to assess parental fitness, yet results are frequently misunderstood or overvalued. A positive test may not indicate unsafe parenting, and a negative one doesn't ensure recovery or stability. This session debunks myths about addiction, explains what testing actually reveals (and what it doesn't), and translates science into courtroom-ready insights. Attendees will learn when testing helps—or harms—and how to craft child-centered parenting plans that reflect science, empathy, and the realities of recovery.

**Stephanie Tabashneck, PsyD, JD, MRPL**, Cambridge, MA

**Steven Paymer, MSW**, Trumbull, CT

### 26. Building Resilient Families Through Trauma Informed Parenting Coordination

This workshop addresses trauma-informed parenting coordination as a vital post-separation intervention for high-conflict families. The panelists will examine the neurobiological impacts of trauma on family dynamics while offering evidence-based strategies for implementation within existing frameworks. Drawing from international research, the panelists will demonstrate how trauma-responsive approaches can address dysfunctional patterns, non-compliance, and parent-child contact problems. Key components include trauma screening protocols, child-inclusive practices, reflective supervision, and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Participants will gain practical assessment tools, intervention strategies, and outcome measurement methods to create safer environments for children.

**Christine A. Profito, PsyD**, National Cooperative Parenting Center, Bradenton, FL

**Debra K. Carter, PhD**, The National Cooperative Parenting Center, Bradenton, FL

**Anne-Marie Cade, LLB, LLM**, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

### 27. Unavoidable and Vicarious Emotional Risk in Family Conflict Resolution

Families in crisis often present as raw, emotional, and out of control, relying on their lawyers, clinicians, and financial advisors to restore balance and function. This workshop explores the emotional toll of that responsibility through the lenses of compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, examining how these dynamics manifest, impact professional boundaries, and affect care. Through discussion and shared experiences, participants will gain tools to recognize, manage, and contain these challenges, fostering resilience, collaboration, and sustainable practice within AFCC's mission of family conflict resolution.

**Beth F. McCormack, JD**, Beermann LLP, Chicago, IL

**Carrie W. Rosenbloom, JD, LMFT**, Ann Arbor, MI

### 28. Will Child Support Ever End? Family Life in the Time of Delayed Adulthood

With changes in the economy and changes in parenting styles, more adult children are emotionally and financially dependent on their parents for longer than past generations. A family lawyer and family therapist will examine the legal and psychological impact of the modern-day phenomena of delayed adulthood.

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

**Karen F. Redmond, BEd, LLB**, West Vancouver, BC, Canada



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### 29. Demography Matters but Media Can Mislead: Population Trends and Family Court

Headlines about trends in families are ever present. Whether it's changing gender roles, teenagers and social media, the uptick in older parents, or the decrease in teen pregnancies they sometimes serve to explain but often mislead to command our attention. This workshop explains the research underlying demographic headlines (including limitations) and will improve media literacy of family-related news headlines. A panel of AFCC members with diverse professional perspectives will then explain how news trends relate to family court caseloads and evolving family case dynamics.

*Lilly D. Munro, LCSW, CADC, Family Court Services, Chicago, IL*

*Alexandra Crampton, MSW, PhD, Marquette Univ., Milwaukee, WI*

*Hon. Randall Fuller, Delaware County Common Pleas Court, Delaware, OH*

*Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP, Forensic Psych Solutions, Brooklyn, NY*

### 30. The Role of Mental Health Professionals and Hague Convention Abduction Cases

This workshop will explore the role of psychological evaluations and testimony in Hague child abduction litigation. The panelists will review a Hague case involving the legal systems of Turkey and the United States in an alleged abduction of a six-year-old Turkish boy to New York by his mother. They will also review the case of alleged retention of three young children from Israel to the United States by their father. The presentation will include a demonstration of a cross-examination of a forensic expert.

*William H. Kaplan, MD, Great Neck, NY*

*Richard H. Min, JD, New York, NY*

*Alberto A. Yohananoff, PhD, NYC Forensics, New York, NY*

*Brett S. Ward, JD, Blank Rome LLP, New York, NY*

**5:00PM-6:00PM**

**International Attendee Reception**

**5:00PM-6:30PM**

**DE&I Open Forum**

**Evening**

**Taste of Seattle**

**9:00PM-12:00AM**

**AFCC Hospitality Suite**



### TASTE OF SEATTLE

**Join a group of 8-10 fellow conference attendees for dinner at one of Seattle's local restaurants Thursday evening.**





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### Friday, May 29, 2026

6:15AM-7:15AM	Meditation & Yoga
7:30AM-5:00PM	Registration
7:30AM-5:00PM	Exhibit Forum
7:30AM-8:30AM	Coffee and Rolls
8:30AM-10:00AM	Workshops 31-40

### 31. Modern-Day Family Law Abolition: How the Elite Left the Poor at the Courthouse

Today's family law system functions very differently depending on a family's financial means. Wealthy families have access to the newest ADR innovations, while poor and working-class families get left in overwhelmed courtrooms. Panelists will examine how exclusion of poor and working-class families from ADR innovations harms children and their families. They will look squarely at how AFCC reflects these seismic divides and how it can help move beyond them, asking the audience to consider ways to bridge the current gaps as practitioners and as an organization.

**Stacey E. Platt, JD**, Loyola Univ. Chicago School of Law, Chicago, IL  
**Marsha Kline Pruett, PhD, ABPP**, Smith College, Northampton, MA  
**Hon. Dolores Bomrad (Ret.)**, Family Matters Resolution Services, Hubertus, WI

### 32. Fearless and Forensic: Equipping Therapists for Court-Involved Work

This session equips therapists to navigate ethical, clinical, and legal complexities of court involved therapy. Learn to establish informed consent, collaborate as part of a therapeutic team, manage attorney interactions, and respond to records requests. Grounded in the AFCC Guidelines for Court-Involved Therapy, this presentation offers practical strategies for documentation, testimony, and working alongside parenting plan evaluators and parenting coordinators in a way that benefits the family system. Whether you are new to this work or refining your practice, gain tools to engage confidently, protect clinical integrity, and support families.

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

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

**Emily Dixon, PsyD**, Southlake, TX

**Christy Graham, LPC-S, RPT-S**, Acorn Counseling Services, Denton, TX

### 33. Building Bridges: The Interdisciplinary Team Approach to Family Transition

Traditional divorce processes often miss the hidden emotional, financial, and developmental forces that determine family outcomes. This session presents an evidence-based interdisciplinary team model integrating attorneys, divorce coaches, therapists, and financial professionals to address what lies beneath surface legal issues. Learn practical implementation strategies, including five viable fee structures that make comprehensive support accessible to clients. Discover how collaborative teams achieve 92-95% settlement rates while reducing trauma and improving long-term family well-being. Leave with actionable tools, sample agreements, and strategies to transform your practice from adversarial to collaborative.

**Beth Slate, BA**, Insight Divorce Solutions, Lebanon, OR

**Elise Buie, JD**, Seattle, WA

### 34. The "Bias" Problem... And How to Think About It

Bias is a big problem in child custody. Cognitive scientists instruct that biases are unconscious, inescapable, and no professional is immune. Understanding bias concepts is necessary and invaluable, but bias can also get exaggerated, overstated, and overplayed within the adversarial system. Disagreement can be confused with bias, assumptions, and heuristics about bias are rampant, and attorneys often demand admissions that others, even experts, acknowledge they are "biased." Simply thinking about possible bias and becoming more aware supposedly does little to minimize their impact. But we have to think about biases, don't we? This session addresses how to think about bias.

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

### 35. Eldering in Family Law: Interdependencies and Influences of Older Generations

As we age, care disputes are often just the tip of the iceberg. Active beneath the surface are interdependencies, as well as loyalties and rivalries, that shape decisions on care, money, and legacy. Drawing on insights, strategies, and case examples from the *Family Court Review* Special Issue on Eldering in Family Law, this workshop applies tools and strategies to case examples to help professionals uncover hidden dynamics, identify elder influences, reduce conflict, and elevate voices in ways that can benefit future generations.

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

**Sue Bronson, MSW**, Elder Justice Initiative on Eldercaring Coordination, Milwaukee, WI



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### 36. A Changing World Order: Impacts on Families and Family Law

In just the past several years, a changing world order has brought previously unimagined impacts to our society, community and families. This "think-tank" workshop will explore the impact of these intense changes and pressures on families and children. How have the shifts in financial, social and political landscapes impacted mental health and legal practices in addressing family conflict? What can mental health professionals and family legal systems do to mitigate these stressors and reduce damage to children?

**Michael J. Kretzmer, JD, CFLS, El Segundo, CA**

**Hon. Mark A. Juhas, Superior Court of California, Los Angeles, CA**

**Jessica P. Greenwald O'Brien, PhD, Natick, MA**

### 37. Co-Locating Social Work and Legal Representation: Opportunities and Pitfalls

This workshop will delve into the murky waters of co-locating mental health and social work care with legal representation. Presenters will review successful models as well as challenges. New York's experience with Family Justice Centers, children's advocacy centers and social service agencies with legal services will be highlighted. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences and discuss best practices.

**Kristen Slesar, DSW, LCSW, MS, Bronx Child Trauma Support Program, New York, NY**

**Hon. Liberty Aldrich (Ret.), The Children's Law Center, Brooklyn, NY**

**Deana Tietjen, JD, The Children's Law Center, Brooklyn, NY**

### 38. Promoting the Best Interests of the Child: Applying Family Systems in Mediation

The presenters propose new structures and approaches to the mediation process that consider family systems and make mediation more effective. Family systems approaches can be transformative for parents with complex family issues. Presenters consider explicit and implicit goals of AFCC's 2025 Model Standards for Family and Divorce Mediation.

**Simone A. Haberstock, JD, LLM, St. Louis, MO**

**Lori Thibodeau, MA, LMFT, The Bridging Center, Bloomington, MN**

### 39. Working with Clients with Mental Health Issues Involved in High-Conflict Divorce

When clients involved in high-conflict divorce do not have an adequate support system or appropriate coping skills, psychological distress and/or mental health issues may surface. How do court professionals handle referring clients for psychological evaluations and treatment, knowing that doing so may negatively impact the client in a custody case? This presentation will discuss the decision-making and referral processes for clients with mental health issues involved in high-conflict divorce. Emphasis will be given to legal and ethical dilemmas that may arise while navigating court proceedings.

**Ruth Ouzts Moore, MEd, PhD, Chicago School of Professional Psychological, Savannah, GA**

### 40. Effective Family Justice Processes in an Era of Economic Crisis

The economic crisis engulfing much of the developed countries of the world has imperiled people's ability to access the family justice system. This workshop will explore the contours of this dire situation and consider the inherent tension between the drive for speedier and less extensive processes against the need for a threshold minimum of process. Presenters will propose various solutions to the problem, including assistance for self-represented (pro se) litigants, harnessing technology, the use of guidelines, the employment of procedural rules of court, and the creative use of ADR models.

**Hon. Kendra Coats, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Milton, ON, Canada**

**Hon. Marvin Kurz, Ontario Superior Court of Justice, Milton, ON, Canada**

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

*"I always leave AFCC conferences feeling jazzed to continue on with this hard work"*



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### 10:30AM-12:00PM Plenary Session Code Switching, Bias, and Family Law



What does it mean to perform professionalism, or parenting under scrutiny? This fireside chat explores the complex dynamics of code-switching, identity management, and respectability politics in family law. Drawing from research and lived experience, they will examine how marginalized professionals and parents navigate (or resist) identity shifts to meet unspoken expectations. What happens when someone can't, or won't code-switch? How do these dynamics shape perceptions of credibility and competence? This keynote invites reflection, discomfort, and a more culturally attuned understanding of family court realities.

**Chioma Ajoku, JD, PhD, ABPP**

Forensic Psych Solutions, Brooklyn, NY

**April Harris-Britt, PhD**

AHB Forensics and Consulting, Durham, NC



### 1:45PM-3:15PM Workshops 41-50

#### 41. What Makes Parent Education Memorable? Instructional Design Criteria

The number and variety of co-parenting programs that courts and divorce professionals have approved for divorcing parents to fulfill court mandates is large and confusing. Although content is fairly uniform across approved programs, there is not a reliable or simple method for determining the memorability and usefulness of programs. Evaluating programs on the strength of their instructional design should be added to the approval process. Robert Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction and Merrill's principles provide a structure for these evaluations. This workshop presents these principles and how they are applied, resulting in a metric by which programs can be compared.

**Donald A. Gordon, PhD**, Center for Divorce Education, Ashland, OR

**Michael R. Eubanks, MEd**, Center for Divorce Education, Athens, OH

*"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."*

#### 42. Multi-Factor Approaches to PCCP: Tools and Interventions

This session presents the newly created Parent-Child Relationship Concerns (PCRC) checklist as a multi-factor framework for understanding parent-child contact problems. Presenters will highlight new research on the reliability and validity of the tool, discuss its role in structuring assessments, and explore tailoring interventions across the five factors of safety issues, child-related factors, parenting problems, parental alienating behaviors, and indicators of child trauma.

**Michael A. Saini, PhD, MSW, RSW**, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada

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

**Leslie M. Drozd, PhD**, Seattle, WA

#### 43. Examining Asymmetric Conflict: Unmasking Hidden Forces in Custody Cases

Not all "high-conflict" cases are symmetrical. Many involve asymmetric conflict, where one parent drives litigation and coercive escalation while the other responds defensively. Neutral interventions such as custody evaluations, mediation, and parenting coordination can unintentionally reinforce the aggressor's strategies, creating undeteriorating harm. This session introduces a framework and guiding questions to help professionals distinguish driving from reactive parents, recognize red flags, and anticipate when neutrality may enable harm. Using case examples, participants will gain tools to protect children, interrogate systemic dynamics, and adopt more discerning, child-centered strategies.

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

**Hon. Bruce G. Smith**, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Newcastle, NSW, Australia

**Albert J. Huntoon, MSW**, Coparenting Connection, Durham, NC

#### 44. PC Cookie Jars: Special Recipes, Sizes, & Shapes for Parenting Coordination

Interventions with parents in conflict require a thoughtful blending of self-determination, accountability, thoughtfulness, cultural competency, efficiency, timeliness, familiarity, clarity, and at times, decisiveness. This presentation will focus on offering creative methods for (1) establishing parenting coordination appointments and agreements, and (2) assisting parents in expanding their ability to utilize the process to benefit their children. In this advanced workshop, we will discuss avoiding a cookie-cutter approach to issues such as disputes about parenting time, substance misuse, children's mental health and other special needs, and providing safety for parents and children.

**Christopher Vatsas, JD**, Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell, PLLC, Plymouth, MN

**Mindy F. Mitnick, EdM, MA**, Uptown Mental Health Center, Minneapolis, MN

**Deborah Link, MA, LMFT**, Ascend Family Institute, Minneapolis, MN



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### 45. Social Media: Pros and Cons—Effect on Forensic Practitioners and Families They Serve

The majority of family law practitioners have been recipients of negative internet postings by dissatisfied and/or angry litigants. These may have been precipitated by the results of evaluations, treatment, or what they merely perceive as bias or mismanagement. This can lead to licensing board complaints, malpractice suits, or even more denigrating social media posts. This workshop will focus on the role of social media and its impact on mental health, its exacerbation of parental conflict, and the impact on family law professionals. Mitigation strategies will be discussed.

**Sharon Montgomery, PsyD, Morristown, NJ**

**Marcy A. Pasternak, PhD, Watchung, NJ**

### 46. The Money Brain Meets the Coparenting Train: Avoiding the Wreck

We've all witnessed it: a high-conflict separation, intense disputes over parenting plans, and looming custody litigation—two trains racing toward collision. Through the collaborative work of attorneys, mediators, and mental health professionals, crisis is averted and a parenting plan takes shape. A collective sigh of relief follows. But the journey isn't over. The next stop—property and support negotiations—can quickly derail fragile co-parenting progress. This presentation traces the path from conflict to compromise, exploring how financial stress and perceptions of loss can reignite emotional battles. Presenters will map this terrain through the lenses of cognitive science, dispute resolution, and family law, examining how the brain reacts to threats around money and fairness. Attendees will gain practical tools to help clients manage fear, maintain focus, and stay on track toward lasting stability for both parents and children.

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

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

**Mindy Penzias Dirks, PhD, Palo Alto, CA**

### 47. Coercive Control & Domestic Abuse in Custody Disputes: Centering Children's Needs

Research shows that domestic abuse harms children. How does this play out post-separation? Participants will learn about the complex dynamics of post-separation control and abuse and how to maintain the focus on the best interests of children while distinguishing manipulations from legitimate claims, including: abuser dynamics and tactics in court processes; how coercive control domestic abuse affects children; how to distinguish high-conflict divorce from litigation abuse; deficits of parents who abuse their (ex)partner; how to figure out what is really happening; and important terms: parental alienation, DARVO, gaslighting, provoke and record, spiteful disregard, and more.

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

### 48. Community Quest: Navigating Differences that Make a Difference in Family Law

In Minnesota, a group of approximately 80 interdisciplinary family law practitioners undertook a project to build a stronger, more inclusive professional community. Using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) as a framework, participants completed individual assessments and debriefs, as well as over 16 hours of continuing education. Program participants and their facilitator share how this developmental approach is helping us learn how to navigate differences that make a difference.

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

**Omkar Sawardekar, MSW, LICSW, Saint Paul, MN**

**Kathryn Lammers, JD, Minnetonka, MN**

### 49. Mediating Family Disputes in the Context of Domestic Violence

Over the last decade, mediation of family disputes, including cases involving domestic violence, has gained traction. At this point, many courts in the United States require mediation before litigation can proceed. This presentation will discuss the benefits of mediation for victims of domestic violence, the protections that must be put in place to ensure the victims' safety, and the tools and practices that mediators should follow to maximize success.

**Valentina Shaknes, JD, New York, NY**

**Hon. Douglas E. Hoffman, New York, NY**

**Nicole Fidler, JD, Sanctuary for Families, New York, NY**

### 50. Levels of Intervention: A Case and Client Management Approach

All family court cases are not created equal. Each case requires a customized plan that can be developed through a consistent management approach. In this session, the focus shall be on a Four Level Intervention assessment that can be utilized by courts in managing cases and by counsel in managing their clients, no matter the issues presented. The levels include information, triaging, interventions, and management.

**Hon. Bruce R. Cohen (Ret.), High Conflict Institute, Scottsdale, AZ**

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

**Alicia K. Davis, JD, National Center for State Courts, Chicago, IL**

*"AFCC Conferences are an outstanding experience....to learn....to connect...to relax and refresh with colleagues."*



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3:30PM-5:00PM

Workshops 51-60

### 51. Thinking Outside the Box: Neurodivergent Families in the Legal System

Focus on autism, ADHD, neurodivergence, and other learning disabilities is growing rapidly in the family law courts. Attendees will learn from two neurodivergent attorneys about the biologic underpinnings of these amazing brains and the difference between stereotypes and lived reality. Practitioners will learn about the unique needs of families experiencing neurodivergent dynamics, red flags, and best practices for drafting parenting plans and helping the family transition to successful co-parenting.

**Meggin E. Rutherford, JD**, Denver, CO

**Nicola A. Winters, JD**, Denver, CO

### 52. The Appropriate and Ethical Use of AI in Judicial Work

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in professional life, judicial officers will face complex questions about its appropriate and ethical use. This workshop will explore when and how AI may be integrated into judicial work, broadly defined to include all aspects of adjudicative functions and the administrative responsibilities of managing judicial chambers.

**Hon. William Alstergren, LLM**, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

**Hon. Robert McClelland, AO, LLB, LLM**, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Sydney, NSW, Australia

**Hon. Tom Altobelli**, Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, Sydney, NSW, Australia

### 53. When Safety Hurts: Understanding and Lessening Harms of Child Removal

Removing children from their parents or transferring custody from a primary caregiver is intended to protect the child from harm but also carries risk of trauma. Whether in a child welfare proceeding, a guardianship matter, or in the context of parent-child contact problems (PCCP), when children are taken from their primary caregivers, they experience acute losses with potential long-term costs. This presentation will review research on the consequences of removal, best practices for minimizing harm when a court orders removal/change of custody, and strategies for evaluating and communicating these risks to the court.

**Jessica P. Greenwald O'Brien, PhD**, Natick, MA

**Alicia Doherty, JD**, Worcester Probate & Family Court, Worcester, MA

**Lynn M. Castriano, PhD, MLS**, Akin, Seattle, WA

**Hon. Liberty Aldrich (Ret.)**, The Children's Law Center, Brooklyn, NY

### 54. Is Your Co-Parent Spying on You Through Your Child's Cell Phone?

Technology is changing the way children and parents interact and how custody disputes unfold. From cell phones and GPS tracking to parental monitoring apps and social media, these tools can support children's safety but also fuel mistrust, surveillance, and litigation. This interactive workshop explores the hidden role of technology in co-parenting conflict, with case examples, developmental insights, and sample parenting plan clauses for reducing disputes. Attendees will gain tools for addressing technology-related custody issues and promoting healthier co-parenting.

**David K. Wilkinson, JD**, San Diego, CA

**Lori A. Love, PhD**, San Diego, CA

**Premela G. Deck, JD, PhD**, SD Family Services, Inc., Canton, MA

**Hon. Jennifer Bingham**, Probate and Family Court, Canton, MA

### 55. Family Matters: Helping Families with Young Children (0-5) Navigate Family Court

This workshop illustrates a framework that supports families with young children (0-5 years) navigating family court. Practical tools will be offered to identify risk and protective factors preventing cascading stressors unique to this population. Presenters consider trauma-informed care for court involved families via case examples and prevention/early-intervention strategies. Legal professionals, parenting coordinators, and mental health professionals will benefit from a relational framework to enhance or create policy and practice that helps overcoming cyclical patterns of toxic relational stress and fosters secure attachment.

**Jane A. Gillespie, MSW**, Calgary, AB, Canada

**Alan McLuckie, PhD**, Univ. of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

### 56. Consistency Between Homes: Structuring Screen time to Maintain Children's Routines

Parents in separated families frequently report challenges with inconsistent screen time rules, leading to conflict and concerns about children's digital well-being. This workshop will look at the psychological and legal considerations and approaches to screen time. Attendees will acquire practical strategies for negotiating and drafting effective parenting arrangements to establish consistent digital boundaries. The session will cover setting age-appropriate limits, monitoring online activity, and fostering essential co-parent communication to promote children's digital wellness.

**Sean B. Knuth, PhD**, Charlotte, NC

**Coralee Elsum, JD**, Melbourne, VIC, Australia



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### 57. Custody in Motion: A Parenting Time Simulation

This interactive session invites evaluators, mediators, and other family law professionals to engage in a dynamic simulation of a parenting time schedule from the perspective of children and caregivers navigating separation or divorce. Participants will "live" a simulated week of a parenting time schedule, moving through activities and transitions that mirror the real-life rhythm of shared custody. The experience is designed to prompt reflection on the emotional, logistical, and developmental impact of the various scheduling models. Following the simulation, presenters will share the challenges observed and the implications for crafting parenting plans that prioritize the child's well-being. This session offers a unique opportunity to step beyond theory and date, immersing professionals in the lived experience of the families they serve.

**Anna Street, JD**, Tuft, Lach, Jerabek & O'Connell, PLCC, Maplewood, MN

**Jennifer L. McBride McNamara, MA, LMFT**, Touching Trees, Eagan, MN

**David C. Gopen, JD**, Minneapolis, MN

### 58. Balancing Rights and Children's Interests in Family Cases with Criminal Charges

When criminal behavior or investigations overlap with family court proceedings, professionals must navigate complex ethical and procedural challenges. This workshop explores how charges stemming from intimate partner violence, child abuse and neglect allegations, or other crimes affect custody and parenting determinations. Presenters will discuss constitutional protections, professional roles, and strategies for balancing child safety and contact with due process. Attendees will come away with tools they can use immediately in cases where criminal and family court processes collide, especially when children's safety and parental rights are both at stake.

**Dawn R. Smith, JD**, Evolve Family Law, LLC, Atlanta, GA

**Daniel Bloom, JD**, Atlanta, GA

**Kristin J. Carothers, PhD**, Atlanta, GA

### 59. Children of High-Conflict Divorce: A Child's Inner World

This workshop addresses the short- and long-term effects of high conflict separation and divorce on children, using the film *Millie* to illustrate critical family dynamics. The film explores Millie's internal psychological world and portrays circumstances that those around their children aren't even aware of. Her experiences involve dealing with her loved parents and understanding how she navigates her parent's separation. The film portrays how parental behavior, whether or not intentional, affects children and their psychological well-being.

**Philip M. Stahl, PhD, ABPP**, Marina del Rey, CA

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

### 60. The Hidden Risk: Doxing, Data Brokers, and Personal Safety in Family Law

In an era where personal information is easily accessible and weaponized, professionals in family law and mental health must understand the real dangers of digital exposure. Explore how online data can be used to intimidate, harass, or endanger individuals involved in family conflict. Participants will learn how doxing occurs, how data brokers collect and sell personal details, and what steps can be taken to reduce digital risks. This session offers practical strategies to help your clients and your practice enhance personal security and safeguard sensitive information in an increasingly connected world.

**Steven Bradley, MBA**, OurFamilyWizard, Pottsboro, TX

**Morgan L. Stogsdill, JD**, Beermann LLP, Chicago, IL

**5:30PM-Evening**

**9:00PM-12:00AM**

**Evening Celebration**

**AFCC Hospitality Suite**

## AFCC Evening Celebration!

Join AFCC and your fellow conference attendees Friday evening for food, conversation, and live entertainment.



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

### Saturday, May 30, 2026

7:30AM-12:30PM	Registration
7:30AM-12:30PM	Exhibit Forum
8:00AM-9:00AM	Coffee and Rolls
9:15AM-10:45AM	Workshops 61-70

### 61. Innovations in PPE: Improved Quality, Efficiency, and Efficacy

This very practical training helps evaluators improve parenting plan evaluation (PPE) satisfaction, efficiency, efficacy, and ecological validity by integrating a number of peer-reviewed, innovative process-oriented data collection methods.

*Benjamin D. Garber, PhD, DefuseDivorce.com, Hollis, NH*

### 62. Innovating Parenting Coordination: A Collaborative, Educational Team Model

High-conflict coparents often feel overwhelmed and stuck in ongoing disputes, placing heavy demands on parenting coordinators and increasing burnout risk. This workshop introduces a collaborative, solution-focused model that emphasizes education, goal setting, and focusing on parents' interests over rigid positions. Parenting coordinators will learn strategies to empower parents to recognize their own resources and develop effective, timely solutions. The team-based approach supports coordinators in guiding families toward practical resolutions, opportunities to role model, while offering relief for both parents and professionals involved.

*Bradley S. Craig, MSW, Mineola, TX*

*Cecilia M. Powers, MSW, Sherman, TX*

### 63. Approaches to Supervised Visitation and AskSven: An AI Tool

This workshop explores different approaches to supervised visitation and introduces AskSven.org, an AI-powered knowledge assistant developed by the Supervised Visitation Network to support courts, professionals, and families. Trained on nationally recognized standards, ethics, and curricula, Sven provides clear guidance on the appropriate use and limits of supervised visitation. This interactive workshop will demonstrate how Sven helps judges craft practical orders, evaluators and mediators develop workable parenting plans, and parents privately access trusted answers to difficult questions. Participants will explore real-world scenarios and discover how AI can improve outcomes across disciplines.

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

*Rena Fox, JD, Synergy Co-Parenting Solutions, Portland, OR*

### 64. Measuring Sustainable Progress in Co-Parent Coaching

High-conflict co-parenting often feels like an uphill battle, with parents stuck in cycles of blame and fear. This session highlights how client-designed measurable action steps break those cycles, helping parents hold themselves accountable, see real progress, and build empowered identities. Co-parent coaches draw on years of experience with "impossible" cases to show how tiny, trackable experiments create lasting transformation for parents—and stability for children—by turning effort into evidence and resistance into responsibility.

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

*Cliff Leonardi, MS, Multnomah County Family Court Services, Portland, OR*

### 65. Mentoring New Parenting Plan Evaluators: Building Competence and Confidence

This workshop examines how structured mentorship develops competent parenting plan evaluators. Presenters share their mentor-mentee experience, addressing challenges in balanced assessments, report writing, testimony, and recognition of IPV and resist-refuse dynamics. Attendees will learn supervision models, feedback strategies, and role boundaries. Case examples show mentorship's role in managing substance use, abuse allegations, and high-conflict parenting disputes involving parenting time and decision making. The session offers practical steps to build mentorship programs that enhance forensic quality and promote child-focused outcomes.

*Steven A. Szykula, PhD, Salt Lake City, UT*

*Jason S. Sadora, LPC, Salt Lake City, UT*

### 66. Divorce as Detachment: Using Adult Attachment Principles to Understand Impasse

This workshop reframes divorce as a detachment process through the lens of adult attachment. Rather than diagnosing "styles," we apply attachment-informed principles to explain why ex-partners become stuck in conflict and ambiguous loss. Participants will learn courtroom-, mediation-, and therapeutic-ready strategies to lower activation, normalize grief, as well as design agreements and therapeutic plans that build trust gradually. Practical tools and case vignettes will illuminate how shifting from a blame to needs-orientation can reduce impasse and support safer, more durable child-focused outcomes.

*Michael A. Saini, PhD, MSW, RSW, Univ. of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada*

*Alan McLuckie, PhD, Univ. of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada*



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### 67. Strategies for Representing Children in Transition: A Multidisciplinary Approach

Family law cases present more complex issues than ever before, and professionals must move beyond their traditional legal roles to address issues regarding not only the child's needs, but also solutions that foster healthy family dynamics long-term. This panel of child representatives will discuss navigation of high-conflict cases with a multidisciplinary approach by partnering with non-legal professionals within their office and community.

**Sarah L. Hawkins, JD**, Office of the Cook County Public Guardian, Chicago, IL

**Colleen B. Littmann, JD**, Office of the Cook County Public Guardian, Chicago, IL

**Kejai P. McNeal, MSW, JD**, Office of the Cook County Public Guardian, Chicago, IL

### 68. Digital Tug-of-War: Protecting Kids from Tech-Driven Family Conflict

Smart devices, social media, and AI are reshaping childhood and family conflict. Drawing on Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, its scientific critiques, and recent longitudinal findings, this interdisciplinary panel examines whether "digital childhoods" may be exacerbating parent-child contact problems and co-parenting conflict. Presenters will explore the potential value of treating technology as a distinct custody domain and the ways attorneys, courts, and mental health professionals can address the pervasiveness of and dependency on smart technology in seeking to maximize the well-being of children while minimizing future conflict.

**Laura H. Stice, JD**, Evolve Family Law, LLC, Tucker, GA

**Lauren R. Smith, JD**, Lauren Smith Legal Services, Atlanta, GA

**Le'Roy Reese, PhD**, Akoma Counseling and Consulting, Decatur, GA

**Dawn R. Smith, JD**, Evolve Family Law, LLC, Atlanta, GA

### 69. Reflecting on Four Decades of Walking the Collaborative Talk as an FDR Professional

Reflecting upon 40 years as an FDR professional learning, utilizing, and embracing collaborative approaches in professional and personal challenges, this interactive presentation will offer a view into how the presenter's collaborative mindset has evolved over the years from initial mediation training into a broad constructive path for both personal and professional challenges. For the experienced practitioner, this workshop will invite self-reflection on how their collaborative work may have transformed them and for the novice professional, the workshop will reveal collaborative skills that extend beyond the basics.

**Gregory Firestone, PhD**, My Florida Mediator, Tampa, FL

### 70. Judicial Experience Meets Parenting Coordination

Explore a pioneering model where private judges draw on bench experience to serve as parenting coordinators, either alone or in collaboration with mental health professionals. This panel of a practitioner, private judge, and mental health expert will compare models, address ethical and legal considerations, and share case-based strategies. Attendees will learn when judicial experience improves outcomes, how to design hybrid systems, and how to navigate challenges of access, cost, and fairness in complex custody cases.

**Hon. Vanessa A. Zecher (Ret.)**, Judicial Arbitration and Mediation Services, San Jose, CA

**Michael J. Kerner, PhD**, Kerner Evaluations Psychological Services Inc., San Jose, CA

**Rebekah Frye, JD, CFLS, LLM**, San Jose, CA

**11:00AM-12:30PM Workshops 71-80**

### 71. Trauma Informed Communication and Dispute Resolution

This workshop explores trauma-informed communication and conflict resolution, emphasizing how trauma impacts interpersonal interactions and conflict styles. Participants will learn practical skills such as active listening, emotional regulation, de-escalation, and interest-based negotiation. This session highlights the role of power and emotion in conflict and provides strategies to reduce re-traumatization, especially for individuals at higher risk of justice system involvement. Through real-life examples and interactive scenarios, attendees will gain tools to create safer, more empathetic communication protocols applicable in both personal and professional settings.

**Teri Hargrave, MS**, Clay County's Office of Dispute Resolution, Liberty, MO

*"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."*



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## May 27-30, 2026

### 72. Parallel Parenting Best Practices: Lessons Learned from Practicing Professionals

This workshop introduces an intentional parallel parenting model, developed based on the Kids First Institute's advanced learning series, for supporting families when high-conflict and/or family violence exists. The panelists will review the literature and share key lessons, detailing how professionals applied case studies to create effective and structured parallel parenting plans. The session concludes with practical recommendations for plan development and policy suggestions. Participants will be invited to engage in dialogue on intentionally mitigating substantial family conflict.

**Daniel J. Puhlman, PhD, LMFT**, Univ. of Maine, Orono, ME

**Nick J. Galanin, JD**, Gorham, ME

**Karen R. MacDonald, MA, LCSW**, Kids First Center, Scarborough, ME

### 73. Diving Deep into Successful Parenting Coordination

This workshop introduces a formula for success for parenting coordinators by making the coparenting relationship the PC's client, culminating in reducing parental conflict and supporting children's well-being. Participants will learn how parenting coordinators guide families through assessment, co-parenting education, creating consistent practices across households and pledging coparenting support. Participants will be provided with coparenting activities that culminate in a family meeting where parents present future goals, consistent household rules, a joint project regarding a healthy narrative about divorce and affirming each other's and their children's strengths.

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

**Marc A. Caplan, PhD**, Marc A. Caplan, PhD and Associates, Las Cruces, NM

### 74. Challenges Parenting Coordinators Experience in a Multicultural Society

The importance of sensitivity to cultural and faith differences is receiving increasing recognition when working with families in dispute. This workshop discusses challenges that parenting coordinators face when working with culturally diverse families and families of different faiths. Navigating these dynamics in a culturally fair and sensitive manner will be discussed. The presenter will also introduce a method to obtain the views and opinions of the children that "hears beyond their words."

**Lynette M. Roux, PhD**, Gauteng, South Africa

### 75. Family Court and Cross-Border Reunification: Legal Barriers and Solutions

This interdisciplinary workshop addresses the intersection of immigration status and family court systems, focusing on the often-invisible forces affecting family transitions in custody disputes and reunification efforts. With one in four US children having at least one foreign-born parent, many families face unique challenges related to immigration status amid legal proceedings. The session will bring together legal and social work professionals to share case studies, explore the impact of immigration on parental rights, and identify resources for supporting families in transition.

**Elaine Weisman, MSW, MPH**, International Social Service - USA, Baltimore, MD

**Rachel Konrad, JD**, Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA

### 76. Beyond the Facts: The Hidden Influence in GAL Report Writing

Guardian ad litem reports shape how courts understand families, yet unconscious bias, emotional reactions, and systemic pressures can subtly influence how those stories are told. This interactive workshop helps GALs and GAL attorneys craft reports that are clear, balanced, trauma-informed, and defensible, while remaining aware of the "hidden forces" that affect interpretation. Through case analysis, short writing exercises, and group discussion, participants will strengthen their ability to write reports that advocate effectively for children while maintaining objectivity, fairness, and professional credibility.

**Kathleen Meek, JD**, Kid's Voice of Indiana, Indianapolis, IN

**Crystal D. Pulley, JD**, Kid's Voice of Indiana, Indianapolis, IN

### 77. Child Inclusion in Mediation: Safeguarding Childhoods

This interactive workshop explores practical ways to bring the child's voice into mediation while protecting their well-being. Participants will learn developmentally appropriate methods for meeting with children, conducting follow-up feedback sessions with parents, and guiding parents to step into their child's perspective. Case examples and discussion will highlight how child-inclusive practices can reduce conflict, foster empathy, and support more sustainable agreements—ensuring children are heard without being placed in the middle.

**Trina Nudson, JD, LBSW**, The Layne Project, Inc., Olathe, KS



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

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### 78. Practicing Family Law for Incarcerated Litigants: Barriers, Trauma, and Support

Incarcerated and low-income litigants often face overwhelming barriers when navigating family law. This workshop shines a light on those challenges and offers concrete strategies for practitioners and courts to remove obstacles and expand access to justice. Drawing on Cabrini Green Legal Aid's pioneering work in Chicago, including the creation of the Cook County Domestic Relations Incarcerated Litigants Call (DRILC), presenters will share lessons learned, innovative advocacy approaches, and policy insights. Participants will leave with practical tools to better serve marginalized clients and ideas for replicating this model in communities nationwide.

*Kaley Thomas, JD, LLM, Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Chicago, IL*

*Darryl Apperton, JD, Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Chicago, IL*

*Dajuan L. Davis, JD, Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Chicago, IL*

### 79. Beneath the Surface: Understanding the Complexities of Farm Family Divorce

This session presents the findings of a needs assessment that surveyed attorneys and mediators in a Midwest state to identify existing resources and gaps in training for family farm and ranch divorce cases. The panelists will discuss data on the unique coparenting challenges faced by these families, including complex asset division, and farm succession. They will reveal the top-priority training topics identified by both professions to enhance their cultural awareness and practice in this specialized area.

*Linda Reddish, MA, MS, Nebraska Extension, Omaha, NE*

*Jessica Groskopf, MS, Scottsbluff, NE*

*Jennifer Rutt, PhD, Lincoln, NE*

### 80. Calling the Right Plays: Words that Rewire Conflict

Step onto the field of conflict with a winning game plan. This high-energy, interactive session reveals how the words you choose can make or break tough conversations. Through live demonstrations and coach-style strategies, you will discover how to replace reactive responses with intentional communication that calms, redirects, and builds trust. Learn the "out-of-bounds words" that sabotage progress and master evidence-based techniques. Drawing on research from cognitive-behavioral theory, Chris Voss's negotiation methods, and social psychology studies such as the Stanford Prison Experiment, this session unpacks the "game plan" of conflict. Walk away with a ready-to-use playbook that transforms high-conflict moments into opportunities for resolution and collaboration.

*Jamie Niesen, MA, MS, Columbus, OH*

*Jennifer R. Szeghi, MA, Cincinnati, OH*



### Save the Date!

#### 17th Symposium on Child Custody

November 5-7, 2026

Orlando, Florida

#### AFCC 64th Annual Conference

June 2-5, 2027

Baltimore, Maryland

#### AFCC 65th Annual Conference

May 31-June 3, 2028

Los Angeles, California



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

### Continuing Education Credits

A certificate of attendance is included with all registrations. Attendees will receive their certificate by June 30, 2026, via email. The certificate will verify attendance at conference sessions and may be used to apply for continuing education credits. The certificate will reflect only those sessions properly signed into and out of. It is the responsibility of the attendee to sign-in/out of each session attended. A list of conference sessions eligible for continuing education credits can be found on the [conference portal](#) and will be updated regularly.

**Psychologists:** AFCC is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to sponsor continuing education programs 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. AFCC intends to apply to National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) for accreditation for licensed professional counselors. If you are an LMFT, LPC, or other mental health professional, you may use the AFCC certificate of attendance 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 Attorneys:** AFCC intends to submit an application for accreditation of continuing legal education activity and CLE in the following states: Minnesota, Vermont, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Ohio, and Wyoming. AFCC reserves the right to amend this list as may be warranted and at AFCC's discretion prior to the conference. The status of applications and approvals will be posted on the conference portal. Several states accept accreditation from their approved jurisdictions. For example, New York, New Jersey, and California (when the event is not held in California) will generally accept credits approved through Minnesota or Vermont. Attorneys from other states may use the AFCC certificate of attendance to verify attendance and apply for credit in their state.

**California Attorneys:** California attorneys may apply for CLE in California based upon approval by a state listed as one of California's approved states for reciprocity since this conference is not being held in California. Several of the states to which application will be made are on California's list of approved states.

**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.

#### International Jurisdictions

The continuing education requirements vary widely internationally. AFCC will provide a Certificate of Attendance for each participant. If you require specific attendance for your jurisdiction, it is necessary that you sign in and out of the sessions you attend. Otherwise, Certificates of Attendance for international attendees will only confirm general attendance.



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

## Conference Information

### Conference Scholarships

AFCC will offer conference scholarships that cover pre-conference institute registration, conference registration, meal functions, and access to the hospitality suite. Some scholarships may also provide travel and lodging stipends. The application can be found [online](#). Applications are due March 3, 2026, and recipients will be notified in late mid-to-late March.

### Exhibit Forum

The Exhibit Forum will be open during conference hours offering a chance to meet with representatives, learn about their products and services, and discuss how they can support your work. To inquire about exhibit tables or additional advertising opportunities, please see the [exhibitor prospectus](#) and contact Mitch Findley, at [mfindley@afccnet.org](mailto:mfindley@afccnet.org) or 608-664-3750.

### AFCC Hospitality Suite

Join AFCC conference attendees for informal networking and refreshments Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00PM-12:00AM and Friday after the evening celebration until midnight. Please wear your name badge. The hospitality suite location will be included in attendee emails and on the room assignment sheet. AFCC will send registrants more details closer to the date of the conference.

### Taste of Seattle

AFCC will make reservations at several local restaurants so that you can join colleagues on Thursday evening for a dinner. Sign up before 1:30PM on Thursday to join a group of fellow conference attendees for dinner—space is limited! Restaurant menus and sign-up sheets will be available onsite Thursday morning. Participants are responsible for 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 and Friday mornings. Please bring a yoga mat if you have one.

### Pre-Conference Institute Registration

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

### Conference Registration

Includes all conference sessions, electronic access to conference materials, certificate of attendance, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, evening celebration, 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, evening celebration, entertainment, and access to the AFCC hospitality suite.

### Conference Presenter Registration

Available only to conference presenters. Includes all conference sessions, electronic access to conference materials, refreshment breaks, opening reception, luncheon, evening celebration, 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 Tickets

The luncheon and evening celebration are included in the conference registration fee. Additional tickets are available: luncheon \$110 and evening celebration \$135.



# AFCC 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026

### 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.

### Workshop Selections

Seating is guaranteed for pre-conference institutes but is not guaranteed for regular workshop sessions, which will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please select the workshop you are most interested in for each time slot on the registration form. AFCC will use these selections to assign more popular workshops to larger rooms.

### Audio/Video Recording

No personal audio or video recording or photographing of sessions is permitted. This is a live in-person event and will not be available virtually.

### Photo and Video Policy

AFCC reserves the right to take photographs during the conference and conference events. Your registration, attendance, or participation constitutes your consent for AFCC to use such photos and videos for promotional and archival purposes.

### Ambient Temperature

Meeting rooms can be cool, consider bringing a light jacket or sweater.

*"AFCC offerings go well beyond other CLEs. It's the difference between grade school and graduate school."*

### Travel and Lodging Information

#### The Westin Seattle

**1900 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101**

Experience the heart of Seattle from a unique vantage point at The Westin Seattle, where every stay brings the city to life through sweeping city and water views. Located just minutes from key attractions like the 5th Avenue Theater and the Monorail for easy access to the Seattle Center and Space Needle, The Westin Seattle positions you perfectly to explore the best of the city.

Reserve your stay today using this [link](#) or by calling 206-728-1000 and requesting the AFCC special rate. AFCC attendees can enjoy a special rate of \$225 per night (single/double occupancy). The room block and special rate are available until rooms sell out or May 1, 2026, 5:00PM PT. Attendees are responsible for their own hotel arrangements.

To ensure room block reservations are properly attributed to the conference and associated with registered attendees, AFCC provides the hotel with a list of registrants. By registering, you acknowledge that this information will be shared with the hotel for this purpose only.

### Ground Transportation

A taxi from Sea-Tac Airport to The Westin Seattle costs approximately \$40–\$55 one way and takes 20–30 minutes, depending on traffic. Rideshares (Uber, Lyft) and private shuttle services are also available. The Link Light Rail (Sound Transit) runs from the airport to downtown Seattle; Westlake Station is the closest stop to the hotel.

### Parking

The Westin Seattle self-parking is \$65 per day. Valet parking is \$78 per day, and available only to hotel guests. Electric vehicle charging stations are offered. Pricing subject to change.

# 63rd Annual Conference

## May 27-30, 2026 | Seattle | The Westin Seattle

### Registration Form

Register online at [afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference](http://afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference) or return this completed form with payment.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Preferred Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

For meal events, do you have any dietary restrictions?  No  Yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Join AFCC to register at the member rate!

	Paid before March 17	Paid before May 4	Paid before May 29
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#### Registration Rates

#### Pre-Conference Institute Registration

Full Day Institute - AFCC Member	\$185	\$205	\$215
Full Day Institute - Non-Member	\$275	\$300	\$325

#### Conference Registration

Conference Registration - AFCC Member	\$585	\$615	\$635
Conference Registration - Non-Member	\$725	\$750	\$785
Conference Presenter Rate - AFCC Member	\$375	\$400	\$425
Conference Presenter Rate - Non-Member	\$450	\$475	\$525
Full-Time Student Rate - AFCC Member (Student ID required. No meals included.)	\$195	\$250	\$275
Full-Time Student Rate - Non-member Includes a one-year AFCC student membership! (Student ID required. No meals included.)	\$220	\$285	\$300

#### Additional Tickets

Luncheon and evening celebration tickets are included with registration unless noted.

Additional Luncheon Ticket	\$110	\$110	\$110
Additional Evening Celebration Ticket	\$135	\$135	\$150
Spouse/Guest Registration (Includes meals, opening session, and plenary session)	\$300	\$300	\$350

**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Method of Payment

Payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed (USD only)  
 Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to my:  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AMEX  
 Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Attendance & Cancellation

Your registration, attendance, or participation constitutes your consent to adhere to the [Professional Code of Conduct for Events](#). 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 April 27, 2026, will be issued a full refund minus a \$100 USD service fee. Written notice of cancellation received by April 27, 2026, will result in a charge of the \$100 USD service fee, with the balance issued as a credit for a future AFCC conference, training program, webinar, or for membership dues. Cancellations should be sent to [afcc@afccnet.org](mailto:afcc@afccnet.org). If your cancellation is not confirmed within two business days, please contact the AFCC office at 608-664-3750. No refunds or credits will be issued for cancellations received after May 7, 2026.

#### Pre-Conference Institute Selections

**Wednesday May 27, 2026 9:00AM-5:00PM**

If you registered for a pre-conference institute please select one.

- Institute 1. Missing the Mark: The Under Addressed Role of Stepfamilies
- Institute 2. Control the Controllables: How to Stay Sane and Thrive in our Family Law Related Work
- Institute 3. Hearing the Voice of the Child: What Children Know and How They Tell Us
- Institute 4. Revenge and Repair in Two Parts
- Institute 5. Judicial Institute: Addressing IPV, Coercive Control, and Litigation Abuse (Judicial Officers Only)
- Institute 6. Navigating the Promise and Peril of Parenting Coordination

#### Workshop Selections

Choose only one workshop from each timeslot:

<b>Thursday</b> <b>May 28, 2026</b>	8:45AM - 10:00AM	Opening	_____
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	1-10	_____
	1:45PM - 3:15PM	11-20	_____
<b>Friday</b> <b>May 29, 2026</b>	3:30PM - 5:00PM	21-30	_____
	8:30AM - 10:00AM	31-40	_____
	10:30AM - 12:00PM	Plenary	_____
<b>Saturday</b> <b>May 30, 2026</b>	1:45PM - 3:15PM	41-50	_____
	3:30PM - 5:00PM	51-60	_____
	9:15AM - 10:45AM	61-70	_____
	11:00AM - 12:30PM	71-80	_____

You may register online at [afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference](http://afccnet.org/63rdAnnualConference)

or return the completed form and payment to:

AFCC 6525 Grand Teton Plaza, Madison, WI 53719

Fax: 608-664-3751 | Phone: 608-664-3750

