



ASSOCIATION OF  
FAMILY AND  
CONCILIATION COURTS



eNEWS

## President's Message

*By Arnold T. Shienvold, PhD, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

Happy New Year to all of you. As I reflect on this year of incredible highs and lows, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the contributions that you make on a daily basis to improve the lives of the children, families and colleagues with whom you work.

[Read more](#)

## AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference

**Riding the Wave of the Future:**

**Global Voices, Expanding Choices**

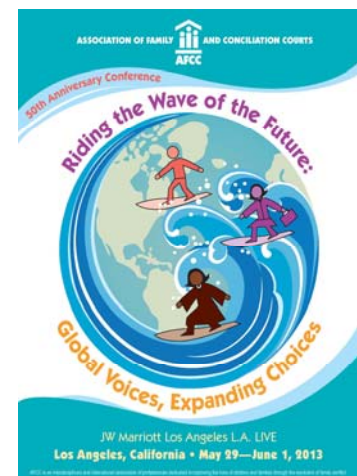
**May 29–June 1, 2013, JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE  
Los Angeles, California**

## AFCC Thanks 50th Anniversary Sponsors

Thank you to the 50th Anniversary Conference Sponsors! This year's Platinum Sponsors are [Kolodny & Anteau](#), [Law Offices of Judith R. Forman, P.C.](#), and [OurFamilyWizard.com](#). Special thanks to California Chapter Board Member and Conference Committee member, Michael Kretzmer, for his outstanding support in securing sponsorships from the Los Angeles area. Thank you as well to the rest of the conference committee, co-chaired by: Robin Deutsch,

MONTHLY E-  
NEWSLETTER  
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## Upcoming Conferences



**AFCC 50th Anniversary  
Conference**  
*Riding the Wave of the Future:*

Hon. Denise McColley, Matthew Sullivan; and committee members: Hon. Peter Boshier, Rachel Birnbaum, Hon. Dianna Gould-Saltman, Jacqueline Hagerott, Grace Hawkins, Sherrie Kibler-Sanchez, Hon. Thomas Trent Lewis, Mary Lund, Leslie Ellen Shear and Lulu Wong—all of whom spent many hours preparing for what promises to be an excellent conference. Please click the link below to see a full list of conference sponsors, visit their websites and learn more about them. AFCC is grateful for their generous support.

[50th Anniversary Conference Sponsors](#)

### **Online Registration Now Available**

Online registration is open for the AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference. Make your plans to attend—register for the conference and book your accommodations; last year's annual conference sold out in March. The conference will be held May 29–June 1, at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE and this year's title is: *Riding the Wave of the Future: Global Voices, Expanding Choices*. The interdisciplinary program will feature the latest in research, programs, policies and practice. There are over 100 conference sessions, up to 20.5 hours of continuing education and the best professional networking opportunities with premier researchers, practitioners and policymakers in the field.

[Register online](#)

[Conference program brochure](#)

### **JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE**

AFCC will return to its roots in Los Angeles. This milestone event will be at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE. The special group rate is \$180/night for single or double accommodations. Rooms are subject to availability and early reservations are encouraged to ensure a room at this excellent rate. The hotel is steps away from the L.A. LIVE entertainment complex, offering guests quick and convenient access to world class venues like the Staples Center, Nokia Theater L.A. LIVE, The Grammy Museum, Regal Cinemas, and a great variety of restaurants and nightclubs. The hotel shares space with the Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles in a distinctive 54-story tower designed by Gensler. Learn more about the best Los Angeles events and things to do in L.A. at [LALive.com](#).

[Online Hotel Reservations](#)

### **Family Court Review 50th Anniversary Special Issue**

AFCC eNEWS readers can enjoy open access to the 50th Anniversary Issue of the *Review*. This issue provides readers with articles on the progression of the journal, the field of family law, as

*Global Voices, Expanding Choices*

May 29–June 1, 2013

JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE

Los Angeles, California

[Conference brochure](#)

[Register online](#)

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[Apply for a scholarship](#)

### **Conference Platinum Sponsors**



### **AFCC–AAML Conference**

September 26–28, 2013

Gaylord National Resort

Washington, DC Metro Area

### **AFCC Regional Training Conference**

November 7–9, 2013

The Westin Crown Center

Kansas City, Missouri

### **AFCC Training Programs**

well as AFCC as an organization. Consider sharing this special issue with friends and colleagues who have since retired, but were once active members, as well as those you believe ought to join AFCC.

[Read the 50th Anniversary FCR](#)

## New Research: Web-Based Program Helps Children Cope Following Divorce

By Jesse Boring, PhD, and Irwin Sandler, PhD of Family Transitions—Programs that Work

New research has found that the internet-based program: Children of Divorce—Coping with Divorce (CoD-CoD), has demonstrated positive effects to promote coping efficacy and reduce mental health problems of children from divorced families. Dr. Jesse Boring, the program developer, presented the findings at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago. The research included 147 children ages 11–16, randomly assigned to receive either CoD-CoD or another popular internet program for children of divorce. Participants were evaluated prior to participating in the programs and following program participation using validated self-report and parent-report measures.

[Read more](#)

## Co-Parenting Communication Guide Now Available

Beginning in 2011, the AzAFCC Board of Directors sponsored a summit project to further the Board's mission of providing an interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of ideas and the development of procedures to assist families in conflict. The 2011 summit project, entitled *Parenting Communication Resources in High-Conflict Cases*, was created to assist judges in writing orders for parents. This year, the Board adopted a version of that summit project for litigants, The *Co-parenting Communications Guide*, intended for free distribution to litigating parents. The *Guide* is available on the Resources for Families page of the AFCC website.

[View the guide](#)

## AFCC Training Programs in Chicago

AFCC, in collaboration with Loyola University Chicago School of Law's Civitas ChildLaw Center, is holding two new training programs on parenting coordination. Join Joan B. Kelly, March 4-5, for a two-day core training and Debra Carter, March 6-7, for an advanced training. Both training programs will be held at Loyola University Chicago in the Philip H. Corboy Law Center. Each training is eligible for 12 hours continuing education for psychologists and 12 CE clock



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

Joan B. Kelly, PhD  
March 4–5, 2013

Loyola University Chicago  
Philip H. Corboy Law Center  
Chicago, Illinois

[More information](#)

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

Debra K. Carter, PhD  
March 6–7, 2013

Loyola University Chicago  
Philip H. Corboy Law Center  
Chicago, Illinois

[More information](#)

## AFCC Chapter Events

### **Arizona Chapter Annual Conference**

*Cultivating Resilience in Children, Families and Professionals*

February 1–3, 2013

Hilton Sedona Resort and Spa  
Sedona, Arizona

[More information](#)

### **Louisiana Chapter Annual Conference**

*Collateral Damage: Addressing the Hidden Costs to Families and*

hours for national certified counselors through NBCC. Approval for 12 CE credits for social workers in Illinois is pending, as is approval by the Illinois MCLE Board for 12 CLE credits.

[More information](#)

[Register online](#)

### **AFCC 50th Anniversary—Movies of 1963**

Our nostalgic, fun piece about 1963, the year AFCC was founded, continues this month. It seems fitting to take a look at the best films of 1963, as AFCC was founded in and is returning to Los Angeles, the home of American cinema. The 36th Academy Awards honored achievements in films from 1963. The ceremony, hosted by Jack Lemmon, was held April 13, 1964, at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

[Read more](#)

### **Nominate a Colleague for an AFCC Award**

Do you know a friend, colleague or program that deserves extra recognition this year? The AFCC Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the John E. VanDuzer Distinguished Service Award, Stanley Cohen Research Award and Irwin Cantor Innovative Program Award, to be presented at the AFCC 50th Anniversary Conference in Los Angeles, May 29-June 1, 2013. Nominations must be received or postmarked on or before March 15, 2013. Please review the award criteria and award descriptions for more information and submission instructions.

[More information](#)

### **Conference of Interest**

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) will hold a new national conference, *Judicial Institute: Family Law*, February 24–27, 2013, at the Westin La Cantera Hill Country in San Antonio, Texas. It will provide the most current information and tools to family and domestic relations judges to improve case processing and outcomes. The program features a range of family law topics on challenging issues in divorce, custody and visitation, property distribution and finances, military service and families, and the role of technology and social media both in, and outside, the courtroom.

[More information](#)

### **AFCC Conference Audio Available**

Conference audio is available from the AFCC 10th Symposium on Child Custody Evaluations, held last November in Phoenix. If you

*Professionals*

March 7–8, 2013

Hampton Inn & Suites

New Orleans, Louisiana

[More information](#)

### **Florida Chapter Annual Conference**

*Creating Our Future: One Family at a Time*

March 14–16, 2013

The Rosen Center

Orlando, Florida

[More information](#)

### **Massachusetts Chapter Annual Conference**

*Behind the Scenes: Mental Health Consultation in Child Custody Cases*

April 5, 2013

Regis College

Weston, Massachusetts

[More information](#)

### **Washington Chapter Conference**

*Pinnacles of Practice in Times of Challenge*

April 6, 2013

Washington Athletic Club

Seattle, Washington

[More information](#)

### **Ontario Chapter Conference**

October 18, 2013

Toronto Public Library

Toronto, Ontario

[More information](#)

### **Join AFCC**

Are you a member?

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

AFCC offers member benefits that promote excellence in practice.

[View member benefits](#)

### **Ask the Experts**

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

missed the Symposium, want to share a session with colleagues or wanted to attend sessions that ran concurrently, audio recordings of sessions are available for purchase through [Digital Conference Providers](#). Audio recordings of sessions from many other AFCC conferences and symposiums are also available. AFCC members receive access to free audio recordings from plenary sessions. Visit the [Member Center](#) to take advantage of this benefit.

## Family Law in the News

### When Couples Divorce but Still Run a Business Together

*By Bryan Borzykowski, courtesy of The New York Times*

Most business owners know not to bring personal issues to work, but that has been especially difficult for Agostinho Ribeiro. That is because he runs his company, a law firm based in Danbury, Conn., with his former wife, Valerie Calistro.

[Read more](#)

### New Family Law Compels Children to Visit Elderly Parents

*By Bruce Baker, courtesy of examiner.com*

A new family law was passed this week in China that compels children and family members of senior citizens to visit them frequently. The new legislation was passed to address elder abuse and abandonment as the Chinese population ages.

[Read more](#)

Experts piece?

[Email your suggestion](#)

### About AFCC eNEWS

Readers are welcome to forward this e-newsletter to interested colleagues. All opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of AFCC.

### Editor:

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## AFCC Thanks 50th Anniversary Conference Sponsors and Collaborating Organizations

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[National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#)



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Happy New Year to all of you. As I reflect on this year of incredible highs and lows, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the contributions you make each day to improve the lives of the children, families and colleagues with whom you work.

To our Judges: Thank you for taking the time to truly care about the families who come before you and to struggling with the decisions you make promoting their individual and collective dignity.

To our Court-Connected Professionals: Thank you for your ongoing commitment to helping individuals and families achieve stability and structure in their lives despite the added challenge of diminishing funds and resources.

To our Mediators: Thank you for understanding the importance of helping families reach self-determined resolutions to their problems and assisting them in using collaborative processes to achieve their goals, thus allowing them to maintain control of their lives and to realize their own strength.

To our Custody Evaluators: Thank you for applying your knowledge and expertise in assessment and investigation to analyze the needs of families and children, and for providing the valuable information needed to assist decision-makers in making determinations about their futures.

To our Parenting Coordinators: Thank you for wading through the turbulent waters of chronic high-conflict parents and applying an array of problem-solving and decision-making skills so children may be shielded from familial tension and hostility, affording them some sense of stability and normalcy in their lives.

To our Attorneys: Thank you for caring about the individuals with whom you work—with all of their fears, anger, needs and wants—and for advocating for them during a tumultuous time in their lives, in an environment foreign to them, within which they are often lost without you.

To our Researchers: Thank you for working so hard to answer difficult questions, provide valuable information and challenge unsupported beliefs so that practitioners can feel more confident about their interventions with families.

To our Trainers and Teachers: Thank you for using your expertise to ensure that we are well prepared with the highest quality up-to-date information and processes so that we may be confident in our ability to meet the needs of others.

To our *FCR* Editorial Staff: Thank you for ensuring that the *Family Court Review* remains the premiere journal for everyone who works with children and families experiencing the stresses of family reorganization.

To our Policy Advocates: Thank you on behalf of the wide variety of people: fathers, mothers, children, victims of abuse, unrepresented litigants and so many more, for ensuring that their needs are considered and included in the programs, laws and policies that affect us all.

To our Therapists: Thank you for helping individuals and families learn to cope with, adjust to, manage and overcome the many stressors and challenges they face.

To the AFCC Board: Thank you for giving your time and expertise so that the organization continues to fulfill its mission, stay true to its values, and remain relevant and vibrant.

To the AFCC Staff: Thank you for being such a high-quality, readily-available, pleasant, efficient, organized, thoughtful and creative team that ensures our organization and its members will always be number one.

To anyone and everyone I missed: Thank you for taking on your role with the families we serve and represent. Your work gives them the most positive experience possible during one of the most difficult times in their lives.

Thank you all for your contributions over the last year and for your continued commitment in 2013.

Wishing you all the best,

Arnie





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## New Research: Web-Based Program Helps Children Cope Following Divorce

By Jesse Boring, PhD, and Irwin Sandler, PhD of Family Transitions—Programs that Work

New research has found that the internet-based program: Children of Divorce—Coping with Divorce (CoD-CoD), has demonstrated positive effects to promote coping efficacy and reduce mental health problems of children from divorced families. Dr. Jesse Boring, the program developer, presented the findings at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference in Chicago. The research included 147 children ages 11–16, randomly assigned to receive either CoD-CoD or another popular internet program for children of divorce. Participants were evaluated prior to participating in the programs and following program participation using validated self-report and parent-report measures. Results showed that youth who participated in CoD-CoD improved more than those using two other popular internet-based websites for children of divorce on measures of child mental health problems and coping efficacy. Children with higher levels of problems and lower coping efficacy showed the most improvement. This is the first experimental evidence of the efficacy of an internet-based program for children of divorce.

### Children of Divorce-Coping with Divorce (CoD-CoD): An Online Program for Children of Divorce Ages 11 and Up

#### What is CoD-CoD?

The Children of Divorce—Coping with Divorce (CoD-CoD) is a five-module internet-based mental health promotion program for children of divorce ages 11 and up. Through the careful adaptation of intervention components previously demonstrated to be effective for children from disrupted families, CoD-CoD is designed to promote participant's development of four divorce-specific protective factors that have been identified through previous generative research: increased active coping, decreased avoidant coping, improved coping efficacy, and healthier divorce-related appraisals (see figure 1).

Figure 1. How CoD-CoD Addresses Divorce-Specific Protective Factors

#### How CoD-CoD Addresses The Four Protective Factors

CoD-CoD Elements	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem-Solving</li> <li>• Positive Cognitions</li> <li>• Psychoeducation</li> </ul>	Increased Active Coping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling Awareness</li> <li>• Relaxation Training</li> <li>• Distraction Coping</li> </ul>	Decreased Avoidant Coping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stressor Controllability</li> <li>• Reduced Wishful Thinking</li> <li>• Peer Testimonials</li> <li>• Coping Practice</li> </ul>	Improved Coping Efficacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Cognitions</li> <li>• Divorce Information</li> </ul>	Healthier Divorce Appraisals

In order to develop these protective factors, participants master a variety of coping skills and then practice integrating these skills to solve a diverse set of problems. In order to engage participants, CoD-CoD utilizes a mix of modalities including videos, animations, interactive activities, quizzes, and video games. Users work toward a program goal, which they set for themselves and complete home practice tasks that challenge them to use in their day-to-day lives. This process culminates in the final module when the users harness their program skills to develop a plan that addresses the divorce related events they reported being most concerned about in the first module. A preview of the module format and sample activities is available [here](#). See Figure 2 for an outline of the skills and information taught in the CoD-CoD program.

Figure 2. Children of Divorce - Coping with Divorce Program Outline

## CoD-CoD Program Outline

### Module 1: Feelings and Divorce

- Introduction to the Program
- The Challenge of Divorce
  - Divorce stressors
- Normalizing Divorce Experiences
- Recognizing Feelings
- How CoD-CoD Can Help
  - Stressful Situations
  - Difficult Feelings
  - Hiding Feelings

### Module 2: Inside Tools

- Cognitive Restructuring
  - Divorce Appraisals
  - Doom and Gloom Thinking
- Events, Thoughts, Feelings & Actions
- Relaxation
- Using Distraction Coping
- Divorce Related Information

### Module 3: Tools for Communication

- Identifying Uncontrollable Problems
- 4-Steps to Good Communication
- Starting a Helping Conversation
- Starting a Supportive Conversation
- How to Resolve Conflict Positively

### Module 4: Problem-Solving

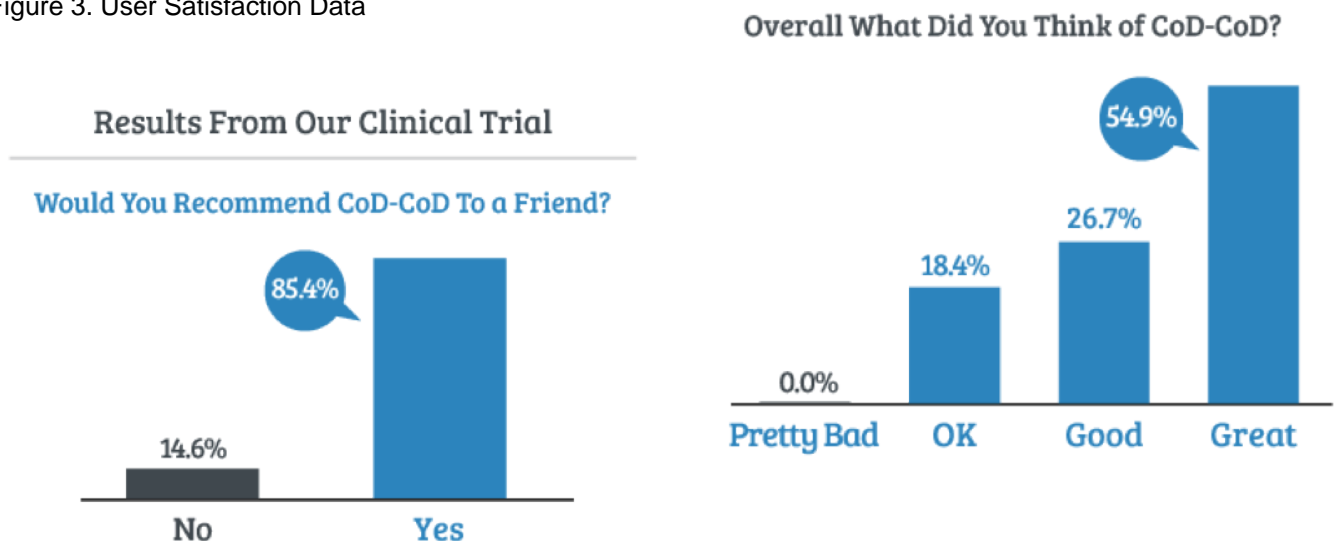
- Problem-solving training
- Choosing Coping Strategies

### Module 5: Integrating Program Skills

- Using Problem-Focused Coping
- Summary of CoD-CoD Coping Skills
- Opportunity to Apply CoD-CoD Skills
- Practicing Skills in the Real World

Most children and adolescents like CoD-CoD and find it to be helpful. Figure 3 shows user satisfaction data from the participants who completed the CoD-CoD Program during the clinical trial.

Figure 3. User Satisfaction Data



Here are some of the things children and adolescents say they like about the program:

- **Private**-They can get help with their thoughts, feeling, and problems without fear of embarrassment.
- **Helpful**-They set their own program goal and almost all children make progress toward that goal.
- **Personalized**-The program help the child address the topics and concerns that interest them most.
- **Engaging**-Parents sometimes assume their children are playing videogames because they stay so focused while going through CoD-CoD.
- **Funny**-It's not uncommon for kids to laugh out loud during the program.

### **How has CoD-CoD Been Evaluated?**

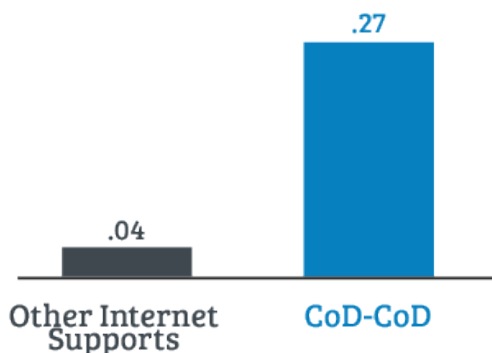
Children of Divorce - Coping with Divorce (CoD-CoD) was evaluated in a randomized experimental trial conducted at the Arizona State University Prevention Research Center. CoD-CoD is the only internet-based program for children of divorce to be evaluated in such a trial. The trial found that:

- CoD-CoD improves coping efficacy (the child's belief that they can cope with stressors).
- CoD-CoD reduces mental health problems (as reported by children and parents).
- Program effects are stronger for children with higher risk and more initial problems.

Figure 4 shows an illustration of CoD-CoD's effect on mental health problems as compared to the control condition (self-study). A full presentation of the findings was presented at the AFCC 49th Annual Conference. A manuscript of these results is under development and will be submitted to an academic journal in February 2013.

Figure 4. Post-Test Program Effects on Total Child Mental Health Problems

### **Reduction in Child Mental Health Problems**



\* Program Effects Are Expressed In Standard Units of Change At Post-Test:  
Program Effect =  $T_1 - T_2 / T_1$  Standard Deviation

### **How Can Families Access CoD- CoD?**

CoD-CoD is offered through Family Transitions, which was founded by AFCC members: Irwin Sandler, PhD, Sharlene Wolchik, PhD, and Michele Porter, PhD. Drs. Sandler and Wolchik have spent more than 30 years developing and evaluating programs for children and families experiencing changes like divorce. Family Transitions is committed to providing programs that meet the highest scientific standards for improving children's mental health and offering programs to families going through divorce, separation or bereavement due to the death of a parent.

More information on CoD-CoD for professionals and families is available [here](#).

Dr. Jesse Boring can be contacted via email at [jesse.boring@familytransitions-ptw.com](mailto:jesse.boring@familytransitions-ptw.com).