



WA-AFCC

# Washington Chapter Seminars

[Return to Index](#)

Seminars and Conferences (Link to  
[Registration Form](#))

A primary function of WA AFCC is to provide annual educational conferences and membership meetings. Networking opportunities and task force activities will be part of this process along with giving those in attendance valuable Continuing Education credits (CLE, CME hours). Additional training events will be scheduled at various locations throughout the year. Check back often for updates to the training schedule.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Hold that Date!!

# **Friday, April 13, 2012 and Saturday, April 14, 2012**

Location: Washington Athletic Club, 1325 6th Ave., Seattle 98101 (206) 622-7900

Title and Theme:

## **"Systemic Solutions for Families in Crisis."**

The newly formed WA State Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts will be holding its Second Annual Training Conference at the downtown Seattle facility of the Washington Athletic Center located at 1325 6th Ave., Seattle, WA 98101. The first day will be a Pre-Conference Institute with day-long training on Parenting Coordinator "Nuts and Bolts." There will also be an exciting track of 90-minute workshops designed to assist attorneys and mental health providers in the family law field. The Full Conference will convene on Saturday for a program of plenary sessions and multiple offerings (3 tracks) of training designed to cover a wide range of topics of interest to judges, attorneys, Guardian ad Litem providers, and mental health professionals.

The program has been approved by the WSBA for up to 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education Credits (Event Code: 300024). It is

also approved for up to 12 hours of CE credit for social workers and mental health providers since WA-AFCC is an approved sponsor for CE programs under the guidelines of the WA NASW organization (1975-312).

The Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) parent organization is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. AFCC maintains responsibility for the program and its content. The program offers up to 12 hours of credit for psychologists depending on which sections are attended.

Please plan to join with your colleagues and fellow professionals to participate in this exciting event. An outstanding array of speakers and judicial officers will be conducting the sessions. The outline appears below.

Contact Dr. Rybicki for additional information or to be added to the mailing list for brochures and information. Contact information: [info@wa-afcc.net](mailto:info@wa-afcc.net)

## **Second Annual WA AFCC Conference**

### **Friday April 13, 2012**

### **Pre-Conference Institute**

Registration 8:30 to 9:00

9:00 to 10:30

## Track A1 Matthew Sullivan, Ph.D.

### **Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination** (registrants must attend all day)

**6 hour workshop** on methods and procedures of conducting parenting coordinator services. Emerging professional standards, practical guidelines, and recommendations for managing challenging clients and working with other professionals involved in these high conflict cases will be presented.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with professional standards and practice guidelines that inform their parenting coordination services.

Participants will gain knowledge of difficult situations including practical challenges, ethical dilemmas, and clinical concerns which may impact the likelihood of successful delivery of parenting coordination services.

Through case examples and group discussion there will be opportunity to explore best practice design of parenting coordination

Matthew Sullivan, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Palo Alto, California, who specializes in forensic child and family psychology. He has been in private practice in Palo Alto for 20 years, specializing in Forensic Family psychology. Dr. Sullivan is a pioneer in the field of Parenting Coordination, which he helped develop in Santa Clara County more than 15 years ago, and has led the development of Parenting Coordination across the U.S. He is one of the most experienced Parent Coordinators (called Special Master in California) in the country.

## Track B1 Gary Schreiner, J.D. and Michele Unsworth, LCPC

### **MaKiN iT riGht: Family Court through the Child's Eyes**

Through an original video presentation, participatory exercises and discussion, this workshop helps participants see family court through the child's eyes. What is it like to be a child telling his or her story in a court system even adults don't understand? This workshop will help participants gain intellectual and emotional insight into issues surrounding the child's voice in court. Produced in the northwest, MaKiN' iT riGhT presents children's stories in their own words. Each young person shown was interviewed to determine custody. Each shares insights for which professionals, child custody evaluators, counselors, mediators and judges can learn. Debrief will follow the presentation. The pros and cons of involving the child and factors considered in determining

whether and how the child's voice should be heard. Options for bringing the child's voice in safely and specific processes developed will be introduced.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will experience child interviewing through the eyes of the child.

Participants will learn to identify issues and considerations for integrating the voice of the child into custody determination.

Participants will learn to identify possible channels for hearing the child's voice in family law matters.

Presenters Michele Unsworth, LCPC and Gary Schreiner, JD are Family Court Services Administrators in Idaho's Third and Sixth Districts, respectively. Each has extensive experience with children and families in the courts. As a team, they bring legal and mental health perspectives together.

10:45 to 12:15

## **Track A2 Dr. Matthew Sullivan**

### **Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination (continued)**

## **Track B2 Daniel Rybicki, Psy.D., DABPS with Dr. Wendy Hutchins-Cook (discussant).**

### **Abusive Use of "Abusive Use of Conflict" and Visitation Resistance Issues**

Two challenging issues for family law cases involve visitation resistance and allegations of the abusive use of conflict. The common link between these issues are claims of alienation or interference. Visitation resistance is sometimes seen as a "symptom" of alienation or estrangement while "abusive use of conflict" covers a wide array of parental behavior. It is often used as a legal argument to limit parental access or exercising of custody. Terms will be defined along with discussion of key forms of intervention for each topic. The workshop will also review the legislative history of these issues and provide a discussion of how these legal arguments can further disrupt post-divorce family adjustment.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will learn to identify causes for visitation resistance including such factors as alienation, coaching, developmental influences, divorce adjustment features, etc.

Participants will become familiar with the legislative history of 191 limitation factors such as abusive use of conflict.

Participants will learn to recognize features of high conflict and litigious clients which may contribute to the abusive use of conflict and learn to draw distinction between actual cases of such abusive conflict as a clinical concern versus a form of litigation strategy.

Dr. Daniel Rybicki is licensed in four states and provides forensic psychological services including parenting evaluations and psychological testing. He has conducted over 350 full child custody evaluations. Dr. Rybicki also has expertise in high conflict cases and relocation cases. He has extensive experience with cases involving domestic violence and alienation concerns. He holds a diplomate in Forensic Psychology from the American Board of Psychological Specialties and is currently serving as the Founding President of the WA AFCC Chapter. He conducts professional training seminars often for legal professionals and mental health in both family law and dependency court matters.

Wendy Hutchins-Cook, Ph.D., ABFP/ABPP, received her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Washington in 1983. She received Board Certification in Forensic Psychology in 2006 from the American Board of Professional Psychology. Dr. Hutchins-Cook serves on the Clinical Faculties of the University of Washington Department of Psychology and the Medical School Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Hutchins-Cook is in private practice. She is regularly appointed by the Court as a parenting evaluator, and testifies as an expert in child and family matters. She presents regularly for the King County Bar Association and is co-author of the current Title 26 Guardian ad Litem Manual, 2009.

12:15 to 1:15 Lunch on own (**WA AFCC Board Mtg**)

1:15 to 2:45

## **Track A3      Dr. Matthew Sullivan**

### **Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination** (continued)

## **Track B3      Carol Bailey, J.D.**

### **Solution Focused Legal Services, Unbundled Legal Assistance \***

This workshop will address practical considerations in a solution-focused approach to resolving divorce custody issues. A values-driven, developmental and constructive model of service will be presented along with analysis of the emerging field of unbundled legal services. The practice of unbundling legal services, also known as limited scope representation, falls into three general categories: consultation, such as giving advice and direction; document preparation, sometimes referred to as ghostwriting; and limited representation in court. Each of these areas will be addressed in this informative workshop.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will gain a better understanding of how unbundled legal services may provide cost-effective solution-oriented assistance in divorce custody cases.

Participants will learn new approaches for family-system interventions and case conceptualization from a legal perspective.

Participants will gain an appreciation for how working to enhance stability, reduce conflict, and provide for long-range solution-oriented outcomes will benefit both the client and the family unit.

Carol Bailey is a legal reformer and innovator. She realized after practicing family law and serving as a Guardian ad Litem that there had to be a change in the way family law is practiced. Couples who wanted an amicable divorce so often end up intensely disliking each other, largely because of the legal system and the way lawyers practice family law. Carol has worked for years through Carol Bailey and Associates to heighten public awareness of the effect of family conflict on children. Recently Carol founded Main Street Law Group to develop ways lawyers can form long term, trusted relationships with clients through providing informed, practical legal advice at a guaranteed price, not billing by the hour. Carol has been in private practice in Seattle since 1991 with experience as a Guardian at Litem and work as a mediator providing Facilitative Divorce Mediation. She is trained in the practice of Collaborative Law and is a member of the Washington State Bar Association, American Bar Association, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals and the Harvard Kennedy School Women's Leadership Board. Carol is a frequent presenter at training seminars and CLEs regarding family law.

\* Not Eligible for Psychologist CE credit under AFCC guidelines

2:45 to 3:00 Break

3:00 to 4:30

## **Track A4 Dr. Matthew Sullivan**

### **Nuts and Bolts of Parenting Coordination** (continued)

## **Track B4 Felicia Malsby, J.D. and Karen Bonnell, M.S.**

### **New Innovations in Collaborative Family Law**

This workshop will describe recent innovations in collaborative family law practice including a new model called "Game Plan for Resolution." Ms. Malsby and Ms. Bonnell will highlight best practices, parenting plan worksheets, and non-defensive communication concepts as part of this training seminar.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with emerging models of collaborative practice which may be useful to facilitate better outcomes for divorcing families.

Participants will recognize cases which may be amenable to collaborative forms of intervention.

Through case example and other methods, participants will identify forms of best practice for working in a collaborative format.

Felicia Malsby is the principal of Family Law Resolutions. Her focus is collaborative divorce and legal separation, non-adversarial matters, mediation, and consulting. Felicia was named the 2010 Family Law Attorney of the Year by the Family Law Section of the Tacoma-Pierce County Bar Association, recognizing her leadership in establishing Collaborative Law locally, as well as throughout the State. She is a co-founder and past 3-year President of the statewide Collaborative Professionals of Washington (CPW), as well as founder and first President of Collaborative Law Professionals of Pierce County (CLPPC). She is a popular trainer, speaker, and author on subjects relating to collaborative divorce, mediation and non-adversarial problem solving within the realm of family law. Her newest project is the development of the Gameplan for Resolution, a new model for resolving family conflict with the support of graphic facilitation. Felicia has been practicing family law since being admitted to the Washington Bar in 1992 after graduating from the University of Puget Sound School of Law (now Seattle University School of Law).

Karen Bonnell has over 25 years of experience working with individuals, couples, and families facing transition, loss, stress and change. A graduate of the University of Michigan, Karen has been Board certified and licensed as an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner since 1982. She served on the faculty of the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University & Seattle Pacific University before beginning full-time private practice in 1984. She continues to be a provider of Professional Continuing Education to both health care and legal professionals. Karen participated in developing the year-long facilitator training program for the Compassionate Listening Project. Karen utilizes this heart-centered approach to authentic speaking and capable listening used around the world in high-conflict situations such as Israel/Palestine. Karen served on the Board of King County Collaborative Law and Collaborative Professionals of Washington. She is a member of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals and Eastside Collaborative Family Law.

4:30 to 6:30 Social Hour – No Host Bar, Appetizers

---

# Saturday April 14, 2012 Full Conference

Registration 8:00 to 8:30

**8:30 to 9:00 Welcome to Conference**

**Keynote Address: Hon. Justice J. Gerry Alexander WA State Supreme Court**

**Looking Back and Looking Forward: A Perspective from Washington's Highest Bench.**

**9:00 to 10:30 Morning Plenary Sessions Grand Ballroom**



## **Plenary 1     Matthew Sullivan, Ph.D.**

### **Court Ordered Therapy: Emerging Wisdom in a Challenging Venue**

Recently the AFCC has published Guidelines for Court-Involved Therapy. Dr. Sullivan served on the task force that developed these new guidelines. This plenary presentation will highlight the new guidelines and discuss points of best practice in meeting the ethical, legal, professional and practical challenges of conducted court ordered therapy. The new guidelines have been formulated to assist members of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) and others who provide treatment to court-involved children and families. The Guidelines are also intended to assist those who rely on mental health services or on the opinions of mental health professionals in promoting effective treatment and assessing the quality of treatment services. The Guidelines are also intended to assist the Courts to develop clear and effective Court orders and parenting plans that may be necessary for treatment to be effective. This plenary will provide a useful overview of the emerging wisdom in this field.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with emerging professional practice standards which address ethical and professional concerns for court ordered therapy situations.

Through case example and other illustrations the participants will recognize methods for promoting effective treatment and monitoring progress.

Participants will know what to expect from court ordered therapy in terms of outcomes, prognosis and duration of treatment.

Matthew Sullivan, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice in Palo Alto, California, who specializes in forensic child and family psychology. He has been in private practice in Palo Alto for 20 years, specializing in Forensic Family psychology. He is a pioneer in the field of Parenting Coordination, which he helped develop in Santa Clara County more than 15 years ago, and has led the development of Parenting Coordination across the U.S. He is one of the most experienced Parent Coordinators (called Special Master in California) in the country. He has served on several AFCC Task Force work groups including the recent task force on developing Guidelines for Court Ordered Therapy.

10:30 to 10:45 Break

10:45 to 12:15 Grand Ballroom

## **Plenary 2     Kathryn Kuehnle, Ph.D. and Leslie Drozd, Ph.D.**

### **Drawing Conclusions for Parenting Plans: Update on the Research**

This presentation will identify the quality of research underlying subjects related to forming recommendations for parent

time-sharing and parenting plans. As research over the past several decades has improved in subject size and diversity, methodology, and advanced statistical analyses, evaluators are able to make more informed recommendations to the Courts regarding structuring the family environments for children's successful adjustment following parent separation, and parenting plans that attempt to protect children from psychological harm. Evaluators must be knowledgeable when reviewing publications in identifying conclusions based on well designed research from conclusions that lack a substantial scientific foundation. The presenters will cover the current scientific evidence on factors associated with children's adjustment to parents' separation; factors associated with children's adjustments to time sharing; parent behaviors affecting coparenting and parent-child relationships; and a review of the most up-to-date research on domestic violence and alienation.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will learn to discriminate between empirical research that can be used to further our understanding of divorced families from research that is flawed.

Participants will learn to identify scientifically based risk and protective factors associated with children's and adolescents' adjustment.

Participants will learn to identify elements of the controversy regarding parenting plans and children's age, and be alert to the science supporting divergent views.

Dr. Katherine Kuehnle received her doctorate from the Univ. of Minnesota; is a Florida licensed psychologist; holds a faculty position at the University of South Florida, Florida Mental Health Institute; and maintains a private forensic practice in Tampa, Florida. Dr.Kuehnle has written 15 book chapters and 5 books with two more books in process. She also has authored numerous articles published in peer review journals.

Dr. Leslie Drozd is a licensed psychologist and marriage, family and child therapist specializing in family violence, trauma, substance abuse, and consultations in child custody. She trains judges, attorneys, and mental health professionals and has a myriad of professional publications. She is the editor of the peer-reviewed Journal of Child Custody.

12:15 to 1:15 Lunch on own

**(WA AFCC Member-only Luncheon Meeting)**

**1:15 to 2:45 Afternoon**

**Three Track Workshop Series**

**Track C1 Leslie Shear, J.D.**

## **Moving from Kansas to Oz : International Relocation and Abduction Issues**

This workshop will address practical and legal factors which influence decisions regarding international relocation, visitation and travel abroad. Case law and psychological issues will be considered along with best practice guidelines for assisting in such cases. Additional attention will be given to abduction risk and the emerging body of legal guidelines for addressing such problems.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with features of the Hague Abduction

Convention and legal frameworks for dealing with abduction issues.

Participants will recognize features which may represent risk factors for flight with children when international travel is allowed.

Participants will become familiar with statutory and practical issues in relocation cases which can impact child adjustment, coparenting, and access to non-custodial parents.

Leslie Ellen Shear has practiced family law in California since 1976. She is certified by the State Bar of California Board of Legal Specialization as a specialist in Family Law and a Specialist in Appellate Law. Leslie is a Fellow of the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the immediate past president of California's Association of Certified Family Law Specialists. She is a frequent contributor to professional journals on issues of child custody and parentage, and a frequent lecturer to lawyers, judicial officers, mental health professionals, parent educators and parents on issues relating to child custody, parentage and family law. Her published appellate decisions include two international relocation cases.

## **Track D1 William Austin, Ph.D., Leslie Drozd, Ph.D., and Nancy Olesen, Ph.D.**

### **Protective Gatekeeping in Custody Cases involving Intimate Partner Violence or Alienation**

The concept of parental gatekeeping is an emerging concern in the field of child custody evaluation. It holds promise to be a central organizing concept for courts and evaluators. Preliminary research shows gatekeeping is more common in the context of divorce and custody fueled by conflict. A substantial research literature exists on gatekeeping, including a few quality studies with divorced parents. This workshop will present a conceptual framework on gatekeeping and co-parenting which considers gatekeeping along a continuum that ranges from restrictive to facilitative gatekeeping. The concept of Protective or Justified Gatekeeping is discussed for custody cases involving allegations of intimate partner violence, child maltreatment, parent substance abuse and other parent behaviors associated with the risk of harm to the child. Case examples will be used to illustrate how to analyze gatekeeping in such challenging situations.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will understand the conceptual framework of parental gatekeeping and the supporting research.

Participants will understand the implications of gatekeeping for practical application to child custody evaluation and forensic assessment.

Participants will understand the concept of protective gatekeeping and application to allegations of intimate partner violence and child alienation.

Dr. Bill Austin is a psychologist licensed in Colorado and North Carolina specializing in child custody evaluations and review work most notably on issues having to do with relocation issues, gatekeeping, and social capital. He is a prolific writer of book chapters and articles in professional publications in the field of family law and child custody.

Dr. Leslie Drozd is a licensed psychologist and marriage, family and child therapist specializing in family violence, trauma, substance abuse, and consultations in child custody. She trains judges, attorneys, and mental health professionals and has a myriad of professional publications. She is the editor of the peer-reviewed Journal of Child Custody.

Dr. Nancy Olesen graduated in psychology from the Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She teaches, researches, and works in private practice, with a particular emphasis on child abuse and neglect, custody and access disputes and the interface between clinical and forensic psychology. She has collaborated on a number of professional articles about custody evaluation, alienation and domestic violence, and has served on national advisory panels for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

## **Track E1      Landon Poppleton, Ph.D. and Steve Tutty, Ph.D.**

### **Assessing the Risk for Violence in Child Custody Evaluations**

This workshop will equip evaluators and parenting coordinators with an understanding of relevant child and adolescent developmental factors that contribute to violence in youth, disorders that incline youth toward violence, risk and risk mitigating factors of violence, and principles for conducting youth violence risk assessments. Special attention will be given to the threat assessment model that can help lead to best interest recommendations and intervention planning. Special topics include physical assault, sexual aggression, bullying, property destruction, gender differences, and family characteristics of violent youth.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will understand developmental factors for violence risk in youth as identified through relevant research.

Participants will understand methods for conducting violence risk assessment for youth using an evidence-based model.

Participants will review dispositional and remedial evidence-based recommendations for youth violence in custody cases.

Landon Poppleton, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in Vancouver, WA. He is licensed in both Washington and Oregon and specializes in clinical and forensic services. He is trained as a scientist-practitioner and provides research informed psychotherapy and assessment to families, children, and adolescents. He works in collaboration with domestic and juvenile court officials, attorneys, physicians and teachers.

Steve Tutty, Ph.D., is a clinical and forensic psychologist practicing at the Front Street Clinic in Poulsbo, Bainbridge Island and Seattle, WA. He specializes in child psychology and parenting evaluations. He actively collaborates with physicians, school counselors, juvenile officials, GAL's and attorneys. He has been active in professional organizations, including AFCC, both as a member and a presenter.

2:45 to 3:00 Break

## **3:00 to 4:30 Afternoon      Three Track Workshop Series**

### **Track C2      Catherine W. Smith, J.D.**

## Passport Restrictions and Other 191 Limitation Factors in Relocation and International Travel: A Review of Katare

This workshop will use the Katare appellate case to illustrate the issues involved with passport restrictions and other 191 restrictions with cases of international travel or relocation. Ms. Smith recently argued the case in Olympia before the Washington Supreme Court. Discussion of the pending decision may be included depending upon action by the Court.

### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with challenges for international travel imposed when 191 restrictions are involved in a family law matter.

Participants will better understand key concepts that influence appellate decisions in such cases.

Participants will learn details of a pending case to illustrate the areas of analysis in such cases.

Catherine Wright Smith received her JD from the Univ. of Washington in 1979. She served as the managing editor of the *Washington Law Review* and as the Judicial Clerk for Hon. Charles Horowitz, WA. Supreme Court Justice. She is founding and former president of the Washington Appellate Lawyers Association. She routinely presents on updates in appellate law at KCBA events. She has an extensive appellate litigation practice, providing representation in over 400 cases in all three divisions of the Court of Appeals, the Washington State Supreme Court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court.

## Track D2 David Hodges, MA, LMFT, Robert Zibbell, Ph.D., and Daniel Rybicki, Psy.D.

### Guardian Ad Litem: Coast to Coast Comparison and Innovations

Washington and Massachusetts are the only two states to rely primarily on a system of Guardian Ad Litem investigators to address child custody decisions. The presenters will outline training and investigation methods used in these two states and address innovations and areas for developing more effective input for the Court. This workshop will also summarize findings from a recent empirical survey study of Washington attorneys and other professionals regarding what they see as the strengths, weaknesses, and emerging issues concerning the quality of our GAL system.

### Learning Objectives:

Participants will become familiar with statutory and practical guidelines that impact delivery of GAL services in two states (WA and MA).

Participants will learn of strengths and weaknesses identified in survey research regarding GAL services in Washington

Participants will identify areas of training and other forms of improvement that may better serve local GAL providers in addressing the needs of family law cases.

David Hodges, MA, MFT has been involved in providing family court evaluations for most of his busy career. He has served in the Fresno County California Family Court Service program prior to working in the King County Family Court Service program here in Washington. His experience in these areas provided a useful foundation for his contributions to the AFCC Court Service Task Force as chair of the sub-committee that published Exemplary Practice publication in 2005. He is also a past board member of AFCC. He continues to provide parenting evaluation, domestic violence assessment, mediation and GAL services in King and Snohomish counties.

Robert A. Zibbell, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist in private practice in Framingham, Massachusetts. He is active in providing parenting coordinator services and has served as a *guardian ad litem* conducting family law investigations in over 400 cases. Dr. Zibbell has been part of the founding group for the Massachusetts Association of Guardians Ad Litem, Inc. and he is very involved in training and quality assurance efforts for MA GAL services. He has been a presenter at other AFCC conferences and he serves on the Board of Directors for the MA AFCC chapter. He has published in peer-reviewed journals and, along with AFCC member Geri Fuhrmann, Psy.D., he has recently written *Best Practices in Forensic Mental Health Assessment: Evaluation for Child Custody*, Oxford Univ. Press (2011).

Dr. Daniel Rybicki is licensed in four states and provides forensic psychological services including parenting evaluations and psychological testing. He has conducted over 350 full child custody evaluations. Dr. Rybicki routinely testifies regarding critique and review of other professionals' evaluations. He has expertise in high conflict cases, relocation cases and extensive experience with cases involving domestic violence and alienation concerns. He holds a diplomate in Forensic Psychology from the American Board of Psychological Specialties and he is currently serving as the Founding President of the WA AFCC Chapter. He conducts professional training seminars often for legal professionals and mental health in both family law and dependency court matters.

## Track E2 Landon Poppleton, Ph.D., Jeffery Lee, Ph.D., and Christina Lyons

### Utilizing Empirical Research in Custody Assessments

Several authors have identified the importance of providing empirical research as the basis for recommendations contained in custody evaluations (e.g., Gould and Martindale, 2009; Tippins and Wittman, 2009). Essential to that process is understanding what the research supports and the limitations thereof. Presenters will provide a framework for custody evaluators, legal professionals, parent coordinators, and mediators for understanding how to use research in custody recommendations and decisions. Case examples will be given to highlight these methods.

#### Learning Objectives:

Participants will gain an understanding of how to use social science research.

Participants will develop skills in critiquing the quality and utility of research.

Participants will become better educated consumers of evaluation reports.

Landon Poppleton, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in Vancouver, WA. He is licensed in both Washington and Oregon and specializes in clinical and forensic services. He is trained as a scientist-practitioner and provides research informed psychotherapy and assessment to families, children, and adolescents. He works in collaboration with domestic

and juvenile court officials, attorneys, physicians and teachers.

Dr. Lee earned his Ph.D. at Brigham Young University in 2010. He has extensive experience in trauma therapy and group therapy modalities. He completed his internship at the Monterey County Children's Behavioral Health program which focuses on treatment and assessment of high conflict family systems. He conducts child custody evaluations, sex offender evaluations and parental fitness evaluations as part of his practice working with Dr. Poppleton.

Christina Lyons is a psychology student at Washington State University and she is preparing to apply to graduate school. She serves as Dr. Poppleton's research assistant.