

## Conference Program Description

### Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

California Chapter Annual Conference

*WHEN CIVILITY BREAKS DOWN: Consequences and Solutions  
for Families and Professionals*

February 22-24, 2019

## **PRE-CONFERENCE INSTITUTES (Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 12:30pm to 4:45pm):**

### **Institute One**

#### **Current Developments in Domestic Violence Law: Cases, Statutes, Threat Assessment/Management and the Psychology Behind it All**

##### **Presenters:**

**Hon. Tara M. Flanagan, Professor Nancy K. D. Lemon, JD, Professor Mindy Mechanic, Psy.D., Nicol Stolar-Peterson, LCSW, BCD, Detective Rachael Frost, Master Investigator, Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Hon. Jennifer Gerard**

The first half of this Institute will cover recent California family and juvenile law cases dealing with domestic violence. Panelists will discuss coercive control and other psychological aspects of domestic violence, to help professionals better serve families in crisis.

In late 2017 and early 2018, California appellate courts issued landmark opinions regarding California's jurisdiction to hear restraining orders against out-of-state defendants, a family court's ability to renew domestic violence restraining orders issued by juvenile courts, the right to seek immigration-based support orders in family courts, and the use of a child's extracurricular activities to harass, intimidate, manipulate, and/or control the other parent.

Other key recent cases address child custody and visitation, restraining orders, international child abduction, immunity from civil suits, allegations of failure to protect children from exposure to abuse, and the right to free court reporters.

The second half of this Institute will address, among other topics, the high correlation between domestic violence tendencies and mass homicide. One 2008 study (Glass, et al) found that a woman was 750% more likely to become the victim of a homicide after a non-fatal strangulation event by an intimate partner. While professionals in this field are acutely aware of the many risks associated with practicing in the area of family law, how many understand that those who pose a threat may not be the ones making threats? If so, how do you identify these individuals who may pose the greatest threats and deter violent behaviors? This panel will discuss past and current cases as it examines the current state of violence, murder/suicides, mass shootings, homicides and who is perpetrating these crimes.

##### **Learning Objectives:**

Participants will:

- Be able to describe significant recent changes in California domestic violence law, including California appellate decisions and newly-revised statutes.
- Be able to describe the concept of coercive control, as well as other psychological aspects of domestic violence.
- Understanding the threat dynamic and identifying the relationship between strangulation and targeted violence.
- Identifying pre-attack behaviors and warning behaviors, as well as strategies for mitigating violence both in and out of the courtroom.
- Understand how to apply this expanded knowledge regarding domestic violence in one's family law practice area.

## ***Institute Two***

### **Promoting Quality Evaluations and Care for Families: Problems, Training Needs and Solutions**

#### ***Presenters:***

**Lyn R. Greenberg, Ph.D., ABPP, Kendall Evans, JD, Hon. Robert Schnider, Ret., Mary Elizabeth Lund, Ph.D. and Bobette Fleishman, JD, MFT**

Parental separation, particularly when coupled with high levels of conflict or violence, places children at increased risk of psychological, medical, or educational problems. The first half of this Institute addresses these issues. These children are more likely to need services, and to benefit when they receive prompt attention from competent practitioners who understand the legal context. Evidence-based care is available in a variety of settings and strong training models exist, but many practitioners are reluctant to provide care for these families. All professionals operating in the shadow of the legal system have ethics codes and professional responsibilities, which sometimes exist in tension. Poor interdisciplinary communication may lead to misunderstandings, missed opportunities to resolve problems, and decisions by care providers to avoid or "fire" the families they serve. This panel will discuss these problems and possible methods of resolving them, considering both the requirements of fairness and due process and the conditions needed to promote quality care for these vulnerable children and families.

AFCC-CA has been calling for custody evaluators to help mentor mental health professionals to become custody evaluators, and the second half of this Institute addresses this important need. Finishing coursework and materially assisting as called for by Rule 5.225 are only a beginning. A new evaluator needs to be part of an entire case, to work directly with clients while receiving careful supervision, and to take part in the analysis and report writing to learn the many practical and intellectual skills necessary to do a custody evaluation. Topics discussed in this workshop include stipulations that allow for mentoring, procedures that insure the mentor has direct responsibility for collecting information, analyzing the case and formulating the recommendations while still allowing the training evaluator to work independently and meaningfully on the case, managing practical and ethical dilemmas that arise during an evaluation where training is occurring, and co-analyzing and co-writing the report. We give the mentor evaluator and the training evaluator's perspectives on the motivation, the anxieties and benefits of the mentoring process.

#### ***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will be able to:

- Identify how the loss of civility interferes with children's access to services, in both specific cases and the broader court-involved population.
- Identify two ethical obligations in each professional discipline that may exist in tension, and two potential strategies for resolving those issues.
- Identify three practical strategies for promoting quality treatment and other services for court-involved families.
- Describe three ethical dilemmas that arise in having a training evaluator directly responsible for data collection and writing of a custody evaluation report and ways to address those dilemmas.
- Describe and use a model for jointly-formulating hypotheses about issues in an evaluation to direct interview questions and other evaluation techniques.
- Describe what it means to think like a forensic mental health professional as opposed to a psychotherapist or an attorney.

## ***Institute Three***

### **What is Real? Identifying and Intervening with an Encapsulated Delusion**

**Presenters:**

**Robin Deutsch, Ph.D., ABPP, Leslie Drozd, Ph.D., Hon. Harvey Silberman**

Cases where children resist or refuse contact with a parent are some of the most challenging cases the courts face. Some of these cases include allegations of abuse that are unsupported, yet the allegations remain alive and the subject of the court hearings, even though a thorough investigation has proven the allegations to be unfounded. In this Institute we will explore the psychological processes that underlie this delusional belief system. We will describe what these cases look like, differentiate an encapsulated delusional system from both a delusional disorder and a paranoid personality disorder. We will describe a screening process and differentiate those cases that are likely to respond to treatment from those that are not. We will propose therapeutic interventions and a system of accountability with concrete goals for the family and for judges to consider in their orders.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Define what an encapsulated disorder is and is not.
2. Differentiate an encapsulated delusion from both a delusional disorder and a paranoid personality disorder.
3. Identify psychological processes involved in these disorders
4. Differentiate encapsulated disorders that are more likely to be treatable from those that are not.
5. Describe treatment interventions and ways to measure success in treatment

### **WELCOME & PLENARY ONE (Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 5:45pm to 7:30pm):**

#### **When Civility Breaks Down in Politics and Relationships: Designing Interest-Based Approaches to Chronic Conflicts**

**Presenter:**

**Kenneth Cloke, JD, LLM, Ph.D.**

In *all* conflicts, there is a better outcome than winning and losing, a more successful process than accusing and blaming, and a deeper relationship than exercising power *over* and *against* others. These better outcomes are achieved when both sides win and no one loses, when adversaries participate in meaningful dialogue and reach satisfying agreements, and when power is exercised *with* and *for* others by satisfying interests and jointly solving common problems.

Globally, we are mired in political conflicts filled with incivility, bitterness, hatred and personal attacks, leading to increased stereotyping and discrimination, divisive language and antagonistic, hate-filled conversations that diminish our ability to work together to solve problems.

Moreover, all conflicts, no matter how petty or personal, possess veiled *political* features that inform their evolution and eventual outcome, in which people quarrel over money, compete for scarce resources, and disagree over how decisions are made. Politically *and* relationally, we need to design ways of discussing our differences that will lead to learning, collaboration, empathy, mutual understanding and problem solving.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will learn:

- What makes political and relational conflicts so uncivil and contentious, and how to transform them.

- How to discuss political and relational differences without becoming biased and adversarial.
- How to design interest-based approaches to chronic political and relational conflicts.

## **PLENARY TWO (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 8:30am to 10:30am):**

### **Therapeutic Apologies in the Context of Strained Parent-Child Relationships**

**Presenters:**

**Michael A. Saini, Ph.D., Robin Deutsch, Ph.D., ABPP, Leslie Drozd, Ph.D.**

There has been increased attention in the past decade to both develop interventions and to explore the key mechanisms of change to assist families who are at an impasse due to strained parent-child relationships, post-separation and divorce. This workshop will introduce an innovative approach of integrating apologies for forgiveness as a method for assisting families to move past the impasse of child resistance and rejection. This workshop will review the empirical evidence related to apologies and forgiveness-seeking, highlight the various ways apologies can be integrated into interventions with strained parent-child relationships, and provide practical strategies to help families create and deliver apologies within the therapeutic context to assist in repairing strained parent-child relationships.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the methods for integrating apologies with children and families within family law matters.
2. Compare and contrast the influence of methods and approaches of apologies within resist-refusal dynamics in the family.
3. Consider a taxonomy for creating and delivering apologies as well as assessing the changes that need to occur to resolve parent-child contact problems.

## **SATURDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:45am to 12:15pm):**

### **Workshop One**

#### **When Children Are Seen But Not Heard: Need for Recognition of Children's Voices in Custody Determinations**

**Presenter:**

**Penny Clemmons, Ph.D., JD, CFLS**

The voice of children of divorce is under-represented in both our psychological and legal discourse. When children have a voice in their custodial placement and time share, even if it is not determinative, the impact of divorce is mitigated.

Research has documented the negative impact of divorce and resulting custody decisions on children and their future progeny. Custody is not a "one size fits all" issue. There is no all-purpose custody template. Custody orders may not be modifiable, even though the child/dren may have outgrown the current order and the existing order is no longer in their best interest. The exorbitant expense of custody litigation and the emotional turmoil that accompanies it prevents many parents from reopening the issue of custody. Children, and their specific wishes, are frequently ignored and they become pawns in the divorce game.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify steps needed to include children in the custodial time share decision making process.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of different custody protocols.
3. Assess alternatives to costly custody determinations.

**Workshop Two**  
**Respectful Communication Is the Key**

**Presenter:**

**Marcie Kraft, MA, MS, JD**

Respectful communication provides the very foundation of civil interactions; it is the key to successful ongoing negotiations, and truly is the most expedient means of achieving a resolution all sides can accept (and be happy with!). In this day and age, though, when civil discourse seems to have gone the way of the horse-and-buggy, people either do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes respectful communication, or, if they do, they have difficulty putting their knowledge into action. Communicating respectfully is a skill which must be developed, nurtured, and practiced. This workshop will present attendees with an overview of what constitutes "Respectful Communication," and demonstrate how skills of Respectful Communication can be developed and fostered.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe / Differentiate styles and forms of Communication demonstrated by Co-Parents during Custody Mediations / Parenting Plan Coordination Meetings.
2. Identify Steps involved in the development of skills of Respectful Communication.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the steps through application to case study examples.

**Workshop Three**  
**The Case for Maintaining Collegiality in the Adversarial Arena**

**Presenters:**

**Lorie Nachlis, JD, CFLS, S. Margaret Lee, Ph.D., Anne Cochran Freeman, JD, CFLS**

We begin with the premise that benefits can be derived from devoting time and effort to maintaining respectful, collegial relationships with our adversaries, whether attorneys or mental health professionals. It is highly likely that each of us working in this field has had experiences with colleagues that have left us sad, troubled and somewhat bitter. Does the adversary system cause us to mirror the parties' underlying conflict or can we transcend the conflict and model appropriate behavior that includes the obligation to repair relationships that have been hurt? Is there something that the courts can do to facilitate respect and collegiality? For those of us who are not giving up litigation any time soon, we will provide thoughts and guidance designed to help us maintain and strengthen these important relationships.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify the pitfalls in mirroring parties' conflicts by professional advocates and their consultants in the case.
2. Identify the benefits derived from devoting time and effort to maintaining collegial relationships with our adversaries.
3. Understand ethics and boundaries issues when considering who they should and shouldn't work with.

**Workshop Four**  
**Digital Media, Children, and Families: Managing Family Conflict and Parental Disputes Around Technology**

***Presenters:***

**Warren Shiell, JD, CFLS, Hon. Laura A. Seigle, Kaveri Subrahmanyam, Ph.D., Angela Bissada, Psy.D.**

The panel will present the developmental and legal implications of digital media use in disputing families. We will begin with a discussion of how children's interactions with digital media (cell phones, tablets, computers, gaming, social networking sites) may positively and negatively impact their development as well as their interpersonal relationships with their families and peers. The panel will, through the elucidation of case examples, present common disputes that arise between parents regarding their children's use of digital media.

The use of digital media in litigation will also be explored. Instead of using digital media to bolster one parent's position in litigation, the panel will suggest that, if properly understood and applied, technology can be harnessed by the judicial system to facilitate positive outcomes for families. Although the long-term effects of our rapidly evolving, all-consuming digital media age remain largely unknown, the panel will consider a family systems approach to identifying and resolving problems caused by the excessive use, misapplication or inconsistent approaches to the use of digital media by children and parents in disputing families.

***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will:

1. Identify the most common digital media used by children, co-parents and families
2. Gain an understanding of the effects of digital media on child and adolescent emotional and social development
3. Become familiar with risks and opportunities associated with the use of digital media in family litigation

**LUNCHEON & DROWN AWARD (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 12:30pm to 1:30pm)**

**PLENARY THREE (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1:30pm to 3:00pm):**

**The Opioid Crisis, Substance Abuse and Treatment Alternatives**

***Presenters:***

**Alix Nassiri, DO, Michael J. Kretzmer, JD, CFLS**

The abuse of opioids is pandemic and the number of deaths attributable to opioid abuse has reached historically high levels. This panel will examine the current state of substance abuse in the United States and how aspects of the opioid epidemic effects our clients and patients. Topics will include an examination of traditional treatment protocols, as well as newer, alternative treatment options. In addition, the panel will provide guidance on how to assess and select treatment programs. Finally, the panel will discuss the ways mental health professionals and lawyers can work together to optimize the potential for successful recovery from substance abuse.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Identify substance abuse issues specific to opioids.
2. Become familiar with indicia of substance abuse.
3. Become familiar with both traditional and alternative treatment modalities for substance abuse.
4. Identify different types of substance abuse treatment programs and criteria for participation.
5. Learn about the working relationship between lawyers and mental health professionals in substance abuse cases.

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 3:15pm to 5:15pm):**

**Workshop Five**

**Domestic Violence: Drafting and Enforcing Effective Court Orders to Keep Children and Families Safe**

**Presenters:**

**Stephanie M. Barnett, JD, CFLS, Hon. Reva Goetz, Retired, Alyce LaViolette, MS, MFT, Ilene Fletcher, Prof. Custody Monitor**

This Workshop will explore best practices for family law professionals to identify and address domestic violence in family law proceedings, with the goal of keeping children and families safe. Renowned domestic violence expert, Alyce LaViolette, will provide an overview of the power and control dynamics of domestic violence, emphasizing how to identify and address commonly occurring issues in family law proceedings involving custody and domestic violence. Professional custody monitor, Ilene Fletcher, will provide insight into the types of orders that would help professional monitors implement court-ordered monitored custody. Hon. Reva Goetz, Ret., and certified family law specialist, Stephanie M. Barnett, will tackle the challenging task of drafting, making and enforcing orders that protect children and families in cases involving domestic violence.

**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will be able to:

1. Analyze facts to identify whether and how domestic violence, including coercive control, may impact child custody proceedings.
2. Assess how to best protect children and families in cases involving domestic violence.
3. Write and make enforceable orders designed to effectively address domestic violence.

**Workshop Six**

**If Therapists Are From Venus and Lawyers From Mars, How Do We Communicate Here on Earth?**

**Presenters:**

**Carol Hirshfield, Ph.D., Karin Manger, LCSW, David Shebby, JD, CFLS, Judith Nesburn, JD, LCSW**

Attorneys and Mental Health professionals work from different assumptions and beliefs, and yet they need to work together in family law proceedings and in consensual dispute resolution - for the sake of the clients. This team of experienced professionals will have a frank and civil discussion about the basic assumptions of their work and how to apply those to communication between the professionals: how we define "best interests of the child"; understanding causes and remedies for conflict between parents; how can we learn from each other; how do we integrate legal and mental health issues into case analysis; how

we can work to avoid blame or conflict in the team; and work with the audience to develop tools for this work.

***Learning Objectives:***

1. Learn to examine the ways that mental health professionals and attorneys view best interests' standards, parenting, conflict, and family dynamics
2. Gain tools for learning from the expertise of attorneys and mental health professionals
3. Modeling civility for the participants – to model for their clients.

## **Workshop Seven**

### **Overcoming Righteous Indignation and Accusatory Suffering: Teaching Co-Parents Respectful Communication and Affect Regulation**

***Presenters:***

**Albert R. Gibbs, Ph.D., Donald A. Gordon, Ph.D., Merlyn Hernandez, JD, CFLS**

Parents involved in family law disputes are not typically interested in being civil with their co-parent, and their engagement in traditional adversarial litigation often intensifies reciprocal feelings of righteous indignation or accusatory suffering. This can trap them in bitter and self-defeating behaviors or hostile withdrawals that undermine calm, consistent custodial exchanges, mutual understanding or effective problem-solving. This workshop will present how an online program, High Conflict Solutions, and a structured six-week co-parenting class, Co-Parent Solutions, improve co-parents' civility with each other by teaching them how to calm themselves when angered and tap into their prefrontal lobes in order to attune to their children's needs, and think and communicate effectively with each other. These programs are effective with a wide range of co-parents and cost effective for parents with limited financial resources or access to services. The workshop will include video clips of co-parent civility after they are taught and practice skills, and also homework assignments, structured class discussions and counseling interventions that strengthen working alliances often necessary for overcoming co-parent resistances and fears about using these skills with each other in real life.

***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will be able to:

- 1 List two hypersensitivities that lead to unsuccessful co-parenting
- 2 Describe three methods to increase parents' emotional engagement
- 3 List three methods for increasing memorability and retention so parents can use the information being taught

## **Workshop Eight**

### **Using Family Therapy Techniques to Move from Hostility to Civility: Emotional Redirecting, Empathic Confronting and Radical Reframing**

***Presenters:***

**Angus M. Strachan, Ph.D. and Stan J. Katz, Ph.D.**

Fine-tune your skills in helping conflicted parents and children talk in new ways that lowers conflict, improves communication and promotes settlement. Two experienced clinicians will use clinical demonstrations to illustrate how introducing civility to discourse leads to more effective outcomes in our work with challenging families.

Through demonstration, commentary and audience participation, the presenters will explain and illustrate key communication principles and practical skills that have emerged from family therapy and mediation. We will focus on three areas: how to engage (build a therapeutic alliance, get around resistance), how to

intervene (core family therapy techniques), and how to coach our clients to improve their problem-solving methods (empathic reflections, positive requests, yes/and communication). If you are a mental health professional, attorney or judge, who conducts settlement discussions, mediation or co-parent counseling, this workshop is for you!

***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will learn:

1. Specific techniques for engaging with reluctant clients.
2. How to reframe and challenge clients productively.
3. How to coach clients to use more civil and productive communication.

**PLENARY FOUR (Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 8:30am to 10:30am):**

**The Evolution of Family Law and Parenting Evaluations: Science, Unintended Consequences & Reconsidering Delivery of Services**

***Presenters:***

**Robert Kaufman, Ph.D., ABPP, Steven Friedlander, Ph.D., Hon. Marjorie Slabach, Comm. Ret., Lorie Nachlis, JD, CFLS**

Efforts over the past 20 or more years to increase the scientific basis of assessment and decision-making in family law matters have provided many benefits to the field and has been an overwhelmingly positive trend. Yet, there have been unintended consequences as professionals increasingly try to establish standardized methods and procedures based on available research. We suggest those consequences include: creation of standards that cannot be reasonably met in an efficient and cost effective way; intensification and increase in litigation; de-emphasis on settlement-based approaches; upsurge of scrutiny of evaluations and assessments; mental health professionals and attorneys alike practicing defensively; decrease in civility and less openness to collaborative approaches; loss of confidence in the family law system; and reluctance of new professionals willing enter the field. This plenary will examine these problematic phenomena and explore alternative approaches to delivering services. They include matching targeted interventions and investigations with specific needs to assist in best interest determinations.

***Learning Objectives:***

Attendees will be able to:

1. Identify two positive consequences of efforts to make evaluations and decision-making in family law more scientific.
2. Identify two unintended negative consequences of efforts to make evaluations and decision-making in family law more scientific.
3. Describe one change in the adversarial system that would reduce conflict and acrimony and re-focus efforts on the best interests of the child.

## **SUNDAY MORNING WORKSHOPS (Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 10:45am to 12:45pm):**

### **Workshop Nine**

#### **Disturbing the Peace in an Electronic Age – Addressing the Burden of Proving “Abuse” Under the DVPA**

***Presenters:***

**Cari M. Pines, JD, CFLS, Hon. Hank Goldberg, Ret., Mary Elizabeth Lund, Ph.D., Mark Ressa, JD, CLFS**

Discussion, instruction and live demonstration of online communication that constitutes domestic violence in a family law environment. Examining the use of electronic data as evidence, the reliance on said evidence by mental health experts, and the presentation of such evidence and issues in family court. The panel will explore what types of email, text messages and social media usage may constitute harassment or “disturbing the peace” under current California law. The panel will explore issues, including the level of impact and correlative proof necessary to establish that electronic activity can rise to the level necessitating protection and restrainable conduct, as well as the impact of such evidence on a child custody dispute. The panel will demonstrate how best to present and defend against such claims.

***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will be able to:

1. Compare the types of electronic communication that may be offered by litigants seeking protection under the DVPA.
2. Explain the considerations by a child custody evaluator and family law judicial officer when determining whether the offered evidence constitutes harassment or disturbing the peace rising to the level of restrainable conduct that may impact legal or physical custody.
3. Demonstrate the evidentiary issues and technological challenges faced by attorneys presenting electronic evidence of domestic violence in a family law courtroom.
4. Custody evaluators will be able to identify three problems with relying on digital information provided as ancillary materials in relation to admissibility of such evidence
5. Draw distinctions between what may be considered as harassment versus normative conflict in co-parenting communication.

### **Workshop Ten**

#### **Co-Mediation: Interdisciplinary Neutrals When Lack of Civility Prevails**

***Presenters:***

**Stacey Shuster, Ph.D., Michele Heisler, CDFAR®, CVA, MBA, Paula Lawhon, JD, CFLS**

Mediators and other alternative dispute resolution professionals have all encountered complex, high-conflict cases that appear to be headed for the courts, destined to be tied up in litigation (and debt) for years. Neutral professionals of all disciplines are ever-hopeful that we can help these clients avoid this painful process, and need to utilize creativity and work with professionals of different disciplines to assist clients in making their own agreements.

In this workshop, three mediators – an attorney, a psychologist and a financial neutral – present and discuss cases that narrowly avoided litigation through creative thinking and flexible approaches. We will present a few of these cases, as well as a few that ended up in court, and identify successful (and less successful) strategies. We will also present warning signs for inappropriateness for mediation and discuss the mindset of the mediator to help discern when to let go and when to press on.

***Learning Objectives:***

Participants will learn:

1. How to determine, based on objective criteria, whether a case is appropriate for co-mediation.

2. A variety of ways that professionals of different disciplines (e.g., attorneys, mental health professionals and financials) can work together to effectively help clients contain their volatility and make productive agreements.
3. How to screen for cases that are not appropriate for mediation or co-mediation.

## **Workshop Eleven**

### **Implicit Bias in the Courtroom: Understanding How Race, Culture and Ethnicity Impact Us**

***Presenters:***

**Linda Bortell, Psy.D., Gitu Bhatia, Psy.D., Hon. Harvey Silberman**

In this interactive workshop, two psychologists and a family law judge will dissect the various ways that implicit bias impacts us in positive and negative ways in the courtroom. Discussions of neuroscience and how memories are formed in the brain will illuminate how we all come to have the conscious and unconscious thoughts and beliefs. Illustrated with case examples and clips from movies, the panel will dissect implicit bias from a psychological and legal perspective.

***Learning Objectives:***

1. Attendees will understand the ways that implicit biases are stored in the brain and difficulties around challenging/changing this.
2. Through exercises, attendees will begin to challenge their own implicit bias and its impact in their work.
3. Attendees will understand the difference between prejudice and implicit bias and the complexity of culture

## **Workshop Twelve**

### **Understanding the (Big!) Challenges of “Blended Family” Relationships: What Works and What Doesn’t**

***Presenter:***

**Patricia L. Papernow, Ed.D.**

After divorce, very (very) often, comes a stepfamily. Indeed, stepfamily relationships saturate the practices of lawyers, therapists, parent coordinators, judges, mediators, and family lawyers. Nonetheless, few receive training in meeting the often intense challenges facing “blended families.” These include “resistant” unhappy children, tangles over parenting, discipline, and the stepparent role, struggles over rules and values within the home and between children’s two homes. Add that the entry of a stepparent can ignite even the most collaborative co-parenting relationship. Relying on our knowledge of first-time families is not only unhelpful, it is frequently destructive.

In this workshop, Dr. Papernow integrates four decades of clinical work with a large body of increasingly sophisticated research to help you recognize each of five major challenges, give you practical evidence-based guidelines for meeting them, and avoid some “easy wrong turns.” This workshop will include demonstrations and provide handouts to participants.

***Learning Objectives:***

By the end of this workshop, participants will:

1. Be able to describe some of the differences between a first-time family and a stepfamily.
2. Be able to describe some of the challenges the stepfamily structure creates, and list some practical strategies to meet them.
3. Be able to list some evidence-informed guidelines for parenting, step-parenting and discipline in a stepfamily.