Call for Submissions - 2027 AFCC CA Annual Conference : Entry # 380

Title of Your Presentation

Death of the Family Therapist: A True Crime Mystery

Preferred Length of Presentation

120 Minute Workshop

Presentation Abstract

Look around. Someone is missing. Where is the family therapist, and who saw them last? In this true crime mystery, two highly opinionated psychologists cast a wide web of aspersion and accusation. Fingers will be pointed in all directions, anywhere but at themselves. Was it the judge, the parenting coordinator, the attorney, the evaluator, or the mental health system that struck the final blow? Or, like Gone Girl, did the family therapist simply wander off for dramatic effects? Attendees will visit the crime scene, examine the evidence, and reach their own verdict. Together we will establish who the court-involved family therapist is, why anyone would have it in for them, which practices deserve to be permanently buried, and which are worthy of revival. Participants will leave as critical consumers and critical thinking providers, ready to resuscitate a dying service and celebrate the rebirth of a new kind of family therapist.

One-Page Outline of Proposal

- Death-of-the-Family-Therapist-Proposal-Submission.docx

Learning Objective #1

Identify at least four systemic and professional factors contributing to the decline in availability and effectiveness of court-involved family therapy.

Learning Objective #2

Distinguish family therapy practices that undermine treatment integrity in court-involved cases from evidence-informed practices that protect the therapeutic role and support treatment outcomes.

Learning Objective #3

Apply at least three concrete safeguards, including specialized informed consent provisions, role clarification, and structured court communication protocols, to protect the family therapist role.

Citation #1

Ford, K. (2025). The aperture effect: A radically simple approach to finding joy and connection in your relationship.

Citation #2

Greenberg, L. R., Fidler, B. J., & Saini, M. A. (Eds.). (2019). Evidence-informed interventions for court-involved families: Promoting healthy coping and development. Oxford University Press.

Citation #3

Deutsch, R. M., Drozd, L., & Ajoku, C. (2020). Trauma-informed interventions in parent-child contact cases. Family Court Review, 58(2), 470-487.

Citation #4

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Walters, M. G., & Friedlander, S. (2016). When a child rejects a parent: Working with the intractable resist/refuse dynamic. Family Court Review, 54(3), 424-445.

Number of Presenters

Two

Presenter #1

Jennifer Harrison

Professional Designation (#1)

PsyD, ABPP

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100-Word Biography of Presenter #1

Jennifer Myers Harrison, PsyD, ABPP, ATR-BC, is a double board-certified clinical psychologist and art therapist. Founder and director of Therapy Partners of the Peninsula, she specializes in court-involved family therapy, parent-child contact problems, and high-conflict custody matters, with forensic evaluation and expert witness testimony across civil, criminal, and family courts. She holds diplomate status in traumatic stress and licensure in seven states plus PSYPACT authority. Training Director at San Jose Behavioral Health Hospital and Villa Fairmont Mental Health Rehabilitation Center, she serves on the AFCC Task Force on Court-Involved Therapy Guidelines and presents internationally on trauma and family court.

Resume or CV of Presenter #1

- JMH_CV_July2026.pdf

Presenter #2

Mindy Dirks

Professional Designation (#2)

PhD

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100-Word Biography of Presenter #2

Mindy Penzias Dirks, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist in Palo Alto, CA with a focus on providing support to individuals and families struggling with relationship difficulties. She has a passion for helping others find thoughtful, dynamic, and gentle solutions to complex social problems. Dr. Dirks works as a family systems therapist, parent coach, and as a consultant to family law attorneys and their clients.

Resume or CV of Presenter #2

- CV-Mindy-Dirks-Ph.D.pages-1.pdf

Reference #1

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Notes

Admin Notification (ID: 5f458bd3c01c8)

added July 20, 2026 at 9:32 pm

WordPress successfully passed the notification email to the sending server.

Submission Confirmation (ID: 5f46f5da5bcea)

added July 20, 2026 at 9:32 pm

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