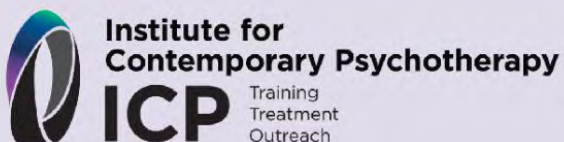


The Traumatic Impact of the Dissolution of the Family: An Interdisciplinary Approach



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2021

8:30 am – 6:40 pm EDT



REGISTRATION

To Register Visit: <https://bit.ly/3DrpHS6>

	Early Bird thru 9/22	Regular Rate 9/23 to 10/22
General Admission	\$200.00	\$250.00
ICP Affiliates	\$150.00	\$200.00
Therapists working with ICP Patients	\$90.00	\$110.00
Current ICP Students/Candidates/Trainees	\$60.00	\$75.00
NYWBA or WBASNY Member	\$200.00	\$250.00
NYWBA or WBASNY Member with income \$35,000 and below/Full-time law students	\$50.00	\$63.00

Cancellation & Refund Policies

Written cancellation or change notifications must be received no later than Monday, October 11, 2021 via email to the NYWBA Executive Director, Karen Lu, by emailing ed@nywba.org or info@nywba.org. After October 11, 2021, no refunds or credit will be issued. Substitute attendees are welcome, but we must be notified with their names and contact information. If you do not attend, you are still liable for full payment. In the unlikely event that this program is cancelled, you will be notified immediately via email and a credit will be issued toward a rescheduled conference, or the entire submitted registration fee will be refunded without further liability on the part of the organizer.

Special Needs Requests

If you have a special needs request, please email emily.mohr@managemellc.com at least 2-weeks prior to the conference date.

For further information please contact:

ICP | Emily Mohr, Conference Coordinator, emily.mohr@managemellc.com

NYWBA | Karen Lu, Executive Director, NY Women's Bar Association, ed@nywba.org

CONTINUING EDUCATION

CEs and CLEs are available to attendees.

NYS CE Information | 8.5 CE Credits

- The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychoanalysts.
- The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy is recognized by the NYS Education Department State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education credit for licensed social workers.
- The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed mental health counselors.
- The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Mental Health Practitioners as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed marriage and family therapists.
- The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Psychology as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed psychologists.

NYWBA CLE Information | 4.5 CLE Credits

- Panel A: Masters: 1.5 CLE Credits, Skills
- Panel B: Mendelson and Liu: 1.0 CLE Credits, Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias
- Panel C: Rooney and Lusterman: 1.0 CLE Credits, Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias
- Panel C: Gunsberg and Trager: 1.0 CLE Credits, Professional Practice

The New York Women's Bar Association is an accredited CLE provider. The Association has approved of the above-listed credit hours for established attorneys and as transitional credit hours for newly admitted attorneys.

A Letter from the Institute of Contemporary Psychotherapy Board Chair

The Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy (ICP) is a not-for-profit dedicated to providing advanced training for mental health professionals and low-cost psychotherapy for the underserved. Through professional development and accessible treatment, we seek to reduce the stigma of mental health issues and ease the suffering of often marginalized people. Essential to this mission are ICP's educational offerings, designed to help clinicians learn state-of-the-art psychotherapy interventions that address the needs of vulnerable populations.

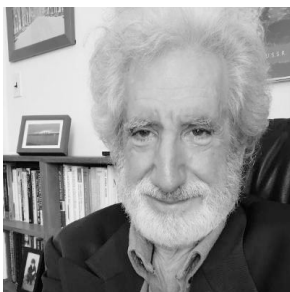
ICP is proud to co-sponsor with NYWBA this unique conference on the traumas of family dissolution. We hope that by learning from multiple perspectives, mental health professionals will better integrate psychological and legal frames to lessen the harm that children and families can experience, strengthen family members' resilience and ease some of the contextual and internal stressors that contribute to trauma. In this way, we may better address the intense pressures experienced by those who navigate the often-fierce currents of separation and divorce.

A multi-disciplinary conference takes considerable time to conceive and to implement, and members of the ICP community have worked for almost two years on the project. With admiration for their imagination and resourcefulness we offer our heartfelt thanks to Committee Member Petra Maxwell, JD for initiating the connection between ICP and NYWBA, Committee Chair Linda Gunsberg, PhD who also served as liaison to the NYWBA, and Committee Members Rosemary Masters, JD, LCSW; LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R; and Claudette LaMelle, LMSW.

We acknowledge Program Managers Molly Potel and Tobin Berliner for their invaluable contributions toward CE credits and conference implementation, as well as praise for ICP's Family and Couple Treatment Services and ICP's Trauma Studies Center, both foundational to the clinical perspectives offered in this conference.

It is a notable moment as ICP and NYWBA address together the traumas of family dissolution.

Ron Taffel, PhD
ICP Board Chair



A Letter from the New York Women's Bar Association President

The New York Women's Bar Association (NYWBA) is a non-profit organization devoted to improving the status of women in society, educating lawyers and assisting them in their professional development and advancement, and promoting the fair and equal administration of justice. One of the ways the NYWBA accomplishes these goals is through the presentation of high-quality continuing legal education programs on a wide variety of topics that are of particular interest to our legal community.

The NYWBA is proud to partner with the ICP to co-sponsor this conference on the important subject of addressing trauma in the context of family dissolution and to provide CLE credits to participants who are attorneys. It is our hope that the interdisciplinary panels presented at this conference will provide insights to assist judges, attorneys, and mediators to better recognize the effects of trauma as they arise in the context of family law litigation or alternative dispute resolution processes, avoid the exacerbation of harm to parents and children, and eliminate biases that impede fair and just resolutions for the families we serve in the court system.

Special thanks go to NYWBA Board Member and CLE Committee Co-Chair Amy B. Goldsmith for shepherding the organizing committee through the rigorous requirements for providing CLE credit to attorney participants.



Amanda Norejko
NYWBA President



Timed Program | Traumatic Impact of the Dissolution of the Family | 10/22/2021

Introduction and Welcome	
8:30-8:37 am	Welcome and Introduction
8:37-8:40 am	Introductory Comments
8:40-9:10 am	Introduction to Conference "Systemic Mindfulness" - Recognizing Traumatic Family Reenactments in the Divorce Process
9:10-9:40 am	Debunking Custody Litigation Myths
Panel A	
9:40-9:50 am	Traumatic Stress and Family Dissolution: Conceptual Overview of the Neurobiological, Cognitive, and Emotional Consequences
9:50-10:40 am	Trauma, Stress and Attachment in Very Young Children (0-5 yrs)
10:40-11:55 am	Traumatic Stress and Family Dissolution: Conceptual Overview of the Neurobiological, Cognitive and Emotional Consequences
11:55-12:25 pm Break for Lunch	
Panel B	
12:25-12:35 pm	Added Stressors to Family Dissolution: The Cultural Context of the Family, Systemic Racism, and Sexism including LGBTQ Biases
12:35-12:50 pm	Consideration of the Cultural Context: Examination of Traditions Connected to Home in Hopi Tribal Court
12:50-1:20 pm	Why Does the Forensic Expert Need to be Culturally Competent?
1:20-1:50 pm	Gender and LGBTQ+ Bias in the Courts
1:50-2:20 pm	A Legal Perspective on Cultural Discrimination, Systemic Racism, and Sexism
Panel C	
2:20-2:21 pm	Under-Recognized High-Risk Factors that Impact Family Dissolution
2:21-3:11 pm	The Best Interests of the Special Needs Child and Family Dissolution
3:11-4:11 pm	Breaking Up is Hard to Do: Mental Illness, Family Dissolution, and a Mental Health Court Perspective
4:11-5:01 pm	Identification of Parental Alienation: Fast-Tracking PA Cases to Mitigate Stress and Trauma
Panel D	
5:01-6:21 pm	Mitigating the Stress and Trauma of Family Dissolution. What Can We Do? Panel Discussion and Q&A
Conference Q&A and Closing	
6:21-6:36 pm	Conference Q&A
6:36-6:41 pm	Conference Closing

The Traumatic Impact of the Dissolution of the Family: An Interdisciplinary Approach

October 22, 2021 | 8:30am - 6:40pm

Mission Statement:

To empower mental health professionals, judges and lawyers with the knowledge and skills to mitigate against the psychological traumatic effects of family dissolution.

Relationship Dissolution:

This refers to the breakup of friendships and romantic relationships including the breakup of non-marital and marital relationships (Battaglia, D.M., 1998). The process is usually due to the voluntary action of at least one partner. Relationship dissolution is an extended process, a long-term psychological process composed of several stages. It is not simply an event. For the purposes of this conference, we have extended the concept of relationship dissolution to family dissolution, which impacts all members of the family.

Conference Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the complexities of psychological trauma in the dissolution of families, and how to identify its symptoms.
2. Demonstrate how psychological trauma can be identified in families, well before family dissolution (intergenerational transmission of trauma, cumulative trauma within a particular family member, and past and present trauma within the family).
3. Examine how racism, sexism and other forms of bias contribute to psychological stress and trauma in family members before and during family dissolution.
4. Identify how the legal system and the court process unwittingly can create and/or exacerbate psychological trauma in family dissolution.
5. Explore alternatives offered by mental health and legal professionals to help mitigate the traumatic effects that can occur in family dissolution.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Attendees and speakers will receive a family study to review prior to the conference. Reading the family study prior to the conference is essential to meaningful discussion for Panels B, C and D.

PRESENTATIONS

Introduction & Welcome



LouAnn Smith



Amanda Norejko



Ron Taffel



Larry Sarezky

LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R | Conference Host

Welcome and Introduction

Amanda Norejko, JD

Introductory Comments

Ron Taffel, PhD

Introduction to Conference

"Systemic Mindfulness" - Recognizing Traumatic Family Reenactments in the Divorce Process

Divorce is an often fraught developmental process, the reenactment of family vulnerabilities that can traumatically play out during separation and in the legal system. The drivers of reenactments are an unpredictable confluence of individual and family dynamics, the temperamental fit of parents and children, unforgiving parent-child estrangements, and even, a family's unrealized strengths. From our different perspectives as mental health providers, attorneys and court representatives, "systemic mindfulness" may help lessen the traumas of family dissolution.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Define two key aspects of "systemic mindfulness" as it pertains to the separation-divorce process.
2. List three psychological drivers of reenactments during the separation-divorce process.
3. Describe three examples of reenactments during the separation-divorce process.
4. Discuss three signals within participating professionals that indicate a family reenactment is occurring.

Larry Sarezky, JD

Debunking Custody Litigation Myths

The custody short film, "Talk to Strangers", illustrates how child custody and access cases can put children at risk for trauma, and generates discussion regarding potential remedies.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify and debunk myths and rationalizations that have perpetuated resort to the courts in cases where out-of-court resolution was possible and in the children's interests.
2. Demonstrate to fellow professionals their misconceptions that court procedures protect children and serve their needs.
3. Contribute ideas to improve parenting education and court program content to dissuade parents more effectively from ceding parental responsibility to the court.

PANEL A | Traumatic Stress and Family Dissolution: Conceptual Overview of the Neurobiological, Cognitive, and Emotional Consequences



Petra Maxwell



Erica Willheim



Rosemary Masters



Yaelle Yoran

Petra Maxwell, Esq | Moderator of Panel A

Erica Willheim, PhD

Trauma, Stress and Attachment in Very Young Children (0-5 yrs)

This presentation will address the physiological, developmental, and social-emotional impact of traumatic stress on very young children, including the interplay of trauma and attachment in the parent-child relationship and the centrality of parental stress for very young children. The presentation will additionally offer select strategies for the management and mitigation of stress on infants and young children affected by family dissolution.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe at least three examples of the impact of traumatic stress on young children.
2. Discuss the importance of the parent-child attachment relationship in buffering early childhood stress.
3. Utilize at least three strategies to mitigate traumatic stress for young children affected by family dissolution.

Rosemary Masters, JD, LCSW and Yaelle Yoran, LCSW

Traumatic Stress and Family Dissolution: Conceptual Overview of the Neurobiological, Cognitive, and Emotional Consequences

This presentation will provide an overview of the neurobiology of traumatic stress and how family dissolution can activate the brain's survival circuits. This activated state, termed traumatic stress, impairs a person's ability to navigate the complex legal processes associated with separation, divorce and custody. Traumatized people can have difficulty thinking, communicating, and making good decisions for themselves and their families. Specific easily learned and employed strategies for mitigating traumatic stress will be reviewed.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe how family dissolution inflicts traumatic stress on those going through it.
2. Discriminate between the different survival strategies the human brain employs when it perceives survival of self and others is in danger.
3. Identify behaviors that indicate someone is in a state of traumatic stress.
4. Employ strategies that reduce reliance on fight/flight survival strategies and enable a person to stay focused, clear, able to communicate and make decisions.

PANEL B | Added Stressors to Family Dissolution: The Cultural Context of the Family, Systemic Racism, and Sexism including LGBTQ Biases



Claudette
LaMelle



Dana Ernst



Isaac Benzaquen



Hon. Edwina
Mendelson



Samuel Lui

Claudette E. LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW | Moderator of Panel B

This panel will look at how culture, racism, sexism, and other societal factors influence both the process and outcome in Family and Supreme Court for families who are separating and/or divorcing. Two landmark studies and their findings will open the discussion: the 1998 Kaiser Permanente study (the original ACEs study--adverse childhood experiences) and the 2013 ACEs Philadelphia study.

Dana Ernst, PhD Candidate, MA

Consideration of the Cultural Context: Examination of Traditions Connected to Home in Hopi Tribal Court

Anthropology offers a uniquely holistic approach to the understanding of individuals, families, and groups through the concept of culture. This presentation reviews major understandings of culture as developed within Anthropology, focusing on both sociocultural and linguistic dimensions. An example of culture and its relation to contemporary jurisprudence will be presented through property conflicts as handled by the Hopi Tribal Court. This potentially offers a respectful alternative approach to the equitable distribution of property in family dissolution.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Understand and explain the major definitions of culture as formulated by both sociocultural and linguistic anthropology.
2. Apply these understandings of sociocultural and linguistic anthropological conceptions of culture to an understanding of a culturally-informed alternative to the US adversarial court system.
3. Understand through the example of the Hopi Tribal Court and the handling of property disputes how and why Family Court and Supreme Court, in the context of family dissolution, may represent an assault to culturally-valued and learned ways of being in the world.

Isaac Benzaquen, PhD

Why Does the Forensic Expert Need to be Culturally Competent?

This talk presents ethical considerations psychologists must uphold when working with families from different cultures. The presenter will explain the meaning of cultural sensitivity, intersectionality and cultural competency. He will then discuss biases that evaluators bring to the table which could potentially render their evaluations invalid or unreliable. He will cite cases in which the Court considered culture and race in custody proceedings, and finally offer strategies to decrease biases in the evaluation process.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Explain the meaning of terms used to describe culture.
2. Describe common biases that can influence the forensic evaluation and can profoundly impact critical decisions.
3. Recognize the importance of using experts to clarify cultural issues that might account for the results obtained in psychological tests often used by the child custody evaluator.
4. Apply cultural sensitivity when conducting an evaluation of the family.

Honorable Edwina Mendelson, JD, PhD

Gender and LGBTQ+ Bias in the Courts

This presentation will cover the continued presence of bias related to gender, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation in the state court system, and various intersecting endeavors to address and confront these implicit biases in court proceedings and the administration of justice.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify the sources of bias and discrimination that continue to operate in the state court system, and describe efforts to combat discrimination related to gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
2. Formulate action plans to address and reject implicit bias and discrimination in their own work environments.
3. Assess the ways in which their own attitudes and experiences may reflect systemic biases.

Samuel Lui, Esq

A Legal Perspective on Cultural Discrimination, Systemic Racism, and Sexism

Racism, sexism and cultural discrimination are built into society's fabric. In the legal system, these issues play a major role in shaping decisions and individuals' lives. This presentation aims to bring awareness to the systematic racism, sexism and discrimination in child custody, child support and dependency/juvenile proceedings in the United States. In addition, this presentation highlights how these issues play out in the international arena, specifically in Japan.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe ways in which a color-blind legal system actually perpetuates racism in child custody, child support, and dependency/juvenile proceedings.
2. Explain how cultural discrimination, racism and sexism challenge case planning that makes sense.
3. Recognize how racism and sexism manifest themselves in child custody cases in other countries, specifically in Japan.

PANEL C | Under-Recognized High-Risk Factors that Impact Family Dissolution



Linda Gunsberg



Serena Wieder



Patricia
Rooney-Lusterman



Mark Rand



Hon. Andrea Phoenix



Dionne Gaines



Yurla Francois



Jordan Trager

Linda Gunsberg, PhD | Moderator of Panel C

Serena Wieder, PhD; Patricia Rooney-Lusterman, Esq

The Best Interests of the Special Needs Child and Family Dissolution

This presentation focuses on 1) the emotional, social and physical stressors experienced by families with a Special Needs Child during family dissolution; 2) the family dynamics where family dissolution involves a Special Needs Child, including stress and potential trauma inflicted by Covid-19; 3) advocating for a Special Needs Child and parents, including discussion of implicit bias towards the Special Needs Child; 4) the complex financial issues faced during family dissolution involving a Special Needs Child; and 5) how courts can make things better.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Define the Special Needs Child and particularly the child with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) in more detail.
2. Identify at least three under-recognized factors related to family dissolution that might exist in a family with a Special Needs Child, particularly additional stressors and potential trauma.
3. Recommend certain estate planning and legal steps to be taken prior to family dissolution that would likely lessen the stress and potential trauma experienced should a family with a Special Needs Child separate and/or divorce.
4. Identify at least three ways court systems can foster healthy outcomes in the context of family dissolution for families with a Special Needs Child.

**Mark Rand, PhD, MPH; Honorable Andrea Phoenix;
Dionne Gaines, BA; Yurla Francois, BA**

Breaking Up is Hard to Do: Mental Illness, Family Dissolution, and a Mental Health Court Perspective

Part 1: Mark Rand

Part 2: Hon. Andrea Phoenix; Dionne Gaines; Yurla Francois

Dr. Rand will open the session with a discussion of mental illness of a parent from a family forensic perspective, focusing on factors associated with its impact on the family and the risks of trauma for the children. Judge Phoenix will then present the issue of mental illness from the perspective of the Nassau County Mental Health Court. Both clinical and legal considerations will be identified and discussed.

After attending Part 1 of this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify three significant areas of inquiry in evaluating families in which serious mental illness has played a role in the family dissolution.
2. List three examples of risk due to bias and stigma that are associated with specific mental health issues.

After the end of Part 2 of this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Describe the admission and eligibility requirements for the Nassau County Mental Health Court.
2. Discuss the Nassau County Mental Health Court's process, inclusive of its phases, consequences, positive reinforcements, and graduation.
3. Summarize the basic role of the case manager, housing, and community support groups.
4. Discuss various challenges and issues experienced by Nassau County Mental Health Court participants with regard to family dissolution.

Linda Gunsberg, PhD and Jordan E. Trager, Esq

Identification of Parental Alienation: Fast-Tracking PA Cases to Mitigate Stress and Trauma

This presentation offers attendees a nuanced introduction to the phenomenon of parental alienation within family dissolution cases from psychological and legal perspectives. With sustained court involvement often required, is the traditional adversarial court process equipped to deal with such cases or should a fast-track model be utilized given the inherent urgency with PA? Preliminary ideas regarding an interdisciplinary PA training model are offered.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify parental alienation vs high conflict child custody, separation and divorce cases.
2. Apply more effective use of legal remedies to parental alienation cases, and in particular, utilize a fast-track court model for these cases in order to prevent the intensification of parental alienation and mitigate related stress and trauma for these families in family dissolution.
3. Design a proposal for an interdisciplinary training model for all professionals involved in family dissolution to identify and fast-track parental alienation cases.

PANEL D | Mitigating the Stress and Trauma of Family Dissolution: What Can We Do?



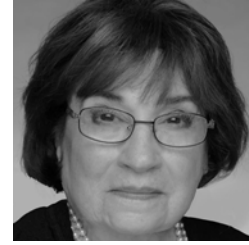
Linda Gunsberg



Hon. Kathie E.
Davidson



Hon. Janet C. Malone



Ellen Holtzman



Petra Maxwell



Robin D. Carton



Marc Mednick



Claudette E. LaMelle

Linda Gunsberg, PhD | Moderator of Panel D

Panelists:

Honorable Kathie E. Davidson

Justice of the Supreme Court, Westchester County; Dean of the New York State Judicial Institute

Honorable Janet C. Malone

Justice of the Supreme Court, Ninth Judicial District, Westchester County

Ellen Holtzman, JD

Matrimonial Attorney; Collaborative Law

Petra Maxwell, Esq

Mediator

Robin D. Carton, Esq

Attorney for the Child

Marc Mednick, PhD

Child and Family Clinician; Forensic Expert

Linda Gunsberg, PhD

Child, Adolescent, Adult and Family Therapist; Forensic Expert; Interdisciplinary Forensic Training

Claudette E. LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW

Clinical and Forensic Social Worker

Mitigating the Stress and Trauma of Family Dissolution: What Can We Do?

This panel focuses on **What Can We Do?** We begin to integrate knowledge of stress and trauma into our understanding of family dissolution; to understand how stress and trauma impact professionals working with these families; explore options of fast-tracking family dissolution cases; consider an interdisciplinary training model for professionals to identify the stress and traumatic experiences of separating/divorcing families in order to lessen their impact; and to understand how implicit biases contribute to, and aggravate stress and traumatic experiences in family dissolution.

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how various professionals can integrate new knowledge regarding stress and trauma into their understanding of the family dissolution process and its impact on all family members.
2. Discuss how stress and trauma in the family dissolution process emotionally affects all professionals working with these families (vicarious traumatization) and how this impacts our work with these families.
3. Describe ways in which working with these families can be both effective and fast-tracked in order to mitigate stress and potential trauma in the family dissolution process.
4. Create ideas for an interdisciplinary training model for professionals which addresses the stress and trauma experienced by family members in the family dissolution process, and the stress and potential trauma experienced by the professionals working with these families. This training model will also address how implicit biases can exacerbate stress and potential trauma.

Q&A for Panel D

Conference Q&A and Closing

LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R | Conference Host

Conference Q&A

LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R; Ron Taffel, PhD

Conference Closing

PRESENTER BIOS

Isaac Benzaquen, PhD

Bilingual Clinical and Forensic Psychologist; Director, Benzaquen Psychological Services, PLLC

Dr. Isaac Benzaquen conducts treatment and evaluations in both English and Spanish for the Family and Supreme Courts and is contracted with the Nassau County DSS to conduct dispositional evaluations in cases of child abuse and neglect, termination of parental rights and placement of children in foster care. Dr. Benzaquen mentors licensed psychologists who are interested in gaining experience in Forensic Psychology.

Robin D. Carton, Esq

Attorney, Carton & Rosoff PC

Robin D. Carton is a partner in the law firm of Carton & Rosoff PC, and her practice is devoted to matrimonial and family law. Ms. Carton is Immediate Past Co-President of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (NY Chapter), Past President of the Westchester Women's Bar Association, Past-President of the Westchester Women's Bar Association Foundation, Inc., Past President of the Law Guardian Association of Westchester County, and a present WWBA Elected Director.

Honorable Kathie E. Davidson

Justice of the Supreme Court, Westchester County; Dean of the New York State Judicial Institute

Hon. Kathie E. Davidson serves as Dean of the New York State Judicial Institute, a statewide judicial education and research center focused on the latest developments in the law. Judge Davidson oversees the creation and delivery of training seminars for newly elected and appointed Unified Court System (UCS) judges, continuing education programs for UCS judges and lawyers, and cooperative education programs with state and federal judicial systems, legal academics and other interested stakeholders.

Dana Ernst, PhD Candidate, MA

Research Fellow, University of Utah Center of Excellence in ELSI Research (Ethical, Legal and Social Implications of Genetics)

Dana Ernst received her Master of Arts in Oral History from Columbia University. As a doctoral candidate in Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology, she draws upon experiences including work in collaboration with the Royal Flying Doctors Remote Health Service on Aboriginal Australian communities in the Central Desert, and a Fulbright Fellowship with Jewish refugees and their descendants from the Middle East and North Africa region, engaging with themes of migration, memory, trauma, and intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge.

Yurla Francois, BA

Care Coordinator-Nassau County Mental Health Court

Yurla Francois has been a Care Coordinator for the Nassau County Mental Health Court for over 10 years. This position intersects her education, expertise and passion to help others. She has 20 years of clinical experience across a variety of settings. Notably, Ms. Francois managed a Mental Health Enriched Housing Program. Additionally, she has experience as a Vocational Specialist and in this role, she worked with individuals with developmental disabilities. Ms. Francois earned a dual degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Dionne Gaines, BA

Senior Care Coordinator-Nassau County Mental Health Court

Dionne Gaines earned a degree in Forensic Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Her career spans over 25 years. She became a Senior Care Coordinator for Federation Employment and Guidance Service in 2002. In 2016, Ms. Gaines joined Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services where she presently serves in the same capacity. Ms. Gaines has served the Nassau County Mental Health Court since its inception in 2008. Her extensive experience includes assisting with crisis intervention and connecting court participants with clinical services, housing, benefits and socialization outlooks.

Linda Gunsberg, PhD

Forensic Expert; Private Practice

Dr. Linda Gunsberg is a clinical psychologist in private practice and a forensic expert. She chaired the Family Law and Family Forensics Training Program at Washington Square Institute in NYC from 1997-2020. Dr. Gunsberg also co-chairs the Psychoanalysis and Law Discussion Group of the American Psychoanalytic Association. She has published and presented widely on topics related to family dissolution, and her most recent presentations focus on overnights for infants/toddlers; parental alienation; and stalking of children and partners in family dissolution.

Ellen Holtzman, JD

Attorney, Law Office of Ellen B. Holtzman

Ellen Holtzman is an attorney with more than thirty-five years of trial and appellate experience. Her practice encompasses State Courts, where she handles matrimonial and family law matters, and Federal Courts where she represents clients in international custody cases. Where appropriate, she practices collaborative law to resolve cases without litigation. A past President of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, she frequently gives lectures on matrimonial law and complex custody cases.

Claudette E. LaMelle, ACSW, LMSW

Claudette LaMelle has been a clinical social worker for over 25 years. For the last 10 years, she has been in private practice and has an extensive relationship with the family courts in Bronx, Manhattan, Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland. She is a visiting professor at Mico University College in Jamaica, W.I. and a field liaison with several metropolitan schools of social work. She serves on the Council of International Programs-USA, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and the National Organization of Human Services.

Samuel Lui, Esq

Samuel Lui has practiced law for over 13 years. He has worked with domestic violence survivors in child custody cases while in New York. He is currently working for a state agency in California that deals with childcare and child placement. In his personal life, Mr. Lui has dealt with the Japanese legal system as a left-behind parent in an international parental abduction case.

Honorable Janet C. Malone

Justice of the Supreme Court, Ninth Judicial District, Westchester County, State of New York Unified Court System

Justice Janet C. Malone joined the bench upon her election to Westchester County Family Court in 2007, was designated Acting Supreme Court Justice in 2014, and was elected to the State Supreme Court, Ninth Judicial District, in 2016. Before her ascension to the bench, Justice Malone had a diverse legal career as a Manhattan assistant district attorney, senior associate, solo practitioner, and Westchester County Family Court Support Magistrate.

Rosemary Masters, JD, LCSW

Founding Director, Trauma Studies Center of the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy

Rosemary Masters holds dual degrees in law and social work. She is the Founding Director of the Trauma Studies Center, a division of the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy, New York City. Currently a member of the Trauma Studies Center's faculty, she teaches the theory and treatment of psychological trauma and serves as a supervisor and consultant to the trauma program. In addition, she maintains a clinical practice and specializes in the treatment of psychological trauma.

Petra Maxwell, Esq

Owner, Mediationline

Petra Maxwell holds a law degree from Harvard Law School and a Masters in Cultural Anthropology from Northwestern University. She has been a practicing attorney for over 25 years. Before becoming a Mediator in 1996, she spent several years developing award winning non-profit parenting programs designed to teach single parents effective co-parenting strategies. Ms. Maxwell is a certified Divorce and Family Mediator, Collaborative Divorce Attorney, and Commercial Mediator and Arbitrator. She has recently completed her training as a Divorce Financial Planner.

Marc Mednick, PhD

Child and Family Clinician, Forensic Expert

Dr. Mednick has served in two primary consulting roles over the last 34 years, the first, as a child and family clinician and the second, as a court appointed independent forensic examiner in contested child custody cases. His most recent focus is on developing training videos to improve co-parenting skills.

Honorable Edwina Mendelson, JD, PhD

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, New York State Unified Court System Office for Justice Initiatives

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina Mendelson leads the New York State Unified Court System's Office for Justice Initiatives, tasked with ensuring meaningful access to justice for all regardless of income, background, or special needs. Judge Mendelson, a graduate of CUNY Law School and previously Administrative Judge of NYC Family Court, also leads the state courts' Equal Justice in Courts Initiative, which includes implementing the recommendations of both the Special Adviser's report examining racial bias and the Women in the Courts Committee's survey on gender fairness.

Amanda Norejko, JD

President, New York Women's Bar Association; Family Court Support Magistrate, New York County Family Court

Amanda Norejko is President of the New York Women's Bar Association. She is a Family Court Support Magistrate, presiding over paternity and support matters. She chairs the New York County Family Court's Gender Fairness Committee. Prior to joining the court system, Ms. Norejko worked at Sanctuary for Families, where she served as Director of the Matrimonial/Economic Justice Project, representing survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. Ms. Norejko received her JD from New York University School of Law in 2001.

Honorable Andrea Phoenix

Nassau County District Court Judge; Acting County Court Judge

Andrea Phoenix was elected to the Nassau County District Court in 2006 and was re-elected to a third term in 2018. She presides over the Mental Health Court and the Drug Treatment Court. She adjudicates both misdemeanor and felony cases. Before taking the bench, she concentrated in the area of Family Law. She was an active member of the Law Guardian Panel, now known as the Attorneys for Children Program. Judge Phoenix serves on the Unified Court System Family Violence Task Force and is a member of various other organizations.

Mark Rand, PhD, MPH

Private Practice; Forensic Psychological Services of NY, PLLC

Mark Rand earned the doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology in 1983. He earned a Master's in Public Health from Columbia University in 2008. His focus since 1997 has been family forensics. He has conducted over a thousand forensic evaluations and testified as an expert in over a hundred cases. Notably, Dr. Rand's professional opinion addressing the issue of mental illness in a child custody matter was cited in a lengthy Appellate Division decision in 2016.

Patricia Rooney-Lusterman, Esq

Patricia Rooney, P.C.

Patricia Rooney-Lusterman, a member of Elder Counsel and NYSBA's Trusts and Estates and Elder Law and Special Needs Sections, is frequently appointed by courts in guardianship proceedings as Court Evaluator or counsel. In addition to her work in the Elder and Guardianship Law areas, she is an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association, Co-Chairperson of NYSBA's Construction and Surety Law Division, and Editor of Deconstruction, the Division's Newsletter.

Larry Sarezky, JD

Attorney, Filmmaker

Larry Sarezky is a retired family law attorney and an award-winning author and filmmaker. In 2020, his Amazon #1 best-seller, "Divorce, Simply Stated" was ranked the #1 Best Family Law Book of All Time, by Book Authority. Larry's Telly Award winning film, "Talk to Strangers" and companion parents' guide have been featured in publications ranging from the journal, The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, to the Huffington Post, and are used internationally to discourage unnecessary child-related litigation.

LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R. Conference Host

Certified Family Mediator; Certified Family/Couple Therapist

LouAnn Smith, LCSW-R, works with family subgroups in different life cycle phases which inform her work with individuals, couples, groups and in her work as a mediator. She is on the faculty of the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and the Training Institute for Mental Health Practitioners. Ms. Smith has presented workshops on divorce and family mediation, daughter/mother relationships, and forgiveness. She values the complex interplay of historical, systemic, biological and experiential variables and how these impact relationships.

Ron Taffel, PhD

Chair, ICP Board of Directors, Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy

Dr. Ron Taffel is Chair, Board of Directors of the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy. He is the author of seven books and over one hundred professional and popular articles translated into numerous languages. Dr. Taffel's training in psychoanalysis and family and child therapy led to his writings on the intersectionality of treatment, the socio-political context, human development and the creation of community. His clinical work has centered on healing individuals and family relationships during life-cycle crises.

Jordan E. Trager, Esq

Wisselman, Harounian & Associates, PC

Active Concentration in Divorce and Family Law, Parental Alienation, and Divorce Mediation

Jordan E. Trager has over 25 years of litigation experience handling matrimonial and family law matters. He has tried numerous complex divorce and Family Court cases including parental alienation cases. He is the leader of the local Parental Alienation Awareness Organization, a not for profit organization educating the public on parental alienation. He conducts monthly group meetings as an affiliate of this organization.

Serena Wieder, PhD

Clinical Director, Profectum Foundation

Dr. Serena Wieder, Co-creator of the Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-based Model (DIR) that transformed the treatment of autism and developmental and emotional challenges, is Clinical Director of Profectum's interdisciplinary certificate training program. Teaching at various universities and collaborating with Erikson and Fielding Universities, she presents and publishes widely including the following titles: *The Child With Special Needs*; *Engaging Autism*; *Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health*; and *Visual Spatial Portals to Thinking, Feeling, and Movement*.

Erica Willheim, PhD

Research Assistant Professor, Child Study Center, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Dr. Erica Willheim is Research Assistant Professor at the Child Study Center in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, NYU Grossman School of Medicine. She is a nationally endorsed trainer in Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP). Dr. Willheim has spent over 20 years working with trauma-exposed NYC children and families. Her primary areas of focus are early childhood mental health, PTSD in caregivers and young children, the intergenerational transmission of trauma, and the impact of Intimate Partner Violence on young children and survivor caregivers.

Yaelle Yoran, LCSW

Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy

Yaelle Yoran is a therapist who has been working with survivors of trauma since 2005. In her clinical practice, Ms. Yoran uses EMDR and other trauma focused therapies to work with individuals and groups to help heal trauma wounds. She is on the faculty of the Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy and heads the Outreach Program, which offers education about the effect of trauma on the community at large.