

# **AFCC** North Carolina Chapter of Association of Family and Conciliation Courts



**Inaugural Conference**  
**March 31, 2023**  
**9am-5pm**  
**Greensboro, NC**

## **Program Overview & Speakers**

### **Plenary Speaker: Robin Deutsch, Ph.D., ABPP – The Slippery Slope of Definitions: The Deceptive Concepts of Trauma, Intimate Partner Violence, and Resist-Refuse Dynamics**

Whether as evaluators, mental health professionals, or legal professionals, we have a responsibility to provide and apply professional and scientific knowledge of the disciplines to our clients and to the court. Many of the concepts our clients bring forth, or that we talk about in our testimony have an intuitive appeal and are often used casually and persuasively. Yet, many of these constructs are incorrectly applied, not consistently defined or properly researched. Dr. Deutsch will address two critical notions: the nature of concept creep, and the application of concept creep to the important matters of trauma, intimate partner violence, and resist-refuse dynamics. Discussion of these issues reveals potential threats to the reliability of assessment, treatment, evaluation, and expert witness testimony.

### **Panel Discussion – Moderated by Attorney Nancy Grace and Judge Michelle Fletcher**

Judges and Attorneys discuss their experiences and practical strategies for managing allegations of trauma, IPV, and parental alienation.

### **April Harris-Britt, Ph.D. - Pivoting Post Pandemic: The Impacts of COVID on Family Law**

In March 2020, time seemingly stopped, and we entered the period that will forever be known as the Pandemic. We were tasked with coping for what many of us believed would be a few months of change. Even now, many are struggling with restarting life and moving forward without a full recognition of the short and long-term complications that were experienced. During this presentation, Dr. Harris-Britt will discuss the psychological, physical, social, and other impacts of the pandemic stress on children, families, and family law professionals, in general, as well as case outcomes, specifically. Additionally, Dr. Harris-Britt will suggest strategies that may promote future adjustment for families and professionals.

### **Town Hall Discussion – Shaping the Future of Family Law in NC**

From conversations with professionals across the state, we know there is a strong desire and need to bring the various disciplines together as we strive to provide solutions to common challenges. The NC Chapter of AFCC is dedicated to hearing about the most important and pressing concerns that you see impacting family law cases in NC. Information will be used to develop future collaborations and programming.

## Presenters:



**Dr. Robin Deutsch** provides consultation, mediation, parenting coordination and expert witness services in Boston, MA. She is Board certified in Couples and Family Psychology. She developed and was the director of the Center of Excellence for Children, Families and the Law and the Certificate in Child and Family Forensic Issues at William James College, where she is a Professor (ret.) in the Clinical Psychology department. Previously she was an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School and for over 20 years Director of Training and Forensic Services in the Children and the Law Program at Massachusetts General Hospital. She is a cofounder of Overcoming Barriers, an organization that provides family-centered services for families in conflict. She has published extensively on issues related to parent-child contact problems, attachment, co-parenting after divorce, high conflict divorce, parenting plans, and parenting coordination,

and is the co-author of *7 Things Your Teenager Won't Tell You: and How to Talk about Them Anyway* (Ballantine, 2005, 2011) and co-editor with Abigail Judge of the book *Overcoming Parent-Child Contact Problems: Family-Based Interventions for Resistance, Rejection, Alienation* (Oxford, 2016<sub>[rd1]</sub>).

Dr. Deutsch currently serves as Chair of the American Psychological Association (APA) working group to Review Scientific Literature Regarding High Conflict Family Relationships with Child Involvement. She was the 2008-2009 President of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC), and the former Chair of the APA Ethics Committee (2007). She served on the AFCC task force that developed Guidelines for Examining Intimate Partner Violence, the American Psychological Association (APA) task force that developed Guidelines for Parenting Coordinators (2011), the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) Task Force that developed Guidelines for Parenting Coordinators (2006), and the AFCC Task force that developed Guidelines for Court Involved Therapists (2010). She is a fellow of APA, 2006 recipient of the American Psychological Association Karl F. Heiser Presidential Award for Advocacy, the 2017 recipient of the Massachusetts Psychological Association Kenneth D. Herman, Ph.D. J.D. Career Contribution Award, and the 2018 recipient of the AFCC John E. Van Duzer Distinguished Service Award.



**Dr. April Harris-Britt** is a licensed psychologist practicing in NC and VA. In addition to providing child, adolescent, adult, and family therapy, Dr. Harris-Britt conducts comprehensive psychological evaluations and forensic evaluations. She also serves as a Parent Coordinator. Specific areas of expertise include trauma and violence, adoption and attachment, medically fragile children, divorce transitions, ADHD and learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and multicultural issues. Dr. Harris-Britt contributes to research and teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Fielding Graduate University where she serves as the Lead Faculty for the Forensic Concentration. She is currently a member of the APA Working Group to Review Scientific Literature for High Conflict Family Relationships and the APA Council of Representatives. She serves on the AFCC Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and the AFCC Task Force on

Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations. She is currently President for the NC Chapter of AFCC.



**Nancy L. Grace** is a principal of Wake Family Law Group. She is a Board Certified Specialist in Family Law, a Fellow of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and a DRC certified Family Financial Mediator. Ms. Grace received a B. A. degree in Spanish in 1982 and a Master's Degree in Teaching in 1986 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She taught Spanish at North Carolina State University prior to attending law school. In 1996, Ms. Grace received a J.D. with Honors from the University of North Carolina School of Law and then served as law clerk to the Honorable James A. Wynn, Jr. of the North Carolina Court of Appeals prior to entering private practice. Ms. Grace currently serves on the Board of Directors for the NC Chapter of the AFCC. She is a State Bar Councilor and Past President of the Tenth Judicial District Bar and is a Past President of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. She is also a former Chair of the Family Law Section of the North Carolina Bar Association and a former Chair of the Family Law Section of the North Carolina Academy of Trial Lawyers (now North Carolina Advocates for Justice). Ms. Grace has a long history of serving on committees and in leadership positions in professional organizations relating to family law and is a frequent speaker or course planner for family law CLE programs.

**Judge Michelle Fletcher** is a native of Greensboro, NC where she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She later earned her Juris Doctorate from North Carolina Central School of Law in May 1995. Judge Fletcher served as an Assistant District Attorney in Guilford County before being appointed by Governor Easley in 2008 as a District Court Judge. She has presided over each of the various district courts including, but not limited to, family law, juvenile delinquency, juvenile abuse/neglect/dependency, domestic violence, and criminal. Her continued dedication to the needs of children is evidenced by Judge Fletcher pursuing and receiving her certification in Juvenile Law in 2010. She was subsequently appointed by the Chief District Court Judge as the lead juvenile judge for the Guilford County DSS Courts until she was later appointed to serve (and currently serves) as the lead judge for all Guilford County Civil courts. Judge Fletcher is also committed to improving the lives of those experiencing mental health and substance abuse issues. She served as an assistant district attorney in the Guilford County Drug Treatment Court program and she is currently the presiding judge for both the High Point Mental Health and Drug Treatment Courts. 'Giving back to one's community through service' is a belief held strongly by Judge Fletcher. She demonstrates this through her involvement and leadership with several organizations. Her past and present professional memberships and Board involvement include the Greensboro Bar Association, Governors Crime Commission, Alcohol and Drug Services, One Step Further, Freedom House, League of Women Voters, Summit House, Guilford County Animal Shelter, Humane Society, and the Junior League of Greensboro. Judge Fletcher spends her free time with her family and their rescue dog, Callie Bean.

**Conference Fees:**

\$200 Member Early Bird (by March 1, 2023)

\$250 Member Regular

\$225 Non-Member Early Bird (by March 1, 2023)

\$275 Non-Member Regular

\$100 Student Rate

**CLE/CEU Credit:** \*CLE 7.0 hours (5.0 General / 2.00 Mental Health/ Substance Abuse)

\*CEU 7.0 hours

\*applied for and pending

**Registration:** [www.afccnc.com](http://www.afccnc.com)

**Hotel:** Sheraton Four Seasons

Greensboro, NC

NC AFCC Group Rate \$159/night if booked before 3/11/23)

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