

Children's Law Conference

November 4, 2016

Workshop Descriptions

Session One:

(a) Demystifying Psychological Evaluations for Court

Kate Kleinfelter, PhD

In this break-out session, Dr. Kleinfelter will seek to answer common questions about SCDJJ psychological evaluations completed for dispositional hearings, by highlighting case examples, research, and ethical standards regarding forensic assessment. This session will address when psychological evaluations are needed; differences between a regular and a forensic evaluation; differences between psychological and psychiatric evaluations; how to know if an evaluation is valid and reliable; what to expect from a good evaluation; what types of psychological tests should be used and why; what is needed for an accurate diagnosis; what to expect with recommendations; interventions indicated for particular diagnoses or case situations; and when and how feedback should be provided to caregivers.

(b) Seen and Heard: The Value of Child Participation in Abuse and Neglect Proceedings

Melissa Carter, JD

The role of children in abuse and neglect proceedings concerning them is still a matter of much debate. System stakeholders are reluctant to engage children for a myriad of reasons, including the risk of potential emotional harm, lack of child-friendly court facilities, disruption of the child's daily routine, lack of transportation resources, and the child's ability to meaningfully participate. Yet research on how the legal system affects the emotions, behaviors and mental health of parties is driving a transformation of the judicial role, toward improved outcomes for children. And, increasingly, children are being granted the right to participate in the legal decisions being made about them. This workshop will help prepare legal professionals to meet these new expectations by sharing best practices for engaging children in the judicial process and insights from approaches taken in other states.

(c) Kinship Care from Placement to Permanency

Josh Gupta-Kagan, JD

This workshop will review the concept of kinship care – including licensed kinship foster homes and unlicensed kinship placements – in the child welfare system, how kinship care impacts outcomes for the child and family, and how kinship placement decisions early in a case affect permanency options that arise later. The workshop will review federal laws which seek to increase the use of subsidized kinship guardianship, how subsidized guardianship has worked in other states, and issues related to its possible implementation in South Carolina.

(d) Helping Older Youth in Foster Care Achieve Independence

Terri Pope, MSW

This workshop will address resources available when children are getting ready to age out of the system; transition planning; how to help children as they transition out of foster care and the resources behind it; and misconceptions that services could be lost if the child were to be adopted.

Workshop Descriptions

Session Two:

(a) Educational Options for Youth in Transition

Andrea Lauricella; Dr. David Stout, EdD; Dr. John L. Thompson II, EdD

Youth who spend time in foster care, are involved with the juvenile justice system, or have previously been expelled often are behind grade level in school. In this workshop, participants will explore several routes for overcoming these obstacles and achieving educational success. A panel of speakers will provide information on virtual school options, obtaining a GED, adult education, and vocational training

(b) Child Witnesses: In-Court Testimony and Out-of-Court Statements

Candice Lively, JD; Dottie Ingram, JD

In this workshop, participants will learn how to prepare children for testifying in court and tools to get the child's statements admitted into evidence. Out-of-court statements and their use in family court as well as excited utterance will be covered, along with the role of the therapist in the admission of out-of-court statements.

(c) Juvenile Re-Entry: Establishing Community Connection for Youth Success

Dr. Aleksandra Chauhan, JD; Tracey Tucker, JD, MSW; Mike Mathison, JD

In South Carolina, the 3-year recidivism rate for youth who are prosecuted and found guilty is 70.6%. A significant contributing factor to this is a lack of reintegration supports for youth upon release. Juvenile offenders face a number of barriers when attempting to reintegrate back into society, not only because of their own personal struggles, but also due to their relationship with the environments into which they are reintegrating. Many confined juveniles return to communities with high crime rates and poverty, unstable households and family relationships, behavioral and medical issues, failing school systems and unemployment, which make effective reentry services so critical to their success. It is imperative that systems and communities do a better job ensuring that youth are supported in their reentry and not leave youth to manage these complexities on their own, setting them up for failure.

This workshop will facilitate discussions about the best ways to address these unique challenges and how to incorporate community resources to provide more holistic representation for youth involved in various social systems.

(d) Real Life Heroes: Resiliency-focused Treatment for Children and Families with Complex Trauma

Dr. Richard Kagan, PhD

Participants will explore how creative arts activities and the metaphor of heroes can be utilized to engage children and caregivers to work in trauma-informed treatment programs. Real Life Heroes is an evidence-supported treatment program for children with traumatic stress. This workshop will include a brief introduction to Complex PTSD, 'best practice' components of treatment for Complex PTSD, and use of Real Life Heroes to engage hard-to-reach children and families. Research results will be discussed including lessons learned from implementation of an integrated trauma and attachment-focused learning collaborative in community-based child/family service and mental health treatment programs. *Learning Objectives:* After attending this session, therapists will be able to: access and begin implementation of a manualized protocol for affect regulation, strengthening child-caregiver relationships, life story work and desensitization; and use creative arts and life story work to engage caregivers and children and to strengthen a child's self-image and cultural heritage.