



## Families Stronger Together 2023 Statewide Annual Conference

Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>, - Tuesday September 12<sup>th</sup> 2023  
University of Washington, Tacoma – Tacoma, WA

Conference materials are available electronically for download here, and will be updated after the conference. Please visit the conference website here: <https://ocla.wa.gov/about-us/programs/childrens-representation/childrens-representation-resources/families-stronger-together-2023/>

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**All CLE credits are pending unless otherwise noted**

### Agenda – Full

Day 1: Monday, September 11th, 2023				
Time	Location	Description	Credits	Credit type
10:00 AM - 12:30 PM	Lobby	<b>Registration (Lunch on Your Own)</b>	N/A	N/A
12:30 PM - 1:15 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Welcome: Why Are We Here Together?</b> Presenters: Larry Jefferson, Jim Bamberger, Heather Cantamessa	N/A	N/A
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Keynote with Dr. Monique Mitchell: The Harm of Removal: What Children and Youth Have to Say</b> Presenter: Dr. Monique Mitchell Description: Drawing upon child-centered research, this presentation will address how children and youth are impacted by removal from their original home and entry into foster care. The seven major types of ambiguity experienced by children and youth in foster care will be explored, and the implications of these experiences in relation to psychological and emotional trauma will be discussed.	1	Law & Legal Procedure
2:15 PM - 2:30 PM		Quick Break		
Plenary #1 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Case Law and Legislative Update</b> Presenters: Shrounda Selivanoff, Laurie Lippold, Marci Comeau Description: In both the legislature and the courts, child welfare advocates have continued to push the envelope in order to keep families together. This plenary will summarize the important updates in the legislative session and will provide a preview of what may be next. Then, we will look back on the caselaw that has shaped the past year, touching on issues related to race, reasonable efforts, evidentiary rulings, developmental disabilities, active efforts, and more!	1	Law & Legal Procedure



3:30 PM – 3:45 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<p><b>Family and Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) Demo</b></p> <p>Presenters: Laura Vogel, Sarah Burns</p> <p>Description: The Administrative Office of the Courts, Family &amp; Youth Justice Programs (FYJP) provides support, training, and technical assistance to judicial officers and court systems that hear child dependency cases. Over the last year, FYJP has collaborated with court system partners across the state to create a variety of online resources and tools that support dependency court systems in aligning with the changes of the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227), increasing equitable access for dependency-involved families and reducing racial disproportionality in child welfare. In this session, FYJP staff will provide a short overview of these resources, along with a preview of the resources that have most impactful for practice.</p>	0.25	Law & Legal Procedure
3:45 PM – 4:00 PM		Quick Break		
<b>Breakout #1</b>				
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Cherry Parkes (CP) 105	<p><b>A: PRP Social Work/Social Service Worker Team Session: Time with OPD Director Larry Jefferson</b></p> <p>Presenters: Larry Jefferson, Michael Heard</p>	N/A	N/A
	Cherry Parkes (CP) 106	<p><b>B: The Anti-Racist Lawyering Initiative</b></p> <p>Presenters: Amelia Watson, Phyllis Stricklan</p> <p>Description: Participants will be introduced to the Family Justice Initiative's Antiracist Lawyering Initiative, an online tool created by a national subcommittee of parent and children's attorneys. This interactive workshop will include a review of the description content as well as an opportunity to strategize how to infuse racial equity into our practice.</p>	1	Ethics
	BHS 106	<p><b>C: Strategies and Tactics for Heavy Handed Negotiation and Aggressive Litigation</b></p> <p>Presenters: Flint Stebbins, Amanda Ullrich</p> <p>Description: When negotiating a desired litigation goal, our clients' relative leverage can be enhanced to a point of overwhelming our opponents into conceding to our demands, but strategies and tactics must be calculated, focused on specific objectives, and backed by a willingness to go to the brink. Learn how to effectively and strategically use negotiation and litigation techniques to achieve your client's desired outcome, to more quickly reunify the family, and to lead to quick dismissals of your client's dependency or termination case.</p>	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	BHS 107	<p><b>D: Beyond Burnout: Moral Injury as Explanation and Ethical Imperative</b></p> <p>Presenter: Anya Perret</p> <p>Description: This session will introduce participants to the concept of "moral injury," a concept distinct from the potentially more familiar concepts of burnout, secondary trauma, or compassion fatigue. Moral injury is a relatively new and less well-known concept, initially used to describe the experiences of struggling veterans who did not fit traditional PTSD criteria. It is defined as the set of symptoms resembling depression and/or PTSD that can occur when one feels they have violated their conscience or moral compass when they take part in, witness, or fail to prevent an act that disobeys their own moral values or personal principles. The first portion of the session will discuss how the concept of moral injury applies to public</p>	1	Other: Personal Development & Mental Health



4:00 PM – 5:00 PM		defenders and social service professionals. The second portion will be framed as a discussion: does this concept resonate for audience members? If so, how? And what should we do about it? What are the personal and ethical responsibilities when one realizes moral injury is occurring? Is there a way to be a healthy and ethical professional in broken systems?		
	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<p><b>E: Understanding the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227)</b> Presenters: Laura Vogel, Jacob D’Annunzio</p> <p>Description: In 2021, the Washington State Legislature passed the Keeping Families Together Act (HB 1227) in recognition that children and families are best served when children are cared for by their loved ones and in their communities. Passage of the Keeping Families Together Act was driven by a number of factors, including the continued overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous children in the child welfare system and an acknowledgement that, even in cases of abuse and neglect, forcibly removing a child from their home is inherently traumatic. Through expanded judicial authority, the numerous statutory changes of the Keeping Families Together Act aimed to create a more equitable Shelter Care process that results in better outcomes for all families, including fewer removals, increased kinship placements (vs. foster care), and reduction of racial disparities. The Keeping Families Together Act became effective on July 1, 2023 and has already had significant impacts on dependency court systems around the state. This presentation will provide a overview of the statutory changes resultant of the Keeping Families Together Act and how these changes impact dependency court practice. Presenters will also introduce the tools, trainings, and resources that have been developed to support dependency court systems in aligning with this historical legislative change. Attendees will have opportunities to ask questions about the impacts of the Keeping Families Together Act on their own practice and strategize with colleagues to generate possible solutions for any challenges.</p>	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	BHS 104	<p><b>F: Considering SIJS &amp; Dependency Orders: Immigration Consequences for Parents</b> Presenter: D’Adre Cunningham</p> <p>Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) orders and orders on dependency and disposition may carry negative immigration consequences for noncitizen parents. This session will present considerations and best practices for attorneys in juvenile dependency court to review and consider prior to entering, stipulating, or agreeing to SIJS orders and orders of dependency and disposition.</p>	1	Law & Legal Procedure
5:15 PM – 7:00 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<p><b>Dinner and Open Space Event</b> Presenters: Jeffrey Adams, Lisa Dabalos-McMahon</p> <p>Description: This session is a call to action with a reading of <u>Justice as the Through Line</u>, by Ivory K. Bennett and Corey B. Best, and an opportunity to learn, explore, act, and discover ways to reinvent ourselves as legal practitioners. In the words of the authors, “Now is an unavoidable time for reinvention. And that reinvention begins with self. What can you do as an individual practitioner to create concrete restorative justices on micro and macro levels? The shift from injustice to restorative justice begins internally and moves outward. You are the holders, the keepers, and the defenders of our personal practices. You are the change we have been unknowingly pursuing.”</p>	1.75	Ethics



**Day 2: Tuesday, September 12th, 2023**

7:00 AM – 7:45 AM	Cherry Parkes (CP) 106	<b>Guided Meditation with Rebecca Dombcik and Amelia Watson</b> Presenters: Rebecca Dombcik, Amelia Watson Description: Participants will be taken through a session of the meta loving kindness meditation technique. Participants will understand the core components of meta loving kindness meditation to both support legal practitioners in stress reduction around dependency practice as well as support collaborative communication strategies with opposing parties. Participants are encouraged to bring a yoga mat or meditation pillow if they have them. Participants may also have a better experience if they chose to wear loose or comfortable clothing.	0.75	Other: Personal Development & Mental Health
7:30 AM – 8:00 AM	Phillip Hall (WPH), Hallway	<b>Lite Breakfast</b>		
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	<b>OPD:</b> Phillip Hall (WPH) <b>OCLA:</b> Cherry Parkes (CP) 105 <b>P4P:</b> Cherry Parkes (CP) 106	<b>Agency Breakouts</b> Description: For this session, we will be breaking out into groups devoted to our respective legal and professional organizations (OPD, OCLA, and P4P), where we can discuss the relevant child welfare issues that are of critical importance to us as public defense practitioners and parent allies.	1	Other: Improving the Legal System
9:00 AM – 9:15 AM		Quick Break		
Plenary #2 9:15 AM – 10:15 AM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Keynote with Corey Best: "Nurturing Freedom Dreams Through a Principled Struggle"</b> Presenter: Corey Best Description: This experience is fueled by the assumption that participants will have the capacity to nurture freedom dreams and come together to embrace what we are called to do in our "aftertimes." Each generation has a legacy of healers, organizers and ancestors that have paved a way to ensure that our collective humanity is actualized. We will welcome the audience with asking "What has racism cost you?" We will hold the weight of the charges to hold change, listen, reflect, notice, pause, engage in truth-telling. Together, we will grapple with ways to infuse "family integrity" and abolitionist thinking into the work of cultivating approaches, practices and behaviors that embody what we know parent representation needs to mean for families—justice. We invite you to embrace JUSTICE as an acknowledgement of one's humanness. Proactively pursuing healing systematic harm, while repairing fractured relationships from the past, equity of voice and personhood. As you enter this container, we ask that you consider removing "what we can't do" from your vocabulary. We also ask that you remove the "What abouts?" from your memory. To challenge us to be BIG in our quest to think culturally versus strategically, we will walk you through a nuanced way of understanding what the principled struggle for "justice doing" looks like in public, and how to LEAD; Learn, Explore, Act, Discover. We invite the audience to dream accountability and bravery as we embrace this experience that aims for impact over outcome.	1	Ethics



10:15 AM - 10:30 AM		Quick Break		
<b>Breakout #2</b>				
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	BHS 104	<p><b>A: Race and Patriarchy: How Families of Color are Impacted</b> Presenter: Raymond Delos Reyes Description: Based on the bell hooks book "Rock My Soul: Black People and Self-Esteem", this workshop will explore how the history of race and patriarchy has impacted Black and brown citizens, the effects this has on how Black and brown parents raise their children, and in turn, how our child welfare system perpetuates classic notions of race and patriarchy. This presentation will call for discussion with the audience on how we as practitioners and/or social workers may implicitly participate in these systems, how we can identify when race and patriarchy present barriers to reunification and how to effectively litigate these issues.</p>	1	Ethics
	BHS 106	<p><b>B: ICWA and WICWA in the Wake of Brackeen, Part 1</b> Presenters: Jamison Tessner, Chelsey Welch, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska Description: This two-part presentation will remind practitioners why ICWA and WICWA are important and the existential risks it faces. Attorneys, social workers, and family advocates will gain valuable, practical knowledge of active efforts, best practices, and the need to articulate and enforce compliance through findings. Attorneys, social workers, and family advocates will also learn about recent court decisions and how they can advance practice and procedure across the state of Washington.</p>	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	Cherry Parkes (CP) 105	<p><b>C: Moving From Impacted Parent to Professional: Quieting the Internal and External Voice</b> Presenters: Shrounda Selivanoff, Seth Davidson, Tonia McClanahan Description: Let's Talk!! Navigating the child welfare system requires determination, perseverance, and a change of attitudes and behaviors. As former child welfare parents, we emerge triumphant in addressing parental deficiencies or pursuing healing from loss. Leveraging our experiences, what does moving into this familiar child welfare space in this new position-professional feel like? In this session, we will create a brave space to talk about how the transition from impacted parent to child welfare professional can sometimes be overwhelming—unearthing those voices of doubt and those external voices that attempt to minimize our worth, importance, and impact in this work. As we work tirelessly to embrace our parents, let's take time to embrace one another. Exposing our collective internal speak and, more importantly, quieting those voices.</p>	N/A	N/A
	Cherry Parkes (CP) 106	<p><b>D: Roles and Responsibilities</b> Presenters: Jeffrey Adams, Brett Ballew Description: This presentation will challenge practitioners to reconsider implicit or often fictionalized views of "other" professionals within the dependency system and support a larger community of practice through management of expectations.</p>	1	Other: Professional Development



10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<p><b>E: Balancing the Harms</b> Presenter: Jacob D'Annunzio, Laura Vogel</p> <p>Description: Changes to our laws – Keeping Families Together Act – now require courts to take the additional step of weighing the harm of removal with the threats to safety if children remain in the home with their parents. This new step provides opportunities for attorneys to humanize their clients, shed light on the rarely discussed details of child removal, and the immediate and long-term impacts to families from separation.</p> <p>Gain an understanding of the various forms of harm that children can face from the separation from parents, siblings, and community. Participate in a discussion of how to argue the harms of removal and advocate for in home placements, placements with trusted caregivers, and robust out-of-home safety plans as a last resort.</p>	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	BHS 107	<p><b>F: Let's Change Your Mind: Reducing the Stigma of Mental Illness Among Dependency Practitioners</b> Presenters: Taila AyAy, Jason Bragg, Marci Comeau, Kelsey O'Sullivan</p> <p>Nearly 1 in 5 people in the U.S. is living with a diagnosable mental illness or symptoms of a mental health condition. Those people include us – the attorneys, social workers, and other professionals advocating for clients in the child welfare system every day. We can be great attorneys, wonderful social service workers, and fantastic parent allies - and still live with mental illness. In this session, we will talk about our own experiences as professionals living with mental health diagnoses and how those experiences impact us and our work. This discussion will focus on reducing the stigma around mental health issues, and will include real talk and practical solutions.</p>	1	Other: Personal Development & Mental Health
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM		Quick Break		
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH), Hallway	Lunch		
	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<p><b>Lunchtime Presentation: The Powerful Impact of Peer Support through P4P</b> Presenters: Johni Gibson, Shawn Powell, Gabe Cisneros, Leah Legee</p> <p>Description: Parents for Parents is a supportive, educational, and empowering program built for and by those most impacted in the child welfare system. Despite years of empirical evidence demonstrating its intrinsic value, the program continues to face challenges. This presentation will introduce practitioners to the program, its development, supportive literature, and end with a call to action to partner with, invest in, and expand programs infused with lived expertise.</p>	1	Other: Nexus Subject
12:45 PM - 1:00 PM		Quick Break		



Breakout #3				
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Cherry Parkes (CP) 105	<b>A: Social Worker Housing, Packing and Unpacking Families</b> Presenters: Renee Jones, Jason Bragg, Tarena Coleman, Rebecca Harris, Abbie Jardine Description: This workshop will provide concrete tips, ideas and troubleshooting to stably house families in the process of reunification. The session will delve into utilizing new legislation to advocate for housing families, the logistics of actually moving the family, what strategies are being used, what has worked and what hasn't, and meeting the basic foundational need of housing to encourage family engagement.	1	Other: Nexus Subject
	BHS 106	<b>B: ICWA and WICWA in the Wake of Brackeen, Part 2</b> Presenters: Jeffrey Adams, Jodi Backlund, Marci Comeau Description: This two-part presentation will remind practitioners why ICWA and WICWA are important and the existential risks it faces. Attorneys, social workers, and family advocates will gain valuable, practical knowledge of active efforts, best practices, and the need to articulate and enforce compliance through findings. Attorneys, social workers, and family advocates will also learn about recent court decisions and how they can advance practice and procedure across the state of Washington.	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	BHS 107	<b>C: Parenting from the Inside and Outside: DOC Programs for Families</b> Presenters: Terren Beeman, Brenda Lopez, Jennie Fitzpatrick, Elaine "Missy" Farr, Katrina Avent, Tera McElravy Description: This workshop will share information on the parent navigator programs at WCCW and Airway Heights, the Parenting Sentencing Alternative program, and the Strength in Families Program, so that attorneys, social workers and parent allies will be better able to support and advocate for dependency involved families with an incarcerated parent.	1	Other: Nexus Subject
	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>D: The FIRST Clinic and the Safety Framework</b> Presenters: Neil Weiss, Taila AyAy, Adam Ballout, Gina WasseMiller, Jennifer Justice, Jasmine Hodges Description: This training will provide an explanation on how courts and the department have been trained to view safety risks vs. safety threats. Assessment of safety is critical in the courts' analysis of HB 1227's required elements for out of home placement. You will understand the difference between the risk vs. threat and learn ways to mitigate risk through creative safety planning.	1	Law & Legal Procedure
	BHS 104	<b>E: RCW 11.130 Minor Guardianship</b> Presenters: Celeste Miller Description: Hear an overview of 11.130 Minor Guardianship, including the major provisions of the statute, steps for filing and completing a case, how it intersects with Washington's dependency laws, and important considerations for choosing Minor Guardianship as a permanent plan for a state-involved child.	1	Law & Legal Procedure



1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Cherry Parkes (CP) 105	<b>F: A Fun Way to Learn Ethics</b> Presenters: Lisa Dabalos-McMahon, Bonney Carpenter, Jacqueline Justice, William Wolf, Lisa Johnson, Tammy Bacigalupo Description: In this potpourri style workshop participants will engage in interactive games and activities to learn, review and discuss a broad range of topics pertaining to ethical issues arising in dependency/termination legal practice and the representation of parents and children within multidisciplinary teams. The topics include racial disproportionality in the family policing system; working with clients in crisis; building effective multi-disciplinary teams; ethical obligations; caselaw, HB 1227, DCYF policies and social issues. Our Washington State Supreme Court calls us to lean into the hard work to take responsibility and strive to fix systemic racial injustice. This will be a time to reflect on and discuss issues such as our ethical duties to assure equity, inclusion, and mitigation of implicit and explicit bias in our respective professions. Our clients experience substance use disorders, mental health issues, disabilities and trauma. A well-rounded practitioner needs to have working-level knowledge on all these topics and be prepared to face ethical issues that arise in everyday scenarios. This fast-paced session will touch on all of these topics. ALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES are welcome in this session. Expect to learn something new and also have some FUN!	1	Ethics
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM		Quick Break		
Plenary #3 2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven González: What Now?</b> Presenter: Chief Justice Steven González Description: Chief Justice González was appointed to the Washington State Supreme Court in 2012. In 2020, he was one of the signatories to the groundbreaking Letter to the Judiciary and the Legal Community, which acknowledged and called out the systemic racism against Black Americans in the legal system and tasked members of the legal profession, including judges, to work together to eradicate racism. Chief Justice González will provide an update on the Washington Supreme Court's efforts to implement the Court's call to action, including a discussion of recent and relevant Court Rules, caselaw, orders, taskforces, commissions, and more. Chief Justice González will also answer relevant questions from the audience about the direction of the Court and the importance of public defenders to the administration of justice.	1	Other: Nexus Subject
3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Phillip Hall (WPH)	<b>Closing Poem</b> Presenters: Parent Allies	N/A	N/A