“FAMILY CONFLICT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: 
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION”
A VIRTUAL MINI-CONFERENCE
OCT 4: 1:30 – 5:00 EDT

REGISTRATION

This is a Virtual Event. It Will Be Held in Conjunction with The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) Conference.

For those of you attending the conference, the fee for the Elder Mediation event is included. For those of you not attending the conference, you are welcome to join the mini conference only. The fee is $50.

You can register on the ACR conference website. If you click “Registration” and follow the instructions you will eventually reach a page where you can register for the half day. If you are an ACR member, you can sign in as a member. Otherwise click “continue as a guest”. The fee for the half day is the same regardless.

If you have problems registering, please send an email to section co-chair Joan Braun, who will help with registration. That address is braun@joanbraun.ca

AGENDA

1:30 – 2:00 pm Eastern
Introduction: Why Family and Elder Mediators are Both Needed to Help Older Families Resolve Conflict

Speaker:

DeLila Bergan, JD, MA, HEC-C; Co-Chair, ACR Elder Mediation Section
AIM Aging Issues Mediation, Denton, TX

DeLila Bergan is an elder mediator, a certified healthcare ethics consultant, and a retired elder law attorney. She earned her law degree from Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and later obtained a master’s degree in bioethics and health care policy from Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University Chicago. She serves clients through elder mediation and healthcare ethics consultations and training. She also serves as an adjunct professor in the graduate conflict resolution and healthcare administration programs at Abilene Christian University.

2:00 – 3:00 pm Eastern

Keynote Speaker:
Joshua Coleman, Ph.D.
Psychologist and Senior Fellow with the Council on Contemporary Families.
Author: Rules of Estrangement: Why Adult Children Cut Ties and How to Heal the Conflict

Dr. Coleman is a psychologist in private practice. He is a frequent guest on NPR and Today and his advice for families has appeared in multiple prominent newspapers. He is a well-known researcher and writer on the contemporary family and a cofounder of Standing Together, a center for advancing awareness on family estrangement. Dr. Coleman is a husband, father, and grandfather who lives in the San Francisco Bay area. A man of many talents, he has also composed music for many popular television shows.

**Topic:** Helping Estranged Family Members Communicate with Each Other

Elder and family mediators are working with an increasing number of families in which a parent and child are estranged or siblings refuse to see or talk to each other. How can we better help these individuals address major decisions that impact everyone in the family? Dr. Coleman will share his expertise on the phenomenon of estrangement within families and how these rifts develop and become entrenched. He will help us explore ways in which we might help family members reconnect and communicate when they must work together to make vital decisions as a family.

3:00 – 3:15 pm Eastern  BREAK

3:15 – 4:00 pm Eastern

**Speaker:**

Catherine N. Swiniarski, JD

Elder Law of Omaha, Omaha, NE

**Catherine Swiniarski** received her Juris Doctorate from Creighton University School of Law in 1986. Since that time, she has practiced law in a wide variety of settings, from corporate to private practice. In addition, she has taught legal topics in various academic settings. Catherine is the owner and managing attorney at Elder Law of Omaha, PC, LLO, and is licensed to practice in Nebraska and Iowa. She is a member of Elder Counsel and a member of the Omaha Estate Planning Council. Most recently, she was editor in chief of the Nebraska Elder Law Handbook.

**Topic: 70s ARE THE NEW 50s: CONSIDERATIONS IN “GREY DIVORCE”**

The number of older adults choosing to divorce is growing steadily. While younger and older couples share many of the same basic issues when divorcing, older clients have additional concerns related to retirement benefits, VA or Medicaid concerns, long-term care issues, funeral plans, grandchildren, and more. The complex issues presented when ending a marriage between older adults, a so-called “grey divorce”, requires a mix of
family law and elder law, and often family law and elder mediation, to meet client needs. Ms. Swiniarski will focus on those additional issues facing older adults who divorce.

4:00 – 4:45 pm Eastern  
**Panel: Creating Synergy through Collaboration**

This panel explores opportunities for elder mediators and family mediators to collaborate. Given the current demographic shift it is becoming increasingly important for mediators in every area of practice to learn about aging issues, both legal and social. This will enable them to provide effective services to older adult clients. Likewise, it is important for elder mediators to be familiar with other areas of practice. This includes family disputes. They may have clients who are experiencing divorce or other family issues. This panel addresses questions such as “how can elder mediators and family mediators collaborate” and “what can we learn from each other”? Come prepared for a stimulating discussion between our panelist, all of whom have extensive relevant experience in the mediation and dispute resolution fields.

**Moderator:**

Joan Braun, LLB, MSW, LLM, Co-Chair, ACR Elder Mediation Section  
Assistant Professor, Lakehead University, Ontario

Joan Braun, is a lawyer, a social worker and a mediator. She is currently working as an assistant professor at Lakehead University, where she teaches Alternate Dispute Resolution and Elder Law. Prior to her academic appointment she worked as a mediator in private practice and as a lawyer in the social justice sector. In the latter role she founded a specialty legal aid clinic for older adults in Vancouver. It was during that time that she became interested in older adult issues and later incorporated elder mediation into her private practice. She has written several articles about elder mediation and is a regular speaker at conferences and other events.

**Panelists:**

**Kipi L. Fleming, Ph.D.**, lives in Lubbock, Texas, and is the conflict management program director at Abilene Christian University Dallas where she teaches negotiation, mediation, and advanced mediation at the master's and doctoral levels. As a mediator for the Lubbock County Office of Dispute Resolution, Dr. Fleming works primarily with families in divorce and custody disputes. She also mediates for the Texas Department of Insurance in cases involving insurance companies and out-of-network providers. Dr. Fleming teaches conflict management skills to groups in the community, in schools, and in churches.

Kimberly Best, RN, MA  
*Best Conflict Solutions*, Brentwood, TN 37027.
**Kimberley Best**, focuses her mediation/arbitration practice primarily on elder mediation and family and relationship mediation and conflict coaching. She is currently serving her second term on the board of the Tennessee Association of Professional Mediators. Ms. Best also serves as a volunteer mediator with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office Dispute Resolution Program and Community/Police Unification Program and is a practicing facilitator for challenging business and social conversations. She is the author of "How to Live Forever, A Guide to Writing the Final Chapter of Your Life Story" and is a speaker and trainer on the topics of conflict management, dispute resolution processes, life transitions, and how to make difficult decisions - including end of life issues.

Vivian Kerenyi, LLB, RSW
Lawyer & Mediator, Vancouver, British Columbia

**Vivian Kerenyi**, has over 30 years of combined training, and professional experience in law, mediation and social work, Vivian Kerenyi brings a specialized and unique blend of skills and expertise to her mediation practice. Vivian graduated from McMaster University in Social Work and Queen's University in Law. She has been called to the Bars of Ontario and BC and is a registered social worker. She is an accredited Family Law Mediator with the Law Society of BC and Family Mediation Canada. She has been a practicing mediator since 1987. In her current private mediation practice, she delivers mediation services to families, including older adults and their extended families. She has more than 20 years’ experience teaching mediation skills, training and mentoring new mediators

Beth L. Aarons, JD, MSW
Aarons Law & Mediation, Southborough, MA

**Beth L. Aarons**, JD, MSW, of Aarons Law & Mediation, and Of Counsel to Skylark Law & Mediation, PC, both in Southborough, MA. While her career is focused in law, her background in social work and psychology has informed her connection with clients, child-focused family law work, and ability to finesse complex family dynamics. Beth is a Certified Mediator through Massachusetts Council on Family Mediation (MCFM) and the Academy of Professional Family Mediators (APFM), primarily mediating divorces, parenting plans, prenuptial agreements, and inheritance dispute matters. Beth is also a Collaborative Law attorney for divorce and estate matters. She is Past President of the Massachusetts Collaborative Law Council (MCLC), and teaches Mediation and Collaborative Law at Suffolk Law School in Boston.

4:45 pm – 5:00 pm Eastern

*Closing Remarks: Joan Braun*