

NCFR Divorce & Co-Parenting Education Focus Group

2017 Annual Meeting

November 15, 2016 7:00 – 8:15 a.m.

Orlando, FL

Presiding: Lawrence Shelton

The Chair welcomed 16 Focus Group member to the meeting, noted this was the first official meeting of the 2017 NCFR Conference, and apologized for not providing breakfast.

After a brief introduction to the Focus Group history and purposes, those in attendance introduced themselves and briefly described their work.

To begin the major item on the agenda, Judith Myers-Walls introduced her work on developing a commercial on-line parenting education program, with the topic:

Narrow or Broad? Targeting Audiences in Online Co-Parenting Classes

High quality FLE programs are designed to meet the particular needs of the target audience and we are all accustomed to getting to know our audiences. In contrast, online programs are most efficient when they serve a widely inclusive audience, who remain largely unknown to the presenter. Surveys of family court judges indicate they would like to have programs available to meet many different needs, from never married parents to single parents and high-conflict couples. Resolving these differing expectations and needs is a challenge.

The ensuing lively discussion ranged widely over issues involved in parenting education programs, court resistance to on-line programs, assurance of completion by the designated parent, and providing appropriate resources. Points raised included the use of interactive materials, modules addressing specific issues, and the possibility of branching programs cycling through different materials depending on responses of the individual.

A number of needs and possibilities were addressed, including the possibility of the Focus Group taking on the task of developing information on best practices for Court education.

The Chair briefly reported on new programs, including:

- a. one funded by a grant to member Ellie McCann from the Minnesota Department of Corrections to provide parenting workshops in three prisons.

b. his own effort, "Taking Divorcing Parents Seriously To Go Beyond The Band-Aid" to advocate for educational approaches to reduce the problems that lead to divorce and to divorces that create additional problems for children and parents.

Time ran out before the group could address additional agenda questions: How do you address diversity and achieve inclusion in your work? What challenges do you face? What would you like help with?

As follow-up, the chair will survey members to ask about activities in the coming year, including NCFR 2018 in San Diego. Questions will include:

- what you would like the focus group to do this year that might help further your work?
- what would you like to have on the agenda for our 2018 meeting?

The meeting closed with encouragement for all to continue the discussion through the Focus Group listserv.

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence G. Shelton
Chair