

Kate Scharff, MSW

Psychotherapist ♦ Divorce Expert ♦ Educator ♦ Author

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Professional Experience

Founder and Principal, Collaborative Practice Center of Greater Washington

September 2010-Present

CPC is a physical and psychological space in which independent professionals from the fields of mental health, family law, finance, and real estate come together around a shared commitment to Collaborative Practice- a compassionate out-of-court settlement process in which a multidisciplinary team helps divorcing couples to restructure their families while preserving emotional and financial resources and enhancing co-parenting capacities. CPC members are carefully selected for their commitment to the peaceful resolution of family conflict, active contribution to positive advances in the fields of family law and alternate dispute resolution, and the ongoing pursuit of excellence in ethical practice at the leading edge of the work. Most CPC-affiliated professionals maintain additional offices in the DC area. When at CPC, they offer an array of services within their own disciplines, work together in mediation and Collaborative Practice, and attend CPC-sponsored trainings, group supervision, and case conferences.

Psychotherapist and Divorce Expert, Private Practice

May 1989-Present

Since 1989, Ms. Scharff has maintained a private practice of psychodynamic psychotherapy with individuals, couples and families (including children and adolescents), clinical supervision, case consultation, and parent guidance. In 1997 she expanded her practice into the field of separation and divorce. Among the specialized services she now provides are divorce process consultation, divorce mediation, facilitated settlement negotiation, parenting coordination, custody planning, custody assessments, and expert consultation (to attorneys and clients). Ms. Scharff is an internationally recognized voice in the areas of therapeutic jurisprudence, integrative law, and child-centered divorce. She has particular interest in the growing Collaborative Divorce movement (in which she is a senior level practitioner and trainer). Ms. Scharff has been qualified as an expert in the family courts of Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia, and has provided testimony on such issues as normative and pathological development in children, attachment, high conflict divorce, co-parenting, custody and visitation, parental alienation, parental effectiveness, and parental fitness.

Presenter and Trainer

May 2008-Present

Ms. Scharff conducts frequent seminars, workshops, and trainings for lawyers, mental health professionals, and financial advisors on a range of divorce-related topics. She teaches both independently and as a member of the multidisciplinary faculty of the Collaborative Practice Training Institute (which she co-founded in 2008).

Regular Contributor, Huffington Post

May 2013-Present

Ms. Scharff's pieces are most often featured in the Divorce section of this online newspaper, but also appear in the Parenting, Huff/Post 50, and GPS for the Soul sections.

Divorce Expert, National and International Media (Online, Print, Broadcast)

May 2008-Present

Ms. Scharff's articles appear in such publications as Divorce Magazine, Family Lawyer Magazine, Washingtonian Mom Magazine, World of Collaborative Practice Magazine, and The Collaborative Review (the journal of the International Association of Collaborative Professionals). Her writing is regularly featured in online publications, public and private websites, blogs, and resource centers in the U.S. and abroad. She is frequently cited in (and regularly contributes to) divorce-related conversations in the national media.

Chair, Metro Washington Center of the International Psychotherapy Institute

2004-2010

Ms. Scharff was responsible for program and curriculum development and implementation, conference planning, marketing/outreach, student recruitment, supervision of faculty and students, and acting as liaison to IPI National.

Founder/Director, The Center for Relationships in Transition (CRT)**1997-2010**

CRT was a private agency providing both general psychotherapy and specialized services to families involved in high conflict divorce.

Publications**Books**

Mastering Crucial Moments in Separation and Divorce: A Multidisciplinary Guide to Achieving Excellence in Technique and Outcome, co-authored with Lisa Herrick, PhD (ABA, March 2017).

Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce: A Guide to Enlightened Team Practice, co-authored with Lisa Herrick, PhD. (ABA Publications, 2010).

Therapy Demystified: An Insider's Guide to Getting the Right Help (Marlowe and Co., December 2004).

Chapters/Articles

Parenting and Divorce Wars, in *Psychoanalytic Couple Therapy*, David E. Scharff and Jill Savege Scharff, Editors (Karnac, 2014).

Therapeutic Supervision with Families of High-Conflict Divorce, in *Treating Relationships*, Jill Savege Scharff and David E Scharff, Editors (Rowan and Littlefield, 2007).

Therapeutic Supervision with Families of High Conflict Divorce, in *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, Jan. 2005.

The Mother as the Desired Object, in *Tuning the Therapeutic Instrument*, Jill Savege Scharff and David Scharff, Editors (Jason Aronson, 2000).

Professional Presentations (representative sampling)

February, 2016: *"It Starts Before it Begins: How to Create a Powerful Helping Relationship with Your Collaborative Client,"* State Bar of Texas Annual Collaborative Law Forum, Dallas Texas

October, 2015: *"Creating Conditions for Growth: Divorce as a Developmental Experience,"* International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Annual Forum, Washington, DC

September, 2015: *"Creating Conditions for Growth: Divorce as a Developmental Experience,"* New Mexico State Bar Association Collaborative Symposium , Albuquerque, NM

September, 2015: *"Creating Collaborative Parenting Plans,"* Seminar for Collaborative mental health professionals, Collaborative Practice Center of Montgomery County

June, 2015: *"Creating Collaborative Parenting Plans,"* Seminar for Collaborative mental health professionals involved in pro-bono work, Collaborative Practice Center of Greater Washington

March, 2015: *"Working with Divorcing Parents and Their Children: A Psychoanalytic Perspective,"* Program in Psychoanalytic Couple Therapy, Peking University and the International Psychotherapy Institute, Beijing, China

March, 2015: *"The Art of Helping People Get Divorced: A Multidisciplinary Collaborative Training,"* Collaborative Professionals of Washington Annual Conference, Seattle, Washington

November, 2014: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce,"* Ontario Collaborative Law Federation (OCLF), Ontario, Canada

November, 2014: *"Upping Your Game: The Balancing Act Between Tending and Moving in Collaborative Practice,"* American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers (AAML) Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

October, 2014: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce,"* Collaborative Law Association of the Rochester Area (CLARA), Rochester, NY

September 13, 2014: *"Why Won't They Take My Advice? Understanding and Working with Difficult Clients: A Didactic and Experiential Seminar,"* American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), Mid-Atlantic Annual Meeting, Washington DC

October 10, 2014: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce: An Advanced Multidisciplinary Training,"* Collaborative Law Association of the Rochester Area (CLARA), Rochester, NY

November 5, 2014: *"Achieving Mastery in Collaborative Law,"* American Association of Matrimonial Lawyers Annual Conference, Chicago, IL

December, 5, 2014: *"Children in High Conflict Divorce: Clinical and Forensic Interventions,"* lecture for trainees, Certificate Training Program in Forensic Child Psychiatry, co-sponsored by St. Elizabeth's Hospital and George Washington University Hospital Department of Psychiatry, Washington DC

November 21, 2014: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce: A Two Day Training Advanced Multidisciplinary Training,"* Ontario Collaborative Law Federation (OCLF), Toronto, Canada

March 5-7, 2015: *"Integrative Law: A Multidisciplinary Perspective, A Two Day Advanced Training for Attorneys, Mental Health Professionals, and Financial Professionals,"* Collaborative Professionals of Washington, Seattle WA, with Pauline Tesler, JD and Lisa Herrick, PhD

March 18-26, 2015: *"Clinical Work with Divorcing Couples,"* Peking University Psychodynamic Couple and Family Training Program, Beijing, China

April 2016: *"Separation and Divorce in the 21st Century: A Three Day Training for Attorneys, Mediators, Mental Health Professionals and the Public,"* The International Psychotherapy Institute, Panama City, Panama

June, 2014: *"Navigating Impasse in Collaborative Divorce (A Two Day Training)"* Collaborative Divorce Association of the Capitol District (CDACD), Albany, New York

Nov. 2013: *"Transformative Moments: The Self as Instrument for Positive Change,"* Center for Educational Leadership, Baruch College, New York

Nov. 2013: *"Anguish, Anxiety, and Aggression: In the Moment with Our Divorcing Clients,"* Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Regional Conference, Kansas City, MO

October, 2013: *"Upping Your Game: The Balancing Act Between Tending and Moving in Collaborative Divorce,"* International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Annual Forum, San Antonio, TX

September, 2013: *"Creating a Deep and Durable Parenting Plan – Content and Process,"* a two day didactic and experiential workshop for divorce professionals, Washington, DC

July, 2013: *"Reaching Children's Best Interests in High Conflict Custody Cases,"* Children's Family Law Center, Washington DC

April, 2013: *"The Collaborative Container,"* DC Academy of Collaborative Professionals, Washington DC

March, 2013: *"Collaborative Divorce: What You and Your Clients Need to Know,"* Family Law Section, Washington DC Bar

March, 2013: *"The Role of the Mental Health Professional in Custody Cases,"* Family Law Section, Washington DC Bar

January-February, 2013: *"Introduction to Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Law,"* University of Maryland School of Law

- January, 2013: *"The Role of the Mental Health Professional in Collaborative Practice,"* Collaborative Divorce Resolution Professionals, Rockville, Maryland
- October, 2012: *"In The Moment: Anguish, Anxiety and Aggression,"* International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Annual Forum, Chicago, IL
- August 2012: *"Three Day Basic Multidisciplinary Collaborative Training,"* Birmingham, AL
- June 2012: *"Divorce Dynamics and the Legal System,"* International Psychotherapy Institute Master Teacher Series, various cities in the U.S., as well as Israel and the U.K. via video link from Omaha, NE
- May, 2012: *"Two Day Advanced Multidisciplinary Team Training,"* Birmingham, AL
- January-December, 2012: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce,"* several venues in the Washington, DC area
- October, 2011: *"Introduction to Collaborative Practice,"* Maryland Administrative Offices of the Courts, Annapolis MD
- October, 2011: *"Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce,"* Virginia Academy of Collaborative Professionals, Mclean, VA
- October 2010: *"Not Your Average Parenting Planning Workshop: Working With the Dynamics in the Room,"* International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Annual Forum, Washington, DC
- May, 2010: *"Creating a Deep and Durable Parenting Plan,"* seminar for attorneys and mental health professionals, Bethesda, MD
- October, 2009: *"Navigating Landmines in Collaborative Practice"* International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Annual Forum, Minneapolis, MN
- May, 2009: *"Three Day Basic Multidisciplinary Team Training in Collaborative Practice,"* Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers (MICPEL), Annapolis, MD
- May, 2009: *"Parenting Together After Divorce,"* Montgomery County Divorce Roundtable conference; also participated in a multidisciplinary panel on the topic of *"Parent Coordinators: Who are They and How Can They Help?"* Rockville, MD
- March, 2008: *"Toxic Passivity in High Conflict Divorce,"* International Psychotherapy Institute, Panama City, Panama
- February, 2008: *"The Psychodynamic Evaluation of Children in Custody Disputes"* Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers (MICPEL), Rockville, MD
- February, 2008: *"Parenting Coordination: What Is It Anyway?"* Presenter and panel discussant at Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers (MICPEL), Rockville, MD
- 2005-2008: *"The Art of Clinical Supervision,"* monthly course for mental health supervisors hosted by the National Association of Social Workers Metro Washington Chapter, Washington, DC
- March 8, 2007: *"High-Conflict Divorce: An Integrated Model,"* National Association of Social Workers Metro Washington Chapter Annual Conference, Washington DC
- March 17, 2007: *"Psychoanalytic Play Therapy: Theory and Technique"* Family Networker Symposium, Washington DC
- October, 2006: *"The Last Taboo: Money in the Clinical Setting,"* organized and chaired this conference, co-sponsored by the Metro Washington Center of the International Psychotherapy Institute and the Metro Washington Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Washington, DC
- September-May, 2006: *"Introduction to Sex and Sexuality: A Course for Psychotherapists,"* designed, staffed, and chaired this year long course for the Metro Washington Center of the International Psychotherapy Institute, Bethesda, MD
- September 2006: *"Sexual Attitude Reassessment: A Two Day Workshop for Mental Health Professionals,"* organized and chaired this event for the Metro Washington Center of the International Psychotherapy Institute, Bethesda MD

February, 2006: *"Love and Sex: A One-Day Conference for Mental Health Professionals,"* organized and chaired this event, co-sponsored by International Psychotherapy Institute and National Association of Social Workers Metro Washington Chapter, Washington, DC

September, 2006: *"Psychodynamic Clinical Supervision,"* organized and chaired this two day conference, co-sponsored by the International Psychotherapy Institute Metro Chapter and National Association of Social Workers Metro Chapter, Washington DC

September 2005-May 2007: *"Introduction to Psychodynamic Psychotherapy,"* chaired/taught this year long course for the Metro Washington Center of the International Psychotherapy Institute, Bethesda, MD

October 2005: *"Toxic Passivity: Working with Victimized Parents in High Conflict Divorce,"* International Psychotherapy Institute weekend conference, *"Applications of Object Relations Family Therapy,"* Salt Lake City, Utah

June, 2005: *"Working with Families of High Conflict Divorce: An Integrated Model,"* American Family Therapy Association/International Family Therapy Association Conference, Washington DC

June, 2005: *"Sexuality in Contemporary Psychotherapy,"* organized and chaired this one day conference, co-sponsored by the International Psychotherapy Institute Metro Chapter and National Association of Social Workers Metro Chapter, Washington DC

September 2005: *"Psychodynamic Clinical Supervision,"* organized and chaired this two-day conference, co-sponsored by International Psychotherapy Institute Metro Chapter and National Association of Social Workers Metro Chapter, Washington DC

April, 2005: *"Working with Families of High-Conflict Divorce,"* Annual Conference of the Metro Washington Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, Washington, DC

March, 2005: *"Working with Families of High-Conflict Divorce: Therapeutic Supervision,"* Psychotherapy Networker Symposium, Washington, DC

January, 2005: *"Clinical Work with High-Conflict Divorcing Families,"* gave keynote address at conference on "New Advances in Divorce," co-sponsored by the Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work and the Catholic University School of Social Work, Washington, DC

September, 2004: *"Clinical Supervision,"* organized and chaired this two day conference, co-sponsored by International Psychotherapy Institute Metro Chapter and National Association of Social Workers Metro Chapter, Washington DC

March, 2004: *"Working with Families of High-Conflict Divorce,"* Psychotherapy Networker Symposium, Washington, DC

January, 2003: *"Therapeutic Supervised Visitation with Families of High-Conflict Divorce,"* International Psychotherapy Institute Conference, *"Working with Traumatized Patients,"* New Orleans, LA

Board Positions/Professional Affiliations

Current

Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

Collaborative Practice Center of Greater Washington

Collaborative Practice Center of Montgomery County

Cosmos Club

DC Academy of Collaborative Professionals, *Founding Board Member, Past President*

International Academy of Collaborative Professionals

Past

Collaborative Practice Training Institute, *Founding Faculty*

Divorce Roundtable of Montgomery County, *Past President*

National Association of Social Workers Metro Washington Chapter, *Past Executive Board Member*

Pro Bono Collaborative Law Project of DC, *Founding Board Member*

Pro Bono Collaborative Law Project of Maryland, *Founding Board Member*

Education

Degrees

1989: Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, New York
Master of Science in Social Work

1986: Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Bachelor of Arts, with Honors

Psychotherapy Training

1997-2002: International Psychotherapy Institute, Chevy Chase, Maryland
Certificate training in Object Relations Therapy

1991-1996 Institute for Child, Adolescent, and Family Studies, New York, New York
Certificate training in psychodynamic psychotherapy with children, adolescents, and families

Additional Training (a representative sampling)

November, 2013: Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Regional Conference, Kansas City, MO

October, 2013, International Academy of Collaborative Professionals 3-Day Forum, San Antonio, Texas

April, 2013: Civil and Commercial Applications in Collaborative Law

March, 2013: Ethics in Custody Evaluations, Washington DC

October, 2012: International Academy of Collaborative Practice 3-day Forum, Chicago, Illinois

October, 2010: International Academy of Collaborative Practice 3-day Forum, Washington, DC

October, 2009: International Academy of Collaborative Practice 3-day Forum, Minneapolis, MN

October, 2008: International Academy of Collaborative Practice 3-day Forum, New Orleans, LA

May, 2007: Team Training in Collaborative Law, Gaithersburg, MD

December, 2006: 40-Hour Divorce Mediation Training, Bethesda, MD

October, 2006: Advanced Collaborative Law Training, Washington, DC

March, 2006: Conducting Child Custody Evaluations, Washington, DC

April, 2006: Collaborative Law Basic Training, Washington,

December 2005: Parenting Coordination, University of Baltimore School of Law and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

Past Professional Experience

1992-1994: New York University Graduate School of Social Work, *Adjunct Clinical Professor*

1991-1993: Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, Brooklyn, New York, *Psychotherapist*

1989-1991: Outpatient Clinic of Federation Employment and Guidance Services, New York, New York, *Psychotherapist*

1988-1989: Payne-Whitney Clinic of New York Hospital, New York, New York, *Graduate Intern*

1987-1998: Jewish Board of Family and Child Services, New York, New York, *Graduate Intern*