

MCFR

Minnesota Council on Family Relations

Family Forum

WINTER 2015

Family Forum
is the
newsletter
of the
Minnesota
Council on
Family
Relations, a
state affiliate
of the
National
Council on
Family
Relations



**Many new changes have come to MCFR!
Read inside for all of the updates:**

- **Newly Elected Board Officers**
- **Successful Fall Conference**
- **Spring 2015 Conference Save the Date**
- **Award Winners**
- **Membership Benefits**
- **Student Update**



Save the Date!
MCFR 2015 Spring Conference
May 1, 2015
The Complexities of Domestic Abuse

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From the President Gail Peavey

Greetings MCFR member,

Family Life Education Month is recognized each February, with the aim to mobilize family life educators and supporters to increase awareness and understanding of family life education and how it benefits and impacts families. This overriding theme was emulated during the MCFR strategic planning retreat facilitated by my colleague, Eric Biltonen, St Croix County UW Extension Community Resource Development Agent on January 29, 2015.

In order to fulfill our mission, the following strategic goals were developed. These goals are based on priority issues facing MCFR in terms of both fulfilling our mission and improving our operational effectiveness and efficiency.

- Increase and maintain membership of MCFR through increased relevance, marketing and visibility
- Educate family professionals and policy makers about impact of policy on family well-being
- Facilitate professional connections by increasing, promoting, and maintaining collaborations and partnerships
- Increase conference impact and attendance through increased outreach and continually improved content.

We brainstormed specific actions listed below that will facilitate our ability to address the mentioned goals:

- Connect with current members to identify areas of expertise and to encourage involvement with MCFR
- Recruit students from universities and collaborate with affiliates from neighboring states
- Develop training opportunities and agreements surrounding co-sponsored conferences
- Reach out and raise awareness of family issues to policymakers
- Continue to utilize technology and social media for marketing/recruitment

We will keep you abreast of the progress of our action plan.

The January retreat was a great beginning for team building as we welcomed five new board members and collectively formed a scholarly group with an abundant wealth of knowledge, skill-sets and passion for working with families in our rapidly changing world. I am confident the inspiration and wisdom of dedicated MCFR members will guide us to fulfill our purpose to explore relevant family issues, provide professional development and connect research to policy to practice. Your ideas and involvement are critical to our success and always welcome. For comments or questions, please e-mail:

gail.peavey@ces.uwex.edu or call 715-485-8600 or contact Tammy Dunrud @ td4MCFR@gmail.com. I look forward to a great year ahead.

Gail Peavey

MCFR President

Congratulations to our Newly Elected Board Members!

We are pleased to announce the election of the following new officers and members-at-large to the Minnesota Council on Family Relations Board.

President-Elect: Peg Lindlof

Peg is a familiar face to MCFR as she has had multiple positions on the board including president. We are so pleased to have her back with us! Peg is a retired family life professional with CFLE certification.

Members-At-Large:

Val Anderson. Val has worked in a variety of settings around the country but is currently a licensed parent educator in the St. Anthony and New Brighton School Districts. She received her PhD from North Dakota State University and recently moved back to Minnesota where she has also been a lecturer at the University of Minnesota. Val has a passion for art and loves teaching art to children.

Mary Campbell Wood. Mary is a University of Wisconsin Extension Family Living Agent serving families in Buffalo and Pepin counties. She has been active in leading local and statewide efforts that support incarcerated individuals and their families with reentry outcomes. Mary has an MS in Guidance and Counseling and a BA in Psychology with a Family Studies minor.

Melissa Denning. Melissa is a licensed early childhood teacher and parent educator in the St. Francis School district. She has already been involved with the planning of the MCFR Fall 2014 Conference. Her specialty is community outreach using Facebook, blogs and other social media. Melissa has three young boys and is involved in many of their activities.

Val Hessburg. Val has been involved in academia for over 40 years working with people of all ages. She developed and ran a non profit for victims of domestic abuse. Val was also nominated for the MN Teacher of the Year in Minneapolis and Westonka School districts. Her mission is to continue to strengthen families through her participation on the MCFR Board.

Laura Sanchez. Laura recently completed her undergraduate degree in social work from Augsburg College and is working on her Master's of Social Work. She had internships at women's shelters and inner city schools where she worked with women and children on communication skills.

WELCOME EVERYONE to your leadership roles in MCFR!



Mental Health: Understanding and Supporting Families

Conference Committee Members; Ada Alden, Betty Cooke, Melissa Denning, Maud Greenhoe, Gail Peavey and Co-Chairs-Beth Gausman and Renee Sawyer. Committee support from community agencies included Kathy Zanner from the Wilder Institute and Cari Michaels from Children Youth and Families Consortium of the University of Minnesota.

The conference agenda was enhanced by agencies who co-sponsored the event: University of Minnesota, the Salvation Army, MN Fathers & Families Network, MN THRIVE Initiative, NAMI Minnesota and Hazelden.

The conference committee set as their foundation for the event the following assumptions to help guide them during their planning;

- Everyone has a state of mental health
- Knowledge comes from practice as much as research
- Prevention efforts help everyone
- Interventions must be interdisciplinary

These assumptions created the foundation of the conference and helped the committee select a variety of engaging presenters and organizations that would provide supporting resources.

The day began with the short video “Stories of Recovery” that was produced by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness-Minnesota). The video featured several people who live with mental illness. These individuals shared their experiences and told what has helped them in their recovery efforts.

Keynote speaker Glenace Edwall from the Minnesota Department of Human Services presented our opening address; “Lifespan Development Approaches to Mental Health: Implications for Policy and Practice”. Glenace outlined the approaches the Department of Human Services is taking to address children’s mental health issues within the State of Minnesota. Her presentation encouraged all of us to look more seriously at the issue of mental health as it affects families and children in our state. The evaluations proved her time spent with us was valuable to all in attendance. At the time of the presentation Glenace was Acting Assistant Chemical and Mental Health Services Administration for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Earlier this year Glenace retired. We wish her well on her next adventures and feel extremely honored to have had her as our keynote speaker.

The second presentation of the day, “Promoting Student Mental Health and Learning” was given by Judy Myers, Children Youth and Families Consortium, U of M, Scott Masini, Principal and Caroly Rottman Behavior Specialist from the Bruce Vento Elementary School in east Saint Paul. The presentation focused on the partnership between CYFC and the Bruce Vento Elementary School. The insightful dialogue between the three participants represented the dedication to the school each felt while struggling with barriers within both

educational systems as well as the families they serve.

The last morning presentation “Case Study Learning in Mental Health: Using an Online Training Tool in Professional Settings” was given by Cari Michaels, from the Children Youth and Families Consortium, University of Minnesota. Cari explained how the online, interactive tools provided by CYFC can encourage practitioners to collaborate together and explore how to respond effectively to children’s mental health.

The afternoon presentations were kicked off by Cindy Saarela, Coordinator for Teaching and Learning with the South Washington Schools. Cindy’s presentation “The Nurture of Nature: Yes it’s good for you!” addressed the relationship between nature and mental health.

Dr. Bill Allen, University of Minnesota and the University of Saint Thomas presented “How and Why Culture Matters in Family Service”. Bill’s presentation looked at the meaning of culture and our ability to look at our cultural biases through a new lens.

The last presentation of the day, “We Are All First Responders for Families” was given by Dr. Bill Doherty, University of Minnesota. Bill shared information about an early intervention model that engages community members and teaches them the skills needed to respond appropriately to individuals who may be experiencing signs of mental illness.

We were delighted to have six poster presentations from students sharing their work in research and practice. The students made themselves available throughout the day to explain their presentations and answer questions. We want to thank Ashley Landers and Mary Maher for helping to organize the poster session.

We are grateful for all the agencies that supplied additional information and support on the topic of mental illness.

Submitted by Beth Gausman and Renee Sawyer, Conference Co-chairs

Ethics Project

The Ethics Committee has three projects on the calendar at the moment.

The Ethical Thinking and Practice booklet is under review prior to a 3rd printing sometime in 2016. Ada Alden, Betty Cooke, Mary Maher and Glen Palm are contributing to this process. Please contact any of them with your comments or ideas.

Technological challenges have slowed plans for a 2nd more interactive webinar later this year. It is hoped that with assistance from the University of Minnesota’s Extension Service and NCFR staff we might be able to move forward with the webinar’s design. Bill Allen, Lisa Krause and Sharon Powell are assisting Mary Maher with the planning.

Finally, an introductory Ethical Thinking and Practice workshop will be held for the Osseo ECFE and Early Childhood Programs staff in April with Mary Maher and Ada Alden presenting. Contact Mary at mary.maher@comcast.net if you are interested in hosting a training at your site.

The Complexities of Domestic Abuse: An Overview of Resources, Research, and Effective Interventions

Friday, May 1st

8:00 - 12 noon

New Brighton Community Center, 400 10th St. NW, 55112

Video conference sites available at Crookston, Farmington, Grand Rapids, Morris and Worthington

Domestic abuse occurs in many ways and in a wide variety of intimate partnerships, from dating to co-parenting to marriage. The abuse may be frequent or occasional, physical or verbal, a threat or an action. Join us for a morning of information and resources targeted to what family professionals need to know about Domestic Abuse.

Continuing education hours are available for educators and social workers.

Attendees will learn:

- To identify the dynamics of domestic abuse and the red warning flags
- To understand the causes of violence
- To understand the effects on children who witness domestic abuse
- To identify resources for educating about and responding to domestic abuse
- What recent policy and legislative changes are relevant to domestic abuse
- What effective interventions are conducted at Domestic Abuse Project (DAP), including Trauma Informed treatment for victims, abusers and for children
- What current research issues are addressed at DAP and elsewhere

Our presenters are leaders in the field from the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) where they work with abusers, victims and children.

Aaron Milgrom, M.A., LMFT, Director of Therapy Services

Angela Lewis-Dmello, MSW, LICSW, Associate Director of Therapy and Supervisor of Youth Services

Schedule: 8:00-8:30 *Registration and continental breakfast*
8:30-10:00 *Opening Session with Aaron and Angela*
10:00-10:20 *Break/Resource Review/Networking*
10:20-noon *Session Two with Aaron and Angela*



To register: Go to www.mn.ncfr.org

Fees: \$25 full-time members
\$40 nonmembers
\$10 student/new professional and retired members,
\$20 student nonmembers/retired nonmembers
Very limited scholarships may be available.

Contact td4mcfr@gmail.com with registration questions.

Submitted by Marilyn Sharpe, MCFR Secretary and Spring Conference Co-Chair

Membership Committee

A membership in MCFR offers many opportunities for professional growth and development;

- Subscription to MCFR Family Forum (3 electronic issues annually)
- Reduced registration fees for MCFR annual spring and fall conferences as well as other professional development opportunities
- Membership in the MCFR listserv
- Opportunities for mentoring, interaction and involvement with other family professionals
- Resume-building opportunities through board service and committee work
- Awards and recognition
- Dues discounts of retirees and students
- Strong connection to National Council on Family Relations

Membership Options	
General Member	\$45.00
General Member with NCFR Discount	\$40.00
Student/New Professional	\$25.00
Retired Member	\$25.00
*Organizational Member	\$75.00
*Organizational Member w/ NCFR Discount	\$70.00

*Organizational membership includes 2 registration fees per conference and 2 listserv participants. Questions about membership in MCFR can be addressed to td4mcf@gmail.com or to become a member go to www.mn.ncfr.org and click on the **Join Us** link on the homepage .

Val Anderson and Beth Gausman, Co-Chairs MCFR Membership Committee

Treasurer's Corner

The end of the year is always a busy financial time. At MCFR, we begin a new budget in January and so are busy taking stock of our financial situation for the year. 2014 was a successful year for MCFR. We ended the year with a net gain of \$60.99. The good news was that we operated without a loss, but we had hoped to earn more money in 2014. When looking over our income and expenses, Tammy Dunrud and I learned that the area in which we fell farthest short to meeting our goals was Membership. Fewer people joined or renewed their memberships to MCFR than we had anticipated and our revenue went down in that category. We believe that one reason why membership decreased was that we did not conduct a membership campaign. In all of the changes and new systems established in 2014, a membership campaign fell through the cracks. 2015 looks financially promising for MCFR. We have learned a great deal in the past year and are optimistic that we will achieve our 2015 financial goals. Membership is definitely an area that we will emphasize. Stay tuned for opportunities to volunteer!

Submitted by: Sharon Powell, Treasurer



2014 MCFR Awards

Gail Peavey, Chair - 2014 MCFR Awards Committee

Awards to members and other scholars and practitioners in family-related areas are an important part of the work of MCFR. MCFR presented two awards in recognition of contributions to the family field at the MCFR Annual Conference on December 5, 2014. We congratulate Dawn Cassidy and Al and Franni Franken as deserving recipients of the 2014 awards.

We were honored to present Dawn Cassidy the **MCFR Ruth Jewson Distinguished Service to Families Award**, an award given to a professional in the family field who is recognized for outstanding work on behalf of families.

As an employee of NCFR since 1989, Dawn's work has been to promote professionalism through her management of the Certified Family Life Educator process as well as her position as Director of Education. In collaboration with MCFR, Dawn was on the initial Ethics Committee in the early 1990's and was instrumental in its development and publication. She continues to support Ethical Thinking and Practice by serving as the liaison between NCFR and MCFR as we collaborate more specifically together on bringing this important document to a greater population of professionals. The first webinar presented by NCFR, guided by Dawn, was in collaboration with MCFR and based on Ethical Thinking and Practice. The webinar drew over 100 people from around the world.

Dawn has always promoted professionalism in the field of parents and family life education. She is co-author of Family Life Education; Working with Families across the Life Span (now in its 3rd edition.)

In addition to her scholarly contributions, Dawn continues to be a vital resource to the MCFR Board and expediently responds to concerns or question. She indeed is a worthy candidate for this honor.

The **Friend of the Family Award**, an award given to a professional who may or may not be in the family field, but who has made significant contributions to the quality of family life in Minnesota, was presented to Senator Al and Franni Franken for their passionate advocacy for improving access to mental health service. Franni and Senator Franken have worked side by side to combat the stigma of mental health and improve mental health access and services.

This past year, Senator Franken announced new grant opportunities to ensure that students in Minnesota and across the country can access critical mental health services. These grants expanded access to early intervention and mental health services for students, help schools work with community-based mental health providers and train teachers and adults to recognize and respond to the signs of mental illness in children and youth. He has been a champion of mental health care since his first days in the Senate through the implementation of the mental health parity law. In addition, Senator Franken has authored the bipartisan *Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act* to bring more resources to law enforcement, the courts, and correctional facilities to help them respond to the mental health issues they encounter.

MCFR Student/New Professional Section News

Last fall, Dr. Dan Moen, Minnesota State University - Mankato graciously invited representatives of MCFR to present to his "Teaching Family Life/Parent Education" course of about 25 undergraduates. As the current Student Chair, I was joined by Jessie Rudi (fellow graduate student) and Mary Maher (past president of MCFR) for the presentation. Each of us discussed our experiences of graduate school, the importance of becoming involved in professional organizations, and how we became members of MCFR. The experience served as a reminder of the vast range of career paths that can be pursued in the family field, as each of us had very different experiences professionally, yet our interests in family were shared. Whether you want to be a marriage and family therapist, family researcher, parent educator, or certified family life educator - the centrality of families in our work is what unites us.

The MCFR Student Section will be inviting proposals for mini-presentations at the Spring 2015 Workshop. This will be an excellent opportunity for students to promote their areas of research to local family scholars, practitioners, and other professionals. Please watch for the call for proposals, which will be released soon.

Submitted by Ashley Landers, Student Section Chair

NCFR News - Winter 2015

Rose Allen, NCFR Affiliate Council Board President and NCFR Board of Directors

The NCFR Annual Conference in Baltimore this past November was a fascinating mix of international family research, public policy and practice. The Affiliate Councils Leadership workshop focused on how we can address family policy issues as affiliates of NCFR. Jennifer Crosswhite, NCFR's Public Affairs Director gave the keynote.

You can read the NCFR Statement on Family Policy here:

<https://www.ncfr.org/about/statement-policy>

Planning ahead – I am looking forward to the 2015 NCFR Annual Conference

Conflict, Violence and War: Family Risks and Resilience

November 11-14, 2015

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

The Affiliate Councils Board (ACB) -- the leadership body of NCFR's affiliate councils, or local chapters -- is seeking names of affiliate and NCFR members who are interested in serving as **program chair** or **student affiliate adviser representative** on the ACB from November 2015 to November 2017.

Nominate yourself or others who you feel would advance the work of the affiliates by Feb. 15, 2015.

Find the nomination webform and links to position descriptions at: <https://www.ncfr.org/acb-nomination-webform>

Book Review:

A Review of *Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women and Alcohol*

Reviewed by Marcie Parker, Ph.D., CFLE, healthcare researcher and consultant in private practice in Excelsior, MN

“Johnston makes a strong case that there this a new, out-of-control epidemic of binge drinking and alcoholism among women, especially highly educated women.”

This beautifully written book is an unusual amalgam: part deeply personal memoir of one woman’s descent into/ascent from alcoholism and part research document. Johnston is the daughter of an alcoholic mother and [late in his life] father. She has had a highly visible career as editor of *Mclean’s* magazine in Canada and a former Vice Principal of McGill University.

While she acknowledges the role of genetics in alcoholism, she points out that for modern liberated women, there are other factors: psychological, social and workplace issues such as loneliness, isolation, anxiety, depression, and overwork in the competitive corporate world. There are two main influences that mean women are drinking at younger and younger ages: their parents’ drinking habits and whether or not they have experienced sexual abuse or trauma in childhood. While men tend to drink to socialize, women tend to drink to blot out negative emotions and feelings. Women are drinking to numb themselves.

Through looking at statistics and studies from around the world [especially the developed nations], Johnston makes a strong case that there is a new, out-of-control epidemic of binge drinking and alcoholism among women, especially highly educated women.

Women have made strong strides in postsecondary education and the workplace; now they are making strong strides in closing

the gender gap in terms of alcohol abuse. In the USA alone, about 23,000 girls and women die each year from the effects of alcohol abuse, which leads to health issues and cancer. Some women today are what could be called high-functioning alcoholics in that they don’t miss days at work or get DWI’s but they do use alcohol and lots of it to relax at the end of the day and continue on with caring for their families and their jobs.

Johnston looks at the role that advertising and marketing play in fueling this epidemic. There is now a feminized drinking culture in the United States where every dinner includes alcohol and drinks such as Mommy Juice, berry-flavored vodkas, Mike’s Hard Lemonade, Happy Bitch and Girl’s Night Out. As women hit parity with men in their drinking, there are many factors that mean that women are going to be impacted much harder than men: women suffer a lot more depression than men, women tend to be 2/3rds the body weight of men; women have more body fat than men and body

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fat fails to dilute alcohol; they have a lower level of an enzyme designed to break down the alcohol and flush it from the system; hormone fluctuations make women more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol; women’s chemistry means they become dependent on alcohol much more rapidly than men do; and, health effects such as cognitive deficits and liver disease all occur in women with significantly shorter exposure times to alcohol.

Women who drink 4+ alcoholic beverages a day actually quadruple their risk of dying from heart disease. While heavy drinkers of both genders run the risk of a fatal stroke, the odds are actually five times higher for women.

In addition, there is a raging debate now on whether pregnant women should drink: yes, no and maybe. But as Johnston puts it, until we know a lot more about the risk to the fetus, why put someone's future at risk by drinking alcohol? She knows young women who have gotten pregnant while passed out at fraternity parties.

To make matters worse, there are few facilities where women can get specialized, gender-specific treatment and there is tremendous stigma where women and drinking are concerned. And women, even the family caregivers, find it difficult to give up their daily duties and care routines to enter treatment and care for themselves for once.

In the U.K. [Johnston calls the U.K. the Lindsay Lohan of the internationals], young women now are dying in their 20's and 30's

of end-stage renal disease [once thought to be the domain of elderly alcoholic men]. Johnston has said that we live now in an alcogenic culture and that risky, binge drinking is normalized. She says that alcohol is the new tobacco in advertising in that ads are being targeted to younger and younger women.

...we now live in an alcogenic culture and that risky binge drinking is normalized.

For Johnston the turning point came when her 20-year-old son, Nicholas, made her a Mother's Day card. He drew her sitting at her typewriter and said, "The whites of her eyes are white and she is drinking Perrier, not wine." She says that the first year of sobriety was the hardest but that she had a tremendous amount of support from her family, friends and co-workers.

Johnston, a professional writer, has made a strong case that there is now a little understood, little recognized epidemic threatening society----the sharp rise in risky and binge drinking by young girls and women. When

Johnston waited in line to meet her hero, Gloria Steinem, in a Toronto bookstore, she tried to discuss her ideas about this new epidemic with the uber-feminist. But Steinem waved her off, saying that alcoholism is not a women's issue.

Drink is an important book, wonderfully well researched and written, that should be read by anyone working with families. It is currently being read and discussed in reading groups worldwide. This book could also be shared with women and their families anywhere along the spectrum from beginning/middle/end of the sobriety journey. The book will sock you right between the eyes and make connections between family, work, advertising/marketing, healthcare and more that you may never have made in the past. It is almost impossible to put down and will leave you with a serious understanding of a grave trend that is sure to grow worse with time.

[by Ann Dowsett Johnston; Harper Wave-Harper Collins; 2013; 305 pages; paperback \$15.99 or hardcover \$27.99]

MCFR History: *Technology Changes, Aging and Decisions*

I was reflecting on which books I should dispose of as I was working on the computer planning a session for some fellow retirees. My favorite bookcase is beside the heater and adjacent to my computer.

I quickly faced the fact that fewer books are being purchased and/or read in book format. Readers and I-pads can hold many books and articles to broaden the mind and provide perspective to current issues. It is a smarter way to condense a great deal of information. As of yet, my mind prefers to touch those ideas and work. My eyesight is not as keen as when I was more active in the field – and it is a reasonable excuse. When I view my bookcase, I can be in the moment when I first discovered that idea or pursued that different perspective. I may be back in an auditorium hearing this amazing speaker at NCFR. I may be cornered in a small room listening to a demographer discuss the cultural changes throughout the generations. I can see that room and feel the eagerness to talk with my mother about why her generation was so different – especially for women.

I can hear a passionate address by a former NCFR or MCFR President and catch the depths of feelings from that family expert. I can still feel the thrill of being touched by these professionals. I also remember being disappointed when a famous author gave a very boring and canned talk – obviously not appreciating the intelligence of that audience.

My bookcase holds many family field books and aging books. I have combined the two areas since my days at Iowa State. Now that I am in my aging years, there is more focus on what I want my future to be than on how I teach others.

I have found it easier to toss topics that I have presented across the years. The odds that others would be interested are very slim. I have kept some items of humor, because laughter can help even during retirement.

My books provide a history of the development of my life and my interests. I can feast my eyes and value again “A Gift of Hope,” “Why Marriages Succeed or Fail,” “The Fountain of Age,” “The Good Marriage,” and “Necessary Losses.”

What I can't capture is the stimulation of colleagues throughout the development of these many topics. I learned so much and have so many people to thank for providing that energy. I hope that the new technologies provide that continual joy of learning as much as the books have done for me.

Submitted by Sue Meyers, MCFR Historian

A note from the Editor:

Hope you are keeping warm and cozy as we traverse another Minnesota winter, glad that we're not living in Boston at this time. Enjoy this issue of MCFR's newsletter. My thanks to all the contributors. I encourage each of you to consider contributing to *Family Forum* – by preparing a book review or a research article/brief or by submitting an item for “Members' Corner” (our version of letters to the editor). If you have any suggestions for improving the newsletter, please let me know.

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