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June Newsletter

Upcoming Events



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Full Day Seminar Hot Topics in Family Law

Tuesday, 27 June 2023
9.15 am – 4.30 pm
Victoria Park Events Centre
309 Herston Road, Herston
Free parking available

The presenters regularly present on family law issues, and topics of interest to family law professionals – especially related to child and family wellbeing.

Topics include:



Dr Rachael Field (Bond University Law School): The Family Law Amendment Bill 2023 – Implications for Family Law professionals



Jon Graham (The International Centre for Children and Family Law): Management of high conflict – is there anything new that can help



Professor Bruce Smyth (Australian National University):
Which post separation parenting apps should I recommend? Why?



Anne Purcell (Parenting Coordination Australia):
The emergence of parenting coordination in the family law space



An opportunity for all practitioners to learn more about hot topics in Family Law, earn CPD points and connect with colleagues.

Early Bird price - \$150 +GST = \$165
Early Bird available until 18th May 2023.
Regular price - \$175 + GST = \$187.50

<https://www.trybooking.com/CIBVV>

Featured Articles



FMH Consulting

Boundaries: How to find them. How to keep them. How to promote them.

Lessons from a children's hospice

For 7 seven years, I was the General Manager of Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice. This incredible service is one of many operated by Wesley Mission Queensland. For the final two years of my tenure there, I was the General Manager of Palliative Care Services, taking on leadership of Hopewell Hospice, the Gold Coast's only community adult hospice. I am the first person in Australia to lead the delivery of palliative care across the entire lifespan: antenatal to geriatric. You could say that by the time I left, I had become very good friends with Death (but that is a story for another time).

Leading teams that work with the dying and the deceased is not something I said I wanted to do when I was in school. In those days, I wanted to be a telephonist. Not because I understood what the job did, I just liked saying it. Telephonist. And because I loved the way a receptionist cooed into the phone. "Good morning. FMH Consulting, Fiona speaking". Yes, that was me.

Except things took a few twists and turns. I ended up studying to become a Registered Nurse. In 1987, I graduated and my learning about life really began. I wasn't really called to work with the dying, but I quite liked ICU and the Emergency Department where I saw a lot of death and dying. I came to respect the privilege of being present for birth and for death.

Fast forward a few decades, and in January 2016, after a quick sojourn through academia and a Churchill Fellowship, I find myself standing at a construction site in Chermside. I looked around, and apparently, I was the boss. What transpired next was some of the most poignant, life-affirming, funny, challenging work I've ever done. I learnt a few tough lessons during that time. This is one of them.

"I have no idea how you do your job, Fiona". "Oh gosh. What a terribly sad job you have I couldn't do it". If I had a dollar for every time someone said that in response to the inevitable question BBQ question: 'what do you do for a living?', I'd be a wealthy woman. And the world would never hear from me again.

However, I've chosen not to monetize that BBQ showstopper. Hence, here I am.

How do I and anyone who works with the dying do the job? Boundaries. Boundaries. Boundaries.

Yes. You've all heard a million times to have boundaries. Some of you are next level experts on this.

You see, with tight boundaries you can trust yourself and others to do the work and not be overwhelmed. With tight boundaries you don't drown in the grief of others. With tight boundaries you stay in your lane. With tight boundaries you remain true to who you are and what you offer.

How do you get tight boundaries? By having them breached, by taking on the grief, responsibility, anger, despair, helplessness of others and feel yourself be crushed under them.

Anyone who has tight boundaries has once had none. And they can show you the scars. Boundaries help you understand what you will let in and what you will keep out. Boundaries are a bit like the hull of a ship. Keep it tight and no water gets in. If there's a crack, you drown. Boundaries are more than saying no to an invitation. They are more than keeping your private life separate from your professional life. More than having your Facebook profile on private. More than personal space.

Boundaries are about knowing who you are, what is important to you, and why you feel uncomfortable when someone gets too close or lulls you into oversharing.

Boundaries are knowing who is working with you with good intent. And who isn't.

If you stand tall, does that mean you have boundaries? Nope. It might just mean you're too rigid. And anyone can cut you off at the knees and you buckle. Only to then have someone or something run over the top of you. And consume you.

If you hold yourself apart from the world, does that mean you have good boundaries? Again no. All that means is that you don't allow yourself the opportunity to be yourself and, in my experience, end up with little resilience for the marathon that is your life.

If you bleed every time someone else is cut, does that mean you have good boundaries because you're demonstrating you can empathize? That's a hard no. All you do is exsanguinate.

Boundaries come from that practised point between reflection on where your weak spots are, knowing your triggers, accepting you'll get it wrong, and trusting that you and your team support each other. They come from knowing when to step back and say *'I can't today'*, knowing someone else will be there to pick up the slack. They come from knowing what to merely observe and honour versus what to feel. They come from knowing what is yours to hold, what is yours to put down, and what is yours to step over.

They're not easy things to wrangle. They are needy. They need vigilance and repair. They are always in a state of flux.

But when they work, they are things of beauty. Boundaries have saved my sanity, my personal and professional relationships, and my career. I use them to help me trust the world.

With tight boundaries, you can breathe and settle into leadership.



Spotlight on POP

Bel: POP Case Coordinator (BAG Eight Mile Plains)

What is POP (aka Parenting Orders Program)

POP is a federally funded parenting program for separated parents run by not-for-profit organisations. It is often court ordered but is open for any separated parent. Some private practitioners also run similar courses, however there is usually a fee associated with the service.

How long does it take and what does it cost?

It's free for everyone AND parents can access counselling support services for free for the following 2 years. POP courses are available on days and evenings and each session runs for are approx. 2.5 hours per week for 7 weeks. The sessions are group based and the separated parents are never in the same group. They can be accessed in person or via ZOOM and if group work isn't appropriate for a parent, the course can be offered one on one. Each parent or carer must complete a free one on one initial intake and risk and safety assessment which lasts for approx. 1.5hours.

What types of clients can benefit from the course?

The course is great for anyone who's lives have been touched by separation, including grandparents, step-parents and carers. Clients learn how to support the children through separation and the aim is to refocus parents' attention onto the children's needs.

How does it work?

There are many emotions around separation and financial separation, including grief and loss and difficulty accepting the new reality as a separated family. POP encourages parents to find acceptance around the breakdown of the relationship and avoid court proceedings or further court proceedings.

The dream is that parents will eventually find a way to co-parent but it sometimes takes time, education and support and both parents must be **willing** to co-parent, **able** to co-parent and **prepared** to learn the skills to effectively co-parent. POP helps parents find a way to parallel parent if a co-parenting relationship isn't working at the time. It helps parents shift into the business mode of co-parenting rather than pushing for engagement as a co-parent where that engagement may cause increasing conflict for children. Where co-parenting is beyond the ability of either parent, POP focuses on helping the parent accept the current reality, move through the pain, shock and grief arising from the separation and then work on co-parenting skills from there.

POP also gives parents the skills to de-escalate their children when necessary, as well as calming and de-escalating themselves. It also helps parents to learn how to evict the other parent from their own headspace, focus on what they can control and role model respectful behaviour, communication and boundaries to their children and others. It also gives parents the opportunity to hear the stories of other parents going through separation and the effect of high conflict behaviours on kids, which can be invaluable.

I've even had parents tell me that if they'd done the course earlier, they wouldn't have separated in the first place!



Featured Article by Marino Law

When tragedy strikes – the impact of death of a parent after separation

It seems like a timely opportunity to revisit the case of *Hearn & Sempers [2017] FCCA 3357*.

The link to the article below is kindly provided by Marino Law and focuses on how the Court deals with the tragic death of a parent where there is a surviving biological parent and a step-parent with whom the child had a strong relationship.

It is commonly believed that if there are parenting Orders in place and one parent passes away, the other parent automatically has the “right” to insist that the child must live with them. This is not in line with the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) which in fact says the opposite.

Click [here](#) to find out how the Family Court Judge determined this sensitive issue

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