



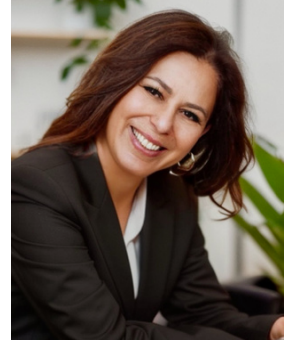
# CCND CONNECTION, Winter 2024

## *PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE*

**Rosemarie Ferrante, JD**

Dear CCND Members,

As 2024 draws to a close, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your dedication to non-adversarial divorce practices and our shared mission of creating a more respectful and collaborative path for divorcing families in Connecticut.



This year, we achieved significant milestones together. Our monthly member meetups have blossomed into vibrant spaces for connection and collaboration. These free gatherings have sparked meaningful conversations and strengthened our professional community. If you haven't joined us yet, I encourage you to participate and experience the value of these sessions.

Our 2024 conference, Foundations and Innovations, served as a powerful reminder of the principles that anchor non-adversarial divorce—cooperation, empathy, and constructive conflict resolution—while also inspiring us to embrace forward-thinking approaches. We celebrated the enduring legacy of our work while exploring cutting-edge advancements such as online mediation, artificial intelligence in conflict resolution, and innovative strategies for managing emotional dynamics in divorce. This dual focus on honoring our roots and fostering innovation ensures that our practices remain grounded and adaptive in a rapidly evolving field.

We're already planning our 2025 Conference, so stay tuned for more details!

Another exciting highlight from 2024 was achieving APFM verification for our 40-hour Basic Family & Divorce Mediation Training, making it one of a select few programs in the country with this distinction. If you're considering refreshing your skills, don't miss the opportunity to join our 2025 training!

As the renewal season begins, we're excited to introduce a new automatic renewal option for membership. By opting in, you'll enjoy uninterrupted access to professional education, training programs, and the resources that keep us at the forefront of non-adversarial divorce practices. Your membership is vital to sustaining our community and advancing the movement toward collaborative divorce solutions. If you have any questions or need assistance with renewal, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Your input is invaluable as we look toward the future. Please take a moment to complete our Professional Development Survey so we can better tailor programs and resources to meet your needs.

Looking ahead, we'll all have a role to play in advocating for the adoption of the Uniform Collaborative Law Act (UCLA) in Connecticut. Collaborative divorce, with its focus on open communication and cooperative strategies, has proven to reduce conflict and better serve families. The UCLA will provide a consistent, legitimate, and protective framework for this process. Together, we can champion this important legislation that aligns with our values and mission.

Your dedication has been instrumental in making 2024 a year of growth and impact. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in 2025 as we continue to transform the divorce experience for families in Connecticut.

**Rosemarie Ferrante**  
President, CCND

# Mediation Practice Tips from Colleagues

## **Ellie Stoddard:**

Listening – when one of the parties (A) is emotional and needs to say something, be sure to let A get it out. And, when A is done, ask the other party (B) if he/she has any comments or thoughts on what A has said. This way A gets heard, but you're still acknowledging B's existence in the room.

If B is rolling his/her eyes or otherwise showing (or saying) that s/he's heard it all before, explain that you've never heard it before. That A feels s/he needs to put context into the process and be heard. That mediations don't (necessarily) proceed in an emotional vacuum. But you also assure B that, once it's out there, we won't keep coming back to it or giving it all the oxygen in the room.

## **Deb Noonan:**

1. Prepare meeting summaries after each session. This allows you to keep track of where you are in the mediation (especially helpful when a lot of time may pass between mediation sessions) and also provides the clients with an opportunity to correct a possible misunderstanding should your summary not accurately reflect what a client believes was said or agreed to.
2. Start the first mediation with establishing interests and goals and bring them back to these stated objectives when the mediation is going off the rails.
3. When arguing becomes unproductive (judgment call sometimes) I'll let the parties go on for awhile and then I'll ask them "is this working for you?" They inevitably say no. I then ask each of them if they think they will be able to convince the other person that their narrative is right, and they both say no. I then ask, "so do you want to continue having this conversation or do you want to focus on reaching mutually acceptable agreements?" Typically, they say they want to move on and focus on solutions. By letting them go for a while they get what they want to say out of their systems but then get re-focused on the work.

## **Jennifer Luise Champagne:**

I would say a helpful tip is to remember the value of encouraging clients to be specific and to identify the positives and negatives of the options, especially when dealing with parenting topics in mediation. I will give you an example. As we know parents often have ideas of schedules and many times approach it from their lens, and what they want. By encouraging them to be specific in how their ideas will work ( how long will it take to drive a child to school from their new house?) and to look at what the result will be ( will they make it to school on time and to their practice), it helps them move from the idea to a different idea when they realize on their own it may not work.

## **Louise Zito:**

Put their interests at the top of each summary and briefly review at the start of each meeting. This helps to keep them focused during the session and prevents them from falling back into their positions. As you uncover interests in subsequent sessions, add them in red to your interest section. If you are meeting in person, you can also have their interests written on paper, taped around the room or on a whiteboard.

## **Eva DeFranco:**

I think we forget that the vast majority of our clients have not been trained in conflict resolution and that most individuals are not comfortable with conflict. We need to teach them and coach them effective ways to approach and resolve the conflicts that come up in mediation and get them to understand that the success of their mediation is up to them. I will often suggest reading material to help the clients understand. Two of my go to suggestions are: "Getting to Yes" and "The Anatomy of Peace."



# Louise Zito explains “The Quits Journey”

Calling It  
QUITS!!!



In Whose  
Best Interest??

The Quits journey began for me in 2020 as I was in the midst of slowing down my practice with the goal of retiring. It really started to gel for me in the summer of 2022 as my last collaborative case was filed, 17 years after I started practicing collaborative divorce. This case held many challenges for me and did not end well. A friend suggested that I write a letter to the collaborative team members, telling them how I felt, instead I developed this training along with several colleagues including a team member. As I was leaving the active practice of law and engaging in consultations and second opinions, I had a lot of time to reflect on what worked and what didn't work in my mediations and collaborative divorces and time to consider the value in terminating a process that no longer works.

I was lucky to be joined by friends and colleagues who have given many years to the development and practice of non-adversarial divorce. I came to realize that most of our mistakes come from insufficient screening of the client, both initially and throughout the practice. Most team mistakes come from a lack of conversation, collaboration and planning by the professional team. Mediators, Mediation Professionals and Collaborative Professionals all suffer from the “litigation is the worst possible outcome” paradigm which leads to a “getting to the end at any cost” mentality. This causes us to lose track of the integrity of these wonderful processes that allow people to divorce peacefully and gracefully, rather than engaged in battle, and leads to settlement that gives people what they have chosen for themselves and each other based on their mutual needs and the needs of the family.

The first Quits presentation was in May, 2023, a half-day panel presentation with group discussion of cases. We covered how to look at termination as a positive step and not a failure, we looked at red flags, what gets in our way stopping us from having those difficult conversations about the breach(es) of integrity and discussing terminating the process or withdrawing from same. We also looked at the Standards and Ethics of IACP, APFM and CCND.

People attending wanted more and they wanted specifics of how to terminate. So we took each of those topics and spent more time with them this past year in five 1 ½ - 2 hour sessions ending in role plays where participants practiced the “It's time to bring this to an end” conversations. My sincere gratitude and thanks to Lisa Gresham, Bob Horwitz, Beth Karassik, Louise McGlynn, Karly Mitchell and special thanks to Eva DeFranco and Liza Thayer for their time, patience and wisdom and to CCND for the forum.



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# NOTES FROM THE BOARD

## ***Douglas Fishman, J.D.***



CCND has been my professional home for the past twenty years. I was relatively new to the practice of family law when I first joined the organization, and from the start I knew that I had found my people. Here were a group of professionals who were dedicated to helping folks navigate one of the most difficult times in their lives in a successful, productive and positive manner. Dinner meetings were enjoyable opportunities to gather, socialize, and receive trainings. For more extensive trainings, CCND brought in the most accomplished and varied practitioners of our arts from across North America, and I embraced and valued those experiences. If there was a role-play, I was probably volunteering for it. And while all of those experiences have informed my approach to mediation and Collaborative divorce, and have become the foundation of my approach to the work, some of those trainings still actively rattle around in my head: just try asking only open-ended question of someone for five or ten minutes, and you will see both how challenging and how revealing it is!

In my time as a CCND board member I have worked on committees, and had the honor to serve vice-president and our first pandemic-era president. I have had the pleasure of welcoming new member to the organization, and to the board. I have seen CCND continue to grow and evolve, as both a resource to professionals and to the public. We have had successes engaging with the judicial branch, and received recognition of our work and professional culture. We are now at the forefront of efforts to bring structure to Collaborative practice in Connecticut, through the adoption of the Model Act. All that is to say that I am proud of CCND and it's accomplishments.

Upon reflection, I would say that the most rewarding aspects of being associated with CCND have been to see new professionals enter the fold and embrace our non-adversarial way; that we continuously are developing professional resources and supports that benefit ourselves and each other; and, to know that I have a professional home where I can find like-minded practitioners and feel like we continue being a source of positive change in our world.

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# NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## **Deb Farea, CPA, CDFA**



**Could you share a bit about your background in accounting and finance? What inspired you to pursue the Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA®) designation?**

I began my career at KPMG in their audit department, where I became a licensed CPA. After that, I transitioned to strategic roles at American Express, while pursuing my MBA at NYU on a part-time basis. About 18 years ago, I launched my own tax practice, where I've had the privilege of helping clients develop tax strategies that align with their financial goals. In recent years, I've worked with several clients to review and interpret the tax implications of their divorce agreements. I noticed that many agreements lacked sufficient detail on tax considerations, which made me wonder how I could get involved earlier in the process to make a positive impact. I learned more about the mediation and collaborative divorce processes, as well as the Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA®) designation. Recognizing that this certification would allow me to engage earlier in the divorce process, I enrolled in the course and became certified by the end of 2023.

**Why did you join CCND? What has been the most valuable aspect of the membership for you?**

I joined CCND to connect with like-minded professionals who are dedicated to making the divorce process smoother and more respectful for everyone involved. Living on the border of New York and Connecticut, I was also interested in joining the New York Association of Collaborative Professionals (NYACP). Both organizations require 40 hours of family mediation training and 12 hours of introductory interdisciplinary collaborative training. I completed both trainings in 2024. I hope being part of CCND will not only allow me to support those going through divorce, but also provide me with valuable opportunities to learn best practices that will help me better serve my clients.

**Divorce work can be challenging yet rewarding. What motivated you to work specifically in the field of divorce financial analysis?**

Unfortunately, I've seen many friends go through the divorce process. As more of my clients began navigating divorce or adjusting to life after it, I realized I could offer support with the financial side of things and hopefully make the process a little less overwhelming.

**In your experience, what are some common financial misconceptions people have about divorce? How do you help clients gain clarity and confidence in their financial decisions?**

Unfortunately, a common misconception is that their lifestyle won't need to change after divorce. For most people, accepting this reality takes time. To provide clarity, I work with them to create a financial projection for the next few years, showing the impact of their decisions. My goal is to promote a healthier financial future and help them feel empowered and confident as they transition into their new life.

**What role do you see financial professionals like yourself playing in non-adversarial divorce processes like mediation and collaborative divorce?**

The role of the financial professional should be to provide expertise from a financial perspective so that all parties clearly understand their financial situation, the long-term implications of their choices, and help them find the equitable distribution that works best for them.

Deb Farea, CPA, CDFA  
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Riverside, CT



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# Members in the News!!

## Carolyn (Carrie) Kaas awarded exceptional commitment to students at Quinnipiac University

Carolyn Wilkes Kaas was recently awarded the 2024 Externship Achievement Award designed to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to externship teaching and the externship community. An associate professor of law, Kaas has been a clinical teacher for 35 years, instructing and guiding students through clinical legal education. Clinical legal education involves students being in a role as if they are lawyers allowing them to work on real cases with real clients. For her first 20 years, Kaas taught at an in-house clinic where she supervised law students directly as the lawyer of record. After about 16 years in the role, Kaas shepherded externship teaching. After teaching all three types of experiential courses, Kaas was elevated to associate dean of experiential education. [Read more here!](#)



**SAVE THE DATE**



**SOBERLINK**  
Proving Sobriety, Improving Lives

*This January, we're thrilled to welcome Mike Fonesca from Soberlink, who will share how Soberlink can assist mediators in situations where alcohol monitoring is necessary. Gain valuable insight from a Soberlink expert on utilizing alcohol monitoring in cases involving alcohol misuse. This lunch and learn will equip you with the essential tools and knowledge to introduce and use Soberlink with your clients, enhancing your ability to address complex family dynamics.*

**January 14, 2025, 12 pm- 1 pm**



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## J.D. Form 278 - Please file!

In November of 2019, at the request of CCND board members, Judge Albis created J.D. Form 278: Notice of Collaborative Divorce/Mediation. The notice is designed to inform the Court that a divorce matter is being mediated or resolved through a collaborative divorce process. Since its creation, judges have used the form to help manage cases. The form has also been helpful in avoiding family relations review of separation agreements before agreements can be sent to a Judge for approval; as is the case with other self-represented agreements. CCND has been asking the judicial branch to track mediation and collaborative divorce cases for years. Form 278 would allow the judicial branch to track. It is critically important that all attorneys who resolve cases through mediation or collaborative divorce file the form with the uncontested documents. If we do not file Form 278 in our mediated and collaborative cases, the judicial branch cannot count the cases in their tracking. In general, our collective voice for non-adversarial divorce may well have limited impact with the branch if the number of verified cases are negligible as the current numbers suggest. Please file the form in every applicable case.

**CLICK ON  
DOCUMENT  
LINK TO GET  
FORM**



*Have you had any business changes in  
2024? Don't forget to update your  
profile on CCND!*

*\*note this is available for individual members only*



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# Professional Development Update



2024 has been a busy year for CCND. We held the next two installments of “In Whose Best Interest?” or “Quits 2.0” and “Quits 3.0.” Both the 40-Hour Family Mediation Training and the Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Training were conducted. CCND’s in-person Dinner Meetings were revived with Dr. Sid Horowitz in April. We had a wonderful turnout for our May conference, “Foundations and Innovations” with guest appearances by Susan Gurthrie, Woody Mosten and David Hoffman. September brought our first in person Annual CCND Meeting in a very long time. In November, Dr. Abby Cole presented findings from her research on the sources of breakdowns in our cases that do not finalize within the collaborative process. The monthly member benefit get-togethers continued with a rotating schedule of Mediator Meetups, Collaborate & Connects, and CDFA Meetups, all of which occur quarterly. We even squeezed in a Lunch & Learn from Attorney Jill Bicks who presented an update about the progress of the Uniform Collaborative Law Act in Connecticut and what will be required for it to be passed by the legislature.

In 2025 the 40-Hour Mediation Training, one of only a few verified by APFM, is coming up in February, and the Introductory Interdisciplinary Collaborative Training will take place in the fall. Please do what you can to invite colleagues and friends interested in non-adversarial divorce to register for these top-notch trainings. Monthly Meetups will continue, and we encourage YOU to think about hosting! Contact Rosemarie Ferrante at [president@gooddivorcect.com](mailto:president@gooddivorcect.com) to have a turn at hosting a Mediator Meetup; Hollis Hardiman at [treasurer@gooddivorcect.com](mailto:treasurer@gooddivorcect.com) to host a CDFA Meetup; and Beth Karassik at [prodevelopment@gooddivorcect.com](mailto:prodevelopment@gooddivorcect.com) for a Collaborate & Connect. We will schedule an in-person Dinner Meeting. There will be our Annual CCND Conference in the spring, with a focus on coercive control and domestic abuse. We are also in the midst of planning an advanced training into the calendar. A survey has been sent to membership to understand your preferences for timing, locations, and costs of events. Please participate, link [here!](#) This information will help the Professional Development Committee plan events in the most effective ways.

As always, we welcome your requests and ideas for topics for meetups and trainings.

~~Your Professional Development Committee: Edward Bryan, Susan Busby, Sophie Helenek, Brendan Holt, Robert Horwitz, Megan McGrath, Rick Richardson, Susanne Snearly, Louise Zito, and co-chairs Nicole Bikakis and Beth Karassik.





# 2025 Membership Renewal Is OPEN!

**The renewal season is upon us, and we're excited to share a few updates that will make renewing your membership even simpler this year.**

As part of our effort to streamline processes, we now offer an option to sign up for automatic renewal. By enrolling in auto-renew, you can enjoy uninterrupted access to our professional education opportunities, training programs, and the invaluable resources that keep us connected and at the forefront of non-adversarial divorce practices.

Your dedication strengthens our community and supports the movement toward respectful, collaborative divorce solutions here in Connecticut. If you have any questions or need assistance with your renewal, don't hesitate to reach out—we're here to help.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to advancing non-adversarial divorce practices.

Please note:

- Only individual members have directory listings.
- Provisional membership expires one year from the date of original provisional member application approval. If you have completed the required trainings, you may apply for individual membership .
- Newly trained memberships are renewable annually for a maximum of three years.

**WATCH VIDEO**



## **CCND Mission Statement**

As a reminder: The Connecticut Council for Non-Adversarial Divorce (CCND) is a multi-disciplinary professional association, whose mission is to:

- Promote dignified, respectful, and private processes through mediation and collaborative divorce;
- Establish and preserve the highest standards of practice and integrity
- Require and facilitate professional education for its members
- Promote non-adversarial conflict resolution
- Increase awareness of alternatives to litigation



**Renew Now!**



The Connecticut Council  
for Non-Adversarial Divorce

# Legislative Update: Focus on the Uniform Collaborative Law Act

## *Jill Bicks, JD*

2025 is going to be the year when Connecticut joins the 26 other states in the country that have enacted the Uniform Collaborative Law Act (“UCLA”). CCND has been working on this effort for years and we now have the support we need from the Connecticut Bar Association, The American Bar Association, key state legislators and a myriad of other state organizations. During the summer, CCND worked with the Legislative Commissioners’ Office to adapt the uniform act to mesh with other Connecticut state laws. The act is now ready for the next steps.

Here's the timeline: the next legislative session opens on January 8, 2025 and ends on June 4, 2025. At the state Capitol, legislators will begin to file their legislative proposals. State Senator Ceci Maher, a member of the Judiciary Committee, will be introducing our bill in that committee.

Legislation introduced will be subject to review by legislative leaders before public hearings are scheduled and then votes will occur at the committee level. If those votes are successful, legislation will go to the House and Senate for action.

### **Here’s where we need you:**

When the time is ripe, CCND will be providing templates to make it easy for you to send emails, write letters, submit testimony, and provide a press release to your local news outlets. Use the templates to:

- \* Contact Legislators: Reach out to your local representatives and members of the Judiciary Committee to express your support for the bill. Personal stories and well-reasoned arguments can be persuasive.
- \* Your local representative can be found here. <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>
- \* Once named in January, the members of the Judiciary Committee can be found here: <https://www.cga.ct.gov/jud/>
- \* Participate in Public Hearings: Participate in the public hearing process by testifying in favor of the bill. This can be done in person or by submitting written testimony.
- \* Engage in Advocacy: Join or support advocacy groups that are working to promote the bill. These groups often organize campaigns, rallies, and letter-writing efforts.
- \* Raise Awareness: Use social media, local community meetings, and other platforms to raise awareness about the importance of the bill and how it will benefit the community.
- \* Stay Informed: Follow the progress of the bill through the legislative process and be prepared to act when key votes or decisions are coming up.



# Upcoming Events & Happenings



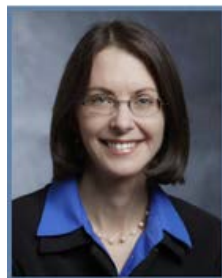
## **40-Hour Family Mediation Training Verified by APFM**

CCND's mediation training is now verified by the Academy of Professional Family Mediators (APFM), marking a significant achievement in ensuring the highest standards for family mediation education. This distinction reinforces the credibility and quality of CCND's programs, offering participants confidence in receiving expert training aligned with nationally recognized best practices, particularly in conflict resolution and family dynamics.

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On Friday, November 22, 2024, CCND members Susan Busby and Laura Renfro attended the 13th John A. Speziale Alternative Dispute Resolution Symposium at Quinnipiac University. **CCND was a sponsor of this program**, and a **prior President of CCND, the Honorable Barbara Aaron** was a symposium co-chair along with professor Charles Pillsbury, another supporter of mediation.

This symposium was about restorative justice and juvenile justice. The symposium organizers brought together incredible speakers from Connecticut, DC, New York, and New Zealand! There were panels on: restorative justice in the community and schools; working with youth, families, and the community in the juvenile justice system; and restorative justice in other parts of the US. There was an instructive modeling of a restorative justice “Circle” demonstrated by students from Bridgeport Central High. We also heard from practitioners from New Zealand who talked about how their system of not charging and family circles successfully worked to dramatically lower the juvenile population in prison. The symposium concluded with a look toward the future of juvenile justice reform in Connecticut.



# Event Photos



## Celebrating at the CLC Gala!

CCND members had a wonderful time attending the 2024 Children's Law Center (CLC) Gala! As long-time supporters of this incredible event, we are proud to stand with CLC in its mission to ensure every child in our community has access to a stable home, quality education, and the healthcare they deserve.

The Gala brought together passionate advocates, generous supporters, and dedicated professionals, all united in their commitment to making a difference in the lives of children and families. Check out these snapshots of CCND members enjoying the evening and celebrating this vital cause!

For more information about CLC and their transformative work, visit [Children's Law Center](#).



# How To Stay Connected

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Kick off! Divorce with Respect week began with CCND President Jennifer Luse Champagne and CCND Board Member Deborah Noonan join Susan Guthrie, former CT attorney and host of the well-known Divorce and Beyond podcast to discuss what it means to divorce respectfully, how CCND and its members are committed to non-adversarial divorce and an overview of the week's event.



Connecticut Collaborative Divorce Group (CCDG) Zoom Webinar  
During this information session, participants will have had the opportunity to hear about the collaborative process and ask questions of the professionals. Presenters: Yvonne Shoff, Katie Bissonnette, Traci Cipriano, Elaine Ducharme, and Brenda Larkin.



Collaborative Divorce of CT (CDCT) Comcast Live  
This discussion focuses on college education and how it can be best addressed within the collaborative process. Presenters: Bob Opatzner, Sophie Koven, Vicki Volper, and Patricia Carrera.

*We've updated our website! See our collection of videos- use them to educate your clients about non-adversarial divorce options!*



## HAVE NEWS?

Hosting an event? Writing an article?  
Please share your news, so we can highlight you!



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GET INVOLVED

Are You Interested in Joining a Committee?  
We need YOU!

We have lots of opportunities to get involved with  
CCND. Reach out to a Board Member today!



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