



Oregon Psychological Association Webinar Series

Trauma, Polyvagal Theory and Divorce – Allies Not Enemies

Tuesday
SEPTEMBER

8

12:00-1:00 pm



Register online at
www.opa.org

Course Description

Dr. Bourg will link three bodies of research to help professionals respond in a compassionate and effective manner to clients experiencing a divorce. Divorce epidemiology will help professionals understand the broad landscape of divorcing families and the kinds of issues they present to mental health professionals. Attachment theory and Polyvagal theory will help explain behavioral and neurological underpinnings to the experience of divorce and the problem issues these families present to professionals. Understanding these three threads logically leads to intervention approaches and risk management practices that reclaim safety for the parents, children and professionals who try to help them.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe three different divorce experiences and how they are likely to present in a professional's office
2. Describe three links between how the clients present and neurological function per Polyvagal theory
3. Explain why some client behavior can best be understood as a traumatic reaction to divorce
4. Explain three ways of working with these clients that are effective and protect the practitioner



Wendy Bourg, PhD

Speaker

Dr. Bourg has two primary areas of expertise, helping families embroiled in a high conflict divorce, and helping make sense of allegations of child abuse.

Dr. Bourg's work in child abuse began at CARES NW, where she worked as a child interviewer for 10 years and was the primary author of the first edition of the Oregon Interview Guidelines. The Guidelines also were published nationally and internationally as a scientific and pragmatic training guide, "A Child Interviewer's Guidebook." She continues that work as an expert witness throughout the state of Oregon.

Dr. Bourg began her work on helping children and parents manage high conflict divorce in graduate school when she helped run a clinic for children of divorce. Her master's thesis examined families experiencing domestic violence while her dissertation research studied children's behavioral and physiological responses to adult anger. In her current practice she conducts custody and parenting studies and maintains a very busy clinical schedule focused on parent coordination, family therapy for children resisting or refusing contact with a parent, mediation and divorce coaching. Dr. Bourg's philosophy is that a good evaluation helps families solve problems in a rational manner, thereby reducing conflict and helping the children and family through this very difficult time. Her clear and consistent focus is on problem-solving that respects the importance of healthy attachment relationships in order to move the family to a more peaceful place.

In her family therapy, many times unresolved allegations of abuse are the focus, and Dr. Bourg's two lines of practice come together. The focus on developing a plan to foster and support attachment, while honoring the need for emotional and physical safety, is key to her interventions on behalf of these troubled families.



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Workshop Classifications and Continuing Education Credits

Each workshop is classified according to the following system:

- Level 1: general or introductory content aimed at a diverse audience.
- Level 2: psychologically sophisticated content, at either introductory or more advanced levels, aimed at general professional audiences.
- Level 3: highly advanced theoretical or technical content, aimed at expert audiences.

Level 2 and 3 presentations will typically warrant CE credit for a licensed psychologist. Both level and number of hours for each workshop are

indicated and official letters of completion will be awarded to participants who attend the entire workshop. APA guidelines specify that no letter of attendance will be awarded for partial workshop attendance.

Level 2 and 3 offerings are typically accepted by the Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners. However, Oregon licensed psychologists should consult the official Continuing Education Guidelines produced by the Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners and note that there is no pre-certification of continuing education credit by the Board of Psychologist Examiners.

Questions? Call OPA at 503.253.9155 or 800.541.9798 or email info@opa.org

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