

## **Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination**

*ACR is a professional organization enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution.*

### **Mission Statement**

To develop Eldercaring Coordination as a dispute resolution option specifically for those high conflict cases involving issues related to the care and needs of elders. Eldercaring Coordination is to compliment, not replace, other services such as provision of legal information or legal representation, individual/family therapy, medical, psychological or psychiatric evaluation or mediation.

### **Vision**

Parenting coordination is a successful child-focused alternative dispute resolution process in which a mental health or family law professional with mediation training and experience assists high conflict parents to implement their parenting plan. Using parenting coordination as a prototype, eldercaring coordination will be developed for high conflict families as an elder- focused dispute resolution process regarding the care and needs of an elder. Eldercaring Coordination will focus on reducing the level of conflict in these families so that the family members are able to focus more productively on the issues at hand and work with others in their support system to provide legal advice, guidance and care.

### **Purpose**

This project proposes that process of “eldercaring coordination” will:

- Help manage high conflict family dynamics so that the elder, family and stakeholders can address their non-legal issues independently from the court;
- Ready the elder and family to work with collaterals to address the care and needs of the elder, avoiding delays and resulting in better decisions;
- Foster self-determination of the elder;
- Promote safety by monitoring situations at high risk for abuse or neglect;
- Provide a support system for the elder and family during times of transition, and
- Free judicial time by addressing matters for which other dispute resolution processes are unavailable or ineffective

### **Objectives:**

The objectives of this project include:

1. Facilitating a discussion amongst stakeholders (professional, court, collaterals) regarding risks/concerns, safeguards, and benefits in the application of parenting coordination as a prototype dispute resolution process to address high conflict family dynamics when elders are an issue;
2. Using research (existing and facilitating new research) to inform the creation of “eldercaring coordination”;
3. Exploring the challenges and ethical considerations when translating parenting coordination to the elder population dynamics and existing legal framework;
4. Creating an “eldercaring coordination” process that would best address the dynamics of the high conflict families;
5. Identifying how “eldercaring coordination” could promote safety of elders and their families, address elder abuse, and decrease instances of neglect of elders;
6. Developing initial guidelines, including training and qualifications, for professionals practicing this alternative dispute resolution process for elders (i.e. “eldercaring coordination”); and

7. Creating a pilot project proposal to guide, assist and assess the development of “eldercaring coordination.”
8. Work with the Florida Chapter of the Association of Conflict Resolution Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination to assist with their development of the concept in Florida.

**Process:**

We created two levels of involvement for stakeholders. Both levels are vitally important to the successful completion of the objectives above:

1. The **ACR Task Force** on Eldercaring Coordination, composed of representatives of organizations/entities, used parenting coordination, currently implemented for families of minor children, as a model to develop eldercaring coordination for cases with elders. This group engages actively in regular meetings and completes tasks between meetings to meet the objectives above. The Task Force currently includes representatives of the following organizations, with several others interested in joining:

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy  
American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging  
American Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section  
American Psychological Association  
Association of American Retired Persons  
Association of Conflict Resolution  
Association of Family and Conciliation Courts  
Elder Justice Coalition  
Florida Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts  
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys  
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers  
National Adult Protective Services Association  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Center for State Courts  
National College of Probate Judges  
National Committee on the Prevention of Elder Abuse  
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges  
National Guardianship Association  
National Guardianship Network

2. The ACR Eldercaring Coordination **Advisory Committee** is composed of experts in related fields, who are supporting the work of the Task Force, be available to answer targeted questions, provide information, critique the work of the Task Force and join sub-committees based on particular area(s) of expertise and specific interest. Professionals with relevant expertise can contact the Co-Chairs.

For more information, please contact ACR Task Force on Eldercaring Coordination Co-Chairs:

Linda Fieldstone, M.Ed.  
305-349-5589  
[Lfieldstone@jud11.flcourts.org](mailto:Lfieldstone@jud11.flcourts.org)

Sue Bronson, LCSW  
414-291-9487  
[sbronson@wi.rr.com](mailto:sbronson@wi.rr.com)