



Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics

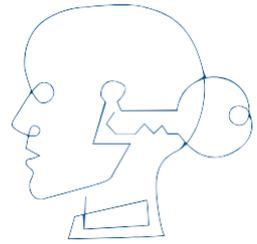
*An Innovative Interdisciplinary Program for
Attorneys, Judges, and Mental Health Professionals*

While I have reached the stage of my career where I now settle all custody cases, many high conflict custody cases are still litigated. To be a mental health forensic expert, a matrimonial attorney, an attorney for a child, or a judge in these complex cases, a professional must be well versed in the contributions from the family law and social science fields. Training of this kind is rare, but critical in order to practice responsibly. This program is outstanding in its integration of knowledge and training in the fields of family law and social science contributions. I have had the opportunity to know Dr. Gunsberg by participating together in international family law delegations, and her knowledge of the field is at the cutting edge. Her enthusiasm for training legal and mental health professionals is unsurpassed.

Atty. Gregg Herman
Past Chair, Family Law Section, American Bar Association (2007–08)
Fellow, American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
Certified Specialist in Family Law Trial Advocacy,
The National Board of Trial Advocacy

Background (1997–2012)

In 1997, in response to the growing need for trained mental health professionals to conduct court-ordered evaluations and to provide expert witness testimony in family litigation, Dr. Linda Gunsberg developed and has continued to chair a



two-year, part-time comprehensive training program in family forensics at the Washington Square Institute for Psychotherapy and Mental Health. Since 1997, the Family Forensics Training Program has offered a sequence of courses which addresses the major psychological and developmental, legal, ethical, and practical issues and tasks involved in family forensic work. Mock trial experience and a forensic externship have been integrated with the course sequence during the second year of training. Upon completion of the program, graduates consisting of mental health professionals from the disciplines of social work, psychology, and psychiatry, have received a certificate in family forensics and are equipped with the knowledge and basic skills in order to practice with confidence as forensic experts in the challenging and complex field of family law. Judges have commented on the competence of our graduates in terms of the relevance and usefulness of their forensic reports and on their testifying and cross-examination skills in the courtroom.

Moving Forward

Although it has been our goal to train mental health professionals so that they are knowledgeable in the family law arena, matrimonial attorneys, attorneys for children, and judges practicing in both Family Court and Supreme Court have indicated overwhelming interest in similar training. Washington Square Institute endorses Dr. Gunsberg's newly expanded program which offers innovative and unprecedented interdisciplinary training in the field of family law to attorneys for children, matrimonial attorneys, judges, and mental health professionals who have already completed training within their specific disciplines and are now seeking in depth training in the family law arena. This training program will offer attorneys and judges the opportunity to be exposed to and become knowledgeable about the relevant psychological/social science contributions to the family law arena. Also, mental health professionals will be exposed to and learn more about the legal



framework in which they perform family forensic evaluations. As a result, all professionals who participate in this interdisciplinary training will approach their work with a new respect for each others' disciplines and contributions. It is our hope that this will lead to a shift away from the "adversarial" in the legal process and thus offer families in need of Court involvement to help resolve their family issues trained professionals who are sensitive, knowledgeable, and committed to an integrated legal-psychological perspective.



Comments of Candidates and Graduates about the Family Forensics Training Program (1997–2012)

Designed to train professionals to conduct high-quality, court-ordered custody evaluations, the Family Forensics Training Program, chaired by Dr. Gunsberg, at the Washington Square Institute, offers much more. I was surprised to discover that the program was very rich in depth and breadth, especially of the psychoanalytic, attachment, and developmental underpinnings of what judges and attorneys commonly see in the courtroom. For those who are interested in understanding not only the what but also the why and how of the world of families in court, this program is perfect. You should expect to be exposed to a myriad of scholarly articles, books, and live talks by professionals and in conjunction with an eight-month externship, you should also expect to become an emerging expert in conducting the invaluable work of a family forensic.

A.R., 2011
Graduate, Ph.D.

My experience as a student in the Family Forensics Training Program of the Washington Square Institute was, without a doubt, the crown jewel of my professional education. It is hard to find a place to begin when describing the strong points of the program. Dr. Gunsberg has assembled supporting lecturers who are truly experts in the intersection of psychology and the law. They are seasoned clinicians who are wonderful teachers and people, who know how to present very dense and sophisticated content to students and who show respect to adult learners. Just as important to my experience in the Family Forensics program were the students enrolled in classes with me. They were very seasoned clinicians in their own right who were highly motivated





learners. Our classes were conducted as seminars and I could always count on my classmates coming to class prepared, reading seminal articles that were included in the well constructed curriculum of the program. My classmates were among the most able and smartest students with whom I have studied. Although the program is grounded in psychoanalytic developmental theory, I particularly valued the familiarity of the faculty with different theoretical perspectives and the willingness of Dr. Gunsberg and others to seriously consider different practice perspectives from different mental health disciplines. Probably the most important thing I can say about my experience with Dr. Gunsberg is that my training undoubtedly sharpened my diagnostic skills, vastly improved my ability to formulate complex cases, write accurate, effective, evaluations (court-ordered and otherwise), and to offer verbal clinical assessments that are focused, to the point, and grounded in theory and practice wisdom.

A.W., 2012
Second Year Candidate, Ph.D., LCSW-R

Selected Comments about the Mock Trial Course Taught by Ellen Holtzman, J.D.

It is thrilling to hear material from a lawyer's perspective. There is lots to learn from Ms. Holtzman.

C.M., 2011
Second Year Candidate, Psy.D.

Ms. Holtzman had a powerful presence and conveyed expertise and experience on courtroom issues and dynamics. She was very inspiring.

G.J., 2011
Second Year Candidate, Ph.D.



TRAINING PROGRAM IN FAMILY LAW AND FAMILY FORENSICS

Description of Courses

The new format for this interdisciplinary training program will be 3 one-year part-time training sequences (Sequences I, II, and III). Attorneys and judges have the option of taking Sequence I, Sequence II, or Sequences I and II. Approval is pending for CLE credit.





Mental health professionals have the option of taking Sequence I, Sequence II, Sequences I and II, and also Sequence III (with Sequences I and II as pre-requisites). A certificate of completion will be awarded for each sequence of the Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics at the Washington Square Institute. Washington Square Institute is chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York.

Sequence I (First Year)

Some of the topics to be addressed are:

- ◆ How to understand social science research
 - ◆ How to read a legal case
 - ◆ Family law landmark cases
 - ◆ Amicus briefs
 - ◆ History of forensic psychiatry, forensic psychology, forensic social work, and family law
 - ◆ Confidentiality and informed consent between the attorney and client, between the forensic evaluator and family members, and between the attorney for the child and the child/adolescent client
 - ◆ Ethical guidelines for attorneys, judges, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists working in family law
 - ◆ Cultural backgrounds and family values of the attorney, judge, and mental health expert
 - ◆ Burnout, secondary vicarious traumatization, and counter-transference when working with separating and/or divorcing families
 - ◆ Family systems theory
 - ◆ Adult development and parenthood (pregnancy; the special needs parent; psychodiagnostic issues; lying, deception, and malingering in adults; medication issues; and drug and alcohol abuse)
 - ◆ Parenting capacities
 - ◆ Best interests of the child (legal, judicial, and psychological perspectives)
 - ◆ Child development (this will be presented within the context of key questions raised by the Court regarding children at different developmental stages):
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- ❖ Attachment and overnight visitation
 - ❖ Separation-Individuation
 - ❖ Infant and Toddler observation
 - ❖ Triangulation, fantasy-reality differentiation, and the development of a moral conscience
 - ❖ Latency (school-age child)
 - ❖ Adolescence
 - ◆ Cognitive Development and Memory:
 - ❖ Memory and false memory
 - ❖ Suggestibility
 - ❖ Manifest and latent communications
 - ❖ Lying, deception, and malingering
 - ◆ Cultural context of child development and child-rearing practices
 - ◆ Parentification of the child
 - ◆ Special needs children
 - ◆ Forensic interviewing of children and adolescents, parents, and the family (and how to understand verbal and nonverbal behavior and communications)

Teaching format will include general lectures as well as separate sessions for lawyers and judges, and mental health professionals, depending upon the teaching material to be covered. Mock trials relevant to topics covered will be integrated in Training Sequence I to highlight how particular topics presented in lectures may emerge in court cases.

Sequence II (Second Year)

Some of the topics to be addressed in Sequence II are:

- ◆ The “culture” of the Court
 - ◆ Custody and parenting time:
 - ❖ Sole custody
 - ❖ Joint custody (spheres of influence)
 - ❖ Split custody
 - ❖ Parenting time schedules
 - ❖ Relocation
 - ◆ The Appeals Process in Family Court and Supreme Court
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- ◆ Psychological and legal interventions:
 - ❖ Mediation
 - ❖ Collaborative law
 - ❖ Parenting Coordination
 - ❖ Supervised visitation (therapeutic supervised visitation, monitored supervision)
 - ❖ Parenting classes
 - ❖ Anger management classes
 - ❖ Psychotherapy (individual psychotherapy, parent-child psychotherapy, family therapy)
- ◆ The status of grandparents in child custody litigation
- ◆ The family forensic evaluation:
 - ❖ Overall conceptualization
 - ❖ The role of collaterals
 - ❖ The importance of home visits
 - ❖ Psychological testing and how to understand psychological test findings
 - ❖ Cultural considerations relevant to the family being evaluated and to the forensic evaluator
 - ❖ Levels of inference
 - ❖ The forensic expert on the stand (preparation for the attorney and preparation for the mental health professional)
- ◆ The role of the attorney for the child – Representation of the child's voice in the Court:
 - ❖ The child's stated preference for a particular parent regarding physical and/or legal custody, and/or specific parenting time schedule with each parent
 - ❖ When the attorney for the child substitutes judgment
 - ❖ Parental contact with the attorney for the child
 - ❖ In camera interview with the Judge (with the attorney for the child present)
- ◆ The parent as pro se litigant: legal, judicial, and psychological issues
- ◆ Special considerations:
 - ❖ Domestic violence and its impact on children and parents; Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court
 - ❖ Child abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional)
 - ❖ Parental sexual addictions (internet pornography)

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- ❖ Parental alienation
 - ❖ Parental child abduction (domestic and international)
 - ❖ Munchausen by Proxy
 - ❖ Parental neglect (emotional, physical, social, educational, and medical)
 - ◆ Military deployment and how separation, divorce, child custody, and domestic violence are handled within the military
 - ◆ Alternative life styles:
 - ❖ Unmarried families
 - ❖ Live-in boyfriend/live-in girlfriend
 - ❖ Same-sex parent families
 - ❖ Donor identity disclosure for children
 - ❖ The incarcerated parent
 - ◆ Foster care, and agency and private adoptions:
 - ❖ Same-sex foster care parents and same-sex adoptive parents
 - ❖ The role of the attorney and the role of the mental health professional (adoption home study)
 - ◆ Termination of Parental Rights
 - ◆ Post-divorce adjustment
 - ◆ Post-divorce litigation (modification of custody, relocation)

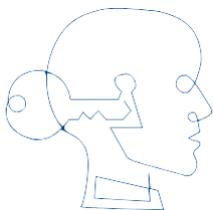
Teaching format will include general lectures as well as separate sessions for lawyers and judges, and mental health professionals, depending upon the teaching material to be covered. Mock trials relevant to topics covered will be integrated in Training Sequence II to highlight how particular topics presented in lectures may emerge in court cases.

Sequence III (Third Year) for Mental Health Professionals

Sequence III involves a 40 week externship at a family forensic externship site (1 day per week, 8 hours per day, 320 hours total) as well as on-site supervision and group supervision by faculty of the Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics. This sequence will focus on developing skills in gathering and integrating essential data relevant to the legal questions asked, and refining report writing skills. Risk management will be addressed. Court testimony and cross-examination will be emphasized, and



candidates will participate in mock trials as the forensic expert. Additional requirements for completion of Sequence III are two court evaluations reviewed by faculty, and a scholarly paper on some aspect of family forensic work. This final paper must follow the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association.



ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Social Workers:

CSW, LCSW, MSW, LMSW, Ph.D., or DSW.

Psychologists:

Ph.D. or Psy.D. in clinical, school, or counseling psychology. Ph.D. or Psy.D. candidates with all course work completed in clinical, school, or counseling psychology are also encouraged to apply. However, certificates of completion for Training Sequences I, II, I and II, or I, II, and III, are only received upon the award of the Ph.D. or Psy.D. degree.

Psychiatrists:

Completion of adult psychiatry residency or adult and child psychiatry residency requirements.

Attorneys and Judges:

J.D. in law.

The Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, disabilities, religion, sexual orientation, national and/or ethnic origin. In those instances in which it is determined in the admissions interview that the applicant's goals are discordant with the aims of the training program, the Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics reserves the right to not accept the applicant.

For further information, please contact Linda Gunsberg, Ph.D., Chair, at (212) 246-5506 or lindagunsberg@yahoo.com



CLASS SCHEDULE, LOCATION, AND TUITION AND FEES

Classes meet on Tuesday evenings from 6:30–9:30 PM with a 30 minute break. Classes are held at Washington Square Institute, 41-51 East 11th Street (4th Floor), between Broadway and University Place.

Tuition for each year-long Training Program Sequence (I, II, and III) is \$2,600. Tuition is non-refundable after the third class of each sequence. In addition, a fee of \$150 will be charged for early withdrawal.

CORE FACULTY

Linda Gunsberg, Ph.D., Chair

Since 1997, Dr. Gunsberg has chaired the Family Forensics Training Program at Washington Square Institute. In 2012, this training program was expanded to offer interdisciplinary training to attorneys, judges, and mental health professionals and has been renamed The Training Program in Family Law and Family Forensics. Dr. Gunsberg's forensic work has focused primarily in the area of divorce, custody, and recommendations for parenting plans, but has extended into International Hague Convention parental child abduction cases and international sexual abuse allegation cases. Her forensic work also includes evaluation of mitigating factors in criminal cases, sexual harassment in the workplace, sexual abuse in hospital recovery rooms, malpractice suits, assessment of trauma and PTSD in children and adults, federal immigration cases, and professional boundary violations. She frequently is called upon to consult with legal teams both in and outside of the courtroom.

Within family litigation, Dr. Gunsberg has been a forensic expert on issues such as grandparents' rights, relocation, parental alienation, parental child abduction, child abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional), battered woman syndrome and domestic violence. She has testified as an expert witness in jurisdictions throughout the United States. She was past Clinical and Research Director, and then Clinical Consultant for TAKE ROOT, the only organization in the United States for adults who were parentally abducted as





children. Dr. Gunsberg is co-chair of the Psychoanalysis and Law Discussion Group of the American Psychoanalytic Association. In her private practice she divides her time between forensic work, parent consultation, and psychotherapy with children, adolescents, adults, families, and couples. Dr. Gunsberg has co-edited the volume, *A Handbook of Divorce and Custody: Forensic, Developmental, and Clinical Perspectives* (Analytic Press, 2005), and co-edited the monograph for *Psychoanalytic Inquiry, The Psychoanalyst in the Courtroom* (2009). She has lectured on numerous forensic topics, most recently on the best interests of the child, parental alienation, and the factors critical to the child/adolescent's paradoxical preference to live with the batterer in child custody cases.

**Ellen Holtzman, J.D.,
Director of Legal Training**

Ms. Holtzman has taught the Mock Trial course for the past six years at the Washington Square Institute Family Forensics Training Program. Ms. Holtzman is a 1982 graduate of New York Law School, where she was an Alfred Gross Scholar. She has been in private matrimonial and family law practice in Rockland County since 1989. Ms. Holtzman is a past President of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, and is presently President of the Women's Bar Foundation of WBASNY. She is the 2007 recipient of the Association's Joan E. Ellenbogen Founder's Award for contributions to the advancement of law and the legal system. Ms. Holtzman served for eight years on the Grievance Committee for the Ninth Judicial District. In 2008, Ms. Holtzman was appointed and continues to serve as a member of the New York State Legislative Ethics Commission.

Ms. Holtzman has been a frequent lecturer at Continuing Legal Education Programs regarding the representation of domestic violence victims in matrimonial actions. She participates in a program initiated by the Rockland County Family Shelter to educate attorneys in the techniques of representing battered women in divorce proceedings. She has taught Women, Crime, and Justice at Dominican College. She frequently lectures on legal ethics for attorneys, and recently was a panelist representing the legal perspective on the best interests of the child at the Psychoanalysis and Law Discussion Group of the American Psychoanalytic Association.





CORE FACULTY *(continued)*

Jay Dennis Cohen, J.D.
Steven Demby, Ph.D.
Sherri Donovan, J.D.
Vivian Eskin, Ph.D.
Steven Fayer, M.D.
Suzanne Groisser, J.D.
Kimberly Kleinman, LCSW
Wilma Cohen Lewis, Ph.D.

Julie Marcus, Ph.D.
Nadine Mass, LCSW
Billie A. Pivnick, Ph.D.
Claude Schleuderer, Ph.D.
Moisy Shopper, M.D.
Claire Steinberger, Ed.D., J.D.
Hon. Helen C. Sturm
Ann Sydor, LMSW*

INVITED SPEAKERS

Alice Arnold, J.D.
Marvin Aronson, Ph.D.
Amy J.L.Baker, Ph.D.
Isaac Benzaquen, Ph.D.
Anni Bergman, Ph.D.
Melissa Bonaldes, J.D.
Richard Bond, LMSW, LSW*
Stephanie Brandt, M.D.
Barry Bricklin, Ph.D.
Diana Diamond, Ph.D.
Robert Z. Dobrish, J.D.
Gail Elliot, Ph.D.
Dana M. Ernst, M.A.
James Gilson, J.D.
Melissa Haviv
Barbara Hauser, MSW
Charles Heller, Ph.D.*
Gregg Herman, J.D.
Meredith Holtzman, J.D.
Marla B. Isaacs, Ph.D.

Michael Joseph, J.D.
Sharon Kofman, Ph.D.
Sharon Kozberg, Ph.D.
Caroline Langley, J.D.
Paul Meller, Ph.D.
Meryl Neuren, J.D.
Mia Pacht
Rodrigo Pizarro, M.D.
William L. Salton, Ph.D.*
Sherill Sigalow, Ph.D.
Diana Siskind, MSW, LMSW
Sydell S. Sloan, M.A.
Cheryl Solomon, J.D.
Howard Sovronsky, LCSW
Philip Stahl, Ph.D., ABPP
Timothy Tippins, J.D.
Serena Wieder, Ph.D.
Jeffrey Wittmann, Ph.D.
Bruce Young, J.D.

*Graduate of the Washington Square Institute Family Forensics Training Program



