



Caring for the Older Adult: The Important Role of Autonomy, Supported Decision Making & Guardianship

VIRTUAL GGEAR Conference
June 23, 2023
8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



In honor of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2023, this conference will address and detail the value of autonomy and the right of the older adult to make decisions without the influence of others. Discussion will also include decision making capacity, supported decision making, assessment, legislation and guardianship.

AGENDA

This conference is now a virtual event.

General Registration: \$30
3.0 CEUs are available for an additional \$30

Student Registration: No Charge

Geri-Ed: \$30 (a code will need to be entered when registering in order to have fee waived)

Scholarships

AHEC West acknowledges that we are facing very challenging times. Because of this, we have a very limited number of scholarships available to waive the general registration fee for any of our possible attendees who are facing financial hardships. Please contact Joy Taylor, jtaylor@ahecwest.org to apply.

REGISTER

Deadline to register is Thursday, June 15, 2023

8:30 - 8:40 a.m.

Welcome and Housekeeping - Joy Taylor, AHEC West

8:40 - 9:25 a.m.

Keynote "**Setting the Stage: Promoting the Autonomy of Older Adults**" presented by Joan K. Davitt, PhD, MSS, MLSP, University of Maryland, School of Social Work

9:25 - 10:05 a.m.

"Supported Decision Making & Less Restrictive Alternatives to Guardianship" presented by Randi Ames, Esq. and Sandy Balan, J.D., Disability Rights Maryland

10:05 - 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 - 11:00 a.m.

"Guardianship" presented by Pam Luby, J.D., Office of Adult Services; Kim Farmer, LCSW-C and Michael Nehring, J.D.

11:00 - 11:45 a.m.

Panel discussion (all presenters) with Q&A

11:45 - 11:50 a.m.

Closing remarks - Dr. Joan Davitt

11:50 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Evaluation and Post Knowledge Survey - Joy Taylor

OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this training, participants should be able to:

- Define autonomy, ageism and other key concepts related to autonomous decision-making
- Be better prepared to recognize and engage in anti-ageist practice
- Demonstrate increased understanding of strategies to promote autonomy for older adults
- Understand what Maryland's new supported decision-making law does and why it's important
- Compare and contrast supported decision-making and other less restrictive alternatives to guardianship
- Analyze how less restrictive alternatives can work in tandem with each other and guardianship orders
- Gain an understanding of the guardianship process and the types of guardianship
- Understand the role of attorneys in a guardianship case
- Understand post appointment responsibilities of the guardian and the duties to the court.

CEUs:

By attending this conference, Social Workers, Psychologists, Counselors and Therapists and ALL Certified Dementia Practitioners and Certified Senior Advisors can earn 3.0 CEUs. **There is a \$30 fee for 3.0 CEUs.**

** AHEC West is authorized by the Board of Social Work Examiners in Maryland to sponsor social work continuing education learning activities and maintains full responsibility for this program. This training qualifies for 3.0 Category I continuing education units and is a live, real-time, **and interactive** learning activity.*

** Hagerstown Community College is an authorized sponsor for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Psychologists, and Category A and B CEUs for Counselors and Therapists.*

A **Certificate of Attendance** will be provided to all participants.

SPEAKERS



Joan K. Davitt, PhD, MSS, MLSP
University of Maryland, School of Social Work

Setting the Stage: Promoting the Autonomy of Older Adults

This session will address autonomy, what it is, how to support autonomous decision making and the role of ageism in undermining autonomy for older adults. Challenges and strategies to support autonomy, including capacity assessment will also be discussed.

JOAN K. DAVITT, PHD, MSS, MLSP, is an Associate Professor & Hartford Geriatric SW Faculty Scholar at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work. Dr. Davitt has worked for over 30 years in the field of gerontological social work as a practitioner, teacher, and research scholar. Dr. Davitt has broad social work experience with a focus on advocacy and policy practice. Their research interests focus on the intersection between policy and practice and the impact on older adults' ability to age in community with a particular focus on disparities in access to and outcomes of community based care. Dr. Davitt's research has been supported by the National Institute on Aging, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the John A. Hartford Foundation, the New York Community Trust, and the Andrus Foundation among others. Dr. Davitt is currently PI on a Training and Evaluation contract with the Maryland Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services. This project supports the Office of Adult Services in promoting continuous quality improvement through staff training and program evaluation. Dr. Davitt was a Health & Aging Policy/APSA Congressional fellow from 2012-2013, a 2005-2007 John A. Hartford Foundation Faculty Scholar, and is a fellow of Gerontological Society of America. Dr. Davitt's scholarship has been published in a wide variety of peer-reviewed journals including those in social work, medicine, nursing and gerontology.

Supported Decision - Making and Less Restrictive Alternatives to Guardianship

Attendees will learn about Maryland's new Supported Decision Making law, which went into effect 10/01/2022. The presenters will also provide an overview of other less restrictive alternatives to guardianship and discuss how these tools are used.



RANDI A. AMES, Esq. is the Managing Attorney for Disability Rights Maryland's (DRM) Developmental Disabilities, Healthcare, and Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) team. Her team focuses on addressing barriers to community services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, educating clients on available Medicaid benefits, and investigating reports of abuse and neglect in state facilities and provider owned and operated community settings. Prior to working for DRM she was a staff attorney with Maryland Legal Aid's Long-Term Care Assistance Project, where she represented nursing facility residents facing involuntary discharges and Medicaid participants facing reductions and terminations of services. Outside of work Randi loves to spend time with her partner and 2 dogs and enjoys baking.



SANDY BALAN, J.D. is a law clerk at Disability Rights Maryland on the Developmental Disabilities (DD), Healthcare and Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) team. Her work primarily focuses on providing education and advocacy regarding supported decision making and other alternatives to guardianship. Prior to joining DRM, Sandy worked on the Advocacy Team at the Epilepsy Foundation of America, where she assisted with advising individuals with epilepsy on their legal rights. She is originally from the Chicago suburbs and loves to read and write in her spare time. Sandy is a graduate of Saint Louis University School of Law.

Guardianship

This session will provide an overview of the guardianship process, when guardianship is appropriate, and the duties and responsibilities of a guardian.



Pam Luby, J.D.
Adult Public Guardianship Program Administrator

PAM LUBY, J.D. has been the Adult Guardianship Program Administrator with the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) since 2019. Pam's interest in Adult Protective Services began when she was a family law court researcher with the Maryland Judiciary and a law librarian with the Maryland State Law Library. Seeing the need for more court oversight and training, she developed and implemented Maryland's first adult guardianship oversight

program in the Montgomery County Circuit Court. This program is now applied in courts throughout Maryland and uses volunteers and social work interns to visit people under guardianship and report their findings to the court. She also scripted and produced a video series on adult guardianship for the Maryland Judiciary and developed several educational materials on the topic. She is a member of the Guardianship/Vulnerable Adults Workgroup of the Maryland Judicial Council's Domestic Law Committee. Before her career in human services, Pam spent 15 years as a sales representative for Thompson Reuters and Oracle Corporation, working both in the US and throughout Europe. She also owned and operated a restaurant and catering company in Annapolis, Maryland. Pam earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and her law degree from the University of Baltimore, School of Law.



KIMBERLY FARMER, LCSW-C has worked at the Washington County Department of Social Services since 2001. She worked in Child Protective Services from 2001 until 2018, when she transferred to the Adult Services unit where she currently works as a Guardianship Social Worker. Prior to her career as a Social Worker, she worked as a Park Ranger for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, working on the Eastern Shore as well as at local state parks. She has a son and grandson and in her spare time she enjoys spending time with family, traveling, the outdoors, sports, and working on projects.



MICHAEL NEHRING, J.D. is a 1991 graduate of Dickinson College, and a 1994 graduate of the University of Maryland, School of Law. He has worked in the field of elder law for 22 years, first under Patricia Patton, and currently, with the Skolnick Law Firm. He represents Respondents in guardianship hearings in seven counties.

Washington County GGEAR Planning Committee Members:

- Joy Taylor, AHEC West Program Coordinator
- Jessica Baker, Allied Health Program Manager, Hagerstown Community College
- Dr. Diane Martin, University of Maryland, GGEAR Program Director
- Megeen White, MS, RN, Program Manager from the Alzheimer's Association – Western Maryland Office
- Dr. Helene Robins-Nester, PhD, Neuropsychologist, Thomas B. Finan Center
- John Kenney, Retired Social Worker, Washington County
- Thomas Hunt, PhD, Psychologist, Western Maryland Hospital Center
- Jackie Booth, AHEC West Administrative Specialist

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