



International Council
on Shared Parenting

International Conference on **SHARED PARENTING 2020**

December 5-6, 2020

VANCOUVER, CANADA
Live Online

The Intersection of Shared Parenting and Family Violence

CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

The Fifth International Conference on Shared Parenting, co-hosted by the International Council on Shared Parenting and the University of British Columbia School of Social Work, brought together scholars and family practitioners from two fields of practice, shared parenting and family violence, under the conference theme, the Intersection of Shared Parenting and Family Violence. Our goals were to open channels of communication and begin a dialogue on the topic, and to develop guidelines with respect to family law and therapeutic practice when parenting after divorce is a contested issue between parents and family violence may be an issue of concern, whether in the past, present or future.

The conference drew over 1,000 participants from over 50 countries, and featured 20 plenary and 40 workshop presentations on the conference theme, as well as moderated discussions, over two days. Our goals were achieved in that we arrived at a consensus on recommendations for theory and research in the arena of the intersection of shared parenting and family violence on the one hand, and reform of family law, policy and professional practice on the other.

The state of knowledge about family violence in contested child custody cases has advanced significantly in recent years, and the conference focused largely on the implications of current research on law reform and professional practice. Our [conference conclusions](#) were divided into recommendations for theoretical development and further research, as well as for law reform, policy and professional practice. Primary among these was the need for a more inclusive conceptualization of family violence, beyond the gender paradigm and encompassing different forms of violence, including parental alienation; and the need to recognize family violence, particularly violence against women, as a criminal offense, with corresponding reforms in the family and criminal courts systems.

It was agreed that shared parenting can be preventive of first-time family violence in the family separation transition. Shared parenting is an optimal arrangement for and in the best interests of the majority of children and families, and we support a rebuttable legal presumption of shared parenting as the foundation of family law, but a rebuttable presumption against shared parenting in cases of family violence should apply. The safety of parents and children should be an overriding concern in these situations.

Finally, the conference was deemed to be a success in regard to the innovative technology used to make the conference look and feel like a live event, with all the features of an in-person scientific conference. An interesting side note was that if this conference had been held in person, in Vancouver, with the number of attendees registered, it is estimated to have

contributed over 1,000 MT of carbon as a result. By being virtual, we eliminated that contribution to global emissions.

For further conference information please visit: Vancouver2020.org

About the conference organizers:

The International Council on Shared Parenting (ICSP) is an international association founded in 2014 with members drawn from scientific, family professions and civil society sectors. The purpose of the association is first, the dissemination and advancement of scientific knowledge on the needs and rights (“best interests”) of children whose parents are living apart, and second, to formulate evidence-based recommendations about the legal, judicial and practical implementation of shared parenting.

Website: www.twohomes.org