What Mediators Can Learn from Attachment Theory

Professors Julia Gold and Paul Ciechanowski, M.D. will discuss research they are engaged in at Harborview Medical Center, using facilitators trained in Attachment Theory and mediation to help families and caregivers working with critically ill patients in the ICU. Attachment theory provides a means of understanding and working with individuals’ capacities or preferences for communicating with or relying upon others. Evoked under stressful situations (particularly anticipated loss), attachment or relationship styles are cognitive schemas or “maps” that determine an individual’s perceptions and attitudes when engaging with others around emotionally-laden issues. They will describe different relationship styles, and then we will discuss as a group how we might use this approach to our work with parties in mediation.

Julia Ann Gold is Senior Lecturer in Law and Director of the Mediation Clinic at the University of Washington School of Law in Seattle. She teaches the Mediation Clinic, the Mediation Skills CLE program offered by the School of Law, Negotiation, and the Street Law Clinic. Professor Gold regularly presents on mediation ethics and is active in offering mediation and conflict resolution trainings locally and nationally. She serves as President of the Board of the Dispute Resolution Center of King County, is a member of the ADR Roundtable, and co-chairs the annual Northwest Dispute Resolution Conference. In 2003, she was a Fulbright Scholar at the law campus of Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, Nepal, where she taught mediation and helped establish community-based mediation programs in rural areas of Nepal.

Paul Ciechanowski, M.D. is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Washington (UW) where he is Director of the UW Psychosomatic Medicine fellowship. He has a background as a board-certified family physician and is board-certified in psychiatry. He has received funding through NIH to study the influence of attachment styles on the patient-provider relationship with regards to treatment adherence and outcomes in diabetes and other chronic illnesses. He has received funding through NIH, CDC and other organizations to investigate depression in patients with medical illness (e.g. pearlsprogram.org, teamcarehealth.org). For the past 14 years, he has combined his experience in psychiatry and primary care in his clinical psychiatric work in the Diabetes Care Center at the University of Washington and as an affiliate investigator at Group Health Research Institute. He dedicates a significant proportion of his time in his role as director of Training Xchange at the University of Washington that provides behavioral skills-based and program-based training and education to healthcare providers in mental health and primary care settings. Dr. Ciechanowski is also founder of Samepage (samepagehealth.com), an educational and consulting company that provides tools, training, and consulting to improve healthcare communication, and which includes attachment theory principles (securebasing.com).