



**RECOGNIZING AND OVERCOMING
SEX AND GENDER BIAS IN FAMILY MEDIATION
7 hours**

Mediation offers parties an opportunity to address family conflict both within the legal system, and outside it. Mediators need to be aware when their own sex and gender biases are in the way of neutrality and impartiality, particularly if parties are disenfranchised based on legal definitions of marriage and family.

We all define ourselves in sex and gender categories, not just those who are seen as deviating from social “norms.” Evolutionary changes in sex and gender identity challenge us to question our assumption that sex and gender have fixed and commonly accepted definitions. The workshop will:

- Question cultural programming we have been given about sex and gender
- Use writing exercises and group dialogue to help explore individual, family, and cultural messages
- Identify the obstacles in changing internalized childhood messages
- Connect mediator’s personal perspectives with their work in mediation

Mediators are required to maintain impartiality towards participants and neutrality regarding the outcome of the mediation. Recognizing our biases as mediators is essential in order to fulfill professional standards of ethics. Overcoming our biases would contribute to making the environment safer for everyone.

“...I view gender as a beautiful animal that people often take for a walk on a leash and might enter in some odd contest to try to win strange prizes...”
Hafiz, Persian Poet, 1320-1389