

Dr. John Seita holds a doctorate from Western Michigan University. Today, he is on the faculty of the School of Social Work at Michigan State University where he also has appointments with MSU Extension/4-H and with the Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station. He is also a father and a husband.

Like few others, Dr. Seita understands the challenges facing disconnected young people. Academically challenged students and youth who are in out-of-home settings, such as foster care, residential care and group care are his specialty. Drawing upon his own leading-edge research and evidence-based best practices, Seita powerfully explores how to effectively apply connecting and reclaiming strategies such as positive youth development and strength-based approaches. His workshops and keynote presentations provide insight and research-based practical skills for those working with youth.

Dr. Seita, himself, is a former youth at risk who beat the odds. He was removed from his mother's home at the age of eight and spent the remainder of his childhood and adolescence in multiple foster homes, detention facilities, group care settings and on the streets. Abused and neglected as a child, his journey through children's institutions and countless foster homes was a litany of degradation and humiliation. His unrestrained anger at his mother and the child welfare system led to a childhood of bitterness, loneliness and one where he fought with adults, counselors, teachers, house parents, childcare workers and anyone else who crossed his path. Seita's understanding of how to reclaim challenging youth is based upon his own journey of 15 out-of-home placements.

In addition, Dr. Seita has conducted research on at-risk youth and has listened and learned from their views in order to improve your skills and knowledge. He is able to blend his own gritty real-world experience with his scholarship and that of other researchers to provide the very best of how to understand and reclaim all youth. With Dr. Seita, you will experience much more than a litany of sad stories. Experiences shared from his own remarkable journey are a platform for understanding lessons learned so that you are better able to connect with challenging young people, improve the quality of your skills, and to reclaim all young people.

Dr. Seita is the only foster care alumnus who has studied youth at risk and provides research-based training, professional development, and insight into the private logic of defiance. His presentations have been called powerful, honest, useful, practical, and visionary. His revolutionary efforts towards policy and practice reform will provide useful ways to improve staff skills in understanding all young people. There are few trainers and speakers nationwide who have lived in the dependent care system and now share both their insider's view linked with the latest research in positive youth development, resilience, strength-based approaches, and brain research. His practical views are blended with inspirations and hope providing you with rare and unique insight by understanding the private logic of defiance often hidden in youth.

In Whose Best Interest: Dr. John Seita communicates his own experience as a troubled, fatherless youth - who was removed from his alcoholic mother and experienced a dozen failed court-ordered placements - in foster care and institutional settings. Today, the former troubled youth holds a doctorate and is an expert on resilient youth. Dr. Seita reflects on the process of reclaiming adult-wary, rebellious youth and provides a blueprint for success with these challenging young people. To those who propose that troubled youth should be discarded through policies of zero tolerance and harsh punishment, Seita's experiences speak with profound moral authority. This session will help you to see your student/client anew and provide new skills and confidence. This session, at its core, focuses on lessons learned for application and practice settings.

Private Logic: In this session, Dr. Seita draws upon his own experience as an unclaimed youth to fling open the thinking behind the behaviors of adult-wary and angry youth. Kids who distrust adults are highly skilled at hiding their real nature and outsmarting anyone trying to reach them. Most adults either shun these youth or get locked in conflict with them. Instead of treating symptoms, looking for weaknesses and in blaming, Dr. Seita shares specific strategies for understanding the thinking of angry youth.

The Private Logic of Connecting with Kids who Outwit Adults: In this session Dr. Seita creates specific strategies for connecting with the adult wary youth whose own private logic is a powerful tool for staying disconnected. Dr. Seita demonstrates how private logic can be a tool for connecting rather than disconnecting. Included in the session are 12 specific, powerful approaches that can be used to connect adults with adult-wary young people.

Bill Eddy is a lawyer, therapist and mediator, and the President of the High Conflict Institute based in San Diego, California. As a lawyer, he is a Certified Family Law Specialist in California, where he has represented clients in family court for 15 years and provided divorce mediation services for over 20 years. Prior to that, he provided child and family counseling for 12 years in psychiatric hospitals and outpatient clinics as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

Mr. Eddy has written several books, including *High Conflict People in Legal Disputes* and *SPLITTING: Protecting Yourself While Divorcing Someone with Borderline or Narcissistic Personality Disorder*. In 2009, he developed the *New Ways for Families* short-term counseling program in use in several family court jurisdictions in the U. S. and Canada. In 2013, he developed the *New Ways for Mediation* method for high-conflict families.

He is on the part-time faculties at the Pepperdine University School of Law and the National Judicial College. He has presented on managing high conflict personalities to lawyers, counselors, judges, mediators, human resource professionals, healthcare administrators, college administrators, law enforcement and home-owners associations in over 25 states, several provinces in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, France and Sweden. His websites are: www.HighConflictInstitute.com, www.NewWays4Families.com and www.BIFFResponse.com.

Managing High-Conflict Personality Disorders: As professionals, you undoubtedly interact with high-conflict parents or clients in your work. Bill Eddy will help participants understand personality disorders by providing a brief overview of five personality disorders and their common high-conflict behavior, including: Borderline, Narcissistic, Histrionic, Antisocial, and Paranoid. He will explain recent brain research which indicates why many people shift dramatically from reasonable to extremely upset, with little apparent control over their emotions. Eddy will then present the "CARS Method for Managing High-Conflict Personalities." Four key skills will be presented for managing high conflict personalities in their disputes, which make up the "CARS Method," including: **Connecting** with Empathy, Attention and Respect; **Analyzing** Alternatives, including making and responding to proposals; **Responding to Hostility and Misinformation** including responses that are BIFF: Brief, Informative, Friendly and Firm; and **Setting** Limits with Empathy, Attention and Respect – and Consequences.

Don't Alienate the Kids: Raising Resilient Children in a High Conflict World: Bill Eddy will provide a brief overview of child alienation: What it is, What it isn't, and Why it appears so often in families with one or more personality disorders. Family dynamics surrounding alienation will be explained. He will take a brief look at legal and mental health controversies and terminology. Eddy will address legal management methods, as courts and professionals can significantly influence the behavior of families with alienation issues, positively or negatively. Some guidelines will be presented to include the importance of professional behavior in these cases. He will then address counseling management methods, as these methods for intervention focus differently on mild, moderate or severe cases. Examples of structuring the counseling process will be explained, with a review of programs and methods, including the presenter's *New Ways for Families* method. Finally, applying a skills-focused approach in working with parents and children will be explained.