

## MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to reflect on how mental health impacts everyone, including the children of the families we serve. We witness firsthand how the emotional and psychological challenges

facing young people have intensified in recent years and are particularly exacerbated during divorce, especially high-conflict divorce.



The lingering effects of COVID-19, the rapid pace of the digital age, and the pervasiveness of social media have all reshaped childhood. Today, children of all ages are constantly exposed to harmful and damaging ideologies, images, videos, messages, and messaging at school, with friends, on social media, on the internet and in the home.

The hidden online world and social media significantly influence a young person's mental well-being and can increase feelings of shame, depression, loneliness, isolation, insecurity, and self-hatred, just to name a few.

Many parents are unaware of what their children are exposed to and may not realize the effects their own behaviors have on their children. During a high-conflict divorce, these feelings are magnified as the children experience a loss in their family unit and at the same time can become victims of their parents' conflict.

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This year's Mental Health Awareness Month theme, "Turning Action into Awareness," reminds us that understanding isn't enough, action is necessary. The National Institute of Mental Health states, "for a young person with symptoms of a mental disorder, the earlier treatment is started, the more effective it can be." Early intervention can

prevent more severe, long-term issues from arising as children grow. As public servants and attorneys, it is essential to prioritize both the mental health and best interest of children in these cases.



By and large, children want to believe in and see the best in both of their parents. There is a deep desire to love and be loved by their parents. As children grow, develop, and begin to face a world that can be scary and unpredictable, and at times disappointing, they need their parents to

be stable, loving, affirming, and dependable forces in their lives. We encourage parents, caregivers, and families to take action and support children by minimizing their exposure to conflict and monitoring their emotional and mental well-being.

**To Our Family Law Practitioners:** We see how hard you work and how deeply you care. The nature of family law can be emotionally taxing, and your role demands resilience. Remember that you are unable to effectively serve others unless you also take care of yourself. Whether it's practicing mindfulness, setting boundaries, or seeking support when needed—taking action for your own mental health is not only wise, it's necessary. Thank you for your dedication and compassion in serving the families of Davidson County. Your work matters deeply—and so do you.

**To learn more about Mental Health Awareness Month, visit**

<https://mhanational.org/mental-health-month/>

## JUDGE WILLIAMS MAKES OFFICE VISITS



Judge Williams is happy to come to your firm, practice, organization, or event to speak about family law and practices in the Fourth Circuit Court. This is also a great opportunity for her to hear from you and receive feedback. If you would like to schedule a time for her to visit, please email Ronnell Griffin, at [ronnellgriffin@jnsnashville.gov](mailto:ronnellgriffin@jnsnashville.gov).

## SWEARING IN WITH JUDGE WILLIAMS

On May 13th, Judge Williams had the distinct honor of swearing in new attorney John Kerrigan, a former student of hers at the Nashville School of Law. Judge Williams finds it a privilege and honor to teach and now officially welcome John to the legal profession! If you would like to be sworn in by Judge Williams, please contact [ronnellgriffin@jnsnashville.gov](mailto:ronnellgriffin@jnsnashville.gov) to schedule a time.

**Congratulations Attorney Kerrigan!**



## HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY! COURT CLOSED MAY 26

Our office will be closed on Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup> in honor of Memorial Day. Additionally, we will not have a motion docket on Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We hope you are able to spend Memorial Day weekend honoring those who have sacrificed their lives for our country. Happy Memorial Day!

## CHAMBER RULE SPOTLIGHT: REQUIREMENTS TO SET AN ID DIVORCE FOR FINAL HEARING

### Rule XI., Pg 24: Irreconcilable Differences Divorces May Be Set for a Final Hearing When:

1. A signed and notarized Marital Dissolution Agreement has been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk. If there was no service on the defendant, the last date of signature must be within six (6) months of the final hearing date.
2. If there are minor children of the marriage, a signed and notarized Agreed Parenting Plan and Child Support Worksheet have been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk.
3. The divorce has been pending for the required time by statute.
4. A Notice of Insurance has been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk.
5. If there are minor children of the marriage, proof of parenting seminar attendance of both parties is filed with the Circuit Court Clerk, or an order to waive parenting seminar attendance has been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk.
6. Proof of mediation has been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk or an order to waive mediation has been filed with the Circuit Court Clerk.

### How to Request a Date:

Available hearing dates are posted on the Court's online calendar. The following link may be utilized to view the calendar: [Fourth Circuit Calendar](#). It may also be viewed by scanning here:



Please ensure the date requested is at least 11 days from the date the Order to Set is filed. An earlier date may be available by agreement of the parties and approval of the Court.

The following link may be utilized to schedule a hearing using the online form: [Fourth Circuit Court Online Scheduling Link](#). It may also be viewed by scanning the QR code (please allow 24 hours for confirmation of chosen date):



A request to set an ID Divorce for a final hearing may also be made by calling the chambers of the Fourth Circuit Court at: 615-862-5910 and speaking with a staff member. Unless there is an Agreed Order, the date provided via phone will also follow the 11 day rule.

***\*Please note: No appearance is necessary at a final ID hearing if a waiver of the same is filed. However, even final hearings with a filed Affidavit to Waive Appearance MUST request a hearing date that follows the 11 day service requirement (unless scheduled via Agreed Order).***

# CALENDAR

Check out the list below for changes to our regularly scheduled dockets and Court closures:

S M T W Th F S

				1		
				15		
					23	
	<del>26</del>					

## MAY

**5/1:** Law Day with the Fourth Circuit Court

**5/15:** Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m.

**5/23:** No Motion Docket, Office Open

**5/26:** Office Closed for Memorial Day Holiday

## JUNE

S M T W Th F S

				5		
			11	12		
			<del>19</del>			
				26		
	30					

**6/5:** Special Master Status Conference Docket at 9 a.m. via Zoom only\*

**Judicial Conference is June 10th--June 12th. The Court will limit hearings on those dates as follows:**

**6/11:** ID Divorce w/ Appearance Waiver ONLY

**6/12:** ID Divorce w/ Appearance Waiver ONLY

**6/19:** Office Closed for Juneteenth Holiday

**6/26:** Judge Williams Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in person or via Zoom\*

**6/30:** No Hearings, Office Open

S M T W Th F S

		1	2	3	<del>4</del>	
7						
				17		

## JULY

**7/1--7/3:** No Hearings, Office Open

**7/4:** Office Closed for July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday

**7/7:** No Hearings, Office Open

**7/17:** Judge Williams Status Conference Docket at 1 p.m. in person or via Zoom\*

For a complete view of our regularly scheduled dockets and available Court dates, please see the calendar page on our website by clicking here: [Website Calendar](#) or by scanning the QR code:

