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## Dr. Sheff's Qualifications & Expert Witness Experience

Dr. Sheff has a **PhD in Sociology** (University of Colorado, Boulder, 2005), having conducted her dissertation research under noted deviance researchers Drs. Patricia and Peter Adler who trained her in ethnographic field methods, data analysis, and reporting. Since then Dr. Sheff has taught about sexuality, deviance, families, and gender at multiple universities including the University of Montana, Georgia State University, Emory, Oglethorpe, the University of Zurich, and (currently) the University of Tennessee.

In 2011 Dr. Sheff was **certified as a Sexuality Educator** by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT). AASECT is the leading professional organization for practitioners in the sexuality education field, and attaining this certification required that Dr. Sheff document her extensive training in sexuality education, engage in additional training through their program, demonstrate continuing engagement in sexuality education, and procure letters of recommendation from peers documenting Sheff's professional background and suitability for certification.

In 2012 Dr. Sheff was **certified as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)**, Guardian ad Litem, by the Fulton County Juvenile Court in Atlanta, Georgia. Becoming a CASA requires a thorough background check and significant training. As a CASA Dr. Sheff received a court order allowing me to: review documents protected by FERPA and HIPPA, including educational, medical, and legal documents; interview relevant adults including parents, foster parents, teachers, therapists or counselors, case workers, and doctors; interview the children to determine their wishes and best interests; and testify in court proceedings regarding her findings and recommendations.

## Expert Witness Experience

Multiple courts have recognized Dr. Sheff as an **expert in sex and gender minorities**. To date, Sheff has been recognized as an **expert in BDSM** by four courts and provided expert witness services in six cases involving BDSM. Dr. Sheff has testified in two **criminal cases** involving BDSM, one attempting to distinguish age play from intended hebephilia (Collum), and

the other attempting to distinguish accidental death by breath play from murder by strangulation (Williams):

- People Vs. David Collum San Francisco Police Department Case No. 170906847
- State v. Richard Williams, Fulton County Gerogia, motion for new trial testimony, Case No. 15SC135761

The third criminal case involved distinguishing between assault and consensual kinky play and settled out of court, and a fourth case was a military court martial that concluded without my testimony. Currently, I am providing expert witness services for two other criminal cases relevant to BDSM and it is too early in the process to report on outcome.

To date, Dr. Sheff has provided expert witness services for nine **custody cases involving sex and gender minority parents**. Three custody cases in which Sheff has been recognized as an expert by the court have settled out of court and so she did not testify in those cases. In two of those cases Dr. Sheff evaluated parents and provided an assessment to the litigators, and in the other case Dr. Sheff did not evaluate the litigants specifically but was to testify about the existence of, norms related to, and suitability of polyamorous families for children. Dr. Sheff has provided background and written summaries for another four custody cases that did not bring her in to testify, and Sheff is currently preparing testimony for another custody case that has not yet gone to court.