



A different way to divorce.



COLLABORATIVE
PRACTICE

Resolving Disputes Respectfully.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
AN ALTERNATIVE TO
DIVORCE AS USUAL,
YOU'RE NOT ALONE.



RESPECT



Collaborative Practice. It begins with something you both can agree on: self-respect.

The end of a marriage or relationship can be tragic enough. Often, the process of divorcing only adds to the pain. You and your spouse or partner may come to see each other as adversaries and the divorce as a battleground. You may experience feelings of confusion, anger, loss and conflict. Under such circumstances, you might find it difficult to see an end to divorce, much less imagine a hopeful future afterwards.

But it doesn't have to be this way. A growing number of parting couples, along with other professionals such as lawyers, mental health professionals and financial specialists, have been seeking a more constructive alternative. These professionals have developed the Collaborative Practice model.

Collaborative Practice is a reasonable approach to divorce based on three principles:

- A pledge not to go to court
- An honest exchange of information by both spouses
- A solution that takes into account the highest priorities of both adults and their children.

Mutual respect is fundamental to the collaborative way. You may cease being spouses, but you don't cease being worthy human beings. When respect is given and received, discussions are likely to be more productive and an agreement reached more easily.



A CLIENT-CENTERED
APPROACH.



COLLABORATE

A PLEDGE TO COLLABORATE.

The key difference between Collaborative Practice and conventional divorce is the pledge to reach an agreement before going to court. You and your spouse keep control of the decisions yourselves, rather than giving it up to a judge. In order to accomplish that, all of the parties consent in writing to be part of a respectful process that leads to an out-of-court resolution. With Collaborative Practice, the goal is to develop effective relationships, solve problems jointly, and prevent a court battle.



OPEN COMMUNICATION.

Even under the best of circumstances, communication can be strained as a relationship is ending. Yet keeping the lines of communication open is essential for reaching an agreement. Collaborative Practice provides for face-to-face meetings with you, your spouse, your respective lawyers and your team as needed. These sessions are intended to produce an honest exchange of information and expression of needs and expectations. When the issues are openly discussed, problem solving can be direct and solutions-oriented.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AT A GLANCE:

- Encourages mutual respect.
- Emphasizes the needs of children.
 - Avoids going to court.
- Keeps control of the process with the individuals.
 - Provides for open communication.
 - Utilizes a problem-solving approach.
- Identifies and addresses interests and concerns of all.
 - Prepares individuals for new lives.

THE COLLABORATIVE TEAM. CENTERED AROUND YOU.



Going through divorce or separation can make you feel isolated and alone, unsure of where to turn for support and advice. Unlike conventional legal process, Collaborative Practice offers you a team of skilled and compassionate professionals. Each expert in their own fields, the team members help you manage the many aspects of divorce—the legal issues, the emotional turmoil, the concerns for children and the financial and property questions. With such support you'll feel more in control of the process itself, and better equipped to begin a new life afterwards.

As you review the roles of your various team members, be sure to choose team members with special training in Collaborative Practice.



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COLLABORATIVE LAWYER

Though Collaborative Practice seeks to avoid going to court, the settlement is still a legal agreement. Therefore, it is essential that a lawyer be involved to advise you on all matters of law, from child custody and support to maintenance agreements to financial settlements and property distribution. Collaborative lawyers have made a commitment to the unique practice of the collaborative model.

DIVORCE COACH

Divorce is a major life transition; while it marks the end of one part of your life, it is also the beginning of another. A mental health professional helps you manage the pain and strain of changing relationships, while focusing on goals for the present and the future. Working with you to make the most of your strengths, your mental health professional assists you in being at your best during the divorce process, then taking positive steps to a new life.

FINANCIAL SPECIALIST

The divorce settlement will in part determine your financial well-being for many years to come. It is critical that it be soundly structured, especially if your spouse assumed more responsibility for your family's finances. The guidance of a financial specialist will help protect your interests. Reviewing all assets and incomes, the financial specialist will assist you in analyzing viable financial options for your future. Evaluating the choices, you and your lawyer can then construct a comprehensive plan for the next stage of your life.

CHILD SPECIALIST

Children may suffer most from divorce, and be least able to understand or express their feelings. Their world is being turned upside down in ways that they cannot begin to comprehend. Communication with parents may be difficult, if not impossible. A goal of Collaborative Practice is to assure that children are a priority, not a casualty. The child specialist, an individual skilled in understanding children, will meet with your children privately, assisting them in expressing their feelings and concerns about the divorce. Encouraging children to think creatively about the future, the child specialist then communicates their feelings, concerns and hopes to the team to consider when planning for the children's lives.



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