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COLLABORATIVE Practice Tips

A monthly bulletin from the CP Cal Practice Excellence Committee

The Practice Excellence Committee is pleased to offer tips to help you increase your Collaborative cases and achieve *practice excellence.*

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Please send us your comments and questions! Email us at info@cpcal.com

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Ways to Cut Costs

Do you stress that the cost pays for a nice, kind, gentle way to end a marriage, and not necessarily as an inexpensive way to terminate a marriage?
Here are some ideas of ways to cut costs. Each has some pros and cons, so consider who your clients are, and their strengths and needs, when you choose any of the following cost-cutting measures.

Tip #1

Not every team member needs to be present at every meeting.
Clients can meet with the coach(es) alone, meet with the financial specialist alone, and meet with the attorneys in a four-way. Factors to consider:

- What is on the agenda? Are there financial issues to discuss?
- Are there open issues relevant to the absent team member(s)?
- What is the level of conflict, or strong emotion? Can your clients "self-regulate"? Can they express themselves without assistance? Do they need help in communicating, or help in listening?
- Does one or both need moral support, emotional support, or back up?
- The Child Specialist is often cut first but this may have a real cost when one is needed.
- Work with one neutral coach when appropriate.

Tip #2

Don't write up minutes after the meetings; instead write interests, agreements and tasks on a white board or notepad, approve them at the meeting, and send photos to the team and clients.

- This may work well for most cases.
- While a lot of information can go into the minutes (that might not be recorded for everyone -- facts, things people can think about, ideas without resolution, etc.) consider whether this is actually necessary.

Tip #3

Give the clients as much homework as possible to do on their own.

- Consider your clients' capacity for completing tasks in a timely manner.

Tip #4

Don't charge for reading or writing short, logistical (not substantive) emails, such as planning a meeting agenda or scheduling a meeting.

Tip #5

Reframe the costs as "reallocation of fees" and a reallocation of services to experts. A neutral financial, or other expert, is less expensive than an attorney. Instead of paying the attorney for therapy or financial disclosures, clients get the best help possible at the lowest rate possible.

Tip #6

Explain that clients can control costs by coming prepared to meetings, communicating well, and by making and keeping agreements. Arguing is not only pointless, it is expensive.

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