

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*.



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

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How to Deal with Mistakes and Repair Working Relationships in Collaboration:
"Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself."
- Eleanor Roosevelt

Mistakes Between Parents

Separated Wife learns that Husband (might have) said something to their 12 year old daughter. Wife is upset, furious and already talking to her attorney and coach about what Husband said and how he "always does this."

Mistakes Between Team Members

One member of the collaborative Team mistakenly copies the parties on a "team only" email showing information that is private or delicate for the process.

Understanding why mistakes are made

Inevitably, humans make mistakes. We forget, we speak insensitively, or forget "the rules" or guidelines we agreed to. Whether it is communication agreements, or parenting agreements, mistakes or breakdowns will happen.

When people are immersed with the overwhelming stress and grief of divorce, predictably, errors will occur. Unfortunately, these mistakes often trigger painful issues in the marriage and reinforce negative views one party has of the other. The wounded client is often sure they "know" why the other parent did what they did, based on the marital experiences. These triggers often cause people to extrapolate a single mistake into thoughts such as "I can never trust him" or "she is always unreliable."

Busy collaborative professionals can also be overwhelmed with their practices, upset clients. Emails and their personal lives

Tip #1

Suggestions for helping clients:

- 1) Teach divorcing spouses that it is important to be a reliable negotiating partner and co- parent.
- 2) Predict errors will happen because of stress, etc.
- 3) Keep very clear notes about agreements - Be Specific.
- 4) Decide how to handle mistakes - take responsibility when you realize you made an error, inform the other that there was a mistake - language etc.
- 5) Teach spouses how to apologize (see apology skills below).
- 6) Teach parents how they can talk with their children when they hear about actions or quotes about what mom/dad said. (see below)
- 7) Practice repairing the relationship and keep going in the process of negotiating and co-parenting.

Tip #2

Suggestions for professional teams:

- 1) Remember to slow down and stay mindful of yourself this will create systems that reduce the possibility of errors.
- 2) Predict with the team that there could be mistakes and create a method to handle them quickly, productively and without defensiveness or excessive criticism. Learn skills of the apology.
- 3) Remember that your professional relationships are important and repairing them is a priority.

Tip #3

Apologies between Adults:

- 1) ACKNOWLEDGE and TAKE RESPONSIBILITY- ideally ahead of being confronted to things that have broken an agreement or trust. This is a good time to pause and let yourself know you are troubled by your lapse of judgement so that you can calm yourself sufficiently to decide the next step.

PAUSE BREATHE LISTEN

- 2) Include how you imagine the effect on the other person. i.e. I realize that missing and important deadline will impact the time for our next meeting:

PAUSE BREATHE LISTEN

- 3) Explain why the mistake happened - illness, fatigue, confusion, etc. letting the person know that it was not intended to cause harm to them or the process.

PAUSE BREATHE LISTEN

- 4) Express your sadness and regret for disappointing the other or undermining trust at an important time.

5) Offer to repair the mistake and/or asking "Is there anything I can do?"

Tip #4

Apologies from Parents to Children:

I am sorry I forgot, or said, _____ to you last night. or I am sorry to hear your mom/dad said, _____. When people are upset, like in a divorce, it can be difficult to remember important things. When anyone in our family is upset we might say things that are "the voice of" being upset, maybe not the best thing to say or fully accurate. When we calm down we can choose how and what to say. We're learning this but it might take a little time.

CP Cal Conference XIII

Registration is Now Open!



CP CAL CONFERENCE XIII
The Roots and Branches of Collaborative Practice

WHEN: April 27-29 2018

WHERE: San Mateo, California
San Mateo Marriott San Francisco Airport
1770 South Amphlett Blvd., San Mateo, 94402

[Visit Conference Website](#)

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