

COLLABORATIVE Practice Tips

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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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Top 10 Reasons to Use a Divorce Coach

We all know divorce is a stressful time for our clients. Yet, they are often reluctant to hire a Divorce Coach. The resistance we often hear includes the following: 1) too expensive; 2) the client / clients are already seeing a therapist; or 3) one client thinks they do not need a Coach, but their spouse does.

Here are 10 reasons to give our clients as to why Divorce Coaches are so valuable to include in their collaborative process:

1. Unmanaged emotions is the main factor that drives costs up in divorce. Everyone has emotions and emotions are often elevated during a divorce. Our capacity to manage our emotions is diminished under the stress of a divorce. A Divorce Coach can teach clients skills to manage their emotions during the divorce process. When each spouse has their own Coach, they can communicate with each other to understand each client's triggers and plan how to effectively address difficult topics.
2. Coaches can evaluate the communication dynamics between the clients and make suggestions to improve them. Our communication skills are

impacted by our emotions and generally not in a positive way. If communication between our clients was not good before the divorce (which is common), it is not likely going to improve during the divorce, without effective assistance. This results in a break down in their ability to resolve problems. Coaches provide guidance to better communication skills, including role play opportunities in separate sessions to prepare for joint meetings.

3. The Divorce Coach helps the other professionals on the team understand and manage a couple's dynamics, particularly with higher conflict cases. Coaches work with the professional team to manage emotions and triggers, plan strategies and communicate more effectively. Coaches establish boundaries in high conflict cases, which saves everyone time, money and aggravation.

4. Coaches are usually more cost effective than an attorney. Having Coaches address emotions and communication issues, instead of an attorney who may be less effective and more expensive, will likely reduce costs overall.

5. For those clients who already have a therapist, it is not uncommon for the therapist to have never met with the other spouse and to have only heard one perspective. Divorce Coaches get to know both clients, meet with them together and can address their communication dynamics, helping them to improve. They also assist clients in identifying their goals and developing a shared Mission Statement, which becomes the focal point for the collaborative process.

6. A client's individual or a couples therapist is not likely trained in Collaborative divorce and may not have the expertise to guide clients through the divorce process. They may lack knowledge of the process in general and more specifically, why a paradigm shift is necessary to assist the family as a whole. Their lack of understanding of the collaborative approach can result in confusion to the client if professionals are not on the same page.

7. The Collaborative Coaches guide parents in discussing many parenting issues that come up during the divorce process. Communication and decision-making processes are redefined as parents step out of what was routine and often ascribed roles. Clients learn from coaches how to transition to more business like communication and awareness that cooperative decisions need to be made with regard to the children's health, education and welfare.

8. Divorce Coaches help parents in many ways as they make decisions and communicate to the children about changes in the family, such as new households, or selling the family home. In addition, the coaches can help parents create separate parenting time and boundaries to respect each other while parents are still living in the same home.

9. A Divorce Coach understands the need to preserve familial relationships when children and extended family members are involved. Teaching clients

strategies to manage and respect these relationships as the family transitions, can benefit everyone far into the future.

10. The Coaches, with the assistance of a Child Specialist, guide the parents in developing a parenting plan that is filed along with their marital settlement agreement. The parenting plan helps minimize conflict by establishing agreements with regard to routine and holiday time share, as well as, how to handle important parenting decisions together. This road map sets a groundwork of common understanding for how the family will move forward and gives not only the parents, but the children, a reliable and predictable plan.

From the PEC:

Coming Out of Hibernation

Okay, Collaborative marketers, here's your challenge for October: Never Eat Lunch Alone.

You'll have to start now to set this up. A lot of scheduling to do! You don't have to meet in person. Zoom will do in a pinch.

First, make a list of people who could be good referral partners. Let's start with people you already know and like and send clients to. Your hairdresser. Your personal trainer. Everyone in your Collaborative Practice Group. Couples Therapists. Civil, business and estate attorneys. Real estate agents who specialize in divorce. Co-parenting counselors. Child therapists. Financial planners.

Then, start calling or emailing. Your goal is to schedule every weekday lunch in October. You can do it!

Now, the purpose of this lunch meeting is NOT to exchange deep and penetrating analysis of the weather! The purpose is to see if the two of you could begin a kind of informal partnership: I'll send you all my friends who need a haircut, you tell your clients in bad marriages about Collaborative Practice and maybe hand out a Divorce Options flyer or two. Start your lunch this way: "Great to see you! We don't have a lot of time. I'm hoping we can dive deep into how both of us can support each other in getting more clients. Would this work for you?"

Yep. You can do it!!! Next step is to ALWAYS follow up after every lunch. Because you've really listened to what the other person has to say about what they need or how you can support their business, best to follow up with a resource if you can.

Okay? Go!



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