

# 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@cpca.com](mailto:info@cpca.com)

[Click Here for Tips from Previous Months](#)

---

## Assessing the Spouse's Suitability for Collaborative Process: Is Collaborative Practice The Right Choice for the Spouse of Your Client?

### Tip #1

**Beware of determining the suitability of the spouse based just on what your client tells you.** While you may get some picture of the other spouse and some picture of the dynamics of the couple from your client, you will almost never see the whole picture. Thus, it is very difficult to assess suitability in the absence of a team or a neutral hired to see both parties.

### Tip #2

**Ask about the other spouse.** Ask your client questions. Here are just a few:

- Have you discussed what process you want to use with your spouse?
- What was his/her idea?
- In working with your spouse in a collaborative process what concerns would you have?
- What do you see as your spouse's strengths? Weaknesses?
- How would you describe the dynamic between you?
- How did you work out disagreements in the past?
- How did you make decisions?
- How would you describe the level of conflict and anger in your

- relationship before your separation? After your separation?
- Has there ever been any physical touching in anger?

Ask follow up questions to all of these.

### Tip #3

**Ask your client specifically about the collaborative process.**

- Do you think your spouse would participate in good faith, with transparency and respect in this process?
- Do you think it matters to your spouse what happens to you at the end of this process?
- Do you think that if it was clear that the best way to meet your goals, interests and needs would be for your spouse to take less or give more that he/she would consider doing so?
- Do you think he/she could acknowledge you if you took less or gave more than you were "entitled" to?

### Tip #4

**If there are any other team members, talk to them.**

### Tip #5

**Have a conversation with your client based on all the information you have about the best process option for him/her.** Once you have as much information as you can get about the couple and about each of them, help your client decide on a process by assessing how much support he/she needs; how much support his/her spouse needs; and what the red flags are for a Collaborative process. Red flags don't have to rule out using Collaborative, but they may make it more difficult or reduce the chances of success--so discuss these with your client. It's ultimately his/her choice in conjunction with his/her spouse, so long as you agree that you will work with your client in this process.



---

**Stay Connected**



CP Cal c/o 145 Wild Horse Valley Drive, Novato, CA 94947 415-897-2398 [info@cpca.com](mailto:info@cpca.com)

