May 2015

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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How to Engage the Other Spouse

Tip #1

Offer a list of practitioners for the other spouse to consider. Most of us are part of a larger Collaborative Practice group in our local community. We may have had cases together and know the style and personality of our colleagues. Since separation and divorce are such personal subjects, ask your client about the personality traits of his/her spouse, how he/she solves problems, and other personality-driven questions to obtain some sense of which practitioners may be a suitable match for the spouse. Taking a step to help guide the other party to a compatible practitioner may make both parties more comfortable with the process and understand that Collaborative Practice is not about winning or losing, but about working together to achieve the optimal result for their family. Take special care to provide the names and contact information of several practitioners and make sure the spouse is aware that he or she can choose whomever he or she wishes to work with in this process.

Tip #2

Propose a meeting of professionals before committing to the Collaborative process. Treat it like a first date. Set a brief meeting with your client, the other party, his or her Collaboratively trained attorney, and any agreed-upon financial professional or coach, to test the waters. Both parties can see that the attorneys are trained in the same manner and have the same goals and objectives. Whether the other spouse agrees to participate in the Collaborative process or not after the meeting, you have still managed to set a congenial tone for the dissolution.

Tip #3

Suggest the spouses attend a Divorce Options™ workshop. Even if they do not attend the same workshop, Divorce Options will provide a wealth of information and concrete examples of how successful the Collaborative process can be when spouses work together for a family-centered resolution to their dissolution.

Tip #4

Prepare your client for an initial "no" from his/her spouse. The spouse may not trust your client, may be angry, or may even be in denial that a separation and divorce are about to take place. Prepare your client to hear his/her spouse reject any suggestion your client brings to the table. Remind him/her that the spouse may need some space and the opportunity to calm down before welcoming the idea of an alternative to litigation.

Tip #5

Provide your client with a list of resources to obtain more detailed information about Collaborative Practice and allow him/her to share these resources with the spouse. If you have a client who is unfamiliar with Collaborative Practice, it is likely the spouse is also unfamiliar with it. When meeting with a new client, we often give him/her a lot of information, knowing that only a fraction of it is being absorbed. Prepare a list of resources--websites, books, CP Cal published articles, blog sites, etc.--to provide to every person with whom you discuss Collaborative Practice. Perhaps you can make this list a part of your website or promotional materials. Invite your client to share this information with the spouse, so that he or she may independently verify the success of the Collaborative process and see the possibilities of utilizing it in their divorce.

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