August 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.*

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICECALIFORNIA

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

**Click Here for Tips from Previous Months**

## Problem-Solving Difficulties Between Team Professionals

Helping our clients reach settlement in their family matter can be trying for the professionals on a Collaborative team as well as for the clients. While we are trained to be aware of the difficulties that clients face, there are times that differences between professionals on the team can complicate an already tense situation. Here are some suggestions to help alleviate difficulties should they arise.

### Tip #1

**Identify the difficulty.** This is a crucial first step, since it will dictate how best to address the issue. Is the problem generated by the personalities involved? Does the subject matter hit a nerve? How are you contributing to the difficulty? It often takes some reflection to pinpoint the difficulty in a given situation.

### Tip #2

**Seek out the advice of a team member.** Collaborative teams have built-in resources: trained coaches. In observing the dynamics of the team (not just the clients) the coaches might be able to offer insight, suggestions and solutions to help resolve differences. Other team members might be of help as well. Perhaps one has worked with the individual with whom you are struggling or has extensive familiarity with the Collaborative process and is therefore able to offer some practical advice.

## Tip #3

**Consult with a colleague not on the team.** Sometimes seeking input from a colleague outside of the team regarding how to handle a difficult situation can be of value. As professionals, we all have friends and associates within our areas of expertise with whom we talk when we need an objective opinion about a client, our business, a fact pattern, etc. This might be a perfect time to use that resource.

## Tip #4

**Respond, don't react.** When faced with an interpersonal dynamic or communication that increases tension or anxieties-pause-do not provide a knee jerk response. Take some the time to examine the circumstances. There is nothing wrong with saying you need some time to think about a response, or with waiting a few days to answer that email. Before responding, get some advice from a team member or a colleague. Make sure your communication is well considered, helpful and objective.

## Tip #5

**Debrief.** After a case is completed, it is tempting not to take the time to "debrief."  Besides being part of Collaborative protocol, debriefing serves as an invaluable learning tool for team members, not only in terms of honing their skills, but also in becoming familiar with, and therefore being able to work with, the different styles and personalities of our Collaborative colleagues.

In short, we are all human, and we are role models for our clients. When we ask the clients to try to see the other side of a disagreement or to understand the other client's personality, we enhance our credibility by modeling this conduct with our colleagues.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICECALIFORNIA

CP Cal c/o 145 Wild Horse Valley Drive, Novato, CA 94947  415-897-2398  info@cpcal.com