

# 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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## Helping Clients Through the Holidays

It is almost holiday season and time to start planning with our clients. Different families have different ways of celebrating. Traditions may include spending time with expanded families, travel, religious rituals, festive parties, decorating, getting a tree, cooking special foods and many more ways of celebrating. So here are some tips for the holidays.

### Tip #1

**Help clients take care of themselves.** Holidays are an important time for many families. Whether our clients have children or not, the first holiday without a spouse, and without children for some, can be an emotional time. The sense of loss will likely be increased at this time and clients may experience a myriad of other emotions as well. So prepare your clients. Talk to them about self care during the holidays and what they can do to make it through a tough time.

### Tip #2

**Plan ahead of time.** If the clients have children, start planning now. Do they need meeting(s) with the coaches? With the attorneys as well? What can the team do to help them through this time? Ask them to think about the kids and what they would prefer. Ask them to set aside their own issues. Ask them to move from rigid adherence to a schedule to a mode of flexibility that works for the kids. Ask them not to let concerns about child support override what is best for their children.

### Tip #3

**Think of the kids first.** If there would not be too much tension, ask your clients to consider doing some part of the holiday with children together with both parents. We know that this is a gift they can give their kids, and especially in a Collaborative case it may be possible. Many adults who experienced divorce as children report great appreciation for parents who were able to have the family celebrate holidays together.

### Tip #4

**What if there is too much conflict to celebrate together?** Talk to your clients about what they did to celebrate in the past. How can they keep some traditions and create new ones as well? Especially for the first year, ask clients to think about sharing time close to the actual holiday so each parent has a chance to be with the child(ren). And remember that too many transitions can be rough for the kids, too. So help them to consider what balanced approach would work for their family.



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