

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

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How to Talk to Clients About Fees

Tip #1

Introduce a discussion about fees at the start. Don't avoid the topic!

Is the client committed to a Collaborative Process? After you have explained the divorce process options for divorce -- mediation, collaborative process and litigation -- discuss the clients' needs and how CP could help meet them.

Tip #2

Ask your clients if they have thought about a budget for their divorce process.

Don't assume that every client is concerned about keeping the cost as low as possible. Some clients will be concerned about keeping costs as low as possible, and some clients will be more concerned about making sure they are receiving expertise and a valuable service. By asking your clients to consider cost, you can get a better sense of their financial resources and limitations, as well as their personal views on spending money on professional services.

Tip #3

Be wary of providing a firm estimate of cost.

Explain that the total cost of the process depends on the level of complexity of the issues, and the level of conflict between the parties. If you feel comfortable, you may provide a range of what your fees have been in other Collaborative cases to give clients some general sense of what to expect in terms of cost. You can also let clients know you can give a better estimate of cost once you get to know them, their spouse and their situation better.

Tip #4

Explain that the clients have significant control over the ultimate cost of the process.

Explain to your clients what they can do to keep the costs down if that is important to them. For example, costs can be controlled when clients complete their "homework" in between sessions, and work with coaches to improve communication skills and minimize unconstructive behavior.

Tip #5

Explain why fees in a Collaborative process are generally lower than in litigation.

Explain to the clients that every hour of attorney billable time in a Collaborative process is for productive work. In contrast, clients in litigation can end up paying for attorneys waiting around the courthouse for a case to be called, and on litigation formalities such as preparing motions and conducting depositions. In addition, in a Collaborative process you pay for one neutral financial professional as opposed to two separate financial professionals in litigation.



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