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

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## Collaborating in The Era of Great Political Divide

Political Opinions abound in today's world and the perspectives seem to be further apart and more divisive than ever. These differences may exist between our clients and even between us as professionals. Managing this successfully is possible!

### Tip #1

**Avoid voicing your own political preferences** and/or showing your own political bias. You never know what the other professionals on the case believe or what your clients may believe. If possible, don't ask and don't tell! Never assume everyone else in the room thinks as you do.

### Tip #2

**An Uncertain Future:** Some issues are currently in flux due to the changing political landscape. This uncertainty can cause anxiety and even fear for our clients. Some of these issues may affect our clients and even the terms of their agreements. For example, health care and taxes.

**Health Care:** Will the ACA be repealed, replaced, modified? This may determine how and whether or not our clients obtain or maintain health insurance. Will children be able to stay on their parents' plans after the age of 18? If so, for how long?

**Tax Reform:** Will the Head of Household filing status go away? Will tax brackets change significantly? Will mortgage interest and property taxes still be deductible? How will capital gains be taxed? What about child care deductions or credits? How will all of this affect child and spousal support? Property division?

The Collaborative Financial Professional can help the clients gather more information and understand what their options are in order to make more informed decisions. Clients may need to be referred to a tax specialist.

### Tip #3

If your clients are divorcing now, **educate them** as to their options. Some options may be: go ahead now and base decisions on the current circumstances, then come back and modify if things change; wait and see what happens; reserve jurisdiction on some issues; go for a "suspended divorce".

### Tip #4

Encourage clients to return to their Collaborative Professionals if there is any significant change. At that time they can submit updated financial information and discuss how any changes to the law will change their support or property division.

### Tip #5

**Be Factual but Neutral.** After all, it's not our opinions that count, but rather, the choices of the clients. Be careful to not let your own biases compromise your neutrality.

### Tip #6

What if clients bring up politics? Politely hear them out, but redirect them to areas of specific concerns, such as taxes, health care, etc. Have them make proposals about concerns rather than discussing politics.

### Tip #7

**Parenting and Politics:** Each parent may wish their children to believe as they do. A parent has the right to express their own opinions to the child. Coaches should be relied upon to give parent's guidance in dealing with differences of opinion in this area as in others. Coaches can help them reach some understanding that children can be exposed to differing political views, but should not be pressured into accepting either parent's view as their own. Children should be allowed to develop their own thoughts and preferences in politics, religion, sports and other areas.



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