

What is Collaborative Family Law?

1. Cooperation, not confrontation

- Problem solving with lawyers where you and your spouse try to understand each other.
- You and your spouse are responsible for information gathering and solutions.
- Both lawyers help you and your spouse to:
 - find and focus on your common interests;
 - understand each other's concerns;
 - explore a wide range of possible choices; and
 - reach solutions acceptable to both of you.
- You and your spouse and both lawyers work as a team.
- It generally takes much less time and money to settle matters using the Collaborative Family Law Process.

2. How will this happen?

- Both you, your spouse and both lawyers will meet together as often as necessary.
- You, your spouse and both lawyers will sign a contract agreeing not to go to court.
- During these meetings you and your spouse, with your lawyers' help, will:
 - exchange information;
 - explore a wide range of possible choices; and
 - reach solutions acceptable to both of you.

3. What will you and your spouse do?

- First, you will each meet alone with your own lawyer to identify your concerns and learn about the Collaborative Family Law process.
- At all meetings where you, your spouse and both lawyers are present, you will follow the Collaborative Family Law process.

- You will treat each other with respect.
- You will listen to each other's perspectives, interests and concerns.
- You will explore all possible choices.
- You will both let go of the past in order to focus on the future.

4. What will your lawyers do?

- Your lawyer will advise you of the law.
- Both lawyers will be honest and respectful.
- Both lawyers will guide the Collaborative Family Law meetings.
- Both lawyers will listen to each of you.
- Your lawyer will represent your interests, but will also listen to your spouse's interests. Your spouse's lawyer will represent your spouse's interests, but will also listen to you.
- Both lawyers will manage emotional situations.
- Both lawyers will point out unreasonable expectations.
- Both lawyers will use clear language when speaking and writing.
- Both lawyers will cooperate in sharing all factual information
- Both lawyers will work hard to help you and your spouse reach an agreement.
- Neither lawyer will go to court before you and your spouse reach an agreement.
- Once you and your spouse reach an agreement, both lawyers will help you to obtain any necessary court approval.