

# HOW TO STOP FIGHTING DURING YOUR DIVORCE

Going through a divorce or separation can be one of the most difficult times in your life. The process can be exhausting and stressful. It is not uncommon to hear of long and expensive divorce battles when people use the courts. This can take over your life, cause poor mental and physical health and ruin your finances. When children are involved, it can also have a negative impact on parenting and children's mental and emotional development. There is another way to move through a divorce that is more collaborative and respectful, it is called Divorce Mediation. This cooperative process can help stop fighting between people and assist them in reaching agreements.

In Divorce Mediation, a professional mediator helps parties to hear one another in a more effective way. They assist in making communication clear and respectful, and help to de-escalate emotions. At the beginning of the mediation process, guidelines will be set out so you know what to expect unlike when people end up in an argument that happens in a spur of the moment and gets out of control quickly. These rules of engagement can include taking turns talking, using non-threatening body language and avoiding put-downs, blaming, and name calling. The result is your discussion will be more respectful and productive.

***Conflict is a part of life. It is how conflict is handled that makes the difference.***

People in relationships often develop a pattern of how they communicate with one another. When they argue, the conversation tends to bounce around and focus on the past. Talking about history and blaming one another causes arguments and distracts them from the topics that need to be covered. This is counterproductive, and people end up feeling frustrated and no further ahead.



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In divorce mediation, a professionally trained mediator helps you to keep on track and moving forward. Usually, only one or two topics will be discussed at a time and they can help you to change your communication pattern so it is more effective for you both.

Conflict is a part of life. It is how conflict is handled that makes the difference. A professional mediator will help you to work through disagreements. They are not personally involved in your conflict and are there to help both of you reach a mutual resolution. Often, when people are in conflict, they focus on one another as being the problem. The mediator will assist you in de-tangling the issues and helping you see them in a more clear and neutral way. This takes the blame off the parties and allows you to return your energies to working on reaching agreements.

Fights can start between people who are divorcing when one or both parties are not in the right frame of mind to have a discussion that is “sprung” on them. They may be tired or have other priorities at that time. Divorce mediation is held at a time that is good for both of you and is planned in advance. During the mediation, there are generally no other distractions and people can focus solely on their discussions.

The mediator sets up a meeting with each person prior to mediation to find out what needs to be resolved. This is called the Pre-mediation. They will give you tips on how to approach sensitive topics with the other party in the mediation and help you to be assertive. For instance, instead of saying “You are always late and changing the parenting schedule at the last minute”, you could say “I find it very helpful to know the schedule for the kids in advance”. The first statement can cause the other person to become defensive and is likely to start a fight.

Prior to the mediation, the mediator will recommend you put together a list of items you need to resolve or reach an agreement about. This provides an “agenda” like you would in a business meeting. Both parties’ agendas are covered in the mediation. Guidelines for breaks and ending the mediation session are also set-up ahead of time.

Discussions that take place in mediation are confidential. Because of this, people tend to be more open when they know what they say will not be repeated outside the meeting. They may have been holding back something that is important because of fear that others may find out. This transparency leads to improved understanding. New ideas and options develop and agreements are reached.

Divorce mediation provides structure, guidelines, and conflict resolution through the assistance of a professional mediator. Creating understanding and calming emotions in mediation can stop divorcing parties from fighting. This paves the way for improved conversations and reaching agreements without costly and stressful interventions from the courts. The benefit is better health, more financial stability, less strain on children and closure so you can move on with your life.



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