



6 Top Reasons to Mediate Your Divorce



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Divorce mediation is proven to be successful over 80% of the time and is an effective alternative to going to court. The mediator does not take sides or tell you who is right or wrong. They set out guidelines to help you communicate in a more respectful and productive manner, manage the process and keep you on track. Mediation provides a space where people are more likely to be open to explore options and find solutions that are satisfying to both. It focuses on collaboration and cooperation while the court process can be adversarial and combative. Judges support mediation and new legislation taking effect in 2020 will make it mandatory for people to go through a dispute resolution process, such as mediation, in certain cases. Here are the 6 top reasons for you to make mediation your first choice.

1. Faster and Costs Less.

Mediation can be completed in as little as 2 weeks. You can start talking about important matters and resolving conflict without delay. Wait times to get into court can be lengthy and unresolved conflict tends to cause matters to escalate. When you use mediation, you and your spouse will pay one professional who is dedicated to helping you both to come to a resolution. This means you can avoid getting caught up in the court process which can go on for months or even years. In the case of a contested divorce (i.e. one where people are not in agreement), the cost can be more than \$20,000 for each person.

2. Confidential and Private.

Discussions that take place in mediation stay in mediation. The mediator and the participants sign an agreement stating that what they talk about cannot be used in court or discussed with others. Once people know that their conversations will not be shared outside of mediation, they tend to be more open with one another which increases their chances of reaching an agreement. Mediation is held in a private meeting room usually at the mediator's office. If you go to court, your personal matters will be discussed in front of a Judge, lawyers and the public.

3. You Make the Decisions.

People are sometimes overly optimistic about what the outcome will be in court. No one can say for sure what a Judge will decide. In mediation, the participants make the decisions for themselves and their children. The mediator will guide you through the process and your discussions. You and your spouse will always remain the decision-makers.

4. Better for Your Children.

Conflict between parents inevitably ends up having negative effects on their children. Even if the children are not exposed directly to the conflict, they can still sense that a parent is stressed or that there is tension between their parents. Mediators help to reduce conflict, keep the focus on the children and are sensitive to everyone's needs. Studies have shown that parents have deeper relationships with their children and positive long-term effects on their families when they choose mediation rather than litigation (i.e. the court system).

5. Flexible and More Informal.

Mediation can be scheduled during the day, in the evening or on a weekend when it is convenient for you rather than being on the court's timeline. It can take place in person, by phone or video chat depending on your circumstances. For instance, if people live far apart from one another or from the mediator, mediation can be done by phone. Mediation is more informal and much less structured than the court system which has specific rules and procedures that must be followed. The legal process can be very overwhelming for people and usually requires hiring a lawyer.

6. Customized Agreement.

People who choose mediation get the opportunity to have more open and in-depth conversations where they can provide one another with immediate feedback. This dialogue will help you and your spouse to create an agreement that fits your family's specific needs. When people create their own agreements, they are much more likely to follow through with their decisions compared to when a Judge decides for them. In cases where people have children, working together to reach an agreement also lays the groundwork for them to collaborate about future parenting matters.

Mediation can help you to get through your divorce in a time and cost-efficient manner so you can move on with your life. Using this process helps keep the focus on reducing conflict and communicating more constructively. This in turn makes it easier for people to come up with options they may not have looked at previously. Going to mediation can get you through this challenging time in your life in a less stressful, less damaging way where you can maintain your self-respect and be a more effective co-parent.

