



**A DIFFERENT
WAY TO
DIVORCE**

COLLABORATIVE LAW ALLIANCE OF BERMUDA

Resolving Disputes Respectfully



IF YOU ARE
LOOKING FOR AN
ALTERNATIVE WAY
TO DIVORCE

AS USUAL, YOU'RE
NOT ALONE

*The Collaborative Model begins with something you both can agree on: **self-respect***



The end of a marriage or relationship can be tragic. Often, the process of divorcing only adds to the pain. You and your spouse may come to see each other as adversaries and the divorce as a battleground. You may experience feelings of confusion, anger, loss and conflict. Under such circumstances, you find it difficult to see an end to divorce, much less imagine a hopeful future afterwards.

But it doesn't have to be this way. A growing number of parting couples, along with other professionals such as lawyers, mediators, psychologists and financial consultants, have been seeking a more constructive alternative by adopting a collaborative approach.

The collaborative model is a reasonable approach to divorce based on three principles:

- A pledge not to go to court
- An honest exchange of information by both spouses
- A solution that takes into account the highest priorities of both spouses and their children.

Mutual respect is fundamental to the collaborative approach. You may cease being spouses, but you don't cease being worthy human beings. When respect is given and received, discussions are likely to be more productive and an agreement reached more easily.

A photograph of a young woman with blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a blue shawl draped over her shoulders. The background is softly blurred, showing other people. On the left side of the image, there is a dark blue rectangular box containing white text.

**A CLIENT-CENTRED
APPROACH**

A PLEDGE TO COLLABORATE

The key difference between the collaborative model and the conventional divorce process, is the pledge to reach an agreement without going to court. You and your spouse keep control of the decisions yourselves, rather than giving it to a judge. In order to accomplish that, all of the parties consent in writing to be part of a respectful process that leads to an out-of-court resolution. With the collaborative model, the goal is to develop effective relationships, solve problems jointly, and prevent a court battle.



OPEN COMMUNICATION

Even under the best of circumstances, communication can be strained as a relationship is ending. Yet keeping the lines of communication open is essential for reaching an agreement. The collaborative model provides for face-to-face meetings with you, your spouse and your respective lawyers and other advisers as needed. These sessions are intended to produce an honest exchange of information and expression of needs and expectations. When the issues are openly discussed, problem solving can be direct and solutions oriented.





AN AGREEMENT EVERYONE CAN LIVE WITH

If you've reached a decision about divorce, you may be reassured to know that the collaborative model focuses on achieving resolution. It is designed to protect the interests of children and help you and your spouse move forward with new lives. Throughout, the collaborative process emphasizes cooperating to find solutions. And instead of being an endless airing of grievances, the collaborative model encourages spouses to reach a workable settlement by building on areas of mutual agreement.



SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT THE MOST

Divorce usually involves many considerations, from concern for children to financial questions to property matters. Along with handling the overall emotional impact, managing by yourself can be difficult. The collaborative model offers you a supportive approach. You and your lawyer work as a team. Other professionals including divorce coaches, child specialists, and financial consultants can become part of your team, helping find constructive solutions for wide-ranging issues that arise in divorce and establish goals for the future.



A FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

Divorce ends a marriage but need not sever family ties or relationships. Especially when children are involved, lifelong responsibilities remain. By preserving respect and encouraging cooperation, the collaborative model helps parents and children keep family bonds while embracing new lives. Divorce will always remain a significant life event. In the face of it, the collaborative model can lead you and your families to a compassionate and dignified solution, and a healthy new beginning.



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COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE AT A GLANCE:

- Encourages mutual respect
- Emphasizes the needs of children
- Avoids going to court
- Keeps control of the process with the individuals
- Provides for open communication
- Utilizes a problem-solving approach
- Identifies and addresses interests and concerns of all
- Prepares individuals for new lives

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