

Ground Rules for the Client for the Collaborative Family Law Process

1. Attack the problem and concerns at hand. Do not attack each other.
2. Avoid positions; rather, express yourself in terms of needs and interests and the outcomes you would like to realize.
3. Work for what you believe is the most constructive and acceptable agreement for both of you and your family.
4. During the four-way meetings with your attorney (both attorneys and both clients are present) remember the following:
 - a. Do not interrupt when the other or their attorney is speaking. You will have a full and equal opportunity to speak on every issue presented for discussion.
 - b. Do not use language that blames or finds fault with the other. Use non-inflammatory words. Be respectful of others.
 - c. Speak for yourself; make "I" statements. Use each other's first name and avoid "he" or "she."
 - d. If you share a complaint, raise it as your concern and follow it up with a constructive suggestion as to how it might be resolved.
 - e. If something is not working for you, please tell your attorney so your concern can be addressed.
 - f. List carefully and try to understand what the other is saying without being judgmental about the person or the message.
 - g. Talk with your attorney about anything you do not understand. Your attorney can clarify issues for you.
5. Be willing to commit the time required to meet regularly. Be prepared for each meeting.
6. Be patient- delays in the process can happen even with everyone acting in good faith.