

Generally, mediation takes 2 to 6 sessions of 1 to 2 hours each. I meet with both parties together, but if you like I will give you the opportunity to meet with me separately, to speak with me confidentially.

My job as mediator is to help you identify the issues you need to resolve, gather the information you'll need to make decisions, and communicate about how to resolve the issues. If you reach agreement, I write up the agreement and its premises in a plain language document called a memorandum of understanding, which is non-binding. You bring the memorandum to an attorney. The attorney will then prepare a matrimonial settlement agreement that you and your spouse sign. This agreement is binding and becomes part of your divorce judgment if you proceed to a divorce.

Mediation isn't an attorney-free process, and ultimately at least one of you will have to engage an attorney. The attorney's role is more limited, however, because you and your spouse have done the time-consuming work of negotiating your agreement through mediation. You may have an attorney while you're in mediation, to consult with and "coach" you in the negotiations. As a mediator, I will give you information and identify issues, but I don't make decisions or recommendations for you. Some people feel more comfortable when they can consult with an attorney during the mediation process, and it helps avoid disputes about the final signed agreement. In addition to preparing the matrimonial settlement agreement, an attorney will ultimately have to file the complaint for divorce with the courts. This is usually done after you have a signed agreement on all issues - then your divorce is considered "uncontested" because all issues are resolved.

You can stop mediation at any time you feel it's no longer working for you. The speed of the process depends on how frequently we can meet and how quickly you can gather the information you need about your finances. If you've already pulled together information about your assets, debts, and income, you can move as quickly as you like. It's helpful for you to bring in: last year's tax return, 3 recent paystubs, and the most recent statements you've received from each of your accounts or assets (bank accounts, investment accounts, retirement accounts), a statement of your mortgage balance, and a list of credit card or other debt.

I am willing to meet with you and your spouse for a brief free consult, to help answer your questions about mediation and to let you determine if you would like to work with me. I need to meet with both of you; if I meet with one spouse and not the other, it can be perceived as affecting my impartiality.