

Expectations of Conduct for Collaborative Family Law Cases

The following is an outline of conduct that is expected of all participants in Collaborative Law joint meetings:

1. Participants will focus on the future and avoid unnecessary discussions of the past. Participants will focus on resolving conflict and not on assessing blame.
2. Participants will listen carefully to the goals that begin every joint session, and will take actions and make decisions in furtherance of the shared goals.
3. Participants will address others in a courteous manner and tone. Participants will not interrupt when another person is speaking. Participants will avoid sarcastic, contemptuous, critical, defensive, or judgmental communication/comments.
4. If a participant feels that progress has ceased or that he/she is about to lose control of himself/herself and say or do something to impede progress, that participant will call for a break. If the break is insufficient to calm the affected participant, the meeting may be terminated.
5. Each participant will speak only for himself/herself. Participants will use “I” instead of “You” sentences.
6. Participants will express their true interests.
7. Participants will be patient with each other and their lawyers. All participants will assume that each participant is acting in good faith and realize that everyone does not move at the same pace. To pull together, each participant must sometimes accommodate by slowing down. Delays can happen, even with everyone acting in good faith.
8. Participants will follow the Agenda for that joint session. If there are other topics that a participant wants to address, he/she shall accomplish same by asking that it be included in the Agenda for the next four-way meeting.
9. Participants will be honest.
10. Participants recognize that arguing is pointless.
11. Participants will be mindful that their joint meeting time is valuable, and will make every effort to make that time productive. Unless previously agreed or requested, parties will not exchange mail or personal items at joint meetings.