GO-PARENTING HANDBOOKI

For Parents
Inclined to
LITIGATE
OR
NEGOTIATE



COPARENTING HANDBOOK

MISSION

Apples and Oranges. We all process information in our own way. For co-parents how we process the information doesn't matter. What matters is that you arrive at acceptable solutions for the best interest of your children.

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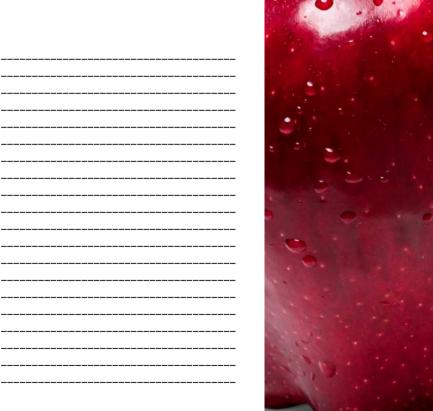
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- 3. Handbook Preview
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- 9. Method and Means ofCommunication
- 11. Engage more, Relate Less
- 12. Suggested Reading

GOALS

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS IN YOUR DIVORCE?





CONFLICT

DEFINE YOUR CONFLICT





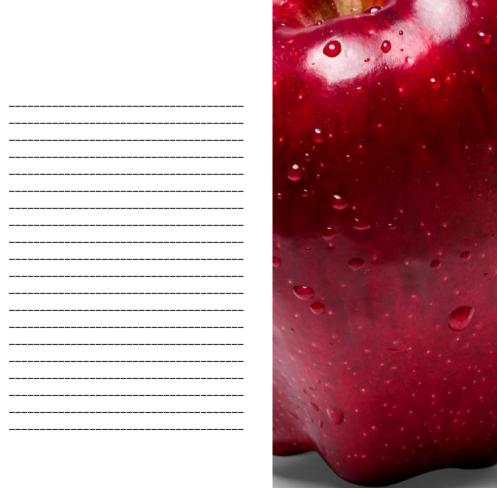
GOALS

HAVE YOUR GOALS CHANGED SINCE YOU MET WITH YOUR ATTORNEY?



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WHAT IS YOUR PLAN OF ACTION



UNDERSTAND THE ART OF CONFLICT POSITIONING

Conflict Positioning. defined as position oneself favorably in anticipation of litigation.

Act Like
A
CoParent



LEARN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

"Your Honor I
would like to
introduce as Exhibit
A all of the parties
email and text
communications."

The Court is going to want to know you communicate with your fellow co-parent. At this point you will want to learn the BIFF style of communication authored by Bill Eddy. Before you continue read Bill Eddy's Book: BIFF for Co-Parent Communication:

Communications should focused on the tasks at hand about working as coparents for the best interest of your child. Maintaining effective communication positions you as an effective co-parent before the eyesof the court.



RECORD YOUR CONVERSATIONS

Learning BFF provides you a method to communicate during the legal process. The The next step is to create the means by which communication can be monitored, downloaded and shared.

There are various apps that allow parents to communicate and share information. Communicate with your attorney as to which smart apps are typically used by your Family law judge.

Sign on the app and ask your attorney to reach out to your ex-spouse's counsel to start communication through your selected app.

ENGAGE MORE RELATE LESS

It is extremely difficult for many parents during the divorce to STOP relating to their child's other parent as their spouse rather than as a co-parent.

Engage your ex as if you were performing a task at your place of work. When discussing your child's needs take a child first approach - making sure your kids needs are met and then finish the conversation.



SHOW THE
JUDGE YOU
HAVE THE
ABILITY TO
CO-PARENT

In following Bill Eddy's BIFF approach, apply that style when you engage your ex. Be to the point when relaying information. Avoid unnecessary interactions that may lead to increased conflict.

ENGAGE IN WIN-WIN DISCUSSIONS

.Co-parents win when they participate in the following discussions:

- 1. Talking to Your Kids about the divorce
- 2. Discuss Budget for Divorce
- 3. Define Your Conflict
- 4. Model Solution: Do you Litigate, Mediate or Collaborate?

PREPARE FOR MEDIATION



A majority of cases are settled at mediation before the case is set for trial. Preparing for mediation gives you time to position yourself in the best light and negotiate your best outcome.

Positioned for Trial

SUGGESTED READINGS

Do you a have a brief description of the road map? Write it here, but keep it short and provide more details below.



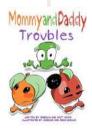
BILL EDDY'S BIFF BOOK FOR CO-PARENTS. AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



BILL EDDY'S: HIGH CONFLICT PEOPLE IN LEGAL DISPUTES, AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



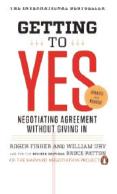
BILL EDDY'S: WHAT'S YOUR PROPOSAL AVAILABLE ON AMAZON..



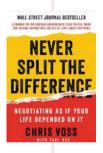
MOMMY AND DADDY TROUBLES - Written by Matt Sossi - a book to help small children understand life in separate homes.

SUGGESTED READINGS

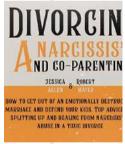
Do you a have a brief description of the road map? Write it here, but keep it short and provide more details below.



"GETTING TO YES?" AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



"NEVER SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE" AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



DIVORCING A NARCISSIST - AVIALABLE ON AMAZON



WHAT DO I DO - A survival guide for teens in divorce - Available on Amazon

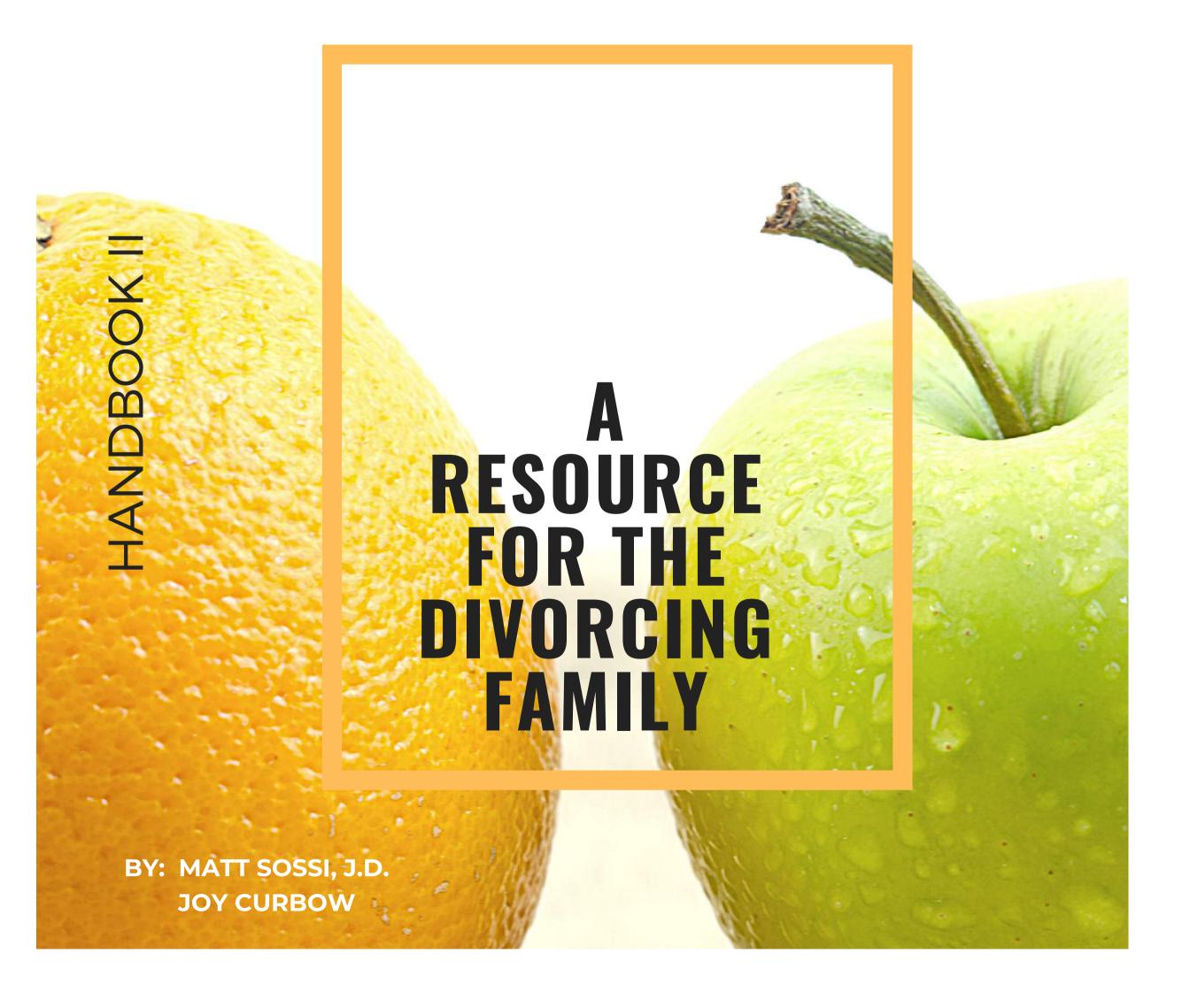
CO-PAREN Amazon HANDBOOKI

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

CO-PARENTINGB HANDBOOK III

PRE-MEDIATION TRAINING

GO-PARENTING HANDBOOK II



Conflict Management Handbook for Co-parents



THERE IS NOTHING MORE
POWERFUL THAN A PERSON
ARMED WITH INFORMATION
AND OPTIONS

Handbook

JUNE 2021

MISSION

Our job has been and will continue to be to help parents reach solutions, avoid court, and to co-parent. By definition it is my job to help parents define their conflict, learn basic communication skills with the goal of ensuring that the parents have the skills not only to manage present conflict but future conflict as well. Regardless of where you are in the process, it's not too late to turn things around and begin the co-parenting process!

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On Apples and Oranges

You have fundamental differences. Take that for granted All that matters to a co-parent is how you work together to achieve a solution.



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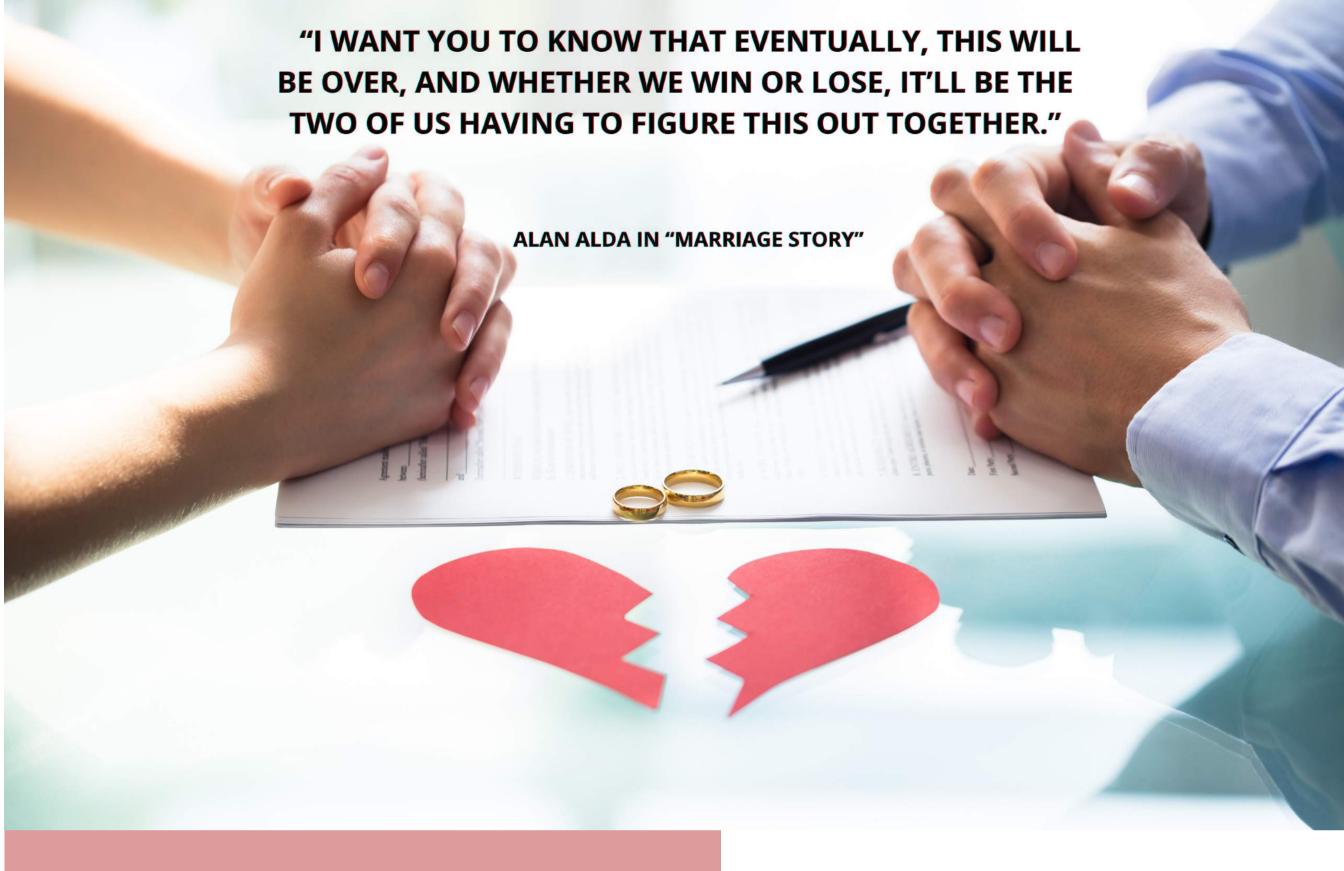
6.	CO-PARENTING
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DIVORCE

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- 10 THE THREE CONVERSATIONS

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- **18 PLANNING A BUDGET**



COPARENTING

Before You Consider Court You have yet to file your divorce. For many parents the question at this point is how to resolve disputes and begin the process of co-parenting.

The question is how?

Without skills, your plans to co-parent will fail at some point and you will be in court. How are you planning to resolve not only your present conflict but your future conflict as well?

Are you Ready?

At present, there are now online sites and online forms to help parents file their petitions for divorce.

The issue arises when the parents have a dispute.

Overcoming conflict during the divorce process may seem like an insurmountable process.

The last place divorcing parents want to be is before a family law judge hearing their case.



COMMUNICATION STARTS NOW

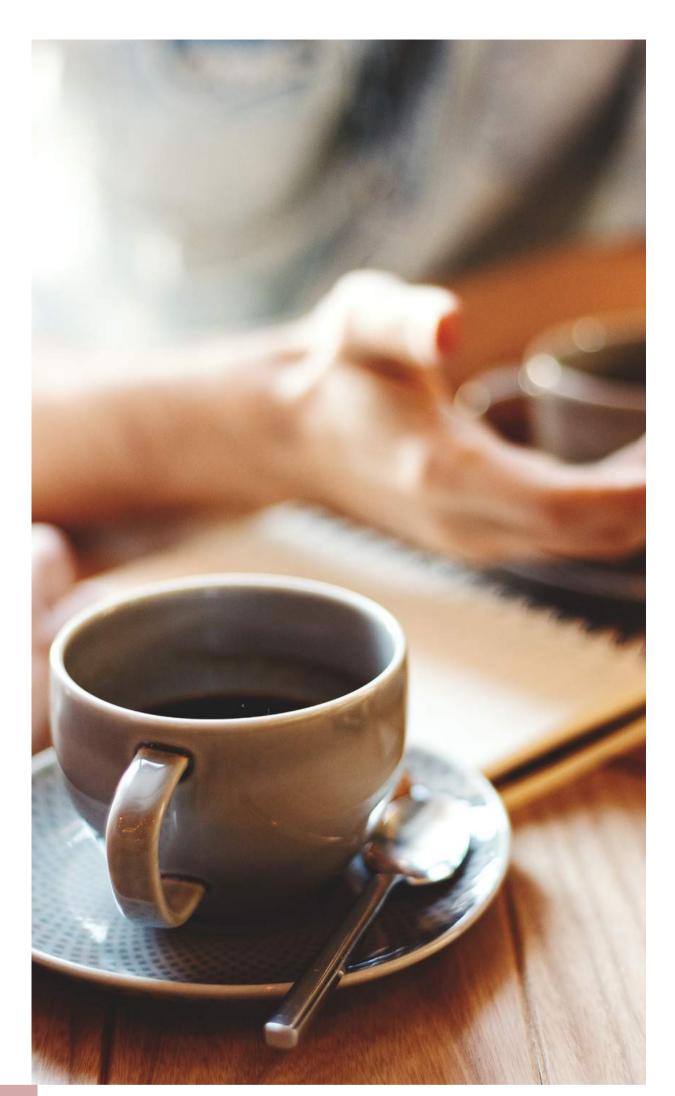
For co-parents, the divorce process should be all about transitioning, ending your relationship as husband and wife, and beginning your journey as coparents.

Co-parenting is going to mean reframing the manner in which you interact with your spouse.

You relate with your spouse on an emotional level. Co-parents communicate with each other as though they were employees working a task on a job.



Book: Amazon and purchase Bill Eddy's BIFF for co-parent communication. Practice the BIFF method in all of your communications!



Bereavement Counseling

It can be hard to transition through the divorce process when your ex (or perhaps yourself) is not ready to end the divorce.

Bereavement counseling is to help divorced couples who feel lost in the trauma of divorce.

Bereavement counseling helps couples answer some basic questions troubling divorcing parents.

Can we stay married?

What happens next?

Bereavement counseling is an excellent way for a mental health professional to intervene and assist among divorcing parents, helping them to continue to communicate.



TELLING THE KIDS

Talking to your child separately may be your only option, but can you agree with me that it is not your best option? Dad may say one thing to the kids and providing one reason for the divorce, Mom saying another. Your INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS are not going to provide the best recipe to reduces anxiety and stress for your children.

Moms and Dads who intend to coparent after divorce should together plan how to discuss the news with their children.

Thinking through HOW to talk to the children most likely will mean visiting a third-party professional, such as a child therapist, who can provide a guideline of what and what not to say.



ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVES

Talking to the kids may have just changed your approach to your divorce.

 Rather than litigating and placing your children in a high conflict situation, the parties focus on meeting the needs of their children and not introducing conflict over each parent's needs.





What will you tell your kids when they ask.

Was this my fault?

Can I still love (my other parent)?

Why is this happening?

Where am I going to live?

Am I still going to see my friends?

Do We Mediate Mediate Litigate or Collaborate?

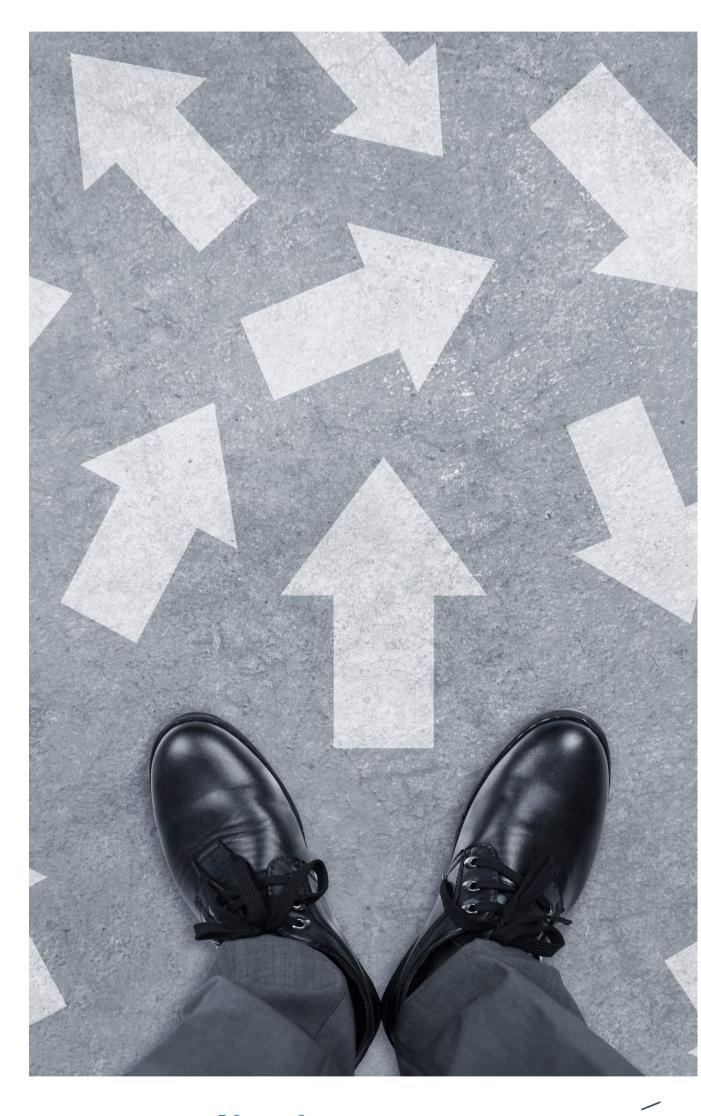
Most parents hire a litigation attorney when they file for divorce. Why?

While litigation may be necessary you need to explore your options.

Simply put do you litigate, mediate or choose collaborative divorce?

Litigation Costs!

Litigation is the most expensive election you can make. There are not just the initial retainers paid to your lawyer, retainers will be expended, and billable hours will continue. There are court reporter fees, there are deposition costs, videographers, etc. The more litigious you want to be the higher your costs.



Mediation costs are significantly lower than litigation or electing a collaborative divorce.

Have You Defined Your Conflict?

Conflict is defined in one of two ways, one as a misunderstanding, the other is defined as an entrenched battle.

Defining Your Conflict Helps Answer the question.

Litigation is designed to resolve deeply entrenched conflict.

Mediation may be a better path to work through the problem.

Electing a Collaborative approach may be necessary depending on the complexity of your divorce.



Engage, Listen, Understand and Respond

- Identify Your Goals
- State Your Differences
- Actively listen
- Define Your Conflict

Talk to a Family Law
 Attorney, Mediator and
 Collaborative Family
 Practitioner

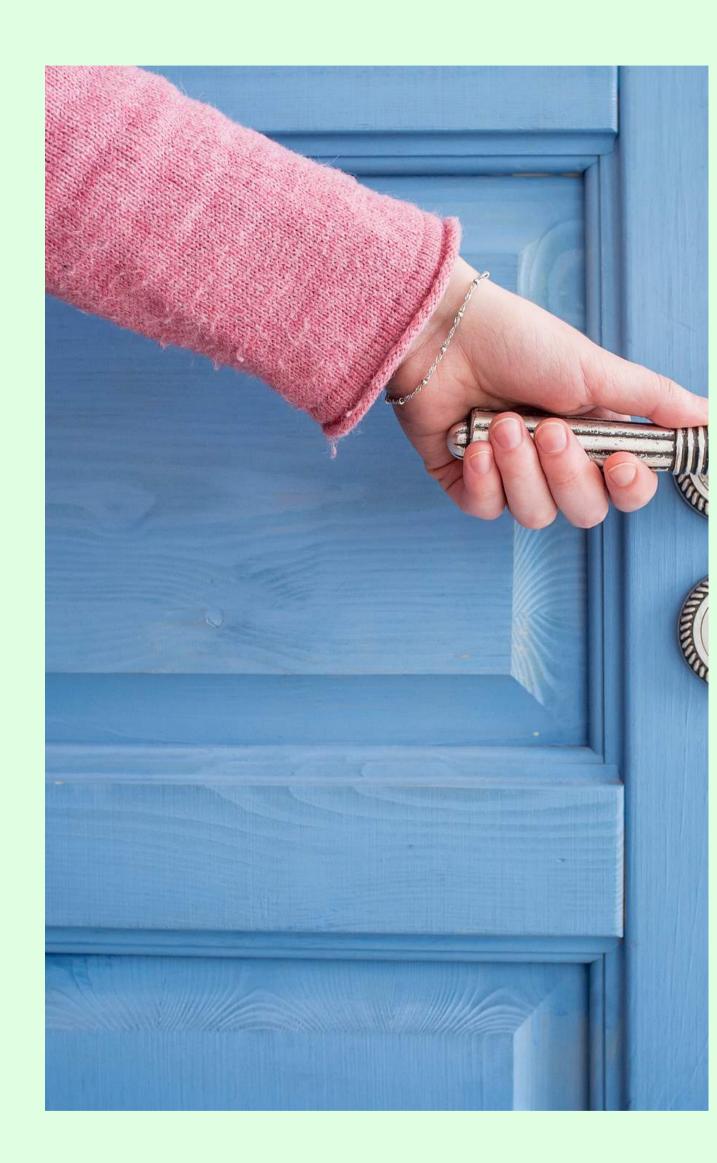
HAVE THE TALK

Mediate Litigate or Collaborate

Checklist

THE POSITIVES

- You expressed your goals and concerns to your ex.
- You Defined your Conflict
- You empowered yourself and attempted to direct how conflict should be managed.
- Succeed or fail you and your spouse found a new way, a problem-solving way, to work through your problems.



THE MONEY TALK

Divorce costs no matter what.

If you are not careful you will lose control over how money is spent along the process.

As you manage your finances during your marriage you will need to budget during your divorce.

Things to consider;

Consolidate existing loans

Pay minimum payments on credit cards

Obtain forbearance on mortgage or car loans

Find affordable solutions:
Stay with Family, share
furniture as best as you can,
do not get into further longterm debt.



CREATING YOUR BUDGET

The average price of a contested divorce is approximately \$20,000.00 when custody is at issue. The cost does not include child custody evaluation reports, amicus fees, etc.

Courts may have to be involved if you can not figure out how to cover present expenses. Parties who can come up with agreements as to who will pay what expense can save thousands of dollars in attorneys fees.





TRANSITION TO

COPARENTING

During The Court
Process

You've filed for divorce, perhaps been to court. You are in an adversarial process. The judge is asking you to co-parent at this point.

How?

WHY ARE YOU LITIGATING YOUR DIVORCE?

MAIN FACTORS

Inability to Communicate with Ex During Divorce

The presumption that Divorce has to be an adversary process.

Lack of information on alternate processes

Fear that collaborative divorces can be Expensive and Unproductive

Mediation Resolves 99% of all Disputes.



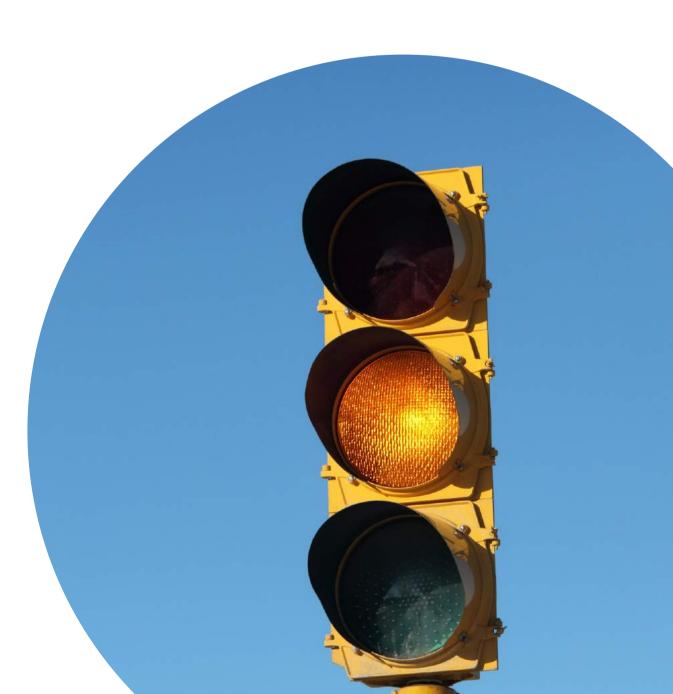
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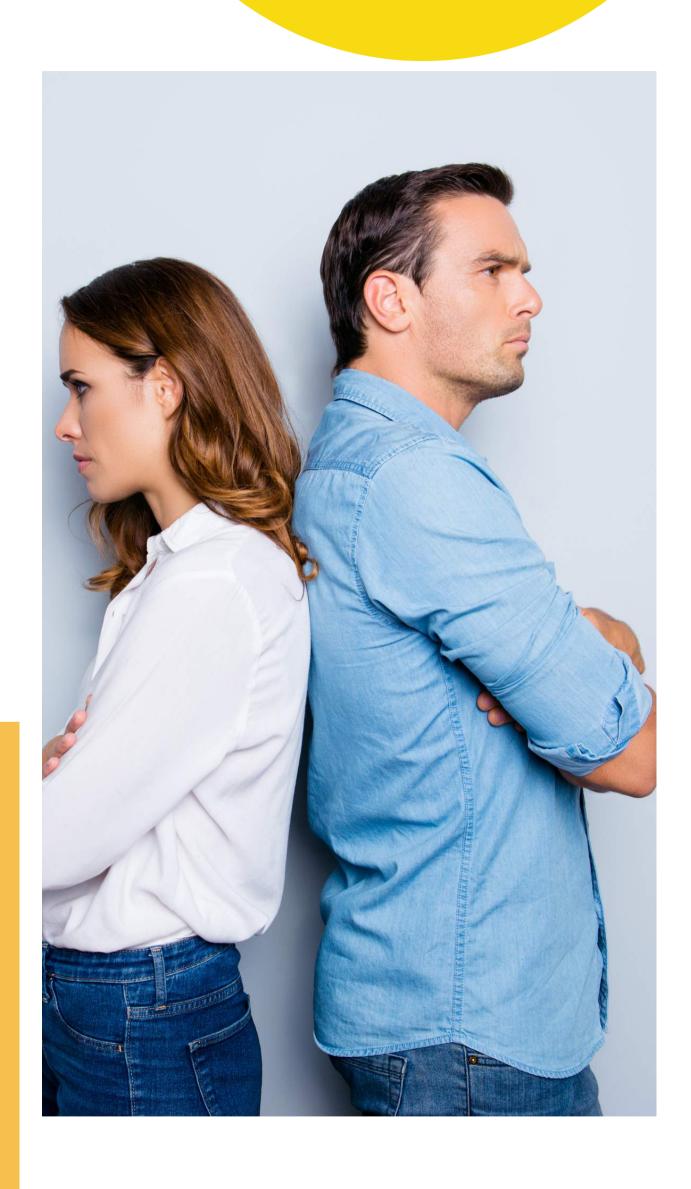
RELAY INFORMATION

During the litigation process relay information - rely on the BIFF method. Be brief, informative factual, and forceful. You are in an adversarial setting hoping that you can transition from litigant to co-parent.



Book: Amazon and purchase Bill Eddy's BIFF for co-parent communication. Practice the BIFF method in all of your communications!

App Close/OFW: Apps that allow you and your ex to communicate in a more focused setting.



TEAM MEMBERS

TEAM BASED APPOACH

COURT REFERRED PARENT

PARENT RESOURCES





CO-PARENTING HANDBOOK

USING A TEAM BASED APPROACH (TBA)



A team-based approach (TBA) is defined as parents working with neutral professionals after they agree to the existence of a problem.

Using a TBA is not about right and wrong. The TBA approach is about finding a solution to the problem.

Steps to TBA

- 1. State the Problem without taking a position
- 2. Agree to a referral to a neutral professional
- 3. Allow time for each parent to communicate with the professional.
- 4. Professional to provide options and resources to parents.
- 5. Parents and professionals come up with a team-based response to the problem.



PARENT COORDINATORS engage the parents in a confidential setting to help parents work through the process and determine what issues are in conflict.

2 PARENT FACILITATOR

PARENT COORDINATORS engage the parents in a non-onfidential setting to help parents learn how to communicate and work through certain desginated issues are in conflict.

3

THERAPISTS - MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

\Mental health professionals are assigned particular roles in your case. Examples of appointed therapist would include the following:

Child Therapist

Family Therapist

Reunification Therapist

Bereavement Counseling

Individual Therapy



Allocate Your Resources that will provide the Best Benefit



PSYCHOLOGIST/ PSYCHIATRISTS

When there are issues of mental health at hand a psychiatrist or psychologist may be needed.

Psychologists may be needed to help parents who are high conflict in nature. Psychiatrist may be needed to help diagnose parents with mental health issues and even, at times, prescribe treatments.



OPERATION CO-PARENT

Educate Yourself on potential team members, roles and duties.

Pick members wisely.

Use a cost-benefit approach when possible.



Transition to Co-parenting

You've learned the principles of BIFF and you worked through the process

You have used the teambased approach and did the best you can to resolve conflict to benefit your kids.





TRANSITION TO

COPARENTING

After the Divorce

You are on the road to coparenting. Co-parenting at this point is more about the journey than the destination.

- I. Maintain Communication
- **II. Apply Skills Learned**
- III. Direct Challenging Conversations

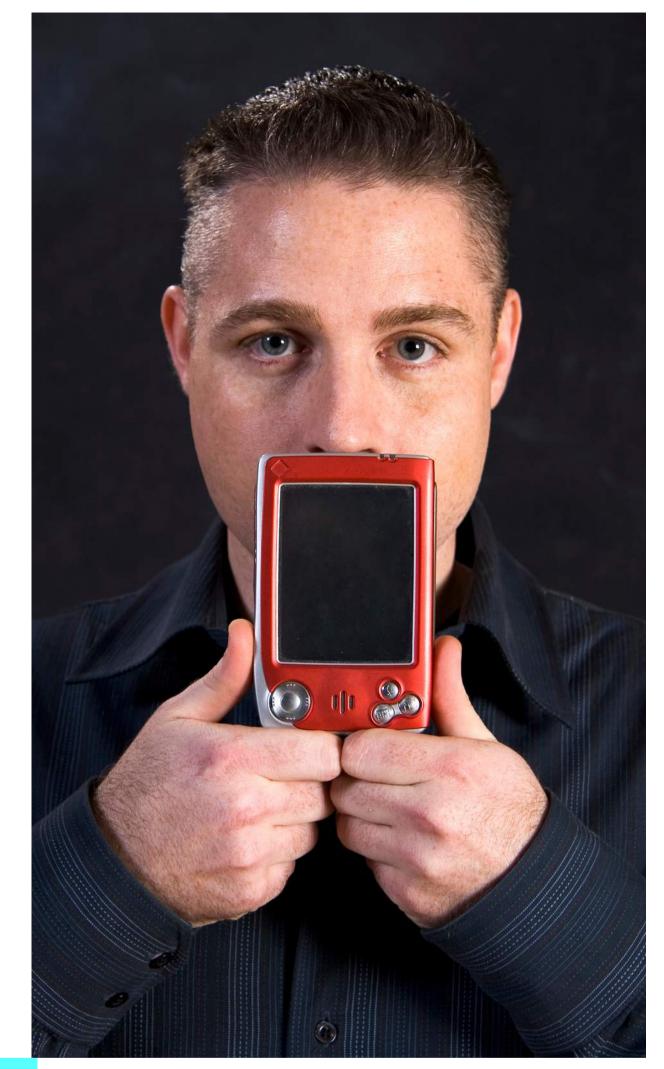
MAINTAIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Don't forget what you learned from the divorce process.

Maintain communication using the BIFF approach.

IF possible schedule co-parenting meetings once or twice a year - stay on the same page about goals, desires, and objectives that you and your children have.

When times get tough, feel free to use App Close or Our FamilyWizard (Smart Apps) to continue communication.



Resources:

Book: Amazon and purchase Bill Eddy's BIFF for co-parent communication.

Smart Apps: OFW and App Close.

When its Time for A One on One Conversation...

Plan Your Meeting

You may want to communicate with your ex on issues that you see as problematic or that have the potential for conflict. Think about what you're going to say before you say it. Think about how he or she will react to what you have to say.

ı

DON'T FORGET TO LISTEN

Actively listen when you hear your ex speak actively listen. Could you be seeing things incorrectly? Do you have all the information that you need? Does your ex have all the information that they need?

UNDERSTAND

You and your ex will each have your own viewpoints as to why you believe you are right. Viewpoints are lenses. Lenses can be based on your prior experiences, values, belief system.

In preparing for this conversation ask yourself basic questions: How will your ex respond? Are you prepared for the response? Is there a better way to present the issue you are facing? Would using TBA be beneficial in this situation.

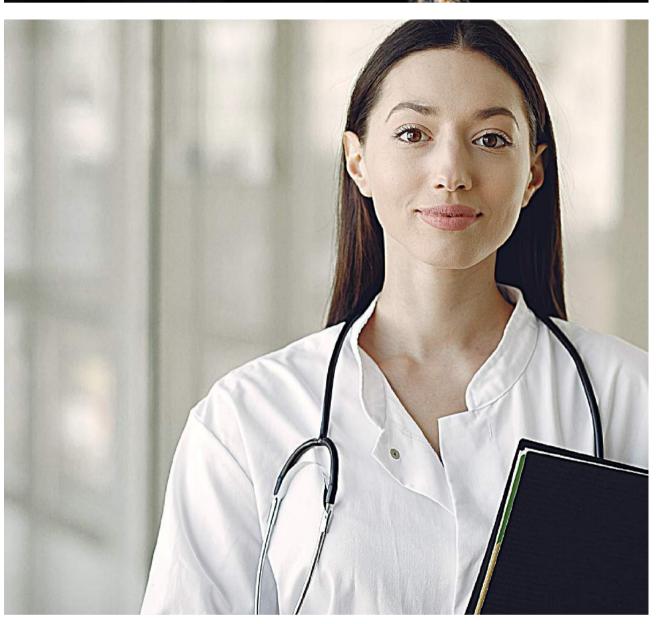
RESPOND

Can you agree at this point? Do you believe collaboration is necessary to solve your dispute?



CO-PARENTING HANDBOOK

CONTINUE THE TBA APPROACH



have used a team-based approach with court-assigned professionals such as parent facilitators or parent coordinators. After the divorce process, you can use the TBA approach with any neutral person you believe can provide options and resources to the table when confronted with a co-parenting problem.

During the divorce process, you may

Team Members could include: Psychologists b. Licensed Professional Counselors c. Dentists d. Teachers e. Doctors or Nurses

f. Coaches

Never allow a conflict to develop when options and resources are available to solve the problem.



Co-Parenting Handbook

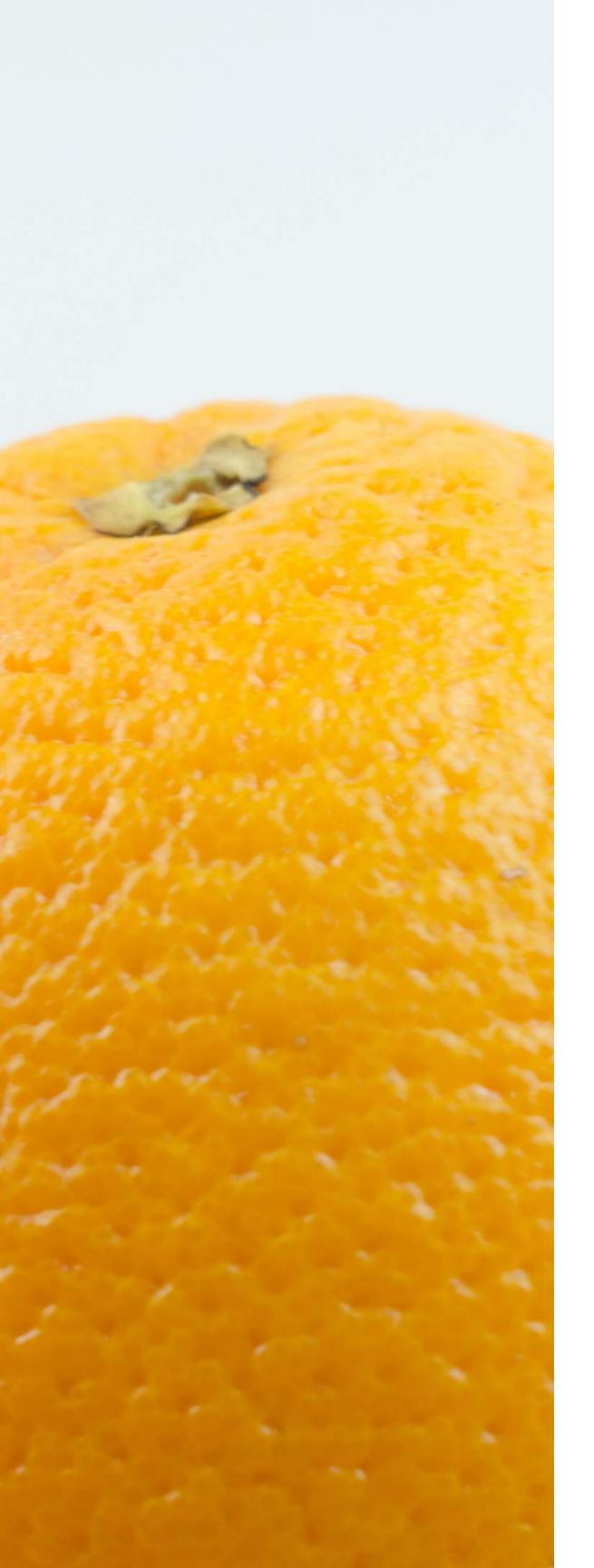
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Matt Sossi is a family law attorney in San Antonio, Texas. Matt Sossi is an amicus attorney, parent facilitator, parent coordinator, and family law mediator. Trained as a collaborative family law attorney, Matt Sossi been helping to divorce families in San Antonio, Texas since 1995.

Joy Curbow is a family law mediator in San Antonio, Texas. Joy Curbow's background is in social work. Joy Curbow is a member of AFCC and has received training through Cornell University in conflict management.

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Mission Statements

My job has been and will continue to be to help parents reach solutions, avoid court, and to coparent.

Matt Sossi

My goal is to empower parents with options and resources and guide them towards a healthy transition to co-parenting.

There is no more powerful advocate than a person armed with information and options.

Joy Curbow



CO-PAREN Awailable on Amazon HANDBOOK

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

MY CO-PARENTING HANDBOOK II

PRE-MEDIATION TRAINING

MY CO-PARENTING HANDBOOK III



Mediation

By working themselves to identify solutions..... parties become empowered.

Bush and Folger "The Promise of Mediation"



Handbook

MISSION

It is my goal to offer communication and conflict management skills to divorcing parents so that they can successfully engage as co-parents. Preparing for mediation is essential as it not only paves the way for how you will resolve the conflict at hand but future conflicts as well.

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Are You Ready?

Co-Parenting
Pre-Mediation
Handbook



CO-PARENTING
GUIDE



PREPARE FOR THE DAY

Every step you've taken to this point has been to get past your current conflict. Mediation may not only define how you resolve your present conflict but any future conflict as well. Preparing for mediation is one of the most important underlooked and undervalued events in the divorce process. e.

MEDIATION:

To Do List

Be Prepared

Be Ready to Work

Show up on Time

Use the Mediator's Time Wisely

Have the Right Attitude

YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED CONFLICT EVERY DAY

You resolve conflict every day without the need for court intervention. You separate simple disagreements with deep entrenched conflict. You collaborate, accommodate, avoid and compromise. We take these basic skills into the mediation room.



SKILLS YOU NEED TO CONTINUE TO RELY UPON

MAINTAIN A WORK-LIKE ORIENTED APPROACH

RELY ON A TEAM-BASED APPROACH TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

BE READY TO ENGAGE IN CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS



Maintain Rules Engagement

- 1. Maintain BIFF-engage like you would at work
- 2. Allow Your Mediator to provide options to work through the obstacles you and your ex have in reaching agreements.
- 3. Always be ready to LISTEN UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO YOUR EX.





Begin to Communicate

Co-Parenting
Pre-Mediation
Handbook

FORM-1



STATE BASICS AGREEMENTS



DON'T WASTE TIME AT MEDIATION.

LIST BASIC AGREEMENTS

There are certain basic agreements that can be listed out prior to the mediation beginning. .

Not everything is a fight or to be used as part of a negotiated settlement.

Providing a list of agreements reached at the beginning of the mediation

- entices parents to move forward and engage with one another during the mediation process
- helps the mediator to focus the parties on the genuine issues the parties have in dispute

Basic Agreement

Property - Form 1

Division of Items inside Home	Division of Items inside Home		
	LIST - Agreed Valuation of Assets and Debts		
	DIITEMS THAT CANNNOT BE AGREED TO	DIITEMS THAT CANNNOT BE AGREED TO	

Basic Agreement

Property Form - 1a

Agreed Division of Accounts Life Insurance and Vehicle	Agreed Division of Accounts Life Insurance and Vehicle	



Agreed Valuation of Assets and Debts



List Oustanding Disagreements Property

Define
Your
Conflict

Basic Agreement

Parenting Plan -2

CONSERVATORSHIP RIGHTS AND DUTIES

CONSERVATORSHIP RIGHTS AND DUTIES





[Image CAPTION] Write a caption that will clearly explain what this Image is about and how it relates to the study

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS BIRTHDAYS SUMMER SCHEDULE

[CAPTION] GRAPHS ARE GREAT IN HELPING MAKE NUMBERS EASIER TO UNDERSTAND

PICK UP AND RETURN LOCATIONS

TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Basic Agreement Parenting Plan-2

CONSERVATORSHIP RIGHTS AND DUTIES

CONSERVATORSHIP RIGHTS AND DUTIES





TELEPHONIC ACCESS SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

HANDBOOK | PAGE 18



List Oustanding Disagreements Parenting Plan

Define
Your
Conflict

Co-Parents

Co-Parenting
Pre-Mediation
Handbook





FOCUS ON THE ISSUES USING A TEAM BASED APPROACH



Taking a problem centered approach helps communication continue throughout the mediation.



Exploring option to the problems at hand allows the parents to think through the problem, collaborate and put their signature trademark on the agreement reached.

1	
2	4
3	
4	

NEVER START A CONVERSATION BY TAKING A POSITION

PRESENT YOUR GOALS LIST YOUR ISSUES STATE YOUR CONCERNS

Studies show that parents who can listen, understand and respond to one another have the best chance to resolve conflict.

Begin to list goals issues and concerns. Share this list with your ex, compare notes.

- 1. See where you share similar goals and concerns.
 - 2. Where are your differences forming?
- 3. Where are there simple misunderstandings- where are their genuine disputes?

LIST

Goals	Issues	Concerns
_	_	_
	_	_
_	_	_
WHICH GOA	ALS, ISSUES AN ARE SHAREI	ID CONCERNS D?
WHICH GOA	LS ISSUES AN	D CONCERNS
Δ	RE DIFFERENT	Γ?

Collaborative - List

PROBLEM Encountered	Professional Involved Resource Used	Possible SOLUTION			
	Ask Your Attorney				
	for Possible Resources to				
	Solve				
	Problem				



CO-PARENTING
PRE-MEDIATION HANDBOOK

List Oustanding Disagreements Property

Define
Your
Conflict





List Oustanding Disagreements Parenting Plan

Define
Your
Conflict

Co-Parents

Co-Parenting Pre-Mediation Handbook





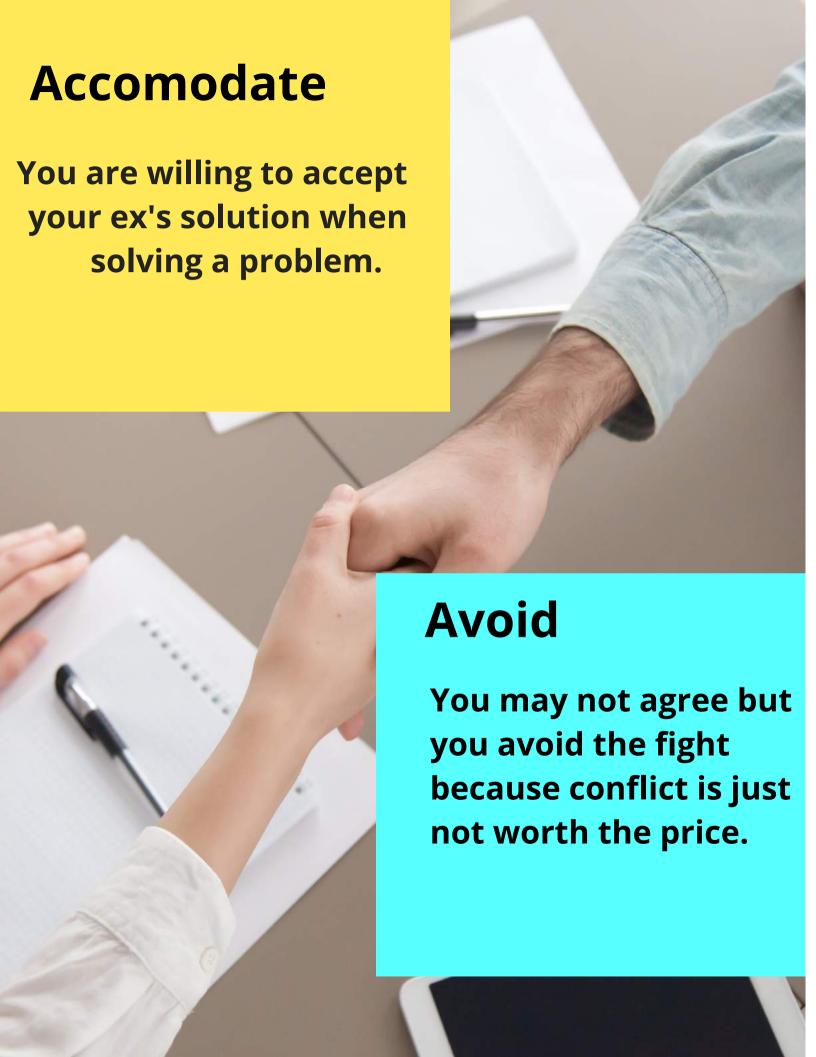
When Collaboration Fails.....

Stating basic agreements and collaborating helps the parties start communicating during the mediation. When collaboration breaks down communication may continue between the parties simply focusing on alternative ways every day people resolve conflict.







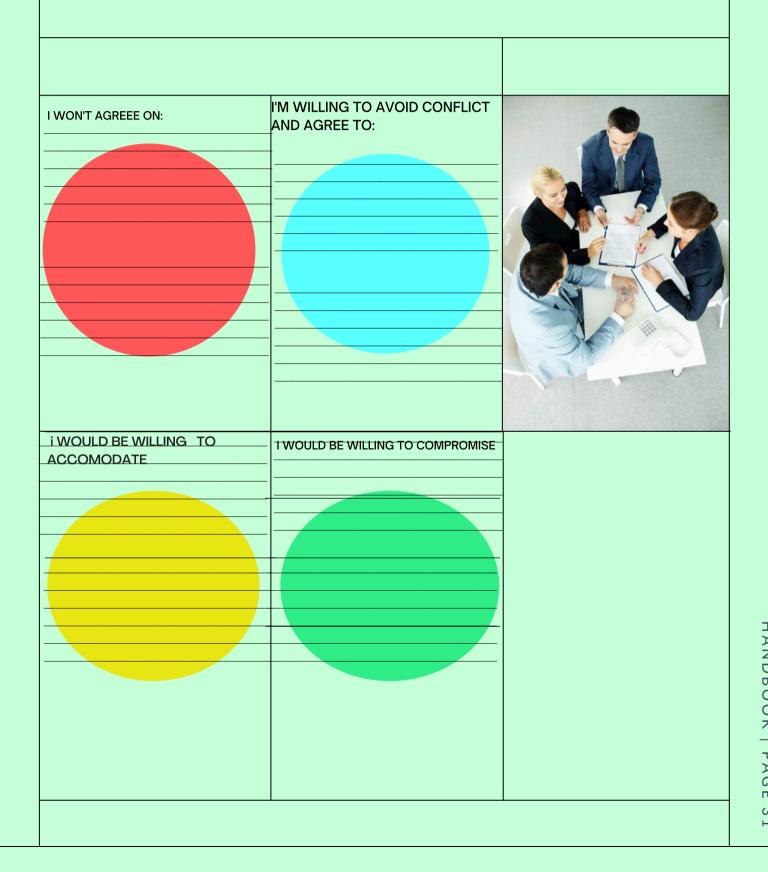




HOW TO MAKE A RESEARCH POSTER A GUIDE FOR STUDENT

Negotiation Chart

Remaining Issues





DEFINED CONFLICT

BEFORE YOU END THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS ALLOW THE MEDIATOR THE OFFER A HAND!

Your mediator is a skilled professional who has done his or her share of successfully negotiating agreements. Don't stop communicating!



List Oustanding Disagreements Property

Define
Your
Conflict



List Oustanding Disagreements Parenting Plan

Define
Your
Conflict

Co-Parents

Co-Parenting Pre-Mediation Handbook



WHEN COMMUNICATION FAILS

You've listed your basic agreements, problem solved and negotiated. By this point there may may be a few issues outstanding that just can not be agreed upon.

At this point the mediator will begin to challenge the parties legal positions, legal theories and ability to present an effective case at trial.

What would be the cost for pursuing a jury trial, as to attorney's fees and witness fees.

What additional expert's would need to be hired to present this case at time of trial?

How long would it take to get this case on the trial docket.

When the matter is resolved it may result an outcome that neither party is happy with.

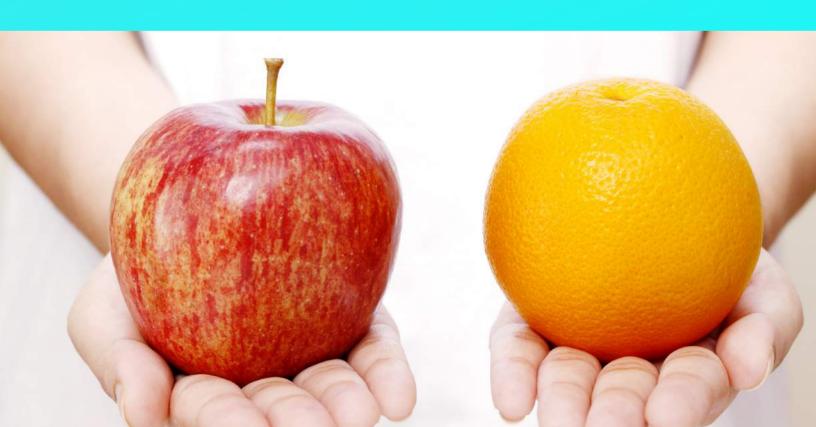
There may be points of law that require an evaluation of the parties positions.

Regardless, do the best you can to limit the issues that need to be evaluated by the mediator.

About the Authors

Matt Sossi is a family law attorney in San Antonio, Texas. Matt Sossi is an amicus attorney, parent facilitator, parent coordinator, and family law mediator. Trained as a collaborative family law attorney, Matt Sossi been helping to divorce families in San Antonio, Texas since 1995..

Joy Curbow is a family law mediator in San Antonio, Texas. Joy Curbow's background is in social work. Joy Curbow is a member of AFCC and has received training through Cornell University in conflict management.





CO-PAREN Amazon HANDBOOKII

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

MY CO-PARENTING HANDBOOK II

PRE-MEDIATION TRAINING