



Divorce Guide

Divorce is an ever present aspect of our modern society. The age of divorced couples is shifting from those in their early 20's and 30's to those now in their 40's and 50's. What does this mean for you? Divorces are becoming more complicated, which makes your decision to hire an attorney increasingly more important. This is especially true since higher levels of assets are involved, children, retirement funds, educational loans and greater levels of debt all factor in, creating divorces that are more hotly contested. The following are some guidelines to keep in mind while you work through this most challenging time. And remember, you don't have to do it alone. Look to family and friends for help while you transition, and make sure you have the most competent representation possible to protect *your* interests through the divorce process.

LEADING UP TO DIVORCE

Attempting counseling services may be a desirable alternative to divorce or separation, and may save your marriage.

Counseling can be of help, allowing you and your spouse to acquire tools to work out the problems and issues in your relationship



DO'S & DONT'S DURING THE DIVORCE

Do treat your soon to be ex-spouse with respect; bickering with the other party, especially through attorneys, gets expensive quickly. Do not allow your spouse to drag you into hostility or animosity.

Do comply with all instructions from your attorney, and provide documentation as requested. There are numerous deadlines that must be met, and missing any of them are grounds to have your divorce action dismissed from court. Fighting with your attorney over the necessary tasks will never help your case. While the divorce is (and should be) emotional for you, it is your

attorney's job to maintain rationality for you.



WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

- Be established legally as a parent.
- Have a positive, nurturing and loving relationship with your children.
- Be involved in their child's educational, emotional, spiritual and mental development.
- Not be discriminated against because of gender
- Be geographically close to their child.
- Be an active participant in their child's lives.



AFTER THE DIVORCE

Co-parenting is a challenge, but it is always in the best interests of children to feel loved by both parents. They need to believe that they do not need to choose one parent over the other.

Keep a flexible routine and leave room for spontaneity. Help your children feel fortunate that they have two homes, and that they are loved in both.

Communicate effectively with your ex-spouse regarding the children. Promptly return email and telephone calls.

If your visits are infrequent with your child, make the most of them.

Do not use your children as messengers between you and your ex-spouse.

Just because children cry or behave badly when it's time to visit the other parent, doesn't mean that they don't love that parent. It is important not to jump to conclusions as to the cause of this behavior, and child therapy may be a great resource for your child to express their concerns.

Don't ask your child about your ex-spouses new partner. It may be an uncomfortable situation for them as well. You should not be the one to confront your ex-spouse regarding her new relationship.

Never speak badly about the other parent in front of your children. Regardless of whether you still have a relationship with the other parent, your child *does*, and always will, have a relationship with them.



If YOU find it too difficult to stay involved in your children's lives, and want to give up...DON'T. Your child may feel abandoned, and they need both parents as role models.

Always remember to think of what it is your child needs, not you. What you want for your children should be for reasons related

to their wellbeing, and not your own selfish desires (i.e. getting back at your ex-spouse).

Do everything you can to avoid going back to court. It devastates children. They see and know more than you may realize regarding the conflict between their parents.

