

**An Alternative to a Nasty Divorce...**  
**Welcome to Collaborative Law**  
**by**  
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A relatively new way to get divorced has come to Washington. Nothing can take away the pain and difficulty of going through a divorce, but the collaborative way keeps you out of litigation and puts more control in your hands. Between you and your spouse decisions are made about your lives post-divorce. If you have children together its vital that you and your spouse handle your divorce with the least amount of damage to everyone, especially for your kid's sake.

I became involved with collaborative law after witnessing the pain and confusion of children whose parents had been through a rough divorce. Without realizing it, parents were putting their kids in the middle of the conflict. They didn't seem to be aware of the ways in which they were continuing to hurt their kids by their words and actions. The kids were highly stressed as the parents fought over their parenting plans and dragged each other in and out of court. This is why I became a collaboratively training Child Specialist. I wanted to make a difference.

Collaborative Law asks that you bring your best self forward in a challenging time for the good of all involved. There are team members to help support you in this process and the divorce can cost less than a litigated one involving competing attorneys. The team members include two collaboratively trained attorneys and a divorce Coach. If you have children, there is a Child Specialist to help you work out the future co-parenting issues and help construct a parenting plan. There is also a Financial Specialist available to you who can put order and fairness into dividing the debts and assets.

The divorce Coach and Child Specialist are often mental health professionals who have a distinct and specific job to do that is not therapy but is focused on the divorce. The Coach helps couples work through the emotional conflicts that block making progress on the legal front. The Child Specialist will meet with you as parents and can meet your kids. It can be cathartic for them to be included. The Child Specialist will provide education and support to help you design the best possible parenting plan keeping in mind the needs of your children. You then take your draft to your attorney who works as a team member with your spouse's attorney.

With Collaborative Law you are in the best hands to guide and support you through what can be one of the most difficult and painful transitions you will ever make. Hiring the allied professionals who are trained to help in specific ways reduces your overall cost. It doesn't make sense to spend an hour processing your grief with an attorney who isn't trained in mental health and who will charge significantly more than a Coach. By using a Child Specialist your children are allowed to be heard, and the parents can benefit from a professional who understands developmental ages, stages of growth, stress, coping skills and the importance of grieving. Come; put your best foot forward.