

# COLLABORATIVE LAW

## DIVORCE WITHOUT THE COURTS

### THE COLLABORATIVE LAW ALTERNATIVE

Now there's another way to approach divorce. Collaborative Law is a process in which the couples, along with their individual attorneys, develop a workable, long-term settlement plan that addresses the interests of everyone involved. When there are children, their well-being comes first. It's a team approach to divorce, handled out of court.

### BENEFITS TO YOU

Collaborative Law is a process designed for people who want a private, respectful end to their marriage. By creating an atmosphere of open communication and cooperation, the Collaborative Law process allows both parties to preserve their dignity while they work toward a settlement that works for everyone involved.

### DIFFERENT THAN TRADITIONAL PROCESSES

Attorneys trained to practice Collaborative Law recognize that while a marriage may be ending, the relationships and obligations continue. The Collaborative Law process replaces court fights with a system that takes control of the outcome away from a judge and puts it back into the hands of the parties. With the assistance of collaborative family lawyers, couples customize a settlement that best fits their goals and family circumstances.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Collaborative Law is designed to balance power between divorcing spouses and protect the rights of each individual. The husband and wife, along with their attorneys and other consultants (if needed), function as a settlement team whose goal is to find solutions that are acceptable to everyone, without court intervention.

When tough issues arise, it is everyone's responsibility to keep the process positive and productively focused on finding an acceptable outcome, rather than "winning" or "losing."

### DIVORCE IS AN ENDING AND A BEGINNING AS SPOUSES GO THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

The typical divorce process doesn't prepare couples for a new start as unmarried individuals who still have common interests and goals. Divorcing spouses usually suffer the emotional and financial costs of preparing for a court battle, even if they eventually settle out of court. The animosity and resentment that can be generated during divorce can destroy critical relationships, causing long-term suffering for both parents and children.

**KOCH, SMITH & HOFFMAN, P.A.**

A Member of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals