

## **GROUND RULES FOR THE CLIENT DURING THE COLLABORATIVE LAW PROCESS**

1. Attack the problem and concerns at hand. Do not attack each other.
2. Avoid positions; rather express yourself in terms of needs and interests and the outcomes you would like to realize.
3. Work for what you believe is the most constructive and acceptable agreement for both of you and the others involved or who might be affected by your agreement.
4. During the 4-way meetings (both lawyers and both clients are present) remember the following:
  - a. Do not interrupt when others are speaking. You will have a full and equal opportunity to speak on every issue presented for discussion.
  - b. Do not use language that blames or finds fault with the other. Use non-inflammatory words. Be respectful of others.
  - c. Speak for yourself; make "I" statements. Use each other's first name. Avoid "he" or "she".
  - d. If you share a complaint, raise it as your concern and follow it up with a constructive suggestion as to how it might be resolved.
  - e. If something is not working for you, please tell your lawyer so your concern can be addressed.
  - f. Listen carefully and try to understand what the other person is saying without being judgmental about the person or the message.
  - g. Do not jump to conclusions or attribute a motive to the other person.
  - h. Talk with your lawyer about anything you do not understand. Your lawyer can clarify issues for you.
5. Be willing to commit the time required to meet regularly. Be prepared for each meeting.
6. Be patient - delays in the process can happen with everyone acting in good faith.