

# Collaborative Family Law

While Collaborative Divorce has many elements, there is one simple feature that defines the process: A Collaborative Divorce is one in which the husband and the wife each retain a lawyer for settlement purposes only.

## How is Collaborative Law different?

In a Collaborative Divorce, unlike a traditional negotiation, the lawyers must withdraw if the divorce cannot be resolved out of court.

Collaborative Law is a way of practicing law in which the attorneys agree to assist the parties using cooperative strategies rather than adversarial techniques and litigation. This early non-adversarial participation allows the attorneys to use analysis and reasoning to help their clients solve problems and creates a positive context for settlement.

The Collaborative method is becoming increasingly popular around the world because it gives clients the opportunity to control the outcome of their divorce and to focus on what matters most.

## Why choose Collaborative Law?

While almost all cases eventually settle, the method of settlement has a big impact on the quality of the agreement reached.

While very few cases go to trial, most attorneys file papers with the court before a settlement is reached so that they can seek the court's assistance as case is progressing. In these situations, attorneys may go to the court for contested matters. The court may also require the attorneys and the parties to come to the court to work on a resolution through settlement conferences, case management conferences, early neutral evaluations, mediation or other court directed methods.

While all of these methods can be helpful in settling matters, a certain amount of acrimony can be created when negotiation is done "in the shadow of the courthouse." The parties also give up some of the control of the case when they chose to file papers with the court.

## Where did Collaborative Law come from?

Collaborative Law was started in 1990 by Stu Webb, a Minneapolis attorney and one of the professionals who served on the original divorcechoice.com Advisory Board. Because of its tremendous success in providing clients with an option that truly served their interests, Collaborative Family Law has spread throughout North America, Europe and Australia.

Ron Ousky has been an international leader in the Collaborative Law movement and co-authored a book on the Collaborative Method with Stu Webb.



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*Ron Ousky has been working with divorcing families since 1982 and has become recognized as an international leader in developing innovative ways to help family law clients.*

*In 2015 the American Bar Association recognized this quality by awarding him the John W. Cooley Lawyer as Problem Solver of the Year Award.*

*During the past three decades, Ron has helped thousands of families find ways to resolve difficult issue through a variety of methods.*

*Ron believes that the choices people make during their divorce can have an impact on their lives, and the lives of their children for many years. He is dedicated to helping them make choices that will allow them to achieve their highest goals.*



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