

The Collaborative Process: A Guide for Separating Couples

The Role of a Family Consultant

This idea may be new to you, the clients, as historically there has been very little emotional support within the process of separating or divorce other than what you get from home or friends. With the Collaborative Process you get emotional support within the process itself.

Parents need to be supported in their relationship with each other through separation and divorce and the role of the mental health professional, who within the interdisciplinary team is known as the family consultant is to provide this psychological support where necessary. The family consultant helps and supports the client with managing their stress and helps each party communicate and negotiate to the best of their ability. The goal of the family consultant is to ensure that both parties have the space to communicate their concerns in term of what they want for themselves and where present their children.

The role of the family consultant is not to understand the cause of the clients behaviour, but to help them deal with the emotional issues that present themselves throughout the process. Experience has shown that intervention from a family consultant is in the long run more cost effective for the client as it helps the client reach a place where they can make good decisions about their future thereby saving them money as it reduces the time they spend with their lawyers trying to achieve this.

The founder and Pioneer of interdisciplinary Collaborative Practice Pauline Tesler advocates that without the role of the family consultant the emotional stability of the husband and wife individually may never be known and the voice of the child may never be heard.