

PRE-DIVORCE PLANNING CHECKLIST

If you are considering a divorce, here are some things to consider as part of your pre-divorce planning. Having this information prior to an attorney consultation will also help make that process more effective and specific.



DEFINE YOUR GOALS:

You don't have to be overly specific (yet); write out important things that you are looking to achieve. This will help you determine (later) how you will proceed through the divorce process.

- **Short-term goals:** These are things you need to do immediately or very soon as part of a divorce transition. Examples might be separating and moving to a new location, obtaining or changing jobs or work schedules, addressing co-parenting problems, securing assets.
- **Long-term goals:** Identifying big issues early is often helpful. Some examples might be what will happen to the marital house (or rental obligations), how will children be co-parented, how are you going to handle division of assets/liabilities.



IDENTIFY YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION:

Being thorough will help you make good decisions if you decide to proceed with a divorce. A good exercise would be to complete a rough draft of the Florida Family Law Financial Affidavit from the Florida Supreme Court. You should identify the following:

- **Identify All Accounts:** Identify all accounts that you and your spouse have. Examples would be bank, brokerage, life insurance, pensions, college savings, retirement, and credit cards. Be sure to include tax debt, student, auto and mortgage loans.

- **Identify Valuable Property:** Include things such as real estate, collectables, autos, firearms, tools, antiques, art, jewelry, sport or hobby equipment, etc.
- **Identify Sources of Income:** Where is all the marital income coming from and how much is it?
- **Identify Expenses:** What are your monthly marital expenses?
- **Insurance Policies:** Identify what you have. Include health, life, auto, property, etc.

If you decide to get a divorce, you'll want this list to decide how to deal with all assets, liabilities and how to separate your joint income and expenses into two households. This will also help determine if any spousal support is justified.



CREATE EVENT CALENDAR:

Keep a detailed journal of any significant events that may happen within your family that could be important during a divorce. You can do this on a calendar or in a journal format. Examples might be arguments, purchases, co-parenting issues, agreements with spouse, dates of separation, etc. Write out a historical timeline if there are things that have happened in the past you haven't written down.

- **Time-Sharing Calendar:** Keep a detailed list of the current time-sharing schedule. For example, detail with what parent the children are spending time with.



AVOID LARGE PURCHASES:

Every situation is unique but making large purchases might complicate a divorce or limit some of your options.



USE WORDS CAREFULLY:

Be careful what you put in writing; it can be used against you later. This includes text messaging, social media and emails!



SECURE IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Make sure any documents, email, telephone and electronic items that you use for divorce planning are private and secure. Use accounts with strong passwords that your family and friends won't have access to. Change passwords if you have any doubt.



CONSIDER PUTTING MONEY ASIDE:

Depending upon your situation, it may make sense to try to put money aside to prepare for a divorce. Money might be needed to start a second household, pay off debts, pay for legal, financial, childcare, or mental health professionals.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

Eat right and exercise. We have seen people make terrible decisions during divorce in part because they have let themselves deteriorate mentally and physically.



WRITE OUT QUESTIONS:

As you are contemplating divorce, keep a written list of questions you have about divorce no matter how big or small. Separate them into legal, financial and mental health questions. If you move forward with the process, you should get those questions answered by your own research or professional advice. It is easy to forget, so write them down!



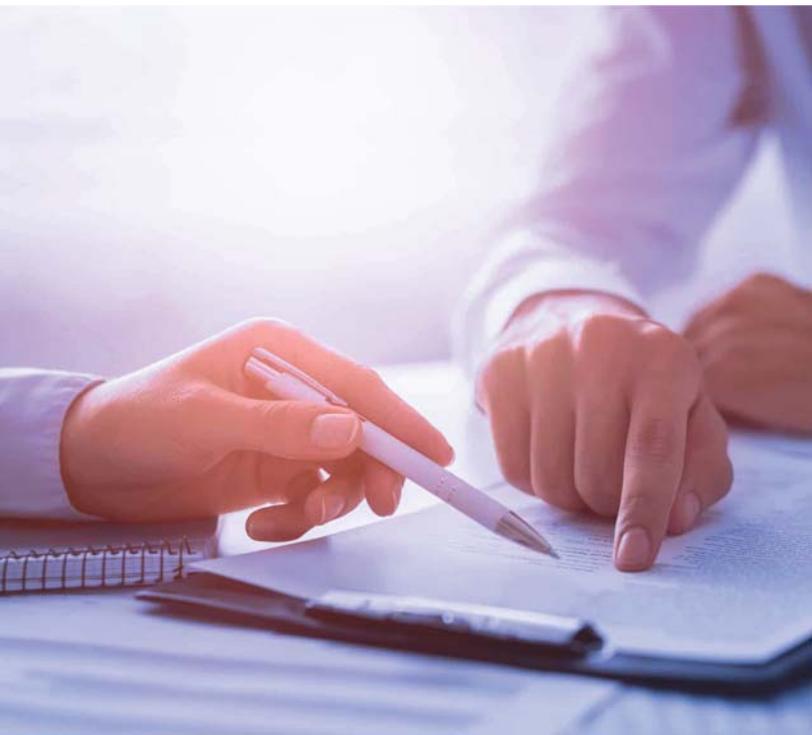
IDENTIFY A DIVORCE COUNSELOR:

Divorce is a process you are probably not experienced with. Identifying a health professional to help you navigate this highly emotional and personal process is a great option. Questions like why does my spouse do xyz, or what is best for my children, how to I handle my (or my spouse's) anger, how do I explain this to my children? Questions like these should be answered by an experienced counselor, not an attorney, financial planner or friend. Many times, it makes sense to have a consultation with an experienced divorce counselor before meeting with any other professionals.



HAVE A LEGAL CONSULTATION:

Once you are seriously considering a divorce, please get a legal consultation so you will understand your legal rights and obligations. Even if you choose a DIY divorce, having a solid foundation on the law and how it applies to your situation will be invaluable in making good decisions.



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

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