

Mediation

In the state of Florida, mediation is a mandatory requirement in many court divisions and family law is no exception. Family law is an area where mediation is a perfect approach to settling the disputes of parties. Frequently couples going through a divorce or other type of family law dispute benefit by settling their disputes during mediation.

Mediation is a confidential process where parties have an opportunity to voice their interests and their concerns so that they may work towards settling their issues in a peaceful manner. Through the mediation process, parties are afforded the opportunity to negotiate their differences in a safe, confidential and controlled environment.

The reason why mediation is not only appealing to couples but also is a successful option, it is through mediation that parties have the best opportunity to come up with options that are most catered to their individual needs.

Mediation can be distinguished from litigation where parties go before a judge who determines their fate and the fate of their children. No matter how good a judge is, regardless of their intelligence, the judge has no way of knowing a child's needs or the details of a marriage more than the actual parties themselves. For these reasons, it is almost always a good idea to bring a matter to mediation in stead of asking a judge to make the decision.

Pro-Se Mediation

Mediation can be done in a number of different ways. Some times couples decide to mediate without hiring lawyers. Pro-se mediation is mediation that only involves the parties and the mediator without the involvement or assistance of lawyers. Pro-se mediation is a great way to mediate a case as the parties can many times avoid the complete expense of paying lawyers.

Mediators with different backgrounds can mediate pro-se cases. Some mediators are lawyers or have legal backgrounds. These mediators have a good understanding of the forms and the language that goes into a marital settlement agreement and a parenting plan. Mental health professionals or MHP's which include counselors and therapists are also excellent mediators.

MHP's are also very skilled at keeping people in the right mindset for settlement and helping individuals come up with functional parenting plans.

Co-Mediation

In addition to Pro-se Mediation, Co-mediation is another type of mediation that is available to couples as an option to settle their disputes. By using Co-mediation, parties select two mediators. For the purpose of co-mediation, the **Melendez Law Office** specifically has joined hands with two respected and experienced Licensed Mental Health therapist and counselors. During the co-mediation process, Mr. Melendez serves as the mediator with the experience of a lawyer. Mr. The mental health professionals that Mr. Melendez co-mediate with are Rachel Moskowitz MS, LMHC and Linda Peterman, CRC, LMHC.

By design, co-mediation benefits from two mediators to insure that the parties receive the best services that are specific to the disciplines of both professionals. During the mediation process, the lawyer/mediator assists the parties in the drafting of the agreements including marital settlement agreements and parenting plans. The counselor/mediator assists the parties with their unique skills as a licensed mental health professional. Additionally, since the counselor/mediator has specific skills in relationships counseling and in counseling children, that person many times is instrumental in helping the parties develop a parenting plan.

Co-mediation can be conducted in different ways. The first type can be when both mediators meet with both parties at the same time and proceeding in a traditional mediation type manner. A second type takes place where the mental health professional meets with the parties to build a parenting plan and the lawyer meets with the parties to build a marital settlement agreement. A Joint session is ultimately held with both mediators for the purpose of putting both documents together and to discuss the finalization of their **divorce** or legal dispute.

Document Production

When parties choose to mediate without lawyers, they still are in need of preparing and filing their additional legal documents in addition to their marital settlement agreement of parenting plan. The Melendez Law Office together with either Rachel Moskowitz or Linda Peterman offers to prepare

all of the parties documents so that they can be filed and finalized with the court.