

An Opportunity for Growth

Separation and divorce, is a process that can go on for several years. Despite the difficulties and emotional pain, like other challenges in life - it can provide opportunities for growth, for both parents and children.

It is an opportunity for you to gain confidence, acquire new strengths and develop new abilities at this time in your life. By doing so, you will model skills to help your children deal with the divorce as well as other challenges in life.

It is natural that your economic level will decrease as a result of divorce. The same income that used to run one household is now running two.

These are facts, but they do not have to be an obstacle to happiness

.....

Focus on finding happiness in other things; children, work (even if it pays less) friends & family.

Work with your therapist & discover who you are & what you want for your future. Your life will go on.

Different Roles....

LAWYER

(will have your interest)

Will inform you of your rights; financial, custodial, etc; based on BC Law, fairly.

LEGAL MEDIATOR

(will not have either parties interest)

Will attempt to have both parties agree, but will not give advice to what is fair– so consult with your lawyer for your legal entitlement FIRST, to avoid agreeing to something that is not in your best interest.

COUNSELLING MEDIATOR

(will have your interest)

-Support to understand and deal with emotions during the legal process and afterward.

-Strategies for healthy & respectful communication & boundaries; for shared custody and to prevent kids from being “caught in the middle.”

Families in Transition	250-3864331
Legal Aid	1-888-685-6222
Ministry for Children	250-310-1234
Ministry of Housing	1-866-866-0800
Income Assistance	250-952-0828
Citizens' Counselling Centre	250-384-9934

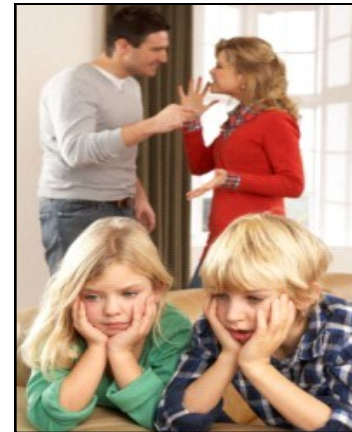
Sources for this brochure:

Lemonade Divorce—Allison Patton

Public Health Agency of Can.

[LorraineSegal](#) post November 13, 2012

Healthy Separation and Divorce



Reducing Conflict... Finding peace.

Sea Side Counselling

Cheryl MacKinnon MSW RSW

250-380-8605



1124 Fort St., Victoria, BC, (Cook & Fort)
250-380-8605 www.SeaSideCounselling.com
Cheryl.SeaSideCounselling@gmail.com

How you can cool down conflict after separation

We all have idealized images of family togetherness. But the gap between expectations and reality can be huge when parents are recently divorced, and grief, anger, and bitterness can intensify stress. Your ex can seem particularly impossible to communicate with, and every conversation emotionally triggering.

Whatever you call these reactions—triggers, hot buttons, hooks—you know when your ex says or does something that “makes” you freeze in fear or hit the roof in anger. It is possible, however, to “cool down” these hot buttons, improve your conversations, to increase your confidence and serenity and it’s much less exhausting. Here are 5 steps for cooling down your triggers. (A therapist can help you.)

1. Identify your hot buttons. We can’t change our response to our hot buttons unless we know what they are. So, we start by thinking of a situation where your ex pushed your hot button. What did s/he do or say that set you off? Think about the **facts** (what happened or what s/he said) and **feelings** (how you felt, reacted.) What is the story you tell yourself about this?

Step 2 Tell your own story.

The next step is to understand the story you are telling *yourself* about what your ex’s intent was and what s/he thinks of you. This often involves your belief that s/he thinks you are unimportant, incompetent, stupid, unlikable, or unworthy or a bad parent. Usually ex’s are just hurt and lashing out, just like you.

****If your partner is being abusive (physically, verbally, emotionally), it is imperative to detach (have as little contact as possible) and work only with your lawyer or counsellor to create clear boundaries with your ex.*

Step 3 Explore your underlying emotions

Our childhood and earlier adult experiences, and fears that we imagine, are the true source of the intensity for current hot buttons. We become fearful when we perceive threats such as: a threat to our attachment or access to our children, our livelihood, our lifestyle, or we fear abandonment. These issues are underlying some triggers. Looking at these fears increases your understanding of what’s fueling your intense responses. When you know what your concerns are; you can begin to address them and deal with them. Then you can verbalize your needs more clearly and calmly with your lawyer, and feel calmer.

Step 4 Imagine a different story

After we become aware of the story we are telling ourselves, the next step is to imagine a *different* story. This could mean changing our self-story for the better. You can change the story you tell yourself and others about your ex, what you blame him/her for, why s/he is wrong; quite simply to “the relationship was not right for me.”

Your ex most likely has a completely different story about your relationship and what happened. That’s fine. Work with your therapist to strengthen your trust in yourself, to know what feels true to you. You don’t need to convince your ex.

Step 5 Change your response (Act as if)

The final step is to change your response; in effect, to unhook the hot button. **It takes willingness, courage, practice, and support** to make changes in how you respond. But even if you’re sure your ex is criticizing or obstructing you, choosing to act detached, and with confidence in your decision, trust in your own sense of “why the relationship does not work for you” and with the support of your therapist friends and family, you will be more likely to reduce your stress and to get more satisfactory results out of the process of separation and divorce. **You will also demonstrate healthy coping skills to your children.**