



MEDIATING YOUR DIVORCE

A Comprehensive Guide for Couples

by Michelle Rakowski

Copyright © 2024 by Michelle Rakowski. All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever without the written permission of Michelle Rakowski, except where permitted by law.

DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this book is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Michelle Rakowski is not providing legal advice. All information in this book is provided without any warranty, express or implied, including as to their legal effect and completeness.

The information should be used as a guide and modified to meet your own individual needs and the laws of your province or state. Your use of any information given or linked to is at your own risk. Michelle Rakowski expressly disclaims any warranty: you are not entering into any Attorney-Client relationship by using this information. Communications between you and Michelle Rakowski are NOT protected by the attorney-client privilege since Michelle Rakowski is not a lawyer and is not providing legal advice.

Michelle Rakowski is not authorized to advise you on what information, including agreements, forms, documents and courses, to use or how to use or complete them.

About the Author

Michelle Rakowski has over 25 years of experience as a family law mediator and life coach, helping families, couples, and individuals overcome major challenges in their lives.

The father of her children left her and their four small kids fourteen years ago, moving across the country. She found herself in an extremely challenging court battle and ended up with an unjust Separation Agreement. After the ordeal ended, Michelle promised to assist others in avoiding the same disorientation, overwhelm, and loss that she had just experienced. To fulfill that promise, she returned to university and studied family mediation.

Michelle, a mediator with 12 years of experience in Family Law Mediation, has helped hundreds of clients through separation and divorce. During this time, she noticed a need for easily accessible resources to assist clients with separation and divorce. Michelle integrated her years of hands-on experience and began creating her own resources. She is thrilled and proud to have produced a set of tools that make it possible for anyone to obtain a fair and affordable Separation Agreement.

Michelle is an exceptional single parent who has raised her four children, each to their own success. Her children have grown up to be healthy and accomplished individuals, a testament to Michelle's remarkable parenting skills. She resides in Alliston, Ontario, and enjoys spending time in the outdoors, particularly skiing and mountain biking. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to [contact Michelle here](#) or at allistonresolutions@gmail.com.

Table Of Contents

Chapter 1 Understanding Divorce Mediation	5
Chapter 2 Preparing for Mediation	15
Chapter 3 The Mediation Process	20
Chapter 4 Coping with Emotions During Mediation	30
Chapter 5 Resources for Divorce Mediation	33
Chapter 6 Next Steps After Divorce Mediation	37
Chapter 7 Testimonies About Alliston Resolutions	40

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING DIVORCE MEDIATION



ABOUT ALLISTON RESOLUTIONS

Going through a divorce can be a challenging and stressful process. It requires navigating the legal system and making crucial decisions about one's future, which can be overwhelming. Alliston Resolutions is a mediation practice that prioritizes relationships and collaboration, helping couples seeking divorce to avoid the high costs of legal battles and create personalized Separation Agreements that cater to their specific needs. The Alliston Resolutions practice is based on four essential values: competence, authenticity, integrity, and compassion.

Here, we believe in the effectiveness of mediation to help couples resolve their differences in a peaceful and respectful manner. Every effort is made to ensure that both parties feel valued and respected throughout the mediation process. The goal is to enable productive conversations and assist spouses in finding common ground between themselves.

We offer a variety of services that include

- **Calculating Property Division**
- **Determining Child Support**
- **Determining Spousal Support**
- **Creating Parenting Plans**
- **Drafting Separation Agreements**

Our primary goal is to help couples reach mutually acceptable solutions that benefit everyone involved. We provide couples with the necessary resources, guidance, and support to make informed decisions about their future.

If you want a compassionate and collaborative approach to the divorce process, Alliston Resolutions is here to help. We can assist you and your ex in navigating the complexities of divorce with grace and dignity through our mediation services. [Contact Michelle today](#) to learn more by calling or texting (705) 770-7479 or emailing at allistonresolutions@gmail.com

REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

Experiencing a divorce can be an extremely stressful and anxiety-inducing event in one's life. The emotional impact of ending a marriage, along with the practical considerations of splitting assets and arranging custody can feel overwhelming. However, it's essential to remember that there are ways to reduce stress and anxiety during this challenging time.

Mediation is a method of resolving disputes that involves collaboration and a non-adversarial approach. It enables both partners to work together towards mutually

beneficial solutions. Mediation provides a safe space for open communication which allows couples to maintain control over the outcome of their divorce, especially when everything else may feel out of control. Choosing mediation helps couples steer clear of contentious and lengthy court battles that can escalate stress and anxiety.



In addition to mediation, there are other strategies that can help reduce stress and anxiety during a divorce. It is important to prioritize self-care and to seek support from friends, family, or a therapist. Taking care of your physical and emotional well-being can help you better navigate the challenges of divorce.

Remember that it is normal to experience a range of emotions during this time, including sadness, anger, and fear. Give yourself permission to feel these emotions and practice self-compassion. By taking proactive steps to reduce stress and anxiety, you can enhance your ability to make informed decisions and move forward with confidence during the divorce process.

READ MORE: [The Unexpected Storm: Navigating the Trauma of Divorce](#)

AUTONOMY OVER YOUR DIVORCE PROCESS

When going through a divorce, it can often feel like you have very little control over the process. However, by choosing to mediate your divorce, you are taking the first step towards gaining autonomy over your own divorce proceedings.

Mediation allows you and your soon-to-be ex-spouse to work together to come to agreements on important issues such as child custody, division of assets, and spousal support. This collaborative approach puts the power back in your hands, rather than leaving it up to a judge to make decisions for you.

By actively participating in the mediation process, you can ensure that your voice is heard and that your needs and concerns are taken into account. This can lead to more personalized and mutually beneficial agreements that are tailored to your unique situation.



Furthermore, mediation allows you to work at your own pace and on your own terms. You can schedule sessions at times that are convenient for both parties, rather than being at the mercy of a court schedule. This flexibility can help reduce stress and allow for a smoother transition out of the marriage.

Overall, choosing to mediate your divorce gives you the opportunity to have a more active role in the process and to have more control over the outcome. By taking ownership of your divorce proceedings, you can ensure that your needs are met and that the decisions made are in your best interest.

PROTECT YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE: SAVE MONEY BY NOT LITIGATING

One of the biggest sources of stress and financial strain during a divorce is the cost of litigation. Legal battles can quickly become expensive, draining your financial resources and leaving you in a precarious position for the future. By working together in a collaborative and cooperative manner, you can often reach resolutions that are more amicable and cost-effective than those imposed by a judge in a courtroom.

Furthermore, by mediating your divorce, you retain more control over the outcome of the process. Instead of leaving important decisions in the hands of a judge, you and your spouse can work together to find solutions that are tailored to your unique situation. This can lead to more satisfying and sustainable agreements that better meet the needs of both parties.



THE ROLE OF THE MEDIATOR

The mediator is an unbiased third party who has the primary objective of facilitating communication and assisting you and your spouse in achieving a mutually acceptable agreement. The mediator will lead you through the process, helping you to identify and prioritize issues, explore different solutions, and ultimately arrive at a resolution that is satisfactory to both parties. The mediator will not make decisions for you or take sides but instead, will act as a mediator to assist you in navigating the complexities of divorce.

One of the key roles of the mediator is to create a safe and supportive environment for both parties to express their needs, concerns, and desires. They will help you communicate effectively, listen to each other, and work together to find common ground. The mediator will also help you manage emotions and conflicts that may arise during the mediation process.



The mediator plays a crucial role in the mediation process, acting as both parties' guide, facilitator, and support system. By working with a skilled and experienced mediator, you can navigate the divorce process more easily and ultimately reach a more amicable and sustainable agreement.

Furthermore, the mediator will provide information and resources to help you make informed decisions about your divorce. They can offer guidance on legal issues, financial matters, and parenting arrangements, ensuring that both parties clearly understand their rights and responsibilities.

If you want to talk to Michelle about arranging a [FREE consult, click here.](#)

MEDIATION IS VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL

First and foremost, it is essential to understand that mediation is entirely voluntary. This means that both parties must agree to participate in the process willingly. Unlike the court system, where decisions are made by a judge, mediation allows couples to have control over the outcome of their divorce. By choosing to mediate, you are taking an active role in resolving your differences and working towards a mutually beneficial solution.

Furthermore, mediation is a confidential process. This means that anything discussed during mediation sessions is kept private and cannot be used against either party in court. This confidentiality allows couples to have open and honest conversations without fear of judgment or repercussions. It creates a safe space for communication and collaboration, encouraging both parties to work together towards a resolution.



LOW, MEDIUM AND HIGH CONFLICT DIVORCES

Low-conflict divorces are characterized by minimal disagreements and a willingness to work together toward a resolution. In these cases, mediation can be a smooth and efficient way to address any remaining issues and finalize the divorce agreement. Couples in low-conflict divorces may find that they are able to communicate effectively and make decisions together without the need for extensive intervention.

Divorces with **medium levels of conflict** involve more disagreements and tension between the parties. While mediation can still be an option in these cases, it may require more time and effort to resolve the issues. A skilled mediator can help facilitate communication and guide the couple towards a mutually acceptable agreement, even when there is increased conflict. However, it is crucial to note that if the parties become highly disagreeable over an issue and are unwilling to explore creative possibilities, the mediator will be unable to help further.



High-conflict divorces are extremely challenging when it comes to mediation. Such cases involve significant animosity, distrust, and emotional turmoil between the parties, which makes it difficult to reach a resolution through traditional means. However, even in cases where the couple highly disagree on several areas, a mediator can help identify areas of agreement and resolve them in a time-efficient and cost-effective manner. In some cases, it may be necessary to explore alternative dispute resolution methods or involve legal professionals to help navigate the complexities of the rest of the divorce process.

No matter the level of conflict in your divorce, this book provides practical advice and strategies for couples seeking to mediate their divorce. By understanding the dynamics of low-, medium-, and high-conflict divorces, you can better prepare yourself for the challenges ahead and work towards a fair and amicable resolution.

CONFLICT STYLES OF INDIVIDUALS

In the midst of a divorce, understanding your conflict style and that of your partner can be crucial in navigating the mediation process. Conflict styles refer to the way individuals respond to disagreements, challenges, and conflicts. By recognizing your own and your partner's conflict styles, you can better anticipate potential roadblocks and work towards finding common ground.

There are five main conflict styles that individuals typically exhibit: **competing**, **collaborating**, **compromising**, **avoiding**, and **accommodating**. **Competing** individuals tend to be assertive and pursue their own interests at the expense of others. **Collaborating** individuals seek to find mutually beneficial solutions through open communication and compromise.



Compromising individuals are willing to give and take to reach a middle ground. **Avoiding** individuals tend to shy away from conflict and may ignore or downplay issues. **Accommodating** individuals prioritize maintaining harmony and may sacrifice their own needs for the sake of others.

It can be helpful to identify your conflict style and that of your partner before entering into mediation. This will give you a better understanding of your

strengths and weaknesses when it comes to handling conflict. For example, if you tend to avoid conflict while your partner is more competitive, you may need to find ways to encourage open communication and compromise. By recognizing and respecting each other's conflict styles, you can create a more productive and cooperative environment for mediation. Understanding and leveraging your unique approaches to conflict can help you towards a more amicable and successful resolution to your divorce.

Not sure what your conflict style is?

Take the test here: [Conflict Management Styles Assessment](#)

IS MEDIATION RIGHT FOR YOU?

Divorce is a challenging and emotional process, and many couples find themselves overwhelmed by the prospect of navigating the legal system to dissolve their marriage. Mediation offers a more amicable and cost-effective alternative to traditional litigation, but is it the right choice for you?

Before deciding if mediation is the right path for your divorce, it's essential to consider your unique situation. Mediation is most effective for couples who are willing to communicate openly and work together to reach a mutually agreeable resolution. If you and your spouse are unable to have productive conversations or are unwilling to compromise, mediation may not be the best option.



Mediation is most successful when both parties are committed to finding a fair and equitable solution. If one spouse seeks to gain an unfair advantage or is unwilling to negotiate in good faith, mediation may not be the right choice.

However, if you and your spouse are willing to work together and communicate effectively, mediation can offer a number of benefits. Mediation allows you to maintain

control over the outcome of your divorce rather than leaving important decisions in the hands of a judge. It is also a much faster and less expensive process than traditional litigation, making it an attractive option for many couples.

Ultimately, the decision of whether mediation is right for you and your spouse is a personal one. If you are willing to work together and communicate effectively, mediation can be valuable in achieving a fair and amicable divorce settlement. It's important to carefully consider your options and consult with a qualified mediator to determine the best path forward for your unique situation.

If you want to talk to Michelle about arranging a [FREE consult, click here.](#)

CHAPTER 2 PREPARING FOR MEDIATION



GATHERING FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

When going through a divorce, one of the most important steps is gathering all necessary financial documents. This can be daunting, but it is crucial to ensure a fair and equitable division of assets during the mediation process.

To gather all the necessary financial documents, you should start by creating a comprehensive list. These documents may include bank statements, tax returns, mortgage documents, retirement account statements, and any other documents that are relevant to your financial situation. It is crucial to be meticulous while gathering the documents so that no important information is missed during the mediation process. If you choose to work with Alliston Resolutions, we will provide you with all the resources you need to identify the exact financial documents you need to collect.

Once you have made a list of the necessary documents, you must start collecting them. This may involve contacting various financial institutions or government agencies to request necessary copies of the documents. It is important to keep all documents organized and in a safe place to be easily accessible during mediation sessions.

In some cases, you may need to enlist the help of a financial professional to help gather and organize your financial documents. This can be especially helpful if you have complex financial assets, own a business or are unsure of what documents you must provide.

Gathering financial documents is a crucial step in the divorce mediation process. By being thorough and organized in your documentation, you can help ensure a fair and equitable division of assets during mediation. It may be a challenging task, but it is an important one that will ultimately help you move forward with your divorce in a smooth and efficient manner.

**Get a headstart on your Divorce Financials by downloading:
[Guide to Making Financial Agreements in Divorce](#)**

PARENTING PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

When going through a divorce, the parenting plan is one of the most important aspects to consider. This plan will outline how you and your ex-spouse will co-parent your children after the divorce is finalized. It is crucial to carefully consider all aspects of the parenting plan to ensure that it is in the best interest of your children.

When creating a parenting plan, one of the first things to consider is the schedule for each parent's time with the children. This schedule should be fair and balanced, considering each parent's work schedule, living arrangements, and the needs of the children. It is important to remain flexible and open to compromise to create a schedule that works for everyone involved. Alliston Resolutions offers excellent resources that can guide you through thoughtfully considering all your parenting plan options before the mediation begins.

Another consideration is how major decisions regarding the children will be made. This includes decisions about education, healthcare, and extracurricular activities. It is important to establish a process for making these decisions that allows both parents to have input and ensure that the children's best interests are always the top priority.

Communication is also key when creating a parenting plan. It is important to establish a method for communicating with your ex-spouse about the children, whether it be through phone, email, text, or a co-parenting app. Clear and open communication is essential for co-parenting successfully.

Overall, creating a parenting plan requires careful consideration and collaboration between both parents. By keeping the children's best interests at the forefront and being willing to compromise and communicate effectively, you can create a parenting plan that works for everyone involved.

**Get a headstart on your Parenting Plan by downloading:
[Guide to Making Parenting Plans in Divorce](#)**

SETTING GOALS FOR MEDIATION

Setting goals for mediation is a crucial step in the divorce process. As you and your spouse navigate this challenging time, it's important to have a clear idea of what you hope to achieve through mediation. By setting specific goals, you can work towards a resolution that is fair and satisfactory for both parties.



First and foremost, it's important to approach mediation with an open mind. This process involves finding common ground and reaching agreements that work for both parties. By setting goals that are realistic and reasonable, you can increase the likelihood of a successful mediation outcome.

When setting goals for mediation, consider what matters most to you. Are you primarily concerned with financial issues, such as asset division and spousal support? Or are you more focused on co-parenting arrangements and child custody agreements? By identifying your priorities, you can work towards solutions that address your most pressing concerns.

It's also important to be flexible and willing to compromise during the mediation process. While it's natural to want to fight for what you believe is fair, it's also important to consider the bigger picture and the long-term implications of your decisions. By being open to negotiation and compromise, you can work towards a resolution that meets the needs of both parties.

Ultimately, setting goals for mediation is about creating a roadmap for the divorce process. By clearly defining your objectives and priorities, you can work towards a resolution that is fair, sustainable, and mutually beneficial. With the help of a skilled mediator and a commitment to open communication, you can navigate this challenging time with confidence and clarity.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR SPOUSE



When communicating with your spouse, it's crucial to have an open mind and be willing to listen. Try to put your emotions aside and focus on the facts at hand. Be respectful and considerate of your ex's feelings, even if you don't share their views. The purpose of mediation is to find a middle ground and come to a compromise that suits both parties.

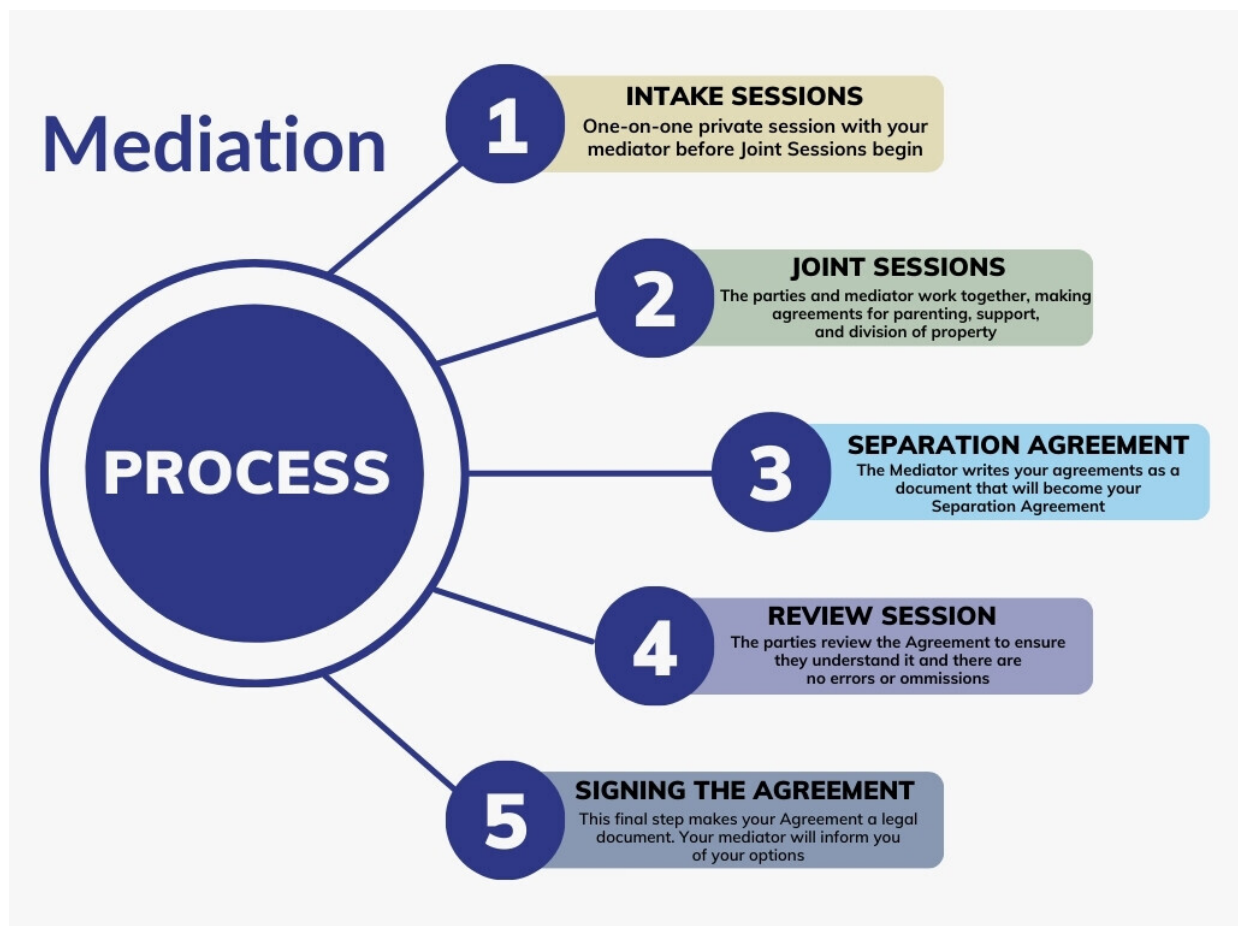
Communication should be clear and concise. Avoid using inflammatory language or making accusations. Stick to the facts and avoid bringing up past grievances. Be honest and transparent about your needs and expectations, and be prepared to listen to your spouse's perspective as well.

Active listening is a key component of effective communication. Try to truly understand your spouse's point of view and ask clarifying questions if necessary. Avoid interrupting or talking over your spouse; give them space to express their thoughts and feelings.

Finally, be patient and understanding throughout the mediation process. It may take time to reach a resolution, but by maintaining open and honest communication with your spouse, you can work together to find a solution that meets both of your needs.

By following these strategies for effective communication, you can improve your chances of a successful mediation process and work towards a fair and amicable resolution to your divorce. Remember, cooperation and compromise are key to a successful mediation, and effective communication is essential in achieving these goals.

CHAPTER 3 THE MEDIATION PROCESS



STEP 1: INTITIAL CONSULTATION



The first consultation is an important and necessary step in the mediation process for couples who are going through a divorce. This phone call, which lasts between 20 to 30 minutes, establishes the tone for the entire mediation process and clarifies what each party should expect in the future. Each party can have their own initial consultation call, or they may choose to have one call together.

During the call, the mediator will explain the mediation process, including the role of the mediator, the goals of mediation, and the benefits of choosing mediation over traditional litigation. The mediator will also discuss confidentiality, impartiality, and the importance of open communication throughout the process.

Each party can share their concerns, goals, and any specific issues they want to address during mediation. The mediator will work to create a safe and supportive environment where each party can express themselves openly and honestly.

Overall, the initial consultation is an opportunity for both parties to get a sense of whether mediation is the right choice for them. By approaching the initial consultation with an open mind and a willingness to engage in the process, couples can set themselves up for a successful mediation experience and a smoother transition through the divorce process.

If you would like to talk to Michelle about arranging a [FREE consult, click here.](#)

STEP 2: ONE-ON-ONE INTAKE SESSIONS



After the initial consultation call, one-on-one intake sessions become an essential first step for the parties and the mediator to work together. These individual sessions are provided by the mediator separately to each party, creating a safe space to discuss their concerns, goals, and any other important matters related to the divorce.

During these one-on-one sessions, the mediator will gather information about each party's needs and interests and their perspective on the issues at hand. This information will help the mediator facilitate productive discussions during joint mediation sessions, ultimately leading to a more successful and amicable resolution.

Individual intake sessions offer a great advantage as they provide an opportunity for each person to communicate without being judged or interrupted by the other. This helps to reveal underlying emotions and concerns that may not be comfortable to express during joint sessions.

These individual sessions can also help build trust and rapport between each party and the mediator. By having dedicated time to discuss their thoughts and feelings in a confidential setting, each party can feel more comfortable and open during joint mediation sessions, leading to more effective communication and problem-solving.

STEP 3: JOINT MEDIATION SESSIONS



Joint mediation sessions are a crucial aspect of the divorce mediation process. These sessions involve both parties and the mediator coming together to discuss and work through issues related to the divorce. Joint mediation sessions aim to facilitate open communication, foster compromise, and ultimately reach agreements that work for both parties.

During joint mediation sessions, both parties can express their concerns, desires, and perspectives on various aspects of the divorce, such as property division, the parenting plan, and spousal support. The mediator acts as a neutral third party, guiding the conversation, ensuring that both parties have an equal opportunity to speak, and helping to facilitate productive discussions.

One of the key benefits of joint mediation sessions is that they allow both parties to work together to develop solutions that meet their unique needs and circumstances. This collaborative approach can lead to more creative and customized agreements that better reflect the priorities and values of each individual.

It is important for both parties to come to joint mediation sessions with an open mind and a willingness to listen and work together. While emotions may run high during these sessions, it is important to remember that the goal is to reach mutually beneficial agreements to set the foundation for a smoother transition post-divorce.

STEP 4: WRITING THE AGREEMENT



Writing the agreement is one of the final steps in the mediation process. This document will outline the decisions made during mediation regarding important issues such as the parenting plan, child support, division of assets, and spousal support. It is important to approach this task with care and consideration to ensure that both parties are satisfied with the terms of the agreement.

When drafting the agreement, the mediator will use clauses that have been previously used by judges and are legally valid. These clauses are known as precedent-backed clauses. It is important to use simple language that both parties can comprehend to prevent any future confusion or misinterpretation. All relevant details, such as specific dates, amounts, and responsibilities, will be clearly defined to avoid any potential misunderstandings.

It is also important to consider the long-term implications of the agreement. Think about how each decision will impact your life moving forward and ensure you are comfortable with the terms outlined in the document. If necessary, seek the advice of a legal professional to ensure that the agreement is fair and legally binding.

If you would like to talk to Michelle about arranging a [FREE consult, click here.](#)

STEP 5: REVIEWING THE AGREEMENT



As you go through the process of mediation for your divorce, it is important that you take the time to review the agreement thoroughly. This is a crucial step where all parties involved should closely examine the proposed terms and conditions to ensure that they are fair and equitable for everyone. It is essential to pay close attention to every detail of the agreement before finalizing it, as once it is signed, it becomes legally binding.

Reviewing the agreement allows both parties to voice any concerns or objections regarding the proposed terms. Communicating openly and honestly during this process is essential to address potential conflicts or misunderstandings. In some cases, revisions may be necessary to reach a final agreement that satisfies both parties. It is essential to be flexible and willing to compromise to ensure a successful mediation process.

STEP 6: SIGNING THE AGREEMENT



After mediation is complete and the Agreement has been reviewed, the moment has finally arrived to sign the divorce agreement. This document represents the culmination of all your hard work, compromise, and communication throughout the mediation process.

Once you are satisfied with the terms of the agreement, it is time to put pen to paper. By signing the document, you are not only finalizing the divorce process but also committing to uphold the terms of the agreement in the future. This legal document will be binding, so it is essential to approach this step with caution and diligence.

Many individuals who utilize mediation services opt to finalize the signing of the agreement on their own with witnesses, without hiring a lawyer. This is considered legal in Canada. However, if you choose to have a lawyer draft the final agreement and sign it with you, that is also perfectly acceptable.

Remember that signing the agreement isn't the end of your relationship. Keep communication open for the well-being of your children. Terms can be reviewed or revised through a "Dispute Resolution" process outlined in the agreement.

By signing the agreement, you are taking a significant step towards closure and moving forward with your life. While the process may have been challenging, you have demonstrated your ability to navigate difficult conversations and make tough decisions.

NEGOTIATING WITH YOUR SPOUSE

When entering into negotiations with your spouse, it is essential to maintain an open mind and a willingness to compromise. Both parties have valid concerns and interests that need to be addressed. By being receptive to each other's perspectives and finding common ground, you can collaborate effectively to find solutions that satisfy the needs of both parties.

Communication is key in negotiations with your spouse. Be honest and transparent about your wants and needs, and encourage your spouse to do the same. By being open and honest with each other, you can create a more productive negotiating environment.

During divorce negotiations, it's crucial to be patient. Settlements can take time to reach, so it's important not to rush the process. If needed, take breaks and allow yourself and your spouse adequate time to consider options. This will enable you to return to the table with fresh perspectives and make sound decisions.



SHUTTLE MEDIATION

Shuttle mediation is a form of mediation that can be particularly helpful for couples who are experiencing high levels of conflict or communication breakdown during their divorce process. In shuttle mediation, the mediator works with each party separately, shuttling back and forth between them to facilitate communication and negotiations.

One of the key benefits of shuttle mediation is that it allows couples to avoid direct confrontation and communication, which can be especially important in cases where emotions are running high or where there is a history of conflict. By working with each party separately, the mediator can help defuse tension and create a safe space for productive negotiations.

Shuttle mediation can also be more efficient, as it eliminates the need for both parties to be simultaneously present in the same room. This can be especially helpful in cases where one or both parties feel uncomfortable or unsafe in the presence of the other.

In shuttle mediation, the mediator will work with each party to identify their needs, interests, and goals and help them to explore potential solutions that meet those needs. The mediator will then shuttle back and forth between the parties, conveying offers, counteroffers, and proposals and helping to facilitate communication and understanding.



THERAPEUTIC MEDIATION

Therapeutic mediation is a powerful tool for couples going through a divorce. It involves working with a trained mediator who helps facilitate communication between both parties in a safe and neutral environment. Unlike traditional mediation, which focuses solely on legal and financial issues, therapeutic mediation delves deeper into the emotional aspects of the divorce process.



One of the key benefits of therapeutic mediation is that it allows couples to address and work through the underlying issues that may be contributing to the breakdown of their marriage. By exploring these emotional issues, couples can better understand themselves and each other, leading to more effective communication and conflict resolution.

Therapeutic mediation can also help couples navigate the complex emotions that often arise during a divorce, such as anger, sadness, and fear. By providing a supportive and non-judgmental space for couples to express their feelings, therapeutic mediation can help them process their emotions in a healthy way and move forward with greater clarity and peace of mind.

Ultimately, therapeutic mediation can help couples reach a fair and amicable divorce settlement and lay the foundation for a more positive co-parenting relationship in the future. By addressing the emotional aspects of divorce, couples can heal from the pain of the past and move forward with a greater sense of understanding and compassion for each other.

CHAPTER 4

COPING WITH EMOTIONS DURING MEDIATION



MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

Managing stress and anxiety during the divorce process is a healthy practice for maintaining your mental and emotional well-being. It is common for individuals going through a divorce to experience heightened levels of stress and anxiety due to the major life changes and uncertainties that come with the process. However, there are several strategies that can help you navigate this challenging time and take care of yourself.

One of the most important things you can do to manage stress and anxiety during your divorce is to prioritize self-care. This means making time for activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as exercise, meditation, spending time with loved ones, or engaging in hobbies. Taking care of your physical and emotional health is essential for coping with the challenges of divorce.



It is also helpful to stay organized and informed throughout the mediation process. Keep track of important documents and deadlines, and communicate with your mediator if you begin to feel concerned or worried. Knowing what to expect and being prepared can help alleviate some of the stress and anxiety associated with the divorce process.

Additionally, seeking support from friends, family, or a therapist can provide you with a safe space to express your emotions and receive guidance on how to cope with the challenges of divorce. Remember that it is okay to ask for help and lean on others for support during this difficult time.

By prioritizing self-care, staying organized and informed, and seeking support, you can effectively manage stress and anxiety during your divorce. Remember that taking care of yourself is essential to navigate this challenging time and move forward with confidence and resilience.

MOVING FORWARD AFTER DIVORCE: NEW BEGINNINGS

Divorce can be a difficult and emotional process, but it can also be a time for new beginnings and opportunities. As you navigate the challenges of ending a marriage, it is important to focus on moving forward and creating a positive future for yourself.

One of the key ways to move forward after divorce is to embrace the idea of new beginnings. This can mean different things for different people, but it often involves setting new goals, pursuing new interests, and creating a fresh start for yourself. Whether it's taking up a new hobby, exploring a new career path, or simply focusing on self-care and personal growth, there are countless opportunities for you to create a fulfilling and happy life after divorce.

As you embark on this new chapter in your life, it is important to remember that healing takes time. It is okay to grieve the end of your marriage and to feel a range of emotions as you adjust to your new reality. Give yourself permission to feel what you need to feel, but also remember to be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion as you navigate this challenging time.

In addition to focusing on your own personal growth and well-being, it is also important to seek support from others during this time. Whether it's through therapy, support groups, or talking to friends and family, having a strong support system can make a world of difference as you move forward after divorce.

Remember, divorce is not the end of your story, but rather the beginning of a new chapter. Embrace the opportunities that lie ahead, focus on creating a positive future for yourself, and remember that you have the strength and resilience to overcome this challenging time and create a fulfilling and happy life for yourself.

If you would like to talk to Michelle about arranging a [FREE consult, click here](#).



CHAPTER 5 RESOURCES FOR DIVORCE MEDIATION



COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS

During a divorce, counsellors and therapists can provide valuable assistance in managing your emotions and overcoming the challenges that come with it. These trained professionals specialize in offering emotional support and guidance during times of crisis, such as divorce. They can help you work through your feelings of anger, sadness, confusion, and grief and provide you with effective coping strategies to manage these emotions in a healthy way.

It is important to find a counsellor or therapist who is experienced in working with individuals going through a divorce, as they will have the expertise and knowledge to support you during this challenging time best. Don't be afraid to reach out for help – seeking counseling or therapy can be a valuable tool in helping you navigate your divorce and move forward with your life.



DIVORCE COACHING

Divorce coaching can be a highly supportive component of the divorce process, especially in cases where litigation is necessary. It involves working with a trained professional who can offer guidance, support, and strategies to help you navigate the complexities of divorce with clarity and confidence.

A divorce coach can help you identify your goals and priorities, manage your emotions, communicate effectively with your ex-partner, and make informed decisions that are in the best interests of yourself and your family. They can also help you develop coping mechanisms for dealing with the stress and uncertainty of divorce and empower you to take control of your own future.



During divorce coaching sessions, you can explore your thoughts and feelings about the divorce, set realistic expectations, and create a plan for moving forward. Your coach will help you develop effective communication skills, problem-solving strategies, and conflict-resolution techniques that can help you navigate the challenges of divorce with grace and dignity.

In addition to providing emotional support and practical guidance, a divorce coach can also help you save time and money by streamlining the mediation process and avoiding unnecessary disputes. By working with a coach, you can ensure that your voice is heard, your needs are met, and your concerns are addressed in a constructive and productive manner.

Overall, divorce coaching is invaluable for anyone going through a divorce. It can help you stay focused, grounded, and empowered as you transition into a new chapter of your life. So, don't hesitate to seek out the support and guidance of a qualified divorce coach as you navigate the challenging waters of divorce mediation.

LEGAL INFORMATION - FAMILY LAW INFORMATION CENTRES (FLIC) IN ONTARIO



When you are going through a divorce, you should have access to reliable legal information that will assist you in making informed decisions. In Ontario, the [Family Law Information Centres \(FLIC\)](#) are valuable resources that are available to individuals who are navigating the complexities of family law.

FLICs are located in courthouses across Ontario and provide free information and resources on family law matters. They offer services such as legal advice, assistance with court forms, and information on mediation and other dispute resolution options. FLICs can be especially helpful for individuals who are considering mediation as a way to resolve their divorce.

Overall, Family Law Information Centres in Ontario are valuable resources for individuals going through a divorce. By utilizing the information and resources available at FLICs, couples can confidently make informed decisions and navigate the divorce process.

CHAPTER 6

NEXT STEPS AFTER DIVORCE MEDIATION



WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE SEPARATION AGREEMENT?

Once you have successfully completed the mediation process and reached an agreement on the terms of your divorce, the next step is to decide what to do with the Separation Agreement. This document is extremely important in finalizing your divorce.

After signing the Separation Agreement, you can submit it to the court. Along with this agreement, you need to submit any other documents that are required to complete the divorce process. For more information on the exact steps to follow, you can consult a [Family Law Information Centre \(FLIC\)](#), which was discussed at the end of Chapter 5. The next section will provide you with the specific steps that need to be followed.

Couples have the option of not filing their Separation Agreements with the court or applying for a divorce order. However, it is highly recommended that they keep their signed Separation Agreements in a safe and secure location, such as a locked cabinet or safe, to prevent tampering or unauthorized access. This will ensure that the agreements are not easily discovered, especially by children. In case an individual decides to apply for a divorce order in the future, they will be able to easily access their agreement.



FILING FOR A DIVORCE ORDER

When you decide to file for a divorce order, you need to gather all the required documents, including your marriage certificate, financial records, and other relevant information. It is crucial to be organized and thorough during this step to ensure your divorce proceedings go smoothly. The [Family Law Information Centre \(FLIC\)](#) can help you understand exactly what forms and documents you need for your divorce order application.

After you have collected all the necessary documents, you must file a petition for divorce with the court. This petition will describe the reasons for the divorce and any other relevant information about your marriage. It is essential to be truthful and precise when filling out this paperwork to avoid any unnecessary delays in the process.



If you file the petition alone, you must serve your spouse with the divorce papers. This can be done by a process server or through certified mail. Your spouse will then have a certain amount of time to respond to the petition. However, many people apply for a divorce order together, and this will mitigate the need for one person to serve documents to the other.

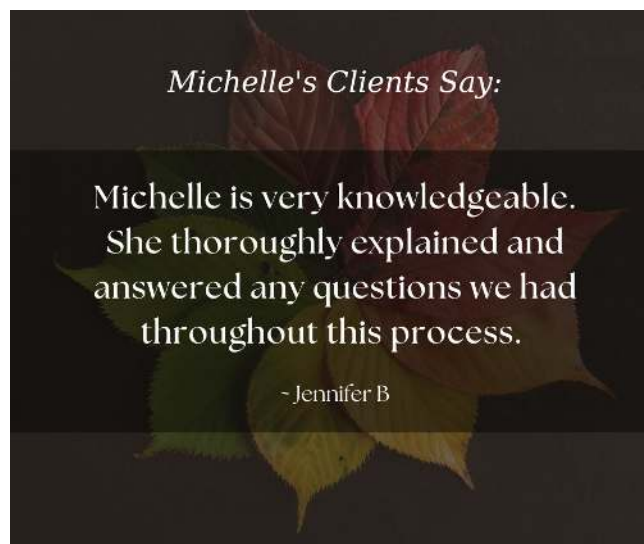
If you have settled your divorce outside of court in Canada and have submitted all the necessary documentation as per the FLIC's instructions, you do not need to attend court to finalize your divorce. A judge will review your petition, and you will be notified if the divorce order is granted. You can then collect a certified copy of the divorce order from the courthouse.

CHAPTER 7 TESTIMONIES ABOUT ALLISTON RESOLUTIONS



Welcome to the pivotal part of our journey together, where we highlight the voices of those who have experienced the transformative power of Alliston Resolutions. The mission has always been to provide exceptional service that not only meets but exceeds clients' expectations.

Michelle Rakowski, the founder of Alliston Resolutions, is committed to **excellence, integrity, and innovation**. The testimonials you'll read are more than just reviews; they are stories of partnership, trust, and success. They showcase what Michelle strives for every day at Alliston Resolutions - to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those she serves. As you read through these heartfelt endorsements, we hope you find inspiration and confidence in choosing Alliston Resolutions as part of your journey towards resolution and success.





Michelle's Clients Say:

During a separation, there's heartbreak and impossible decisions to make, Michelle helped make our process smoother in a kind and extremely knowledgeable way.

- Mary L

Michelle's Clients Say:

Michelle paid attention to our needs and concerns and guided us every step of the way. Thanks Michelle for your excellent service.

~Veronica H

Michelle's Clients Say:

Michelle is a genuinely caring professional who seeks the best interests of all parties helping individuals and families navigate through separation and divorce.

~Petros Family Services

If you're going through a divorce and need guidance, know you don't have to go through it alone. At Alliston Resolutions, I'm committed to helping couples reach resolutions that honor everyone's needs. [Book a FREE consultation TODAY](#) to explore how mediation can help create a respectful, amicable, and constructive future for everyone involved.

Thank You!



Michelle Rakowski



NAVIGATING DIVORCE WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

Embarking on a divorce can be a difficult process that often involves strong emotional reactions. However, at Alliston Resolutions, we believe that it is possible to navigate through this process without unnecessary stress and conflict.

We offer compassionate, client-centred mediation services that empower couples to find amicable solutions, respecting the needs and goals of both parties. Our mediation process provides a structured and flexible environment that encourages constructive dialogue and leads to agreements that can pave the way for a positive future.

By choosing Alliston Resolutions, you're not only seeking a resolution to your divorce, but you're also embracing the possibility of a respectful and dignified transition into the next chapter of your life.