

Parenting plan cont.

and limitations is a parent's job. If parents set these rules together and stick to them, it gives the children a sense of stability even while their family is changing.

Contact

It is common for children to play one parent against the other to get what they want. It is even easier for children to do that if the parents aren't living together. How often as parents do you hear, "But Dad said I could." If you make a point to stay in contact and talk about your children it will keep a united front for their sake.

Keep in Mind

If you are feeling alone or overwhelmed, you may want to consider talking with a professional to help you deal with the situation. If fact, you might also want to consider seeing a counsellor with your ex, and/or the entire family, to help find ways to cope with the realities of your new family life. Counselling may be beneficial. If you need immediate help, there is a toll-free mental health crisis line which can be accessed 24 hours a day. The number is 1-888-737-4668.

Family Justice Services (FJS) has offices located across the province and offers a parenting course for parents who are trying to deal with separation and divorce. Contact 1-709-729-1183 to ask for the FJS office nearest to you.

Legal advice is always strongly recommended for people going through separation and divorce. It is not a good idea to make decisions in emotional times without first consulting with a lawyer to make sure your interests are protected. There are various ways to contact a lawyer:

- **Lawyer Referral Service**— Call Public Legal Information Association of NL at 1-888-660-7788 to be provided with the name of a lawyer who will provide consultation (up to thirty minutes) for a nominal fee.
- **Legal Aid Commission of NL**— Call your local office to inquire about the application process and whether you might qualify.
- **Yellow Pages**— Look under "Lawyer" for listings of lawyers.

Contact Information

How to contact Supreme Court Family Division across the province:

St. John's: Phone: (709) 729-2258
Corner Brook: Phone: (709) 637-2227
Gander: Phone: (709) 256-1115
Grand Bank: Phone: (709) 832-1720
Grand Falls - Windsor: Phone: (709) 292-4260
Happy Valley - Goose Bay: Phone: (709) 896-7892

The Family Law Information Line of the Dept. of Justice Canada: 1-888-373-2222

How to protect yourself from the fallout of separation and divorce



Supreme Court
of Newfoundland and Labrador
Family Division

Please note: The information provided in this brochure is general in nature and not intended as legal advice. To discuss a specific situation we suggest you contact a lawyer.

Separation & Divorce

Separation and divorce are tough processes to go through for anyone. Taking care of yourself throughout this process must be a priority. If you have children, they will need you more than ever, because this situation is difficult for them as well. You cannot be there for your children if you have unresolved issues yourself.

We strongly suggest you seek legal advice as you try to navigate the legal processes involved in separation and divorce.

Emotions

It makes the entire process more difficult to deal with if you are not addressing your emotions. Every person will deal with divorce in different ways because every person and situation is different. The effects of a divorce on a person vary; it may make a person stressed, upset, angry, worried, confused or withdrawn. Many others experience grief. These are common emotions people feel as they go through the stages of divorce.

Talk about it

Divorce is a very personal thing for many people. The issues and reasons why you have chosen to take this step are not

something most people want to share with others. While talking about divorce may not be something you want to do, internalizing your problems aren't going to make them go away. Discussing it with someone may help the situation.

Here are some people who you might want to approach:

Family and friends

Your family and friends care about you very much and they want to help you through this. They may not have approached you because they want to give you space, but you approaching them may be what they are waiting for.

Counsellor

If you are not comfortable with speaking to someone you know, you might consider speaking with a counsellor. Counsellors are impartial professionals who can help people with all types of problems. With a counsellor you would have confidentiality and expertise.

Priest, Minister, Rabbi, etc.

Another option would be to speak with your religious or spiritual leader. Sometimes this is a good choice because you get the expertise and confidentiality of a counsellor, but the person usually knows you and your ex-partner.

Support Group

Support groups are a great way to share with others who are in a situation similar to yours.

Normally the people in the group are going through or have gone through some of the same things as you. With a group like this it may give a sense of encouragement.

Parenting plan

If you have children, it is very important for them to see a divorce as a “change” of partnership rather than an “end” of partnership. Whether you and your partner are together as a couple or not you will still need to work together to provide a united front for your children. It is difficult enough on your children to deal with divorce; providing a united front lets them know that they do not have to choose between parents, and that while you're not “life” partners you are “parenting” partners.

A great way to ease the tension and make the process smoother for you and your partner is to come up with a parenting plan together. This may alleviate stress on both sides and provide the best solution for your whole family when children are involved. In order to avoid confusion in the future, open and frank discussions between the parents about how they will continue to parent together, while living apart, may be a very good idea.

Here are some ideas:

Rules

All kids need rules, and setting boundaries