

DIVORCE CHECKLIST

WHEN CONSIDERING DIVORCE, THERE ARE SEVERAL IMPORTANT STEPS AND CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND. WHILE THIS GUIDE PROVIDES A GENERAL OVERVIEW, IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSULT WITH LEGAL AND FINANCIAL PROFESSIONALS FOR PERSONALIZED ADVICE. HERE'S A SHORT GUIDE TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE INITIAL STAGES OF THINKING ABOUT DIVORCE.

BEFORE DIVORCE:

SELF-REFLECTION AND EMOTIONAL PREPARATION:

- Take time to reflect on your reasons for considering divorce and consider the emotional impact it may have on you, your spouse, and your family.
- Seek emotional support from trusted friends, family, and/or a divorce coach to help you cope with the challenges and emotions associated with divorce.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION:

- Understand the divorce laws specific to your jurisdiction. Familiarize yourself with the legal requirements, processes, and potential outcomes involved in a divorce.
- Consult reputable resources such as books, websites, or online forums to gain insights into the divorce process and learn from others' experiences.

COMMUNICATION AND COUNSELING:

- If possible, try to have an open and honest conversation with your spouse about your concerns and desire for divorce. Consider mediation as a means to facilitate a more amicable separation.
- Seek individual coaching or therapy to help you navigate your emotions, make informed decisions, and maintain your well-being throughout the process.

GATHER FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

- Collect and organize all relevant financial documents, including bank statements, tax returns, property records, debts, and investment portfolios.
- Make a list of your assets, liabilities, income, and expenses. Understanding your financial situation is crucial for negotiations and ensuring a fair division of assets.
- [Free worksheets](#)

CONSULTATION WITH PROFESSIONALS:

- Seek advice from a family law attorney who specializes in divorce cases. They can guide you through the legal process, protect your rights, and provide clarity on legal implications and potential outcomes.
- Consider consulting a financial advisor who can help you understand the financial impact of divorce, assist with asset division, and help you plan for your future financial stability.

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO LITIGATION:

- Explore alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation or collaborative divorce. These approaches can provide a more cooperative and less adversarial environment for resolving issues and reaching agreements.

DOCUMENTATION:

- Make copies of important documents such as marriage certificates, prenuptial agreements, and relevant contracts.
- Document instances of domestic abuse or any other issues that may affect the divorce proceedings.
- Coercive control (this is very important - a section is dedicated to this below).

CREATE A SUPPORT NETWORK:

- Surround yourself with a strong support network of friends, family, and professionals who can provide emotional, practical, and legal support throughout the divorce process.

PRIORITIZE THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN:

- If you have children, their well-being should be a top priority. Develop a plan for co-parenting and consider their needs, emotions, and routines as you navigate the divorce process.

Remember, divorce is a complex and highly personal decision. It's crucial to consult with professionals who can provide guidance tailored to your specific circumstances.

DURING DIVORCE:

COMMUNICATION AND LEGAL REPRESENTATION:

- Communicate with your spouse or their attorney regarding your intentions to file for divorce.
- Retain a divorce attorney to guide you through the legal process, protect your rights, and negotiate on your behalf.

TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS:

- Determine living arrangements during the divorce process, especially if you and your spouse cannot reside together.
- Discuss temporary child custody and visitation schedules if applicable.
- Establish temporary financial arrangements, including spousal and child support if necessary.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Monitor joint bank accounts and credit cards to ensure fair use and prevent financial surprises.
- Consider changing beneficiaries on life insurance policies, retirement accounts, and wills.

CHILD-RELATED MATTERS:

- Develop a parenting plan that outlines custody, visitation schedules, and decision-making responsibilities. Whether you will use a mediator or litigate, it is a good idea to work with a co-parenting specialist/mediator who focuses on parenting plans in particular. In a Collaborate divorce, it is typically done by a divorce coach
- Focus on the well-being and best interests of the children throughout the process.

PROPERTY AND ASSET DIVISION:

- Take inventory of marital assets, including real estate, vehicles, investments, and personal belongings.
- Work with your attorney or CDFAs to negotiate a fair division of property, considering both financial and emotional factors.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND PAPERWORK:

- Complete and file necessary divorce documents, such as the petition, financial disclosures, and settlement agreement.
- Respond promptly to any court requests or deadlines.
- Attend court hearings or mediation sessions as required.
- Make sure to choose the option to change your married last name so you don't have to go back to court if you decide to do so down the line.

AFTER DIVORCE:

LEGAL DOCUMENTATION:

- Obtain copies of the final divorce decree or judgment from the court.
- Update your identification documents, including your driver's license, passport, and social security records.

FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENTS:

- Revise your budget and financial plan based on the changed circumstances.
- Update or create a new estate plan, including wills and powers of attorney.

CO-PARENTING AND SUPPORT:

- Follow the terms outlined in the parenting plan and continue to prioritize the well-being of the children.
- Adhere to any child or spousal support obligations as determined by the court.

SET FINANCIAL GOALS

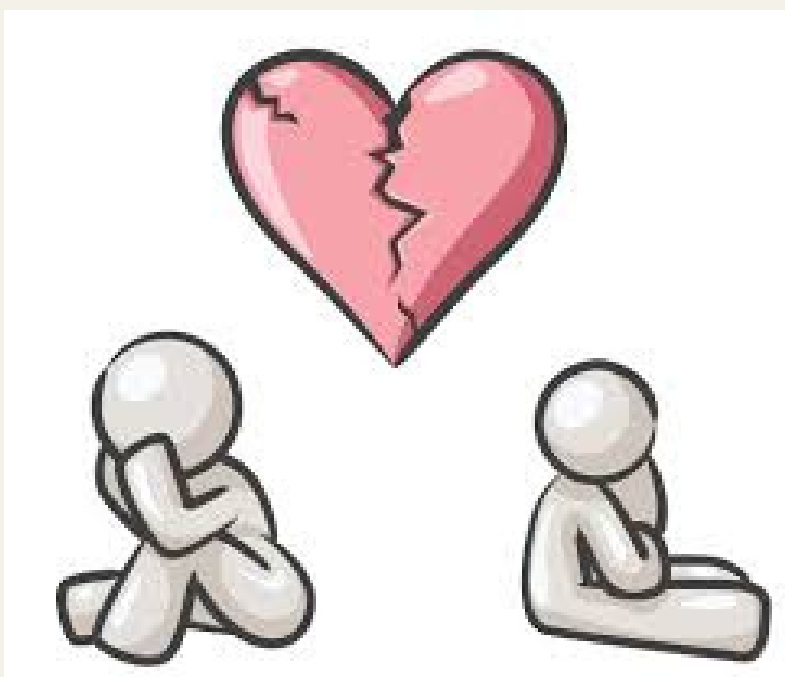
- Continue seeking emotional support through coaching, or support groups.
- Focus on self-care and rebuilding your life after divorce.

Remember, this checklist provides a general overview, and the specific tasks and priorities may vary depending on your unique situation. It's essential to consult with professionals and tailor your approach to meet.

COERCIVE CONTROL

Below are some *suggestions* of how to navigate divorce and coercive control. Coercive control is a serious matter, and seeking professional help and legal advice is crucial.

An experienced attorney can assist you in understanding how to use your documentation effectively within the legal process.



COERCIVE CONTROL

When documenting coercive control for divorce purposes, it's important to keep detailed records that demonstrate the patterns of behavior and its impact on your life. Here are some steps to effectively log coercive control:

Create a journal or log:

- Start a dedicated journal or log to record incidents of coercive control.
- Include dates, times, and descriptions of each incident, noting the specific behaviors and their effects on you.

Be specific and objective:

- Describe the coercive behaviors as accurately and objectively as possible.
- Include details such as what was said or done, any threats or intimidation, and how it made you feel or the impact it had on your emotional well-being.

Document frequency and patterns:

- Note the frequency of each incident and any patterns of behavior that emerge over time.
- Pay attention to consistent tactics used, such as isolating you from family and friends, controlling finances, monitoring your activities, or engaging in verbal or emotional abuse.

Gather evidence:

- Collect any supporting evidence, such as text messages, emails, voicemails, or social media interactions that document the coercive behavior.
- Preserve any physical evidence, such as damaged property or visible injuries resulting from abusive incidents.

Keep records of witnesses:

- If others have witnessed the coercive control, document their names, contact information, and their perspective on the incidents they observed.
- Witnesses can include friends, family members, neighbors, or professionals who have interacted with you and your spouse.

Seek professional help:

- Consult with a therapist, counselor, or domestic violence advocate who can provide guidance and support.
- Keep records of any therapy sessions, counseling reports, or recommendations made by professionals regarding coercive control.

Maintain a timeline:

- Create a timeline of significant events related to coercive control, including milestones, key incidents, and attempts to address the issue.

Include the impact on children:

- If you have children, document instances where the coercive control affects their well-being or safety.
- Record any incidents of the controlling parent undermining your authority, engaging in parental alienation, or using the children as a means of control.

Preserve privacy and safety:

- Keep your documentation in a secure location, such as a password-protected computer or a safe place outside of the home.
- Be mindful of your safety and take precautions to protect your privacy if you believe your spouse may access your records.

Consult with an attorney:

- Share your documented records with your divorce attorney.
- They can guide you on how best to present the evidence and incorporate it into your divorce case.