

## NEGOTIATIONS

## The Difficulty of Dealing with Impasses in Traditional Divorce Negotiations

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The ultimate goal of couples going through a divorce is to have a working parenting agreement and an acceptable financial settlement. In addition, most couples would like the process to proceed as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, this is not

always what happens. There are many disagreements that occur, and impasses may develop as a result. These impasses can stem from underlying issues that the couple may or may not be aware of and not be able to identify when questioned. These are the

cases that become stalled and may drag on for long periods of time.

The question arises about what action to take when these situations occur. It may be difficult for attorneys, who are not trained mental health professionals or financial professionals, to get to the root of the impasse. This might be the best time to involve a coach who is a mental health professional or a financial neutral in the process.

The expertise of an outside professional would be an additional route to take in cases in which the impasse seems unresolvable, and the negotiations have stalled. Both clients must move from a fixed position to one that is in the best interest of the entire family to keep the process moving forward. Just as important, the clients must be able to communicate effectively without causing negative emotions from the other spouse. A trained mental health professional may be able to get the clients to broaden their perspective on the issues and provide communications tools that keep conversations constructive.

### BARRIERS WHERE A COACH MAY HELP

The following is a list of some of the many barriers couples may

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*Ellene has worked in an inpatient psychiatric unit and an inpatient general medical unit. She has taught communication skills to parents and children for the National Institute of Health (NIH) and has been a social work field instructor for both Loyola University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ellene is especially skilled in working with couples who are allowing barriers and recurring past emotional issues to impede their divorce. She is a member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the Collaborative Law Institute of Illinois (CLII), the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, and the Mediation Council of Illinois.*