



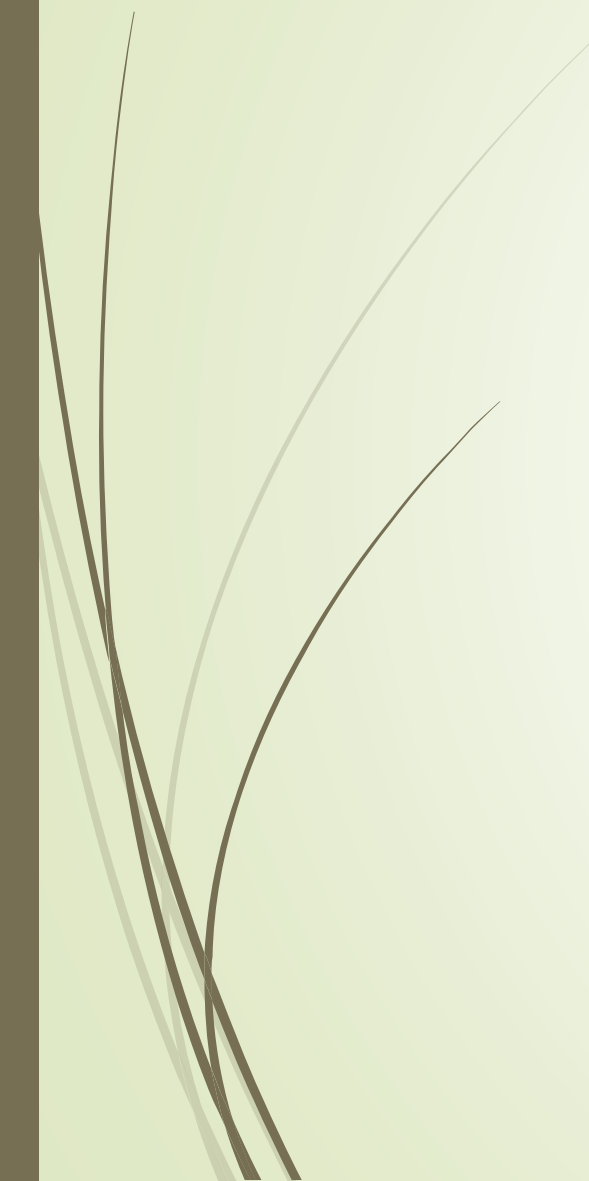
Family & Emotional Issues of Divorce

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What We'll Cover

- Introductions & Current Concerns
 - The Divorce Process
 - Strategies to Manage the Divorce
 - Helping Your Children
 - Taking Care of Yourself/Managing Your Emotions
- 



The Divorce Process

- ▶ Going from “love and together” to “apart and at odds” to “separate and stable” (a new normal). You will get through it. It might not look like you expect.
- ▶ Grieving the loss of what you expected it would be: the death of the dream. Grief can look different than you expect. E.g., Difficulty making decisions. Be compassionate with yourself.
- ▶ Difference in the process if it was your choice to leave: where you are in the process:
 - ▶ Not your decision: Shock -> Anger -> Seeking to Understand -> Reconciling to the Fact -> Self-Doubt/Grief/Loss -> Making Meaning -> New Opportunities
 - ▶ Your decision: Grief/Loss -> Guilt/Self-Doubt -> Making Meaning -> New Opportunities
- ▶ Stressors: family, financial, community, loyalties, logistics.



Strategies to Manage the Divorce

- ▶ Identify a good support team (for you and your children).
- ▶ Share only what you want to share; have at the ready things you will say for when people ask.
- ▶ Write things down! Keep a notebook with dates and paperwork. This can get overwhelming. Take it slow.
- ▶ Strategies and options for communicating with your spouse.
 - ▶ Email is often best.
- ▶ Decrease your vulnerabilities! As much as you can, stay emotionally regulated. Don't respond when angry or feeling urgency. Have a trusted person who can look over communications. Wait 4 hour, or maybe even a day, before hitting SEND.
- ▶ Be proactive, not reactive.




Helping Your Children

- ▶ Telling children and answering questions:
 - ▶ Keep it simple and age appropriate
 - ▶ Kids need to know how it will affect them, especially younger kids
 - ▶ “Mom and Dad will always love you, we’ll always be your parents, that will never change”
 - ▶ “Your house with Mom” and “Your house with Dad” versus Mom or Dad’s house
 - ▶ Make sure they know it’s not about them
 - ▶ “I miss you” versus “It’s so good to see you”
- ▶ Don’t speak ill of your spouse, period! What to do if your spouse is speaking ill of you.
- ▶ Don’t use your kids as go betweens! Don’t probe. Remember, they are loyal to both of you. Don’t put them in the middle or ask them to take sides.
- ▶ They will have different experiences at your house versus spouse’s house, focus on what’s important.
- ▶ Watching out for danger signs, and what to do about them.
- ▶ Divorce is a stressor, but how you handle it will determine whether or not it’s traumatic. Civil co-parenting results in the best outcomes for the children.



Taking Care of Yourself

- ▶ Divorce can be/feel all consuming. Take breaks, exercise, talk to friends about other things. It might feel overwhelming.
- ▶ Remember this will be over at some point! Find a mantra.
- ▶ Urgency can be a sign of dysregulation. Do you need to respond right now? Does this need to be decided right now or can it wait?
 - ▶ Identify the feelings, where are they in your body, are you breathing? Are you holding tightness in your jaw, back, belly?
- ▶ Strategies for calming yourself in the moment:
 - ▶ Voo-ing, Singing, Humming
 - ▶ Dancing, Exercise
 - ▶ Showers, Cold water on Face or to Drink
 - ▶ Breathing: box breathing, slower exhales



Taking Care of Yourself (cont'd)

- ▶ Dealing with anger, denial, blame, resentment, guilt, feelings of revenge or regret, or sadness/helplessness.
 - ▶ Run things by a friend
 - ▶ Journal
 - ▶ Cry!
 - ▶ Find old joys
- ▶ It's OK not to be OK. You will likely go through many different emotions. Don't give too much weight to any one phase, have compassion, allow yourself to feel (and move through the feeling).
- ▶ Divorce is an opportunity for growth: you can deal with old issues and do some powerful personal growth.



Resources



► Support Groups

- https://www.divorcecare.org/countries/us/states/ca/cities/san_jose
- <http://www.christinebroderickmft.com/women-in-transition> (for women)
- <https://www.marriage.com/advice/divorce/online-divorce-support-groups/>

► Blogs

- <https://www.whenitsknotforever.com/blog>
- <https://www.liveabout.com/top-divorce-blogs-1102772>

► On Supporting Kids

- <https://childmind.org/article/supporting-kids-during-a-divorce/>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-raise-happy-cooperative-child/201302/8-strategies-helping-kids-adjust-divorce>