



12 Steps to Consider as You Struggle through the Details of Uncoupling

By DIVORCE360.COM

The divorce has been filed, and you're moving through emotional, financial and legal issues. Nothing about divorce is ever easy. As you work through the process, you will be faced with a number of issues that range from grief over the loss of your relationship to confusion over visitation and custody issues, if you have children. While you're struggling with all the details, here is a list of things to think about while you're in the thick of it all.

1. CONSIDER A THERAPIST.

If you haven't already engaged a therapist, it may be helpful to consider therapy now. As you move through this difficult time, having someone who can listen and guide your emotional health is crucial. Pay attention to yourself and focus on the positive. You may even need medication to deal with anxiety as the process continues. Also, you may want to consider therapy for your children, if you haven't already.

2. KEEP EMOTIONS OUT OF IT.

Try not to engage in long battles with your spouse about issues from finances to child care. This will only prolong the difficulties over the long haul. A court will decide many of these issues anyway. Leave the legal work up to your attorney. Keep communication calm and civil and document any issues between you and your spouse in case you may need them for court. Remember, any written communication can end up in a legal proceeding, so be careful what you say and how you say it.

3. FIND A JOB IF YOU NEED TO.

If you have been out of the workforce for some time or you have been a stay-at-home mother, you may want to consider talking with your attorney about finding a job. If he or she agrees, consider your professional options. A part-time position may be the chance for you to reenter the workplace. Or a freelance job may offer more flexibility if you have youngsters at home.

4. STAY SINGLE.

If you haven't already, do not start a new relationship yet. Consider putting this aspect of your life on hold until after the paperwork is complete. Depending on the family law in your state, a relationship outside of your marriage, no matter when it began, can become a point of contention during the formal divorce process. Note that in a state where this is an issue, any e-mail, notes, computer records, phone calls, bills or even your E-Z Pass bill can be used in a legal proceeding to prove infidelity. And with upheaval in your world, you may want to avoid this emotional commitment for a number of reasons, including potential legal ones.

5. IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY, CONSIDER A COLLABORATIVE DIVORCE.

If you haven't already thought about this before you filed, now is the time to give this more consideration. In this process, legal, financial and child care experts work together to get your family through the divorce with as little damage as possible. This kind of divorce can be particularly helpful for your children, who can feel stuck in the middle as you argue your differences in the legal process. In the long run, this can help your parenting relationship with your soon-to-be former spouse. [Click here to read more about working together for a collaborative divorce...](#)

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MEDIATION



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6. CONSIDER HIRING A DIVORCE FINANCIAL EXPERT.

In a collaborative divorce, a financial expert would be part of the process. But if you haven't agreed to that, you may want to talk with a divorce financial analyst or planner who can help you look at your immediate financial needs and your long-term needs, particularly if you have accumulated a home, had children or added financial assets during your marriage. Deciding whether to keep your home or how to split your assets can be much easier with an expert at your side.

7. KEEP YOUR CHILDREN OUT OF IT.

Divorce is a difficult time for everyone, particularly children. If you have children, remember to keep the kids away from the divorce, any arguments about it or any arguments you may have with your soon-to-be ex spouse. Divorce can have long-term effects on children. However, those effects can be minimal if you and your partner agree to put the children first.

8. TRY MEDIATION.

Constant court battles take an emotional and financial toll on you and your spouse, regardless of who filed or who is at fault. The court offers trained mediators who can help negotiate an agreement on issues ranging from visitation to custody to support. They can help you keep the emotional and financial costs down in the divorce process.

9. KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE IN COURT.

If you do end up in a court room, regardless of the circumstances, know how to act, particularly in front of a judge. A judge is a legal expert, who simply interprets the law. He or she will not take a personal stance, no matter how they may feel, about the case. Dress professionally, act courteously and answer truthfully. If you have any questions, most agencies have a Web site where you can research the court rules from depositions to other legal issues – or you can ask your attorney, who is your legal representative in the courtroom.

10. KEEP A DIVORCE FILE.

If you haven't already started one, start a divorce file and keep it updated. Depending on the length, issues and contentiousness of your legal proceedings, the file can become large. Try to keep it organized so that you can easily find documents for your financial, emotional or legal experts if need be. The file should also include any written correspondence, e-mail or other documents from your spouse, just in case you may need them in court.

11. UPDATE YOUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION.

Consider your home, auto, life and other insurance policies. If you need to update them with beneficiaries or addresses or the status of your legal name, you should consider any updates. Talk with your attorney about this to make certain you are within your legal rights. Make certain these same issues are considered in any legal, mediation or collaborative process. [Click here to read more about updating your financial information...](#)

12. KEEP UP YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM.

If you haven't already, assemble a group of family and friends, who can help you by listening or lending a hand when need be. Religious organizations often offer support groups for singles, divorced and children whose parents are going through a divorce. Counselors at schools can often offer help to youngsters whose parents are divorcing, as well. And the Internet offers a host of stories and online resources from divorce sites, social networking and other resources.