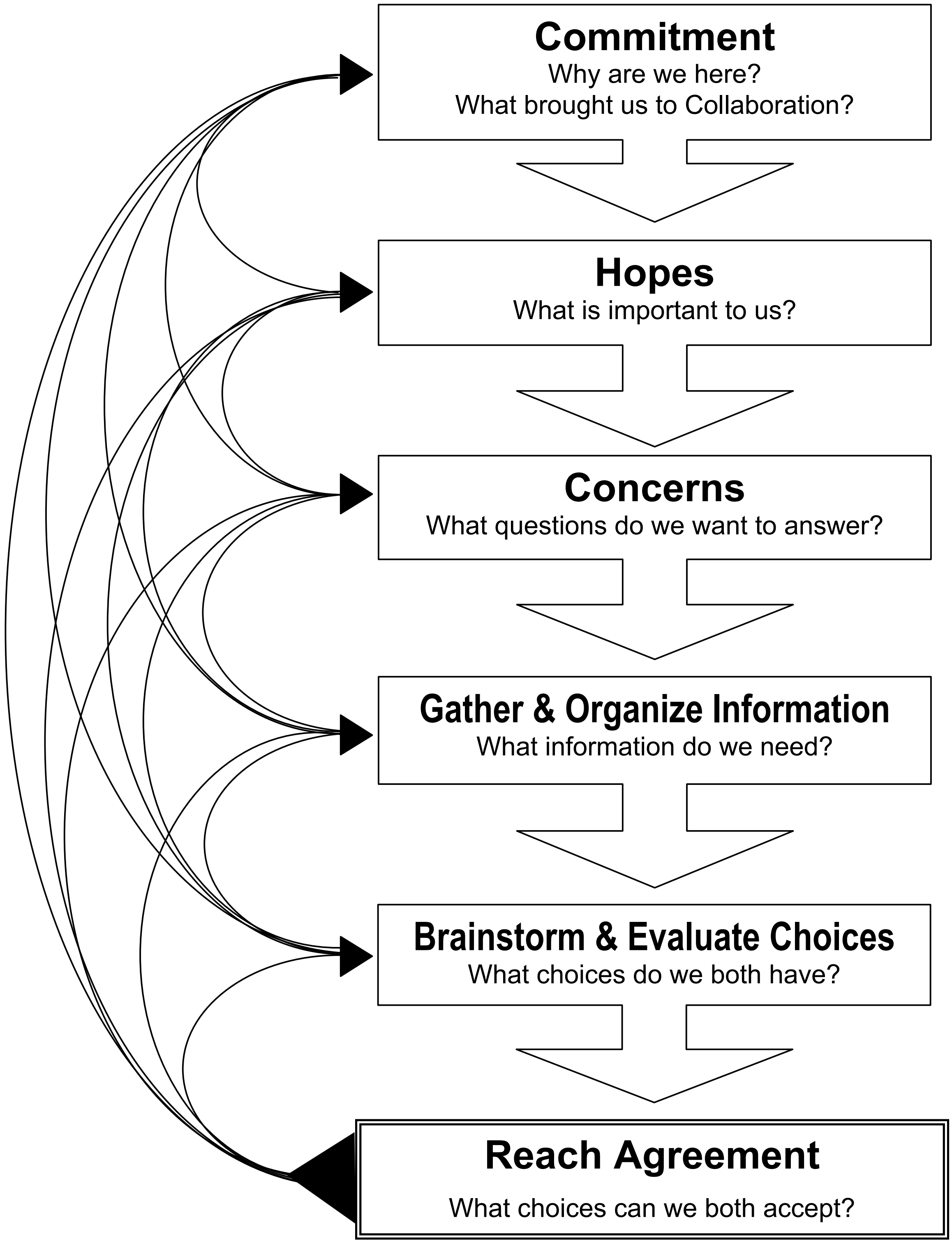
Collaborative Practice – How it Works for the Client



COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE SAN MATEO COUNTY

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE SILICON VALLEY

With thanks to Collaborative Divorce Team Trainings

What You Can Expect From Your First Full Team ("Sign-on") Meeting

Your first full team meeting will be very different from all other Collaborative meetings. It is the first time your handpicked team meets together. It is the only meeting for which your team determines the agenda. Working with your team, you will set the agenda for subsequent meetings. Everyone being present at the first meeting really helps us coordinate our work as a team; striving for the same goal: a Collaborative Divorce that addresses your needs and those of your family.

In order to be effective as a team, we have created a procedure intended to elicit everyone's commitment, yours and ours, to work toward reaching a settlement that best meets the needs of you and your family. This procedure helps set the stage for meetings to come.

Shortly before your sign-on meeting, your professional team will meet separately to coordinate the specifics of the meeting agenda. Because all your team members follow the same protocol, you can expect the meeting to include the following, although maybe not in this exact order:

1. Review of the Collaborative process: what you can expect going forward.
2. Invite discussion of your reasons / expectations in choosing the Collaborative process.
3. Review of the Collaborative documents:
   a. Principles and Guidelines for Collaborative Practice
   b. Stipulation and Order for Collaborative Practice
   c. Consent and Release to Share Information
   d. Collaborative Process Diagram
   e. Expectations of Clients and Professionals (some suggested guidelines)
   Document Review Process: asking questions, understanding what's involved, and making the commitment to the significant efforts that are required.
4. Confirm agreement and sign the Collaborative documents.
5. Address any urgent concerns that cannot wait for the next meeting.
6. Consider costs: how to pay for a process seeking to reach an optimum, long-lasting agreement within your available resources.
7. Create a customized "roadmap" for your settlement. Because you need to know how you will resolve the important questions you are facing, the roadmap will seek to identify those important topics and create a plan for how and in what order they will be addressed.
8. Map out a schedule and allocation of work to be done by you with the different team members. The team helps you set a time-line and structure, and works to create a calendar for about the next three months. This helps keep your case moving forward at a timely pace.
9. Identify the case manager. The case manager's job is to monitor and try to maintain the pace of the process, to help keep the roadmap current (sometimes it needs to be adjusted), and perhaps most important, give you a point person to whom you may talk about any process concerns that may arise (for instance, are meetings happening as planned? are they accomplishing the stated goals?). The case manager will take any such concerns to the rest of the team. Remember that the case manager's role is focused *only* on keeping the process working productively, *not* on the substance of your settlement.

We hope this helps you understand and gain some comfort in knowing what to expect in this important first full team meeting. In future meetings, one of the professionals will facilitate discussions and brainstorming ideas to help you to find the solutions that best fit for your family.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Your Collaborative Divorce team