<u>WHAT IS A COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE "TEAM"?</u>

In the Collaborative Practice process, the team consists of a multi-disciplinary group of professionals. There are two mediating attorneys – one for each spouse. Ideally, the attorneys feel that they work for both spouses, although each is identified as support for and meets privately as counsel to only one person. Either one or two Communications Coaches are assigned to a case. A one-coach model is used for participants who have a strong basis of mental health and effective communications skills and where there are relatively few issues to resolve combined with a relatively high degree of cooperation; a two-coach model is used for couples in which one or both members are struggling with issues related to current functioning, grieving, communications issues or mental health issues. Coaching is designed to assess the emotional components of a case and to provide skill building for parties so that they can communicate effectively during the Collaborative Practice process. Coaches also support the other members of the team related to communications issues and group dynamics. A Child Specialist is used in cases where custody or co-parenting issues are present. The Child Specialist works with all family members to assess dynamics, educate parents about developmental and crisis issues and to negotiate a parenting plan if needed. A Financial Professional (referred to as a "Financial Neutral") can also be a part of a Collaborative team. This professional helps the couple to understand their joint estate and finances and provides information and support so that the couple can plan for their future as a bi-nuclear family. A Case Manager (typically one of the coaches) records meetings in "session notes" and distributes them to the team, including clients. Case Managers also schedule meetings and attend to any administrative tasks.