

Deciding whether to separate and leave a relationship or marriage can be the beginning of a long and difficult process. People may experience distress, confusion and chaos as the consequences from this decision unfold.

For some people, the path to separation is clear. For others, it may be that there is either ambivalence, or even a desire to reconcile with their partner.

Many people may have tried, or be in, counselling to heal the rift in their relationship. It may be that there are practical issues which are not being addressed in counselling which can be resolved in marriage mediation.

## How can Marriage Mediation help me and my family?

Marriage mediation is not counselling and it is not therapy. For reconciliation to occur, parties will typically commit to counselling to move forward. However, whilst reconciliation work / counselling is on-going, your life and those of your children will continue. Marriage mediation can help you create the living arrangements necessary to continue with reconciliation or counselling.

How can you create a structure which gives you space to attempt reconciliation? If you decide to use a controlled separation, how do you manage arrangements for your children and finances whilst you live apart? If you remain under the same roof, what arrangements are necessary to ensure the best chance for a reconciliation?

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I am focused on working with people who seek to resolve their disputes in a constructive and respectful way.

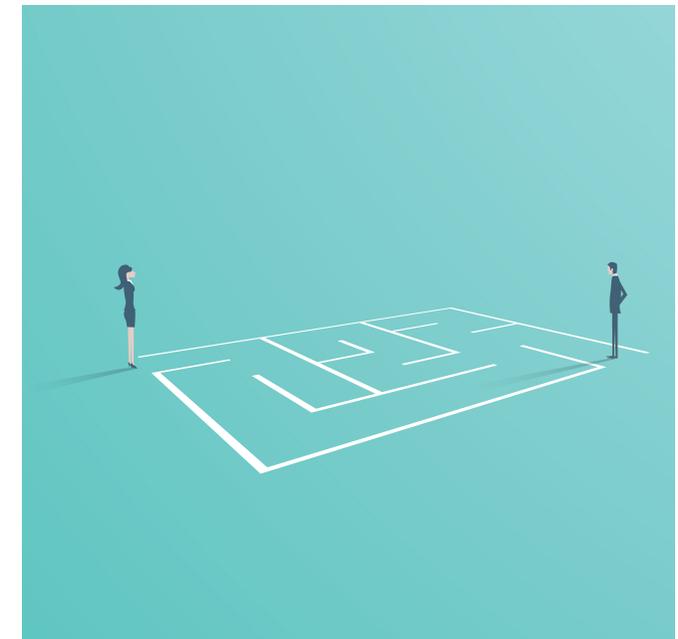
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# Marriage Mediation

## Before, during and after



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## Before marriage mediation:

- **Considering marriage mediation** - you may receive information from a counsellor or solicitor about marriage mediation as an option for a trial reconciliation or controlled separation. A mediator will be happy to discuss with you the nature of the process (e.g. intake through to mediation agreement) so that you can make an informed choice about whether this will be right you and your family
- **Finding a mediator** - when considering a mediator, you may receive a recommendation (e.g. from your solicitor, a friend or counsellor). It is important that you and your partner both feel comfortable with the mediator that you select. You may also wish to consider the mediator's training, experience, availability and cost. A preliminary call with a mediator can also be valuable in helping you to understand more about their approach and how they manage the mediation process.



## During marriage mediation:

- **Intake** - the first step in marriage mediation is for each of you to meet the family mediator for an intake meeting. This is an individual meeting with the mediator and gives you an opportunity to tell the mediator about your perspective on the context of the reconciliation process / controlled separation / etc., the issues that need to be resolved and your goals.
- **Mediation sessions** - the mediation session begins with both you and your partner identifying the issues that need to be resolved and your goals. The mediator will create an agenda. You will both agree the order in which to discuss the issues. The mediator will then lead the conversation through each point. At the end of a session, the mediator will provide a summary with any 'without prejudice' agreements / proposals and which sets out any homework. Mediation is a confidential process and any offers / agreements prior to a final mediation agreement are confidential.
- **Reaching agreement** - when you and your partner have reached agreements, the mediator will draft these terms in a mediation agreement. You always have time to consider the draft and seek any legal advice before signing. Once you and your partner confirm you accept the draft, the mediator will prepare a final copy of the mediation agreement for you to both sign. For most couples who decide to try and reconcile, this will mean continuing or beginning a long process of work with a couples' counsellor.

## After marriage mediation:

- **Review** - it may be that you both agree to include a review when you will check in with the mediator to decide whether the agreed arrangements need to be amended / extended or cease. A review can provide a timeline for when you both consider whether reconciliation has occurred, is still ongoing, or is no longer an option.



- **Family mediation** - if you decide to separate or divorce, then you can work with the same mediator to make your arrangements for children and finances through the family mediation process.