

## What is Collaborative Law?

Collaborative law is a dispute resolution process in which the parties focus on cooperative problem solving. Each party hires a lawyer who is specially trained to use negotiation tools and methods designed to meet the interests and needs of the parties to the dispute. The parties and their attorneys sign a Collaborative Law Agreement in which they agree to share relevant information, maintain the confidentiality of the process, treat each other respectfully, and hire experts jointly if they are needed. Through the use of a series of four-way meetings, the parties, with the help of their lawyers in a safe environment, find mutually acceptable solutions to their issues.

In collaborative law both the parties and their lawyers agree not to use the court as a decision maker. To ensure their dedication to out-of-court settlement, the lawyers stipulate that they cannot represent the parties in court. If agreement cannot be reached and the collaborative process goes to impasse, the collaborative lawyers will withdraw from the case. They will then help their clients find litigation lawyers. Unlike litigation, where the decision-making is left to judges, collaborative law allows the parties to retain control of both the process and the outcome and to reach a resolution that maximizes the well-being of all concerned.

To learn more about Collaborative Law go to: [www.collaborativepractice.com](http://www.collaborativepractice.com); [www.collaborativedivorce.com](http://www.collaborativedivorce.com)

The following lawyers are members of the Vermont Bar Association Collaborative Law Committee have received training in Collaborative Law and have agreed with each other to be committed to the principles of the process:

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