

[Click Here For Our Collaborative Divorce Video](#)

In Florida the collaborative law divorce method is the most innovative development in family law in the last ten years. Collaborative family law offers you a non-adversarial process in which you and your spouse work as a team with trained professionals to resolve disputes respectfully, privately, and without going to court. In a Collaborative Divorce, each spouse has the support, protection and guidance of his or her own lawyer throughout the process.

In this process the clients and attorneys enter into a binding agreement, committing to resolve all issues without court intervention. If settlement fails, the attorneys must withdraw. This makes the collaborative divorce method unique. This commitment to settlement is memorialized in a valid, binding agreement signed by both parties and their attorneys at the beginning of the collaborative process. This agreement is the cornerstone of the process and is essential to the collaborative method.

An advantage of collaborative law is the use of jointly retained, neutral professionals (experts) for issues requiring expertise such as valuation of closely held businesses, commercial or residential appraisals or guidance on parenting issues. These experts use their training and expertise to assist both parties in obtaining a knowledgeable settlement. Rather than acting as “hired guns”, these experts can bring to the table an honest and even-handed view of relevant information and facts to assist in creating options for settlement.

Three steps to begin a successful collaborative divorce:

1. Meet with a collaborative divorce attorney. Ms. Harris and Mr. Hunt are members of a select group of Tampa Bay attorneys trained and experienced in this methodology.
2. Refer your spouse to one of the trained [Tampa Bay Collaborative Divorce Lawyers](#) . Generally, it is better to leave the choice of an attorney to your spouse rather than providing a specific name. Any of the attorneys listed here will provide excellent advice and service. These are highly respected attorneys who practice independently of one another, yet are well known to each other as practitioners of skill and integrity, who can be trusted to honor their promises to negotiate in good faith and with full disclosure. These attorneys are trained in this methodology and understand what is happening each step of the way.
3. Begin the collaborative process with the help of your attorneys. The process is transparent and both spouses will be completely involved and understand the issues and actions involved. Each of you will have far greater control over your divorce in a collaborative

setting rather than in a courtroom.

When clients present with frustration, anger, fear of effectively communicating with his or her spouse, we add to the collaborative team, a neutral communications facilitator who is an experienced psychologist or divorce counselor. With this professional's help, a couple's dysfunctional habits are less likely to derail their ability to settle their case. They work with the clients both in and outside of the meetings to teach divorcing spouses how to communicate responsibly with each other. Occasionally they assist the attorneys in tailoring their approach within the group meetings or in preparing their client, due to various emotional characteristics of the client or his or her spouse. Clients emerge from this collaborative process better able to communicate after their divorce.

Issues are resolved through a series of joint sessions, including the clients, attorneys, and as needed, the other professionals. We keep the group on a well paced schedule to reduce the time and expense of the divorce. This group, collectively and individually, is dedicated to reaching a settlement that considers the values and goals of both parties. Using this method, we have achieved successful settlements in more than 95% of cases which opt for this collaborative approach.

For additional information about collaborative practice or for a collaborative attorney outside of the Tampa Bay area, go to the website of the [International Academy of Collaborative Professionals](#), of which Ms. Harris and Mr. Hunt are long-standing members.