

Achieving positive outcomes through

# Counselling & MEDIATION



ARE YOU CONSIDERING SEPARATION

OR DIVORCE? Counselling & mediation services are available in the community and this brochure outlines different paths you can take to achieve positive outcomes.



➞ **Help is available.**

This brochure will help you find assistance and advice to work things out without going to court. It will help you understand which step to take first, where to find help and at what cost.

If you already have legal representation it will help you and your lawyer understand other supports that are available to you and how to access them.

During separation and divorce, community organisations can help you and any of your family members with:

- relationship difficulties
- conflict resolution and problem solving
- parenting arrangements
- property settlements.

➞ **What help is available?**

Community organisations are committed to helping you find solutions that are in the best interests of your children, yourself and your ex-partner.

You can contact any of the community organisations listed on the back of this brochure. The contact details are listed so you can determine the most convenient organisation for your needs.

➞ **How much does this help cost?**

Each of the community organisations listed in this brochure charge fees on a sliding scale according to income.

*All the community organisations listed in this brochure are approved and partially funded by the Australian Government to provide counselling and/or mediation services under the Family Law Act 1975. This brochure has been funded by the Australian Government's Attorney-General's Department.*

# SEPARATION & DIVORCE





# other information

There are many ways for you to access assistance when you are separating and you might need to get help from:

### ■ Centrelink

Provides information on government benefits.

13 61 50  
[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

### ■ Child Support Agency

Will assist you and your ex-partner meet your child support responsibilities. Also has a Community Services Directory to help you find counselling, financial advice and mediation in your local area.

13 12 72  
[www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

### ■ Community Legal Centres

Are independent, not-for-profit organisations that provide referral, advice and assistance free of charge. Full listing of all community legal centres is available.

(03) 9602 4949  
[www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)

### ■ Family Assistance Office

Payments information for people on family assistance.

13 61 50  
[www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au)

### ■ Family Court of Australia

The home page of the Family Court of Australia provides Court addresses and contact details.

(03) 8600 3777  
[www.familycourt.gov.au](http://www.familycourt.gov.au)

### ■ Family Law Hotline

Free national telephone service providing information about the family law system and local services.

1800 050 321  
[www.familylaw.gov.au](http://www.familylaw.gov.au)

### ■ Federal Magistrates Court of Australia

Provides information on Family Law.

1300 367 110  
[www.fmc.gov.au](http://www.fmc.gov.au)

### ■ Law Institute of Victoria

The Victorian Legal Practices Directory lists details for legal practices in Victoria.

(03) 9607 9311  
[www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au)

### ■ Men's Line Australia

A national telephone counselling line for men who want to talk about their family and relationship concerns. It provides information, support and referral 24 hours – seven days a week.

1300 789 978  
[www.menslineaus.org.au](http://www.menslineaus.org.au)

### ■ Men's Referral Service

Melbourne Metro  
Freecall

An anonymous and confidential telephone service provided by men for men wanting to stop their violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members. 12noon to 9.00pm Monday to Friday.

(03) 9428 2899  
1800 065 973  
[www.ntv.net.au](http://www.ntv.net.au)

### ■ Regional Law Hotline

Free national telephone service providing information about the family law system and local services.

1800 050 400  
[www.familylaw.gov.au](http://www.familylaw.gov.au)

### ■ Victoria Legal Aid

Melbourne Metro  
Country (toll free)  
Provides legal advice and information.

(03) 9269 0234  
1800 677 402  
[www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

### ■ Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria

Melbourne Metro  
Country (toll free)  
Crisis support, information and referral to safe accommodation (refuge) for women experiencing abuse in their relationships. 24 hours – seven days a week.

(03) 9373 0123  
1800 015 188

### ■ Women's Information Referral Exchange

Women's Information is a free information, support and referral service available to all Victorian women.

1300 134 130  
[www.wire.org.au](http://www.wire.org.au)

### ■ Women's Legal Service Victoria

Toll Free  
A statewide organisation providing legal representation, advice and referral to women, specialising in the areas of family law and family violence.

(03) 9642 0877  
1800 133 302

## twelve reasons for using counselling and mediation services

affordable

1

emotionally less draining than Court

2

lawyers involved in co-operative process

3

conflict management & reduction

4

full control

5

focus on children's needs

6

linkage to other support services

7

safety as priority

8

improve parenting relationship

9

focus on family needs, not Court process

10

conducted by qualified and trained professionals

11

confidential

12



Contact your local service provider to discuss which approach – counselling or mediation – will work best for you and your family (see back of this brochure).

Your lawyer or legal adviser may refer you to one of the community organisations. If not, you might want to consult with a lawyer or legal adviser during any of the steps of counselling or mediation.

# the pathways

## **c** Counselling services

Counselling services are available to discuss issues arising at any stage of your relationship. Counselling aims to help you cope with personal issues affecting your life and strengthen your capacity to deal with these issues. Some organisations also provide specialist counselling for children to help them cope with separation issues. There is also special support for men and women coping with or considering separation.

## **c** Step 1: First appointment

Depending on the counselling you seek, you may be seen individually or with your partner. The counsellor will seek to understand the issues leading to your separation and support you to manage your relationship issues.

## **c** Step 2: Subsequent appointments

Individually or together, you will work with the counsellor to explore the issues you are dealing with and help you manage them. They will help you clarify future directions for you and your family. This may also be assisted by using mediation.

## **c** Outcomes

Counselling will help you resolve your relationship issues and improve your post separation parenting responsibilities. You may reach agreements about child support and arrangements for the care of your children. If not, you may need to consider mediation for a more formal negotiation process.



Agreement



No agreement



COURT



Agreement and resolution



No agreement



COURT

## **m** Mediation services

Mediation services help couples and families to resolve disputes in relation to finance and property and arrangements for the care and parenting of children. Mediation aims to develop mutual agreements after considering a range of options available to families.

## **m** Step 1: First appointment

You will be seen individually at the first appointment and will identify the issues you wish to negotiate with your ex-partner.

## **m** Step 2: Subsequent appointments

These may be face-to-face with your ex-partner or held in separate rooms and you will work with the mediator to resolve the issues you and your ex-partner identified as needing negotiation. Counselling may assist you to manage the emotional consequences of separation.

## **m** Outcomes

Similar to counselling, options negotiated between you and your ex-partner may result in agreements about child support and arrangements for the care of your children. Options in mediation may also extend to property and financial settlements. These agreements may be written but are not legally binding. You are strongly encouraged to obtain independent legal advice if you are entering into legally binding agreements as a result of mediation.



DRUMMOND STREET  
RELATIONSHIP CENTRE  
*Building Better Relationships*



**Cairnmillar Institute**  
993 Burke Road, Camberwell  
Also at 120 Collins St Melbourne, Pakenham & other sites  
[www.cairnmillar.org.au](http://www.cairnmillar.org.au)



9813 3400



**Centacare Catholic Family Services**  
383 Albert Street, East Melbourne  
Also at Dandenong, Footscray, Malvern, Mitcham  
Geelong (R)  
[www.centacaremelbourne.org](http://www.centacaremelbourne.org)

9662 3929



5521 7055

**Centacare Diocese of Ballarat**  
619 Sturt Street, Ballarat  
Also at Hamilton, Mildura, Warrnambool  
[www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/Centacare](http://www.ballarat.catholic.org.au/Centacare)

5329 4444



**Centacare Diocese of Sandhurst**  
65 Baxter Street, Bendigo  
[www.sand.catholic.org.au/centacare](http://www.sand.catholic.org.au/centacare)

5443 9577



**Centacare Gippsland**  
19 Connor Street, Warragul

5622 1188



**Child and Family Services Ballarat Inc.**  
115 Lydiard Street North, Ballarat  
Also at Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Daylesford  
[www.cafsballarat.org.au](http://www.cafsballarat.org.au)

5337 3333



**Children's Protection Society**  
70 Altona Street, West Heidelberg  
[www.cps.org.au](http://www.cps.org.au)

9458 3566



**Community Connections (Vic) Ltd**  
135 Kepler Street, Warrnambool  
[www.comconnect.com.au](http://www.comconnect.com.au)

1300 361 680



**Drummond Street Relationship Centre Inc.**  
195 Drummond Street, Carlton  
[www.drummondstreet.com.au](http://www.drummondstreet.com.au)

9663 6733



**Family Mediation Centre**  
L4, 1001 Nepean Highway, Moorabbin  
Also at Frankston, Narre Warren, Ringwood  
Freecall (country)  
Sale (R), Traralgon (R), Wonthaggi (R)  
[www.mediation.com.au](http://www.mediation.com.au)

9555 9300



1800 639 523  
9705 6277

**GordonCare for Children**  
1125 Nepean Highway, Highett  
Also at Mentone, Frankston  
[www.gordoncare.org](http://www.gordoncare.org)

9555 1439



**Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc.**  
64 High Street, Seymour  
21 Welsford Street, Shepparton  
[www.gvfc.org.au](http://www.gvfc.org.au)

5799 1711



5831 1217

**LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services**  
L5, 227 Collins Street, Melbourne  
Also at Bayswater, Brighton, Camberwell, Frankston, Moonee Ponds, Preston, Wyndham  
Geelong (R)  
Wangaratta (R)  
[www.lifeworks.com.au](http://www.lifeworks.com.au)

9654 7360



5222 3172  
5721 5700

**Mallee Family Care**  
122 Ninth Street, Mildura  
Swan Hill (R)  
[www.malleefamilycare.com.au](http://www.malleefamilycare.com.au)

5023 5966



5032 4479

**Northern Migrant Resource Centre**  
251 High Street, Preston  
187-189 High Street, Thomastown  
13 Munro Street, Coburg  
[www.mrcne.org.au](http://www.mrcne.org.au)

9484 7944



9466 4933  
9383 6233

**Relationships Australia (Victoria)**  
46 Princess Street, Kew  
Also at Croydon, Greensborough, Narre Warren, Sunshine  
Ballarat (R)  
Shepparton (R)  
Traralgon (R)  
[www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)

9261 8710



5331 1558  
5821 1846  
5174 1100

**Southern Family Life**  
197 Bluff Road, Sandringham  
[www.southernfamilylife.org.au](http://www.southernfamilylife.org.au)

9598 2133



**Upper Murray Family Care**  
558 Mitchell Street, Albury  
29 Stanley Street, Wodonga

02 6022 8000



Legend:



counselling



mediation

(R) Regional

# CONTACT DETAILS

Please contact any of the organisations listed for advice on reordering this publication.