

Mediation with Melissa Gragg



MELISSA GRAGG
CVA, MAFF

Mediation is an option for couples looking to minimize their interaction with the court system, have more control over decisions made in their divorce and allow for unique and specific plans. It can be used to complete the entire process of divorce or part of the divorce. Mediation is designed to minimize conflict and can be used to complete a divorce in less time than would normally be spent in litigation. Parties retain control over the decision-making process and agreements are reached only when both parties find the terms are acceptable.

Mediators are neutral professionals. Their role is to help individuals clearly define issues, keep lines of communication open and promote discussion and resolution. Mediators do not make decisions for a couple. Rather the couple is in charge of making their own decisions about what the future, children's future and finances. Some of the issues that mediation addresses are: plans for parenting children, division of property and future financial provisions. Mediation can be done both pre and post divorce decree. It is possible to come to resolution of conflict in the face of anger, resentment and fear.

Mediation is confidential, discussions and options explored in mediation are protected communications. At Valuation Mediation, we provide clients with secure online portals for all parties to upload confidential information and exchange documents in an efficient manner. All individuals involved in the matter will have login access to the info. All meetings will be conducted via Zoom with the Valuation team present unless requested otherwise.

MEDIATION PROCESS:

Initiating the Process: The mediation process may begin in different ways. Typically a couple has decided to explore the mediation process or one of the parties is interested in pursuing the process. Mediation is voluntary, so both parties must be in agreement to pursue mediation. An individual meeting will be held with each spouse / partner and joint meetings begin afterward. Except in rare instances all subsequent meetings will be with both parties together.

Duration of the Mediation Process: As each separation and/or divorce is different, it is hard to predict exactly how long your mediation will last. In general, a full divorce, including custody issues, division of property and assets, takes between six and eight sessions. In addition, the mediator will prepare a Memorandum of Understanding, outlining all of the agreements that you have reached through the mediation process.

Outcome of the Mediation Process: The final outcome of the mediation process is the Memorandum of Understanding. The mediator will create this document using all of the agreements created through the mediation process. This document is then given to one or both of the parties' lawyers which is used to create the final divorce decree to be submitted to the court. Part of successful mediation includes planning for future change and how you and your spouse can successfully negotiate those changes, with or even without mediation.

Once you have decided to move forward, we will present you with a formal engagement letter, discuss timeline and meeting schedules. If you have any questions about costs, timing or other financial issues – please call Melissa Gragg at (314) 541-8163 or melissa@bridgevaluation.com

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Valuation, Forensic, Tax and Cash Flow Analysis for Settlement Purposes & Mediation

We provide consulting and financial analysis to assist individuals, and their mediators or attorneys, in the middle of a divorce. We specialize in valuation services when divorcing parties own any marital or separate business interests. We provide forensic analysis of bank statements and business financials, if necessary and requested by the client(s).

We can also analyze other property or assets/debts owned by the parties, show settlement scenarios worksheets, calculate maintenance or alimony and work with the mediator to provide various options of how to split the property.

We conduct all meetings via Zoom and work with the mediator to understand the financial assistance needed by the couple.

Steps to Working with Us

Here are some of the steps to work with us to develop a settlement plan with a business valuation and/or tracing separate and marital assets, maintenance, child support, tax and cash flow calculations:

- Initially we determine the services needed, prioritize the projects and understand the timeline for completion.
- We provide a valuation document request for three to five years of various financial data.
- We provide a secure online portal for all parties to upload and review documents.
- We input the financial data, pull the research reports and market comparable transactions and create a list of questions and schedule our "discovery" meeting.
- We use web conferencing technology to facilitate meetings online if one party cannot be physically present.
- The valuation expert will then incorporate all the information from the discovery meeting into the valuation analysis, address any additional questions to all parties via group emails and determine the value of the business(es).
- Another meeting will be arranged for the valuation expert to communicate the findings of the valuation analysis, as well as answer any questions regarding the assumptions used to determine the value

Once you have decided to move forward, we will present you with a formal engagement letter, discuss timeline for completion and schedule out the meetings. Typically, it takes us 4-5 weeks to complete the valuation process with a report or 2-3 weeks with no report.

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