Ground Rules for Collaborative Law Process

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- Attack the problems and concerns at hand, not each other.
- Avoid positions; rather, express yourself in terms of needs and interests and the outcomes you would like to achieve.
- Work for what you believe is the most constructive, acceptable agreement for both of you and for your family.
- During the four-way conferences, remember the following:
    - Do not interrupt when your spouse or his/her attorney is speaking. You will have a full and equal opportunity to speak on every issue presented for discussion.
    - Do not use language that blames or finds fault with the other spouse. Try to use non-inflammatory words and be respectful of each other.
    - Speak for yourself, using “I” statements.
    - If you share a complaint, try to raise it as your concern and follow up with a constructive suggestion.
    - If something is not working for you, please tell your attorney so that your concern can be addressed.
    - Listen carefully and try to understand what the other person is saying without being judgmental about the speaker or the message.

        - Talk with your attorney about anything you do not understand. Your attorney can clarify issues for you.
- Be willing to commit the time required to meet regularly and be prepared for each meeting.
- Be patient. Delays in the process can happen even with everyone acting in good faith.