HARGRAVE
FAMILY LAW

SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH DIVORCE:

A GUIDE FOR MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPISTS

Prepared by Hargrave Family Law



INTRODUCTION: SHARED GOALS

Marriage and family therapists and divorce attorneys are often seen as being on opposite sides of the journey — one helping couples stay together, the other pushing them apart. In reality, both professions share a deeper purpose, both united in supporting our clients by:

01 Guiding individuals and families through life transitions

02 Reducing harm and conflict while building a brighter future

03 Promoting emotional health and stability for children and parents

04 Empowering clients to create a future in which they can thrive

At Hargrave Family Law, we believe therapists are essential allies in guiding families toward healing — whether that means reconciliation or a healthy, respectful separation. Our firm has had the privilege of partnering with many therapists who specialize in couples & family counseling as well as discernment counseling. Supporting our clients towards a life of stability and fulfillment is something we hold dear. We provide this resource in an effort to reinforce that partnership opportunity and provide resources that may be helpful to you.



THERAPISTS' COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT DIVORCE

Therapists tell us they may often feel:

- **Fear of "abandoning" the client** if they acknowledge divorce as a healthy next step.
- **Uncertainty about their role** once legal proceedings begin.
- **Worry about harm to children** caught in the conflict of a broken marriage.
- **Frustrated by the lack of trusted resources** to give clients when they do decide to divorce.

Our goal here is to address and allay some of those concerns.



WHAT THERAPISTS MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT DIVORCE

Therapists often have deep clinical knowledge regarding their practice, but limited exposure to the legal divorce process. Here are some "insider truths" that can empower you as you counsel your clients:

Not All Divorces End in Courtroom Litigation

Many families benefit from resolving divorce through the use of **collaborative law, an agreed simple divorce, mediation, or a negotiated settlement,** allowing them to avoid a courtroom battle entirely. Helping clients stay focused on resolution and moving forward towards a better future is a goal that therapists and attorneys share.

Divorce Is Not One-Size-Fits-All

Families have the opportunity to customize parenting plans, child and spousal support arrangements, and property division in ways that reflect their unique family's needs. This is especially true when **both parties can work cooperatively towards reaching resolutions.** Guiding clients to creative solutions that work for their family is a wonderful opportunity for lawyers and therapists to work together.

Texas Has Its Own Nuances

From community property rules to parenting plan guidelines to alimony, the legal framework is different than what you may see online, on TV, or hear from clients or friends. The Texas Family Code is over 1500 pages, and knowing the ins and outs and how to strategically apply it takes an attorney a career to master. Encouraging clients to seek guidance from reputable skilled legal professionals benefits them as they evaluate their options.

Courts Are Tasked with Protecting the Best Interests of the Children

Judges are supposed to make decisions that are in "the best interest of the child. In most cases, that means judges do not want children dragged into the parental confict, or the legal process. Rather, parents should be learning new communication skills as they transition from a broken marital relationship to divorced co-parents, and therapists can be instrumental in helping guide parents through this transition in a healthy manner. These skills will help create an opportunity for a good co-parenting relationship post-divorce.

Financial Fears Are Often Greater Than Reality

Many clients worry they will be financially ruined post-divorce. Knowing that equitable (though not always equal) solutions do exist can help reduce their anxiety. Also helping clients prepare to re-enter the workforce, seek new employment opportunities, or begin networking will help them adjust to life after divorce.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF OUR CLIENTS

Collaboration Benefits Families

Therapists provide critical tools and support,

helping clients regulate emotions, gain clarity around their goals and interests, and make grounded decisions. Therapists can also help clients embrace a growth mindset, where they prepare to face new challenges and take on new roles with regards to childcare and/or financial management. They can help empower clients to see that divorce is not strictly an end, but rather a transformative time that's the beginning of the client's next chapter, one they get to write.

Attorneys provide structure and legal guidance throughout the process,

and help clients navigate this challenging period of transition, evaluate options based on their stated goals and interests, and provide information that empowers them to make the best decisions for themselves and their family. Our team encourages clients to stay focused on the future rather than the past, and to keep their goals for the future in mind as they work toward resolution, setting them up for a success moving forward.

Together, we can both support the client in working to reduce conflict, focus on what matters most, ease transitions, and actively work towards a resolution that leads to a brighter future.



PRACTICAL WAYS TO PARTNER



Team Approach

In collaborative divorce, therapists (as mental health neutrals) often sit at the table alongside attorneys and financial professionals. They are actively involved in helping the parties navigate the emotional aspect of divorce and keeping them focused on finding solutions. If you are interested in learning more about the **Collaborative Divorce process,** we'd love to talk!



Education for Clients

As part of our mission to empower people with knowledge, Hargrave Family Law provides **complimentary online workshops and resources** that therapists can share with clients. Our divorce planning workshop is hosted by one of our trusted attorneys and includes a financial planner as well as a mental health professional specializing in Discernment counseling. There is also the opportunity for therapists to participate in the workshop if their practice aligns with offering discernment counseling.



Ongoing Support

We strongly believe in the power of therapy to change lives, provide support in challenging times, and help ease the challenges presented during life transitions. We encourage our clients to explore the many invaluable benefits of therapy prior to divorce, during divorce, and after divorce, as it can enrich the family's future ability to thrive.



Referrals to a Trusted Partner

Instead of giving our clients a list of random names, Hargrave Family Law only refers clients to trusted therapists who are known to us through our network. We would love to explore including you in that network. Likewise, we want to also build your trust so we can be a trusted referral partner for your clients as well.

WHY THERAPISTS CAN TRUST HARGRAVE FAMILY LAW

We know that your reputation is on the line when you refer a client to a lawyer, and we don't take that trust lightly. At its core, our mission is to help good people end broken marriages and divorce without destruction. At Hargrave Family Law, we commit to supporting our clients throughout the divorce process and beyond, and pride ourselves in being fierce advocates for those we represent by focusing on the following:



Compassion first.

We never pressure clients into divorce. If a marriage can be saved, we want to save it! We love LOVE. However, we also know that there are times when loving means leaving. Walking people through the process with compassion is always our priority.



Child-centered advocacy.

Protecting children's emotional well-being is a core value in our firm. We know when the children of our clients have the chance to thrive, our clients have better lives.



Respect for therapists' role.

Therapists are a critical part of the support team for our clients, and we encourage our clients to seek out support during life's turbulent moments. The right therapist can help out clients come out of these chapters stronger and better equipped for the next chapter.



Peaceful pathways.

We are leaders in collaborative divorce and creative problem-solving, choosing to start on the peaceful path forward that rebuilds rather than promoting all out war that destroys.

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR THERAPISTS

When clients bring up divorce, you may find these supportive, nonjudgmental responses helpful:

> *It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed. Would you like to talk to a law firm that will explain your options without pushing you towards courtroom litigation?*

> *I know a reputable firm that takes a compassionate, child-centered approach. Would you like me to connect you?*

> *Even if you're not ready to divorce, learning your options can reduce fear and help you feel more in control.*

> *Do you think the next step is to learn more about the divorce process so you can make informed decisions?*



RESOURCES THERAPISTS CAN SHARE

We provide a safe place for people to learn more about divorce, and have a wide array of publicly available FREE resources, including:

YouTube Videos about Divorce:
https://www.youtube.com/@HargraveFamilyLaw

Website to learn about our Firm:
https://www.hargravefamilylaw.com

Complimentary Monthly Divorce Planning Webinar:
https://hargravefamilylaw.com/dallas-divorce-workshop/

Complimentary Resources to Educate:
https://hargravefamilylaw.com/complimentary-resources/

A SHARED COMMITMENT

Divorce doesn't have to mean devastation, and we believe in guiding people to divorce without destruction. Working in tandem with trusted therapists helps us provide our clients the support they need to step into their next chapter with the ability to flourish. When therapists and attorneys work together, families can emerge from divorce with **dignity, hope, and a foundation for healing.**

Hargrave Family Law is honored to partner with therapists who are focused on the client's future ability to thrive. Together, we can help families through life's most difficult transitions with compassion, clarity, and empowerment. Reach out if you'd like to learn more about partnering with our firm.



CONTACT US

4201 Spring Valley Rd Suite 1210
Dallas, TX 75244

(214) 416-9433

Scan to visit website