



COLLABORATIVE  
PRACTICE  
Resolving Disputes Respectfully

# Collaborative Professionals of Central Pennsylvania

*Our members are available to speak to professional, civic and service organizations about the Collaborative process. If you'd like to schedule a presentation, please email [info@collaborativelawpa.com](mailto:info@collaborativelawpa.com).*

Summer 2014

## Upcoming Events

**CPCP Members and Family Picnic, Senators Baseball Game, July 9. Picnic begins at 6 p.m.**

**International Academy of Collaborative Professionals Networking and Education Forum, Oct. 23-26, Vancouver British Columbia**

## Collaborative Law Defined

Collaborative Practice is a voluntary dispute resolution process in which parties settle without going to court. It is, quite simply, a different way to divorce. Today, more than 10,000 professionals, including 60 in the Central Pennsylvania region, have been trained in the Collaborative process and are committed to using this approach to resolve disputes respectfully. Want to know more? Visit [www.collaborativelawpa.com](http://www.collaborativelawpa.com).

## The Role of the Collaborative Coach

As Steve Lindenberg, Ph.D., sees it, the greatest benefit of the Collaborative divorce process is that it "turns couples and children into survivors instead of victims." Having testified in dozens of custody hearings over the course of his 37-year career as a mental health professional, Lindenberg has seen first-hand the "scorched earth" consequences of traditional divorce proceedings.

In a conventional litigated divorce, the court and its rulings drive the process, and as such, "turns people into adversaries," Lindenberg says. But as a designated and trained Collaborative mental health coach, Lindenberg says his goal is to encourage a team approach that ultimately benefits both sides. "I begin by meeting with each of the participants individually to get them to commit to the process and to help them outline what they hope to achieve through a Collaborative divorce," he explains. "I get them to identify their needs and their strengths."



By helping the parties identify what they believe would be a fair and acceptable outcome from the outset, a Collaborative coach can help dismantle any roadblocks, especially those related to co-parenting. "It's a beautiful thing to see parents working together through a team approach," Lindenberg says, especially since couples who develop their own co-parenting plans are less likely to go to court.

To read more of what Steve Lindenberg has to say about the role of the coach in the Collaborative approach to divorce, visit the Collaborative Professionals of Central Pennsylvania [website](#) and check out his blog post.

## Collaborative Case Study

Melissa P. Greevy, a partner with Johnson, Duffie, Stewart & Weidner in Lemoyne, didn't need to sell her client, "Laura," on the benefits of the Collaborative approach to divorce. A brief explanation of the process and how it could benefit Laura and her soon-to-be ex-husband, "Ken," was all it took. (The clients' real names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

Unfortunately, Ken did not respond to repeated requests to pursue the Collaborative approach, so Greevy was forced to file a formal complaint in court for a traditional divorce, meaning Ken was served with divorce papers. At that point, he decided to investigate the Collaborative approach and eventually obtained his own Collaborative attorney. "In Pennsylvania, you can convert a traditional divorce proceeding to the Collaborative approach without any court procedures," Greevy explains.

Laura and Ken each prepared their own needs analysis at the beginning of the process to outline what they wanted to achieve at the end of their Collaborative divorce. One of the needs and interests Ken identified was his desire to retire early to pursue his lifelong hobbies. Ken's dad died soon after retirement and was never able to enjoy the hard earned (and saved) fruits of his labor. It was a fate Ken hoped to avoid but with divorce pending, Ken feared his assets would be diluted, making early retirement impossible.

Ken worked for a large, national company that Greevy knew, based on previous experience, had a defined benefit pension plan. Ken was forthright in disclosing his 401K plan and stock options but did not think he had a defined benefit pension. Greevy respectfully asked Ken to call his HR department to inquire and sure enough, he had one. By being willing to make the call, Ken was able to "expand the pie" for both himself and Laura by identifying additional assets that would be available to both of them in retirement.

**To read more about this case and how the Collaborative process ensured a successful outcome for both Laura and Ken, visit [Collaborative Professionals of Central Pennsylvania](#) and check out Melissa P. Greevy's June 9, blog post.**

## Collaborative Law In the News



The American Bar Association's Uniform Collaborative Law Act (UCLA), which calls for consistency in the practice of collaborative law from state to state, has been enacted in Alabama, Hawaii, Nevada, Ohio, Texas, Utah, Washington and the District of Columbia.

## Collaborative Professionals of Central Pennsylvania

### Member Notes

- Attorney Robert Davis, Jr. a former member of the Pennsylvania Disciplinary Board, spoke at the May meeting of the CPCP to discuss ethics rules for attorneys, mental health professionals and realtors (the team approach) and the interplay of these rules among the various professions.
- The International Academy of Collaborative Professionals has introduced several new training materials, including e-brochures that IACP members can access at no charge.

There are also new printed public education leaflets available for \$15 for 100 copies. Log on to the Member area of the [IACP website](#) to order your materials.

- Members of the CPCP have made site visits to six mental health practices in the area to provide information on the Collaborative process and a couple of those practices have already invited our members back to make a formal presentation about Collaborative law and how it may benefit their clients.
- On May 16, several CPCP members attended a networking social at Troegs in Hershey that included a tour of the brewery and delicious food and conversation. Our next social will be at the Senator's baseball game at City Island on July 9. Members are encouraged to bring their families and join us for a picnic at 6 p.m. before the game.
- The Executive Committee of CPCP has voted on and accepted a new set of talking points designed to help our members provide a consistent message and explanation to potential clients about what the Collaborative process entails. To get your copy, please email CPCP Co-President Dawn Sunday at [DSSunday@AOL.com](mailto:DSSunday@AOL.com).

**If you'd like to learn more about how you can benefit from the networking and training opportunities afforded through membership in CPCP, please contact our membership chairperson Deb Cantor at [dcantor@mwn.com](mailto:dcantor@mwn.com).**