

## FOREWORD

Kate Scharff and Lisa Herrick have written an extraordinary treatise, *Navigating Emotional Currents in Collaborative Divorce: A Guide to Enlightened Team Practice*. This is the book the Collaborative community has been waiting for: an accessible, practical grounding for Collaborative lawyers (as well as financial and allied professionals) in how to bring to our conflict resolution work something of the psychological understandings and skills that we so admire and envy in our mental health colleagues. For mental health professionals who are curious about Collaborative Practice, this book will introduce you to a way of applying your existing psychotherapeutic skills in a new field.

In the late 1990s, I had the privilege of working together with Bay Area psychologist Peggy Thompson and social worker Nancy Ross to integrate the divorce coaching and financial services team model they had originated with Collaborative Law, which by then was my primary mode of working with divorcing clients. Out of that joint effort emerged interdisciplinary team Collaborative Divorce Practice as we know it today, a model that has swept the field of family law not only in North America, but also in Europe, Australia, Israel, and elsewhere. The value for clients and their children of interdisciplinary Collaborative professional team service delivery is incalculable. A broader, deeper, and more durable kind of conflict resolution becomes possible when the professional helpers take the time to learn the art and craft of teamwork, and to build the trust relationships that are the ground for effective Collaborative service delivery.

The challenge in team service delivery lies in the need for divorce professionals who have previously worked with their clients primarily as “lone rangers” to learn how to share the

Collaborative sandbox. However skillful we may be as lawyers, mental health professionals, or financial advisors, we are all beginners at interdisciplinary teamwork. Every interaction between two or more people on a Collaborative divorce case provides banana peels to slip on, sore toes to step upon, rabbit holes to fall into. Collaborative teamwork may involve regular communications among as many as seven team members, multiplying the opportunities for missteps geometrically. At the same time, Collaborative teams also provide abundant opportunities for professionals to learn together what works, what does not, and why. Until now, the process of learning skillful teamwork has been somewhat hit or miss, depending on the personality and dedication of individuals and the degree to which the trainers who have taught them about Collaborative Practice have grasped the complex challenges of interdisciplinary teamwork and have developed effective ways to teach about it.

Now, at last, there is a deskbook that both beginning and experienced Collaborative professionals can turn to for a clear, user-friendly, yet sophisticated grounding in the dynamics of interdisciplinary team collaboration. Scharff and Herrick begin with the basics about human behavior during divorce, both functional and dysfunctional, that every Collaborative professional needs to understand in order to make the shift from adversarial legal dispute resolution into the more nuanced world of human conflict resolution. These concepts are presented clearly and straightforwardly without jargon, and are anchored in teaching stories drawn from the authors' extensive experience in Collaborative Divorce Practice. These practical illustrations of snafus in team practice and the emotional dynamics that drive them make the material immediately accessible even to lawyers and financial consultants who may have had little prior exposure to psychodynamic concepts. Practice tips and checklists derived from the theoretical material make it possible for Collaborative professionals to read the book today and implement new skills at tomorrow's Collaborative meeting. Particularly impressive is the authors' smooth and skillful exploration of how the dysfunctional behaviors we struggle to manage in our difficult clients can trigger equally dysfunctional behaviors in their professional helpers, and how the dysfunctional

patterns of our clients' failing marriages can be mirrored in dysfunctional dynamics on the professional team.

These people know what they are talking about, and they present it simply and compellingly. This book is the first of its kind, and it has transformative potential. Every lawyer—every professional—who is serious about this work ought to read it, and Collaborative practice groups that aim to foster effective team practice would surely benefit from using this book as a resource.

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