



West Coast

Family Law Centre

Elise Schopper-Brigel
Lawyer and Mediator

Karen Henry
Lawyer and Mediator

We have found in working with families that violence to some degree is very common. As Family Dispute Resolution Professionals under the *Family Law Act*, we are required to check for the possible presence of family violence to better help our clients going forward. For this reason, we talk to our clients about the following important questions:

1. Have you ever had any concerns for your own safety or the safety of your children during the relationship?
2. Has your spouse ever caused you to feel threatened or fearful?
3. Do you believe there is an immediate risk of violence in your family, either to you or to your children?
4. Have you ever had any concerns about sexual, psychological or emotional abuse, including attempted abuse, of yourself or your children?
5. Have you ever had any concerns of intimidation, harassment, or coercion for yourself, your children, other people, property or pets?

We are required by law to ask these questions of all of our clients for a number of reasons:

1. To assess the safety and well being of family members;
2. To assist possible victims to come up with a safety plan;
3. To educate you about the potential impact violence may be having on your family members;
4. To be able to refer you to appropriate services; and
5. To ensure that parenting plans and separation agreements are made in an environment free of coercion and intimidation.
6. To appropriately design family dispute resolution processes.

If your answer is "yes" to any of the questions above, please continue to page 2 and answer the questions to the best of your ability.



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Questions to answer:

1. Who wants to end the relationship and why?
2. What concerns do you have about separating? Do you have a support system?
3. How are decisions made in your relationship?
4. What happens when either of you gets angry?
5. How do you and your spouse settle disputes when you don't agree?



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6. Do you currently feel afraid for any reason? Please explain:
7. Have you ever been fearful about your partner's way of expressing anger?
Please explain:
8. Has your partner ever threatened to or actually destroyed your property?
Yes _____ No _____
9. Has your partner ever threatened to or actually harmed your children? Your family?
Yes _____ No _____
10. Has your partner ever threatened to or actually harmed you?
Yes _____ No _____
11. Has your partner ever threatened to or actually harmed him/herself?
Yes _____ No _____
12. Have you or your children been subject to or threatened with sexual abuse?
Yes _____ No _____
13. Are alcohol or drugs an issue?



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Yes _____ No _____

14. Have you (or someone else in the family) ever called the police about your family?
Please explain:

15. Has the Ministry for Children and Family Development ever been involved with you as a family?

Please explain:

16. Are there any restraining orders or no contact orders?

Yes _____ No _____

17. How do you think your partner influences the lives of your children?

18. Do you have any concerns about your children's emotional or physical safety?

Yes _____ No _____

19. Do you get free time with the family or do you feel free to get together with friends or family?

Yes _____ No _____

20. Do you have any concerns of being denied the necessities of life or being forced into confinement?



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Yes _____ No _____

21. Has your partner threatened to deny you access to your children?

Yes _____ No _____

22. Has your partner ever used intimidation, harassment, coercion or threats against you, your children, other people, property or pets?

Yes _____ No _____

23. Is there a history of family violence in your family of origin or your partner's family of origin?

Yes _____ No _____

24. Are there any weapons in the home?

Yes _____ No _____

25. Have you or your partner ever caused intentional damage to property?

Yes _____ No _____

26. Has your partner threatened to or actually denied you access to family finances?

Yes _____ No _____

27. Do you believe that you would be able to communicate with your spouse in a fair and equal manner during mediation or a meeting with counsel present? What would you need to have in place so that you could?