

GETTING THROUGH THE BREAKUP EARTHQUAKE



When a couple breaks up, it sends shockwaves through their family.

We call this the breakup earthquake. Depending on its seismic force, anger, sadness and confusion can rumble through a family. At the very least, the *breakup earthquake weakens family structure and relationships*. At its worst, it can tear apart families the same way an earthquake tears apart buildings, bridges and the ground.

Such damage is often the result of constant conflict, which can cause toxic stress.

Toxic stress is never good and it's very harmful to children because it can block or weaken brain development, which can lead to many health and social problems—at the time and throughout life.



Just as a house needs a sturdy foundation to hold up the walls and roof, a *brain needs a good base to support all future development* and lifelong health.

Families can avoid and calm the shockwaves of the breakup earthquake in many ways. *Collaborative practice and mediation* are two options and they help families keep their integrity, manage their conflict and give them control of their decisions.

In collaborative practice and mediation, *specially trained lawyers and other professionals help families restructure.*

Much like aid workers in a disaster, they help parents find positive and practical ways to solve their family's problems. These options can also work for couples without children.





Through collaborative practice and mediation, **separating couples are able to settle their differences** as well as protect what matters most to them, such as their children, property and finances.

They gain the knowledge, skills and support they need to manage the stress of separation and to move forward with their lives.

Giving families better ways to talk about and deal with their feelings can also help them divorce or separate without the cost and anxiety of a legal battle or going to court.

With the right support and skills, **families can calm and reduce the damages of a breakup earthquake**

and support the healthy development of their children.



To learn more about mediation, collaborative divorce options and the story of brain development see:

collaborativedivorce.ca
afms.ca
albertafamilywellness.org

Project funding generously provided by the Palix Foundation.