

Divorce Is Traumatic - Don't Get Caught Unprepared

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Preparing for divorce before it happens will reduce the stress that many people face when unprepared. Below are some suggestions to assist you in preparing for divorce.

Understand your finances - not only how much your spouse earns, but the amount of your monthly bills, assets and debt. It is not uncommon for a spouse to incur substantial debt that the other spouse knows nothing about. This is true of loans too. Make sure you have access to all of your records, i.e. tax returns, expense records, bank accounts and credit card cards. Review and understand your finances completely.

Obtain a credit card and bank account in your name alone to safeguard your finances. You don't want to be in a position where you cannot pay for necessities because you no longer have access to funds or a credit card. If you have liquid assets take all or half of these assets and deposit them into your personal account for safe keeping. Ultimately, this account will have to be disclosed and your spouse may have an interest in this account, but the funds will be safeguarded.

If you are not employed, start exploring a career path so you can be self-sufficient. If you need to go back to school or for training, check the time this will take and the costs. Even if you receive alimony, there is no guarantee that your spouse will make these payments and there is no permanent alimony in the State of New Jersey. Additionally, often income is awarded to a dependent spouse who is not employed. If you are the dependent spouse, you want to make sure you receive the proper amount of support.

Consult with a qualified family law attorney to discuss your circumstances and options. Review costs so you can determine how you can fund your divorce litigation. Discuss how to deal with issues that have arisen due to the breakdown of your marriage, such as having to file a Temporary Restraining

Order against your spouse or defending a Temporary Restraining Order that was filed against you.

If you have personal property that has sentimental or intrinsic value, put it in a safe place. If it is taken by your spouse and you cannot prove it you will have no recourse. The same is true of items in a joint safe deposit box. Although the signature card can identify who was last in the box, it is often difficult to prove its contents.

Finally, consult with a counselor, especially if you have children. Discuss with a counselor how best to tell your children about your divorce and how to address any concerns your children might have.