

HOW TO SAVE THOUSANDS ON YOUR SEPARATION: A SMARTER ALTERNATIVE TO LAWYERS



There's a Smarter Way to Separate - And It Doesn't Involve \$50,000 in Legal Fees

If you're facing a separation, you're likely feeling overwhelmed - not just emotionally, but by the uncertainty of what lies ahead. You've probably heard the advice: "Get a lawyer." But what most people don't realize is that the traditional legal system can be financially and emotionally devastating - not just for you, but for your entire family.

At Positive Solutions Divorce Services®, we believe there's a better option. One that keeps you in control, protects your children, and costs a fraction of what most people spend in legal fees. Since 2008, we've helped thousands of couples across Ontario move through the separation process - without stepping foot in a courtroom.

In this guide, we'll show you how family mediation compares to the traditional legal route - and why it could save you **tens of thousands of dollars** while helping you reach a peaceful resolution faster than you thought possible.

A 2021 Legal Fees Survey published in *Canadian Lawyer Magazine* reports that the **average cost of a Separation Agreement prepared by lawyers is over \$50,000 per person.**

Compare that to mediation:

- ❖ No courtroom battles
- ❖ No inflated legal bills
- ❖ No delay tactics
- ❖ Separation Agreements finalized for less than most lawyer's retainer fees



Step-By-Step: How to Reduce Legal Fees During Separation

STEP 1: Pause Before You Lawyer Up

Most couples contact lawyers out of fear or pressure - and it's often the costliest move they make.

Start by exploring alternatives like family mediation. If you and your partner are both willing to cooperate, you can skip the adversarial legal process altogether.

STEP 2: Book a Free Joint Consultation with a Mediator

Find a qualified, accredited family mediator (like at Positive Solutions Divorce Services®) and attend a **free, joint consultation** to:

- ❖ Understand your options
- ❖ Learn about the process
- ❖ Confirm you're both suitable for mediation

This step alone can save you thousands in retainer fees.



STEP 3: Get Organized Early

The more prepared you are, the less you pay for someone else to gather information. Collect:

- ❖ Financial Statements
 - Bank Statements
 - Investment Statements
 - Credit Card Statements
 - Mortgage Statements
 - Line of Credit Statements
- ❖ Property Assessments
- ❖ Pension Valuations
- ❖ Tax Returns

STEP 4: Commit to Transparent Communication

Hiding assets or “lawyering up” behind the other person's back leads to conflict, delays, and expensive legal costs. Instead:

- ❖ Be honest about your financial situation
- ❖ Keep your ex informed of your intentions
- ❖ Consider mediation to support you through the process. Mediation can save you tens of thousands of dollars in unnecessary legal fees.

STEP 6: Avoid Court Unless Absolutely Necessary

Court should be the **last resort**, not the starting point. Judges often encourage mediation anyway - so why not begin there?

Litigation can cost **5–20x** more than mediation, can take years in court and damages co-parenting relationships.

STEP 7: Get Independent Legal Advice — Strategically

Mediation allows each party to get **independent legal advice (ILA)** before signing the agreement - usually a **one-time meeting** instead of months of back-and-forth.

STEP 5: Use Flat-Fee Services Whenever Possible

Avoid open-ended billing. Ask for flat-rate pricing on:

- ❖ Mediation sessions
- ❖ Separation Agreement drafting
- ❖ Divorce application support

Positive Solutions offers **all-inclusive pricing**, helping you avoid hourly surprises.



Bonus Tip: Don't Rely on Advice from Friends

Taking aggressive legal steps based on someone else's divorce story can be incredibly costly. Work with professionals who focus on resolution - not drama.

Cost Comparison: Lawyers vs. Mediations

What Separating Couples Aren't Told About Legal Fees

Most people assume that hiring a lawyer is the “normal” first step in separation. But they're often shocked to discover just how expensive - and adversarial - the traditional route can be.

Mediation offers a dramatically different experience - emotionally and financially.

Side-by-Side Cost Comparison Table

Service Item	Lawyers (Traditional)	Positive Solutions (Mediation)
Initial Retainer (per person)	\$5,000–\$10,000+	No retainer required
Hourly Rate	\$350–\$700+	Flat fee (no hourly billing)
Total Cost (avg.)	\$50,000+ per person (according to 2021 legal survey)	Average \$2,500 per person (all-in)
Agreement Completion Time	6 months – 5+ years (due to delays, back-and-forth)	4–8 weeks on average
Process Style	Adversarial – "lawyer vs. lawyer"	Collaborative – "you and your partner with a guide"
Control Over Outcome	A judge decides if it goes to court	You make the decisions - with professional support
Billing Method	Charged for every email, phone call, and court date	Fixed-fee pricing with no hidden charges
Impact on Co-Parenting	Can escalate conflict and damage future relationships	Designed to build positive communication
Privacy	Public court records	Confidential and private



Real Story: When Clients Find Out Too Late

A couple called us after 5 years of legal proceedings. Each had spent over \$60,000 in legal fees - and they still didn't have a signed agreement.

"With Positive Solutions, we finalized an agreement in under 4 hours, for less than \$2,500 each. We could've bought another house with what we wasted on lawyers."

Takeaway:

If you're willing to work together - even if you're not on the same page yet - **mediation should be your first stop, not your last resort.**

Still Not Sure?

Ask yourself:

- ❖ Would you rather pay \$2,500 or \$50,000+ to complete your separation?
- ❖ Do you want to make your own decisions - or have a judge make them for you?
- ❖ Are you looking for closure in weeks - or court dates in years?

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You don't need to have everything figured out - that's what we're here for. This list simply helps you feel more prepared and in control.



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