



# Solutions Through Mediation

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## THE VOCABULARY OF DIVORCE

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**Divorce** – The dissolution of a marriage.

**No-fault Divorce** – A dissolution based on the irretrievable breakdown of the marriage in Massachusetts; these are the grounds for divorce in all 1A and 1B divorces.

**Joint Petition** – A 1A Petition for the Dissolution of the Marriage filed jointly by the parties [refers to sec. 1A of M.G.L. (Mass. General Laws) ch. 208].

**Equitable Distribution** – The theory that determines how marital property is divided between husband and wife in Massachusetts and many other states.

**Child Support** – Money paid by one parent to the other parent for the benefit of the children.

**Child Support Guidelines** – Apply to most Massachusetts families and give guidance as to how much child support is to be paid

**Alimony** – Money paid to the spouse who has less money to allow her/him to maintain the lifestyle of the marriage. A new Massachusetts alimony statute was signed by the Governor in September 2011.

**Custody** – The legal right to care for your child(ren); shared legal custody is the norm now in Massachusetts, although shared physical custody – now usually called a shared parenting plan – is less common.

**Guardian ad litem** – A lawyer or psychotherapist who is appointed by the Court in a contested custody case to help the Court determine what is in the best interest of the child(ren).

**209A** – Order of Protection (restraining order) – A Court Order that may be obtained for cause by a person who is in fear of physical harm at the hands of a family member, former roommate, spouse, girlfriend/boyfriend.

**ADR** – Alternative Dispute Resolution: Arbitration/Mediation/Collaborative Legal Process

**Divorce Coach** – A recently created role created to help guide a person through a divorce; usually a psychotherapist and often part of a Collaborative Practice Team.

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