

# Coaching Intervention - Informed Consent

RIA SEVERANCE, LMFT

This written policy is intended to inform you, the participant(s) in either dyadic work, decision counseling, child-parent reunification, co-parenting, mediation, family therapy, or a collaborative divorce process, that when I/we agree to work with you, you understand and grant me/us (when another therapist is involved) permission to do any or all of the following at my/our discretion, acting in your best interests, to make the process as effective and efficient for you as possible:

- Any of the strategies below may be experienced by you as disruptive, challenging or annoying, even while they move you towards more effective results. There will be much learning taking place – be patient with your self and each other.
- Skills training for more effective responding will occur when negative judgments, criticism, contempt, blaming, defensiveness, emotion dysregulation or stonewalling occur.
- Therapists will support one another’s effectiveness by cross-talking and engaging the other client(s) in the room.
- If you want to get to the finish line effectively for your decision counseling, family therapy, co-parenting, parental reunification or separation/divorce and spend less money, I/we may interrupt, stop and/or redirect you.
- Arguing is an ineffective means of communicating, and may be a distraction from underlying issues. Arguing serves as uninformative “noise” that reinforces polarized positioning, and blocks forward movement. Arguing will be disrupted by me/us, and more effective communication skills will be facilitated.
- If you seem angry, scared, upset, sad, etc. I/we may need to stop to help you acknowledge what is going on for you, before we can move forward. I/we may ask you to work to clarify the underlying mood, tension or give voice to unspoken issues. To move forward effectively, we may not be able to simply “skip” or run over elephants in the room.
- I/we may need to help you distinguish your thoughts/opinions/negative judgments from painful/difficult feelings.
- When you become judgmental, I/we will redirect you to observe and describe “the facts” as a video camera would, or to make a respectful request for more information, to avoid needlessly provoking or alienating your partner/spouse/co-parent/parent/child. Judgments are inherently alienating when you direct them at your self or others.
- If you issue a complaint, I/we will redirect you consistently to make a *clear, direct and polite request for the specific behavior you do wish to see* (rather than focusing on what you *don’t* want), or to *offer a win-win proposal*. I/we may rephrase your requests to increase the likelihood your partner/co-parent/parent/child can hear them.
- At times, I/we may ask you to stop talking to focus on listening actively, e.g. when emotions escalate. Your partner/spouse/co-parent/parent/child is not likely to be able to move forward unless s/he feels understood.
- During this process, I/we will frequently ask you to verbalize your understanding of your partner’s/co-parent’s/parent’s/child’s specific concerns, desires and needs. You don’t have to agree/endorse, in order to simply acknowledge and reflect.
- In ANY relationship, there are *always* unresolvable conflicts that require some degree of understanding and acceptance. Rehashing the past is *rarely* effective when you are learning new skills and/or ending a marriage.
- You acknowledge this fact, and agree to take these issues off the table, and to accept coaching and effective resources to assist in resolving the issues that *are* resolvable (e.g. individual therapy, co-parenting classes).
- In this process, there is a need to accept and possibly resolve your own disappointments in order to move forward in your lives, together or apart. If the context is divorce, you agree to consider the best interests of *all* family members, to do what is necessary to secure an honorable closure to your marriage/partnership, or to co-parent effectively and to stretch beyond your comfort zone and any desire to “be right,” in order to focus on the wellbeing of your child(ren).
- If you have a child/children, the goal is to have you co-parent effectively, to be able to dance at your child’s wedding, and to have all such future milestones be joyful and respectful, rather than producing a lifetime of often unspoken, painful tension for your child(ren).

By my/our signature(s) below, I/we acknowledge that I/we have read, understand the contents of this policy statement, and agree to discuss any concerns about them with my/our couples therapist/coach/mediator, and agree to abide by this policy to allow for the effectiveness of this process.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Client Signature

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_