

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
What Is Divorce Abuse? .....	7
Steps to Prevention .....	10
<b>Step One:</b>	
<b>Keep Your Child out of the Middle</b> .....	11
How Conflict Hurts Your Child .....	12
Danger Zones: Ways a Child Gets Caught in the Middle:	
<i>Open Conflict</i> .....	14
<i>Negative Talk</i> .....	14
<i>Family Members' "Support"</i> .....	15
<i>The Silent Treatment</i> .....	15
<i>Using Your Child as a Messenger</i> .....	16
<i>Putting Your Child in a Loyalty Bind</i> .....	16
<i>Burdening Your Child</i> .....	16
<i>Interrogating Your Child</i> .....	18
<b>Step Two:</b>	
<b>Allow Your Child to Love Both Parents</b> .....	19
Value Both Parents .....	19
<i>Positive Qualities Activity</i> .....	20
Two Teachers are Better than One .....	20
The Greatest Danger .....	20
<i>Avoid Negative Assumptions and Actions</i> .....	20
<i>Respect your Child's Need for the Other Parent</i> .....	21
<i>Show Acceptance of the Other Parent</i> .....	21
<i>Show Acceptance for Two Homes</i> .....	22
<i>Ease the Transition Process</i> .....	23
<i>Minimize Change Whenever Possible</i> .....	24
<b>Step Three:</b>	
<b>Work on Your Own Recovery</b> .....	25
Giving Yourself Permission to Grieve .....	26
<i>The Stages of Grief</i> .....	26
Letting Go of the Pain .....	27
Recognizing Positive Memories .....	29
Disengaging from Your Former Partner .....	29
<i>Focusing on Getting Even</i> .....	29
<i>Focusing on Winning</i> .....	30
<i>Focusing on Control</i> .....	30
<i>Playing the Victim</i> .....	30
Managing Your Anger .....	31
<i>Choose Responsibility over Anger</i> .....	31
<i>Anger DOs and DON'Ts</i> .....	33

<b>Step Four:</b>	
<b>Develop New Communication Skills</b>	35
Create New Expectations around Communication	35
<i>Agree on a Method of Communication</i>	35
<i>Decide on the Frequency of Communication</i>	36
<i>Select the Topics</i>	36
Learn New Communication Techniques	37
<i>Use a Respectful Tone of Voice</i>	37
<i>Use Respectful Body Language</i>	37
<i>Select Your Words with Care</i>	37
<i>Avoid "You" Statements</i>	38
<i>3 Reactions: Defend, Counterattack, Withdraw</i>	38
<i>Practice "I" Statements</i>	39
<i>Use Reflective Listening Skills</i>	40
<i>Reflective Listening Practice</i>	41
<i>Learn to Negotiate Differences</i>	43
<i>The 7 Steps of Negotiation</i>	43
<b>Step Five:</b>	
<b>Create a New Relationship as Co-Parents</b>	47
Task 1: Realign as Co-Parents	47
<i>Realignment Contract</i>	48
Task 2: Minimize of Negative Influences	49
Task 3: Use a Business Relationship as a Model	49
<i>Dedication to a Common Goal</i>	49
<i>Commitment to a Win-Win Relationship</i>	49
<i>Differences Are Negotiated</i>	50
<i>Common Courtesies Are Observed</i>	50
<i>Communicate with Facts, not Feelings</i>	50
<i>The Relationship Is Limited in Scope</i>	50
Task 4: Clarify Boundaries	50
<i>Clarifying Boundaries Activity</i>	51
Task 5: Be Dedicated to the Future	51
<i>Encourage Shared Activities</i>	51
<i>Embrace Your Child's Extended Family</i>	52
<i>Prepare for Future Change</i>	52
<i>Navigate Developmental Changes</i>	52
<i>Give the Gift of a Strong Co-Parent Relationship</i>	53
In Closing	53
<b>Appendix</b>	55
Children's Typical Reactions to Divorce	56
Divorce Rules	59
Bibliography	60
Suggested Resources	60