

There are few areas of social life and legal practice involving more sensitivity and trauma than that involving matrimonial law. Clients frequently misunderstand the role of a lawyer in representing their interests in this area of law. While a lawyer has a professional responsibility to ensure that the client's rights and interests are always paramount (subject only to laws relating to children) lawyers are also officers of the court. As such they play an important role in the administration of justice.

To assist you in understanding our role as your lawyer we set out below certain best practice objectives to which we will adhere in the delivery of our services to you:

1. To provide high quality legal and other advice, to represent the client's needs in a conscientious, diligent and efficient manner and to act in accordance with our professional obligations as lawyers and our duty as officers of the court.
2. To ensure that the client's rights and interest are paramount subject only to laws relating to children.
3. To encourage, counsel and systematically help the client isolate the issues in dispute and to develop appropriate options for their resolution, where at all possible in a spirit of cooperation with the other party and their advisers and with a view to reaching agreements which accommodate as many as possible of the interests of all of the parties by negotiation rather than by contested litigation.
4. To assist the client to regard the welfare of any children as their first and paramount consideration and to encourage the client to promote cooperation and consultation between parents in decisions concerning children.
5. To encourage the client to provide full, frank and clear disclosure of all information relevant to matters in dispute.
6. To provide candid and honest advice as to the merits and probable results of the client's case.
7. To avoid heightening personal emotions by the advice we give and by the use of language or expression of opinion as to the behaviour of the other party; to represent our client's interests, not their anger.
8. To advise, negotiate and conduct proceedings in a manner calculated to assist and encourage the client to settle differences as quickly as may be reasonable, recognising that the client or the other spouse may need time to come to terms with the consequences of the breakdown of the relationship.
9. To advise, negotiate and conduct proceedings on behalf of the client in a manner designed to achieve a level playing field, to balance the power in the relationship and to ensure that neither party is disadvantaged by the control of money, property or power.
10. To promote prudent family law practice and procedures designed to achieve the efficient handling and conclusion of the client's matter and the compliance either with directions of the court, orders, agreements and terms of settlement.