

# Divorcing Tools

## Introductory Workshop

### INTRODUCTION

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There are nearly 150,000 applications for divorce each year in England and Wales. Although the divorce rate has been falling, it does not take into account the increasing number of couples who choose not to marry or those in civil partnerships whose relationships have broken down. There is no doubt that divorce and separation both cause very real emotional upheaval for everyone involved, including any children, friends and family. In short, divorce and separation can be a very isolating, painful, stressful and expensive process.

This groundbreaking workshop will be invaluable for anyone (married or not) whose relationship is ending, whether they are the instigator or the unsuspecting partner. It will enable you to develop specific practical skills and communication techniques that will be particularly useful throughout the divorce/separation process. This is a confidential, informal and non-judgemental workshop. It will help you to discover the numerous potentially expensive and stressful pitfalls and problem areas that you may encounter along the way, and it will give you the confidence and skills to pre-empt and manage these situations effectively, thereby reducing the stress and associated expense. It may well also help you to move on more quickly into the next phase of your life.

The development of interpersonal skills traditionally has been targeted specifically at the business community in order to provide solutions for dealing with various workplace situations. However, it was personal experience of the difficult and stressful divorce and separation process that inspired the conception of the *Divorcing Tools* model by H2 Training and Consultancy. It was developed by a small group of H2 Consultants who between them have significant personal and professional experience in the related fields of occupational psychology; interpersonal effectiveness training; skills coaching; divorce and personal counselling, as well as having survived the divorce and separation process themselves.

*Divorcing Tools* reapplies the tried and tested skills and techniques of emotional intelligence, assertive communication, strategic problem solving, negotiation and conflict resolution (amongst others) to the specific challenges of a relationship breakdown.

### KEY AIMS

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1. To enable participants to develop confidence and skills to behave and communicate effectively, in order to work towards and to achieve positive outcomes from their relationship breakdown.
2. To focus on key issues and challenges relating to a relationship breakdown, such as: developing and maintaining confidence and self-esteem, looking after the children's best interests, dealing with aggression and conflict, managing relationships with friends and family and getting the best from your solicitor.
3. To introduce powerful and flexible tools and techniques for surviving the divorce/separation process whatever the participants' previous experience or circumstances.
4. To facilitate the development of strategies for maintaining participants' ongoing post-workshop personal support and development.
5. To cover essential topics in a relatively short time, that can be applied easily to real-life situations with immediate effect.

## KEY BENEFITS

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Participants will learn how to:

- Get the best results from their dealings with professional services, such as solicitors, financial advisers and mediators, in order to minimise unnecessary pressure, time and expense
- Minimise the financial, emotional, practical and social costs of their divorce
- Maintain self-esteem and increase confidence to assert their needs when communicating with their ex-partner and with their advisers
- Anticipate and confidently handle complex relationship/friendship issues that inevitably arise in a divorce/separation situation by setting realistic new groundrules and redefining boundaries
- Proactively handle the process of change and how to take personal control of difficult situations through strategic planning and creative problem solving
- Develop a more confident and competent negotiating style, in order to protect their own interests and get the best outcomes
- Make, refuse and respond to requests more effectively to help reach a quicker resolution and avoid unnecessary, frustrating and expensive stalemate
- Improve communication and develop cooperative and supportive relationships with all parties to the divorce/separation, in order to ease the process to a speedier resolution
- Deal more confidently and effectively with conflict and anger from others
- Maintain their composure, balance and dignity even when provoked
- Take a broader perspective and decrease personal stress and anxiety
- Exercise control to help avoid any feelings of resentment, anger, guilt and helplessness

## WHAT THIS WORKSHOP IS AND ISN'T ABOUT

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Uniquely the *Divorcing Tools* workshop IS about:

- Providing a structured practical workshop facilitated and designed by experienced professionals to develop specific skills and techniques that are invaluable in the divorce/separation process
- Providing a safe and comfortable environment conducive to personal reflection, learning and development
- Facilitating participants to reflect upon the consequences and benefits of a range of actions and behaviours
- Empowering individuals to feel more confident about their own choices and actions
- Enabling participants to become self supporting and to develop their own support networks

The *Divorcing Tools* workshop is NOT about:

- “Tea and sympathy”: it is not a self help group lacking professional input
- Sitting in an uncomfortable community centre
- Pressurising participants to share their personal details and insecurities
- Creating an expensive or dependent ongoing relationship with our organisation
- Judging peoples’ lifestyle and relationship choices or decisions
- Promoting any particular product, service, cause or faith
- Promoting any particular approach or outcome to relationship difficulties
- Offering legal advice of any type

## WORKSHOP FORMAT

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This workshop runs over 2 days, from 10.30am on a Saturday until about 4pm on Sunday. Day one will consist of a number of instructor-led sessions as detailed in the outline programme below. These will be a combination of relaxed but informative self-reflective exercises, discussions and presentations of tools and techniques by the trainers. The second day will be less structured. It will begin with some sessions that will help you to crystallise the skills and techniques that you learned on day one into a personal action plan. You will also have further opportunity to chat with other course participants, to share experiences and to make the most of the spa and leisure facilities on-site (for those opting to stay).

In order to meet our participants' varying needs we are offering the following options:

1. Saturday and Sunday Workshop including one overnight stay with leisure package
2. Saturday and Sunday Workshop (no overnight stay or leisure package) for those living locally
3. Saturday only: Core Skills Workshop (10.30am to 5.30pm)
4. Additional Friday overnight stay for those with long journeys

Please note that although we are offering a variety of options, these are for convenience. However, we would highly recommend attending both days of the workshop as it has been carefully designed to include a balance of learning and relaxation and will give you an opportunity to step back and gain perspective on your current situation.

## VENUE & FACILITIES

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The workshop will be hosted at Kents Hill Park Training and Conference Centre in Milton Keynes. The venue has been selected for its central and easily accessible location in the UK, as well as for its high standard of training, accommodation and leisure facilities. Transport links to Milton Keynes are excellent with regular direct train services from London Euston and Birmingham New Street and being close to the M1 Motorway J13/14. If you are arriving by car there is plentiful free parking on-site.

**Training Environment:** The workshop will be run in comfortable, well equipped, air-conditioned, modern conference rooms which are wheelchair accessible and are fitted with induction loops where necessary.

**Catering:** Kents Hill Park provides excellent catering. On arrival you will be treated to pastries, tea and coffee. There will be plentiful refreshments throughout the day and a three course self-service lunch in the relaxed yet stylish, contemporary restaurant. For those opting to stay the night there will be a three-course dinner from a varied menu of tasty and healthy options. Given adequate notice, special dietary needs are also well catered for.

**Accommodation:** All bedrooms have been recently refurbished, are well appointed, are comfortably furnished and have en-suite bathrooms. Bedroom facilities include remote control TV, hairdryer, hospitality tray, direct dial telephone, BT Openzone wireless internet access and study area.

**Relaxation and Leisure:** On-site leisure facilities are available for those who opt to stay overnight. These include a fully equipped gymnasium, indoor sports hall which is available for badminton, volleyball and five-a-side football, there are regular step aerobics classes, circuit training etc., two squash courts, large swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, steam room and solarium. Free towels are provided for your use. The Oasis Beauty Room offers at an additional cost: therapeutic massage, reflexology, Reiki, Indian head massage and various Dermalogica skincare and body treatments.

**Café Bar and Cyber Café:** There is a relaxing café bar and lounge area furnished with comfortable sofas. The café serves light snacks and beverages throughout the day and evening as well as there being a licensed bar. You will also be able to enjoy a large screen TV, Sky Sports, football table, darts and pool if you wish!

## OUTLINE PROGRAMME

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### DAY ONE - 10.30am to 5.30pm

- **Begin with the end in mind** – Identifying realistic goals to aim for throughout the divorce/separation process. Taking a broader perspective to decrease personal stress and anxiety.
- **The enemy within versus the enemy without** – Understanding the difference between internal and external influencing factors and their contribution to either creating positive or negative outcomes. Learning how to take personal responsibility for improving communication and developing cooperative and supportive relationships with all parties.
- **Seeing the “bigger picture”** – Identifying the complex emotional, interpersonal, practical and financial issues that inevitably arise throughout the divorce/separation process. Considering how the various issues interrelate.
- **Dealing with the issues** – Minimising the potential emotional, social, practical and financial costs of divorce/separation, including setting realistic new groundrules and redefining relationship boundaries.
- **What are the key skills, tools and techniques?** – Considering the techniques available for dealing with the complex issues identified in the previous sessions. Learning how to take personal control of difficult situations through strategic planning and creative problem solving.
- **Self-esteem and confidence** – Learning how to develop and maintain self-esteem and understanding the importance of these in underpinning the ability to assert your needs and to communicate effectively with your ex-partner and with your advisors.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – Understanding the importance of exercising self-control to help avoid behaviours or actions that create or perpetuate feelings of resentment, anger, guilt and helplessness in yourself and/or your ex-partner.

- **Assertive, Passive and Aggressive Behaviour** - Identifying different behaviour styles and characteristics in yourself and others, and learning how to apply the assertiveness model to achieve the best outcomes from communications and negotiations with your ex-partner, family, friends, your solicitor, financial advisor and mediators.
- **Request making and refusing** - Identifying ways of being polite but clear and direct in the process of making and refusing requests in order to reach a quicker resolution and avoid unnecessary, frustrating and expensive stalemate.
- **Dealing assertively with criticism** - Learning how to give and receive criticism in an effective manner.

### DAY TWO MORNING - 10.00am to 1.00pm

- **Recap of Day One** – Reflecting on key learning points from the various sessions and consolidating understanding through an informal question and answer session.
- **Dealing with difficult and aggressive behaviour** – Learning how to deal confidently and effectively with conflict and anger from others. Maintaining composure, balance and dignity even when provoked.
- **Personal Strategic Action Plan** – Identifying the key issues relating to your personal situation and developing a realistic strategic personal action plan that utilises the tools and techniques learnt during day one of the workshop. Considering ongoing sources of support, potential difficulties and how to overcome them.

### AFTERNOON - 2.00pm to 4.00pm

- **Free Time** – Enjoy the leisure facilities, have a drink, relax and have a chat before going home.

## FEEDBACK

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- *“The trainer helped lots with confidence, which is a lot of my problem. Also gave me various options and ways of handling difficult situations.”*
- *“I found it really helpful to be able to talk through issues personal to me and it was nice to be able to talk through my fears without worrying about what the group might think of me.”*
- *“Thanks very much for the workshop I found it really useful (and I promise to let you know how the mediation goes)”*
- *“It was especially useful that the session drew from my own experiences – it provided practical solutions and wasn’t too theoretical”*

## COST

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We understand that attending a training workshop is an investment - not just in terms of the cost, but also in time. We are therefore committed to providing excellent value by ensuring that our workshops are reasonably priced. Unlike other inexpensive workshops, we deliberately restrict the number of places so you can rest assured that the workshop will be focused on the needs of every participant, and will be an effective and supportive learning experience.

Costs for the workshop are as follows:

- Saturday and Sunday Workshop including one overnight stay with leisure package: **£420**
- Saturday and Sunday Workshop (no overnight stay or leisure package): **£300**
- Saturday only: Core Skills Workshop (10.30am to 5.30pm): **£250**
- Additional Friday overnight stay: **£120**

Workshop fees are fully inclusive of:

- VAT at the current rate
- Workshop tuition / materials
- Workbook, with comprehensive reference materials and checklists
- Three course lunch / refreshments

Accommodation costs cover:

- Comfortable double room with en-suite bathroom
- Three course dinner
- Full English Breakfast
- Use of on-site leisure/spa facilities (pool, gym, sauna, jacuzzi, steam room, exercise classes.)

## CONTACT

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