

## Is your client ready for divorce?

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By Noel da Silva

Peel / Halton Collaborative Practice met for its annual 2-day retreat at the Hockley Valley Resort on Friday, December 1 and Saturday, December 2, 2017. There were about 20 lawyers, family professionals and financial professionals who attended. There were four last minute regrets from members who had formally registered. It was a very informative, interesting and fun two days. The food was excellent.

What is very interesting for any person who works in the family law field and who is struggling to finalize a separation agreement is the question of whether the person or client was ready to proceed or not. Even if the marriage or relationship was at an end and they said they were ready for a divorce, was this actually true? How would you as the professional they consulted know what the problem area was? Is there any way to help the client through the impasse or problem area?

Well as you may have guessed someone has been working since 2015 on an app to do this. That someone is Sue Cook, who is a social worker. She is very well qualified to think about and do research in this area. She is a good speaker and helps train people in the collaborative law process using the team model. She has given seminars locally, provincially for the Ontario Collaborative Law Federation and internationally at the International

Academy of Collaborative Professionals at the annual forum.

The software is a divorce readiness indicator screening tool. It starts with a questionnaire. Either or both spouses or partners can answer the questionnaire. It takes about an hour to complete. The lower the score the readier the person is to enter into a streamlined process. The higher the score the less ready the person is and the more likely they are to need to use the team model. In addition to a really competent team they could as an alternative consult with a family professional first or as part of the separation process.

Go to the website [www.OutcomeReady.com](http://www.OutcomeReady.com). You can also reach Sue Cook at (705) 716-1089. The cost is \$149 for two people. As a professional you can purchase 20 units to give to your clients for \$50 each.

Outcome Ready produces an in depth comparative analysis that considers 25 broad areas. Some of the factors have greater significance such as:

- Child concerns
- Coping strategies
- Financial concerns
- Behaviour during marriage
- Behaviour during separation
- Mental health
- Negotiation skills
- Positional v. Interest
- Child custody and care
- Power Imbalance
- Trust

As you can see and start to understand this tool is thorough and provides good insights for both the clients and professionals seeking to help. In addition to the comparative analysis there is a complexity report that sets out the individual complexities score with an explanation. One party does not see the other party's results.

Do not hesitate to call Sue or any of our collaborative practice members listed on our website [www.peelcollaborative.com](http://www.peelcollaborative.com) , a constructive and dignified process to separation and divorce.

*Noel is a family lawyer practicing in Brampton. He is also a member of Peel / Halton Collaborative Practice, Collaborative Practice Toronto and the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals.*

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