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It is not just about costs in family law, it is also about a person's well-being and most importantly, the children's well-being.

But if we focus on costs, here is how. Whenever a couple goes to court in a family law matter (with legal representation), the rule of thumb is that it costs on average \$5,000 per step in the case (starting the action, attending the case conference, attending questioning, a motion and settlement conference). Often it costs much more, particularly when kids are involved. The goal is to keep people out of court. If there is early intervention with both parties by family relations specialists (social worker, therapist, divorce coach, parenting mediators / assessors) from the very beginning, there is a much higher chance that things will not degenerate into litigation, thus saving the family tons of money. Most importantly, what can easily become a high conflict custody and access case (which is so hurtful to kids) is likely to be contained from the get go. This is so clear to all involved that this is why in Ottawa, we have put together the Coordinated Case Management Pilot Project (the so-called High Conflict Project) to provide separating parents with this type of early non-legal intervention. This project alone can attest to the enormous cost savings for those families who have participated.

From a private practice perspective, it is very simple. Instead of paying me \$300 an hour to listen to, deal with, and contain the client's very understandable emotions, the client would pay between \$100 to \$150 per hour to have a family relations specialist do that. The savings? 50% of the cost. In addition, because the client's emotional needs are properly attended to by a qualified professional (one who does not think about property sharing and strategic moves to gain custody), the clients are much better equipped to deal with matters outside of court, and settle. In my firm, we work with a family relations specialist (not in the way we would like because of LSUC constraints but in the best alternative way) and his interventions in my clients' files are examples (every day) of how his involvement in my cases have resulted in quicker, less costly settlements which will lead to long-term peace for these separated families.

I hope that helps.



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