

PRINTABLE WORKSHEET

Separating well: telling the kids and the first 30 days

A planning sheet for parents who have decided to separate. If there has been violence, threats or fear, put safety first: VictimLinkBC (24/7) 1-800-563-0808, or 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Telling the children — our shared script

Say it together if it's safe, sitting down, when there's time afterwards. Keep it short: a grown-up decision, not their fault, final, and you both still love them.

"We have something important to tell you. _____ and _____ have decided that we're going to live in two homes. This is a grown-up decision we made together, after a lot of trying. It is not because of anything you did or said, and it isn't something you can fix. We both love you, and that will never change. Here's what will stay the same: _____. Here's what will change: _____. Any feeling is okay. You can ask us anything, any time."

Avoid: blaming either parent, adult details (affairs, money), asking them to choose, promising what you can't guarantee.

The first 30 days

- ☐ Temporary living arrangement agreed, in writing
- ☐ Interim parenting schedule + shared calendar
- ☐ Children's routines kept steady; school told
- ☐ BC Parenting After Separation course (free, online)
- ☐ Draft plan started with Justice Canada's Parenting Plan Tool
- ☐ Shared accounts, debts and bills listed; who pays what for now
- ☐ Documents gathered: taxes, pay stubs, pensions, mortgage/lease
- ☐ Each of us has had independent legal advice
- ☐ Emergency contacts, wills and beneficiaries reviewed
- ☐ What we'll each say publicly agreed

How we'll communicate

Help in British Columbia

- Family Justice Counsellors (BC government) — free help with parenting, support and mediation for eligible families.
- Mediation or collaborative family law — settling outside court.
- Counselling, individually or together. Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text 686868.
- General information only, not legal advice.

Interactive version, with your results calculated for you: victoriarelationshiptherapy.ca/tools-separating-well-planner.html