



Family Matters

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May 2021

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A Note From Kendelle

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Get Active To Reduce Stress And Maintain Mental Health

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Separation vs Divorce

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Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

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Depending on their age, children and teenagers can face challenges such as:

- Cyberbullying
- Online predators
- Downloading malicious software
- Using inappropriate apps or websites
- Sexual luring or sending sext messages

While you can't completely cyberproof your child, you can make sure they are prepared and leverage technology to protect them.

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A Note From Kendelle

Spring is well underway, and there has been so much change and uncertainty over the past several months, including this past April. With April came surging COVID cases, particularly here in the Fraser Health region, as well as tighter restrictions imposed by Dr. Bonnie as a response. Vaccines are rolling out – we all just can't seem to get them fast enough.

Nonetheless, with April came some loosening of the rules and protocols for those living in seniors' homes across British Columbia. My grandmother is one of those seniors. While the facility she lives in has not yet fully loosened the protocols as contemplated by Dr. Bonnie, I am thankful that we are able to now have real visits with her in some capacity, which means a lot.

COVID has been particularly trying for seniors, including my grandmother. The isolation she experienced was longstanding and onerous. Facetime calls can only go so far. I always thought at least she and my grandfather had each other throughout most of this pandemic; however, Grandpa died last October at age 93.

Because of COVID, my grandmother had to deal with the death of her husband of over 70

years largely on her own and while isolated from friends and family. As a family, we missed that time to grieve together, share memories of him over coffee, tears, and laughs, and generally just be together during such a sad time.



We were also unable to have a funeral.

My grandfather was a rarity in this world and lived his life to its fullest and in sacrament to his

family, friends, and community. He was a farmer, a fisherman, a businessman, a leader, a friend, a dad, a husband, a grandpa and the greatest grandpa. More than that, he lived with honour, was wise and always dependable. He also loved my grandmother more than life itself.

COVID didn't take my grandfather. Essentially, for various reasons, his body just gave out on him after almost a century of living. But, COVID certainly did not make his last months and weeks any easier. I would have liked to spend more time with him before he died; I would have liked to hug him and tell him how much I loved and respected him.

COVID is tough on all of us, but its impact has been more pronounced and devastating for some. While most seniors have now been vaccinated, COVID continues to soar through our communities and has devastating effects. We are on the home stretch, but we must continue to be vigilant if we limit the spread of COVID-19 and move on with our lives as quickly as possible in a post-Covid world.

Differences Between Separation and Divorce

Separation

In BC, there really is no such thing as a "legal" separation in the way many people perceive it. On a high level, you are considered separated if you or your spouse have decided to separate, have communicated this intention to separate, and have taken some kind of action to further this intention to separate. It is possible for you and your spouse to continue to live under the same roof, but still be separated.

Sometimes people confuse 'separation' with a formal Separation Agreement. Being separated does not mean that you have dealt with and resolved all the issues arising from the breakdown of your relationship. You can be separated and still have not divided property, income or resolved parenting issues. Further, you can be separated but still reside in the same home. A Separation Agreement, on the other hand, is a formal agreement entered into by spouses who have already separated (or are contemplating separation) that sets out how various financial, property and parenting matters will be settled.

Your date of separation is important and here's why. Your date of separation can come into play in one form or another in various aspects of your family law case. For example, your date of separation will matter when it comes time to apply for a divorce. In most cases, you and your spouse need to be separated for at least a year before a judge will grant you a divorce.

Further, your date of separation may determine what assets are family assets subject to division and may even impact the value assigned to an

asset for division. On a similar note, the separation date may determine which debts are family debts. Finally, your date of separation may impact you differently depending on whether you and your spouse are married or unmarried, particularly with respect to limitation periods. For example, your marital status will impact how long you have to apply for spousal support.

Divorce

Divorce is the termination of your legal marriage which takes place after the separation of married spouses. While you may date and move in with someone after separation, you must be divorced before you can remarry. Only married people can get a divorce. Obtaining a divorce in Canada is independent of the settling of all other matters arising from the breakdown of your marriage, such as property division, support and parenting arrangements. Typically, a divorce is obtained after all other matters have been finalized. However, a Divorce Order will start the clock running for various limitation periods. For example, a person will only have two years from the date of divorce to make a claim against his or her spouse's property in BC.

In Canada, we have 'no fault' divorce. Therefore, even if your spouse committed some wrongdoing such as adultery or domestic violence, while this experience may provide a ground for divorce, the wrongdoing in and of itself does not necessarily impact your entitlement to most corollary relief such as property division. However, on a separate note, violence in a relationship may impact issues such as guardianship and parenting time.

Keeping Your Kids Safe Online

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Depending on their age, children and teenagers can face challenges such as:

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Communication is key

As with most issues involving children, communication is essential. Be both a good listener and a mentor for them in navigating online risks.

Ask younger children to engage in their online activities while at the kitchen table or family room so you can keep an eye on them.

Watch for warning signs such as withdrawal, anxiousness or secretive behaviour. Chat with them about how they are feeling to determine if something is wrong.

Of course, as your children enter their teenage years they seek more privacy. They want to use their devices in their own bedroom. Keep the lines of communication open so that they approach you if they are having online troubles.

Phones

Parents are buying phones for their children when they are as young as six – although the average age that kids get a phone is 10. If you want to get your young child a phone you may opt for a simple one that only allows them to text or make/receive phone calls. This will prevent them from being exposed to additional risks.

Of course, as children mature they begin demanding smartphones so they can go online and use features such as Instagram, Snapchat and Tik Tok.

Parental control apps can be valuable to monitor which sites your child is visiting. If you decide to use such an app, it's essential to be upfront with your child and explain why you are installing it. While some monitoring apps allow you to track your kids without them knowing, that's hardly a recipe for long-term trust. Have a discussion with them so that they understand the risks and responsibilities of having a phone.

Here are some of the features available on parental control apps:

- Location tracking: This is useful to ensure that your child is safe. If they say they are going to Johnny's house, but they aren't there you can call them to see what happened.
- Blocking apps: You can select the apps that you don't want your child to use and block them.
- Screening content: If you decide to allow your kid to use Instagram,



- Tik Tok or You Tube, you can still screen out certain content that may be inappropriate.

- Monitor time: Some apps let you limit the length of time that a child is online, forcing them to study or find an alternative activity.

Parental control apps vary widely in both features and pricing. Do some research to find the one that works best for you and your child.

Protecting children online

Kids love to play games online or chat with their friends on social media. As a parent, it's important to know with whom they are engaging and the nature of their interactions. Here are some of the risks:

- Cyberbullying: Children may face bullying while playing games online, in chat rooms or on social media. Make sure your child knows how to block people who are being inappropriate. Ask them to alert you to any cyberbullying so that you can discuss it with them and take further steps as necessary.
- Downloading malware: Prohibit your child from downloading any software without your permission. Before you download anything, check the online reviews and warnings.
- Sharing private photos and sexting: Have a conversation with your teenager about the risks of sending photos. They may think they are just sharing with their boyfriend/girlfriend, but pictures can be quickly spread to classmates and even strangers.
- Predators: Adults posing as teenagers may try to lure them into sending intimate photos or even meeting in person. Make sure that your child is only chatting online with people they know.

Risks are constantly changing as new technology is introduced. Therefore, it's essential for you to be aware of what your child is doing online and to have ongoing discussions about safety.


Get Active To Reduce Stress and Maintain Mental Health


These are stressful times – fears about covid, financial worries and an inability to socialize with friends and family are all taking a toll. Staying active is a great way to relieve stress and maintain strong physical and mental health. It doesn't have to be a 10k run or a two-hour bike ride. There are plenty of ways to get a bit of exercise, even a few minutes helps!


If possible, schedule your workout with a friend or your spouse. That way, you will feel an obligation to be there and won't stay home because you are "too tired." Plus you'll get some social interaction, which always builds mental energy. Find something you enjoy doing. There's no point going to a gym and lifting weights just because experts say it's good for you. If you find it boring, chances are your new exercise routine will fizzle after just a few months.


Embrace the outdoors! Fresh air enhances your mood and a little sunshine gives you Vitamin D, which boosts your immune system and reduces the risk of cancer. Of course, be sure to wear a hat and sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun's harmful rays.


Here are some options:

 **Yoga:** This ancient practice is great for building flexibility. When properly done, deep breathing triggers your body's relaxation response. You can even do it online at home if you don't have time to get to a class.


 **Walking:** A simply stroll around the block at lunch hour can clear your head and give you renewed energy for the afternoon. A longer, brisk walk helps you maintain your weight, reduces your blood pressure and strengthens your muscles. Faster walks deliver even more benefits!


 **Running:** Jogging builds your heart strength and gets those endorphins flowing. If you are a beginner, alternate between running and walking until you build up some stamina. Once you have some distance under your belt, set a goal, such as competing in a 5k race. Most cities have running clubs, allowing you to combine staying active with socializing.

 **Tennis:** Racquet sports are a good workout and are mentally challenging. If you belong to a club, you have the opportunity to meet new people while maintaining physical distancing across the net. Tennis builds muscle tone, strength and flexibility. Most importantly it's fun – so you are less likely to abandon this form of exercise due to boredom.

 **Swimming:** This is one of the best all-around exercises available. You strengthen your arms, legs and heart all at the same time. The challenge with swimming is that it can be tedious staring down at a blue line on the bottom of the pool and going from end to end repetitively. You can make it

more fun by swimming with a buddy or joining a swimming club. Most clubs have a coach who will set out a routine and provide you with tips to improve your stroke.

 **Gardening:** Yes, it's exercise! Lugging bags of dirt and digging out weeds can cause you to sweat. And smelling the roses and viewing the beautiful colours will give your spirits a lift.

 **Golf:** As long as you avoid the power cart, you can get a light workout on the links. It's one of the few sports where you can join two or three buddies and still maintain social distance.

Whatever you choose, have fun and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits. You will be able to maintain a healthy weight, feel better and be calmer.



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Pier Law & Mediation 404 – 1688 152nd Street Surrey, BC, Canada, V4A 4N2 - info@pierfamilylawyers.com