



## Checklist: Choosing a Lawyer

It is important to choose a lawyer you feel comfortable with. Here is a checklist for you to use.

My lawyer:

- Is someone I trust.
- Understands issues that affect Aboriginal families.
- Is sensitive to safety and power imbalance issues.
- Explains the options but doesn't make choices for me.
- Is sensitive to the emotional and psychological tasks of separating.
- Knows that when children are involved, there is no such thing as "winning."
- Understands that bitterness and conflict can be more damaging to the children than the separation itself.
- Has told me, that at any time, my ex-partner and I can reach an agreement (with or without the help of our lawyers) write a separation agreement and/or consent order, and bring the court process to an end.
- Is willing to try negotiations where I don't have to be face to face with my ex-partner.
- Believes that dealing with family disputes in the courtroom is a last resort. Only if we can't agree will we have the judge decide for us.

***If you do not answer yes to all of these statements about your lawyer, consider changing lawyers.***