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.