

narcissist abuse support

Hiring a lawyer to represent you in a divorce with a narcissist is an important decision. Not all lawyers understand narcissistic abuse or the behaviors that might be expected in a divorce. However they do understand a high conflict divorce situation, use the questions below as a guideline. Most lawyers will not give you enough time to ask all these questions so pick and choose the ones that are important to you.

Questions About Them

1. Can you share with me your style of lawyering?
2. Are you a shark lawyer? Can you help me get me ex? This is a trick question, if they say yes, they are a shark lawyer and will fight for you, think about leaving then. You don't want a shark lawyer. Narcissists always hire the shark slimeball lawyers that will do anything to win. If you come into the battle with another ego driven lawyer, the games will never stop. You want an assertive lawyer that knows how to fight yet doesn't start the fights. Ask if they play offense or defense?
3. Do you create a strategy for the divorce? Do we work on this together? Does it get updated as things come up, how reactive to the challenges will you be? What is the best defense? A good answer would be that you will beat them with the truth, paper trails and the law.
4. How reactive would you be to handle false allegations made by my spouse?
5. How would they know which allegations we need to fight vs which one to walk away from?
6. Ask them if they say they know about personality disorders can they direct you to a book or information to read? To me this is an important one because it shows that they have done their research and can guide you to get some of the answers on your own. A seventeen-dollar book can save you thousands of dollars asking your lawyer the same information.

Questions About Knowledge of Your Court System

1. How long can you expect the divorce to take? (see state guidelines)
2. If you have any separate property or inheritances are, they protected?
3. My ex has hired _____ what do you know about this attorney? Have you ever been up against them? What can we expect? Did you win against them? ('did you win' is another trick question: winning is relative, and a lawyer should not be counting their wins.)
4. How familiar are you with the potential judges in your district? Do those judges favor men or women? Do you have any concerns for a certain judge we should worry about?
5. Will the courts make us go to mediation? In your experience how successful would that be with someone with a personality disorder?

Questions About Your Team

1. Who will be working on my case? Will I have a paralegal as a point of contact? How am I billed for their time? If we need investigators or forensic accountants do you work with

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some you can recommend? Will you be in the courtroom if you go to trial? Will anyone else be at our table in trial?

Questions About Communication

1. How often will we communicate? Is that phone? Office? Video meetings?

Questions about personality disorders

1. How do you define what a high conflict divorce is?
2. In a case of high conflict divorce what are some tactics you are familiar with and how would you suggest we handle them?
3. What do you know about personality disorders?
4. How do you define narcissistic personality disorder?
5. How many divorces against a person with NPD have you represented?
6. How were they resolved? What does winning with a narcissist look like?
7. Would you try to prove the behaviors of the NPD party were tactics to inflate the case and get legal fees?
8. Have you ever represented a person with narcissistic personality disorder? Most lawyers have represented someone with narcissistic personality disorder, and they would have seen it and had to represent them to help them win. If the lawyer says they haven't represented someone that was narcissistic I would question their ability to identify someone with NPD or to recognize the tactics commonly deployed.
9. What did you learn from representing them?
10. What do they foresee as major obstacles for a case with a person with NPD? How would you navigate those obstacles?
11. Have you had a case where you needed to pull in expert witnesses that are experienced in NPD? Why were they called in? How did it help your case?
12. What should you be concerned about?

Questions About Cost and Fees

1. What is your honest feeling about me getting legal fees from of my spouse? How often is that granted? Under what conditions? If you are the primary earner could you be responsible for your spouse's attorney fees? How can this attorney protect you from that?
2. How much could my divorce cost? Knowing that they cannot predict what will happen in your case, they should be able to give you an informed estimate if things go well, and they should be able to breakdown average costs for the normal parts of a divorce. Expect them to say this is an estimate, because truthfully until they get in the ring and see the power of attacks they will be challenged with, they cannot know the true scope.
3. Ask what the retainer will be and how far they expect that to go? How often will you be billed? What is their hourly and what is the rate for any supporting team members? How can that be given to them? Ask them if they take payments if needed? What if the whole retainer is not used, can you get it back? It's all too common that people hire an attorney and then learn they are not the right fit. What type of loss would occur in this situation? Is it refundable minus the time already spent?

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4. Ask them what you can do to control the costs from escalating? Look for a robust answer here with a solid strategy for keeping costs down. If they say something like; get along, settle quickly, or be reasonable to all offers, they do not have a strategy and you will be on your own watching your financial future fly away.
5. What if your spouse runs up legal bills with unreasonable claims and accusations, can they be made responsible for those fees?
6. Ask them their rate per hour and their staff's hourly cost. Be sure to ask them what their billing policy is, do they bill differently for court vs out of court? At what interval do they bill? Some are every six minutes? Verify if there is a minimum, because if they just ready your quick email and charge you for 15 minutes your bill will grow extremely fast.
7. Some lawyers charge a "flat fee", please be beware of lawyers that charge a flat fee. This flat fee might be based on a certain number of hours, ask them if that is the case? What if you go over this flat fee number of hours? What does the rate go up to? Divorcing a high conflict narcissist is usually much more work than these flat fee lawyers anticipate so get clear on this before you sign up. Cheaper is never better. These lawyers tend to move for quicker settlements and may not be good trial attorneys.
8. If money is a concern - are there things that can be delegated to you to save money? Maybe copying things? Ask them what the copy fee is? I think mine was .25 per sheet. My case file books were 5000 sheets of five years of statements and bills and paperwork. In our court we needed three copies one for our side, one for their side and one for the court. That is 15,000 sheets that would have been \$3750 to just create these evidence books. I did all the work and brought them to them to save money. Remember I would have also been paying a paralegal \$100 an hour to copy and collate. This way they could just pull out of the books exactly what they needed to present and label each piece that was being submitted as evidence.

Questions on Where to Start

1. Should I move out of the house? Is there a risk if I do?
2. Can we get my spouse out? How long does that take?
3. Can I take some money out of our joint account to pay the expenses I have?
4. How soon can we request that my spouse give me money?
5. How does spousal support get calculated? If you are the possible recipient or payer it helps to understand the formula in your state.
6. What do I need to be concerned with about the children? Support? Visitation? What are the laws in your state to avoid custody battles?
7. Do they understand the grey areas of a parenting plan? Can they explain?
8. If my spouse is abusive or had DV charges will they get visitation with the kids?
9. What would they do first if you hired them tomorrow? If you have already been filed on by your spouse 1) they should answer the complaint and notify the court and opposing counsel that they have taken the case 2) Get a hearing arranged as soon as possible to get temporary orders to define living arrangements, child support and visitation, a communication plan, and temporary support for you if needed. If you haven't been filed

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on yet they should expedite the filing with the courts to begin the process 2) get temporary orders, as above.

Final Thoughts Before the Hire

1. Ask for references even if you are sold on them in that meeting. Look at reviews on Lawyers.com and Avvo.com. Go onto a website like Nextdoor.com and ask your neighbors if anyone has ever used this lawyer and get feedback before you give them a deposit.
2. Listening to your gut – if you have been in a narcissist relationship you are probably used to bad behavior. If your head is telling you that you “should” hire a particular lawyer, but your gut is screaming “run!” listen to your gut. It doesn’t matter if the lawyer you are interviewing is supposed to be “the best,” “the cheapest,” or anything else. If you don’t feel comfortable with the lawyer, you should not hire him or her! What’s more, if you leave the lawyer’s office in tears, or feeling like you need a shower that is NOT a good sign!

Going through a divorce can be an emotional time, but going through a divorce with a narcissist can make your head spin as you ask who is this person? The tricks you will soon find out will be pulled on you are crazy. I am writing a book that will be published soon. It’s called

‘You Can’t Make This Shit Up! The covert tricks a narcissist pulls during divorce and the strategies to be a surTHRIVER’

If you need to understand what is going on or emotional support to get through this I am available to coach you through this.

Visit my website - <https://narcissistabusesupport.com/narcissistic-abuse-coaching-sessions/>

Good luck with your divorce. I promise it will eventually end 😊

Tracy Malone

NarcissistAbuseSupport.com Founder