

Problem 1: Getting an Accurate Diagnosis

Hugh and Wendy are in their early 40's and still live in the same residence, although separately. Their two children are teenagers. About a year ago Wendy asked Hugh for a separation. Since that time Hugh has consistently pressured Wendy to do marriage counseling, but she has refused. Wendy is a corporate executive and makes over \$375,000 a year. Hugh calls her a "workaholic" and believes that she is having an affair with a subordinate. Wendy spends at least a week each month on corporate travel. Hugh is an elementary school teacher and makes \$58,000 a year. He has been the main caretaker for their two children, Chester, age 16, and Carla, age 14. Wendy wants an equal time schedule with the children and does not believe that either party should pay support to the other. Hugh does not want to discuss the terms of the divorce and believes that they should not separate while the children are in high school. If there is to be a separation, Hugh wants the children to stay with him in the marital home and a financial settlement based upon "everything that the law entitles him to."

Problem 2: Substantive and Emotional Problems

Hector and Winifred have been divorced for about 3 years. Winifred had custody of their four children, ages 17, 15, 10 and 8. Under their agreement, Hector has been paying child support based upon the state guidelines. At the time of the divorce Winifred, who is a realtor, earned \$45,000 a year, and Hector, who was the manager of a car dealership, earned \$70,000. There was no spousal support. Hector now believes that Winifred is earning far more than he does. Winifred recently married a dentist who has two adult children of his own. She drives a 2016 Cadillac SUV. Three children are now spending one-third of their time with Hector, and Candice, the 15-year old, now lives with him. Hector filed a petition with the court to terminate child support and to require that Winifred pay him child support. The parties have spent over \$10,000 each on legal fees prior to the mediation.

Problem 3: The Roles of the Mediator

This is a second marriage for Harrison, 57, and Wallis, 55. They have been married to each other for 9 years. Each has adult children. At the first session both parties request a private meeting with the mediator. Here is what the mediator learns in these private meetings: Wallis tells the mediator that Harrison, who owns his own hair styling studio, is hiding money in secret accounts and is not declaring his real income on their tax returns. Harrison wants the mediator to know that Wallis is having an affair with the principal of the public high school where she is a history teacher. Harrison claims that prior to the marriage he owned the home that they live in and that it has a substantial pre-marital equity. Wallis recounts using an inheritance to do substantial upgrades to their house. She says that Harrison thinks she is having an affair with her school's principal, but avers that they have not had sexual relations even though they recently took several overnight trips together.