



STEPS TO JUSTICE

FAMILY LAW

An OJEN workshop demonstrating a CLEO
public legal information resource.



CLEO

Community Legal Education Ontario
Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario



True or false?

1. I got legally married to an Elvis impersonator in Las Vegas, but it doesn't count because I live in Canada, right?



True or false?

2. My parents are getting a divorce. I want to live with my mom because she is a way better cook. Luckily, I am 10 years old so I can make that decision for myself.



True or false?

3. My partner and I are splitting up and we can't agree on what to do with the kids. She wants to be the one who makes decisions about their care. But that would give her the power to stop me from seeing them, right?



True or false?

4. I pay spousal support to my ex-husband. That means I send the cheques directly to his house.



True or false?

5. My husband recommended we both go see Lyndsey the Lawyer to discuss our separation and divorce. But I decided to go see Louis the Lawyer by myself, because it's better for us to have our own separate lawyers.



Family Law in Ontario: *What is covered?*

- Birth and adoption
- Decision-making and time with children
- Child support
- Family court
- Marriage and common-law relationships
- Out of court options
- Partner Abuse
- Shared property and debts (married or common-law couples)
- Restraining orders and peace bonds
- Separation and divorce
- Spousal support



Real Life Legal Problems *Demonstration Scenario*

I have decided that my marriage is over and I want a divorce. My husband travels a lot for work and he seems to think everything is fine, so I don't think he will agree to it.

Can I apply for a divorce on my own? And if so, how?



Steps to Justice



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Steps to Justice website. At the top left is the logo with the text "Steps to Justice" and "Your guide to law in Ontario". At the top right, there is a "HIDE THIS SITE" button, a language selector for "Français", and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and RSS. Below the logo is a navigation menu with a search icon and links for "Legal Topics", "About Steps to Justice", "Latest Updates", and "Embed & Share". The main banner features a woman with a backpack and the text "Steps to Justice" in large orange letters, followed by the tagline "Step-by-step information about legal problems. Reliable, practical, and easy to understand." Below this is a search bar with the placeholder text "Tell us what you are looking for...". On the right side of the banner, there is a vertical stack of social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, Email, and a share icon. Below the banner is a "Legal Topics" section with a dark blue background and a list of topics: Abuse and Family Violence, Criminal Law, Debt and Consumer Rights, Employment and Work, Family Law, Health and Disability, Housing Law, Human Rights, Income Assistance, and Tribunals and Court. In the bottom right corner of the page, there is a "Live chat" button with the text "Live chat Mon-Fri 11am-1pm".

Steps to Justice
Your guide to law in Ontario

HIDE THIS SITE

Français

Legal Topics

About Steps to Justice

Latest Updates

Embed & Share


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Step-by-step information about legal problems.
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Tell us what you are looking for...

Legal Topics

- Abuse and Family Violence
- Criminal Law
- Debt and Consumer Rights
- Employment and Work
- Family Law
- Health and Disability
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Live chat
Mon-Fri 11am-1pm



I have decided that my marriage is over and I want a divorce. My husband travels a lot for work and he seems to think everything is fine, so I don't think he will agree to it. Can I apply for a divorce on my own? And if so, how?

Some questions:

- Do you and your partner need to agree to get a divorce?
- What other legal issues should you consider before applying for a divorce?
- What is the difference between a “contested” and “uncontested” divorce?
- How do you know which form to fill out when you apply to the court for a divorce?
- Which court has the power to make a divorce order?



**Using the
Steps to Justice
Website**



Group Work

1. Navigate to the Steps to Justice website:
<http://stepstojustice.ca>
2. Read your scenario with your group.
3. Try to identify the main legal issues.
4. Imagine that you are the person in the scenario. Use the Steps to Justice website to answer the questions on your handout.
5. As you browse, try to find out more about how the law would affect the person in your scenario. What does it say? What are their options?
6. Record your answers on the handout.

If you get stuck, ask for help!



Large Group Scenario

FOCUS AREAS:

- 1) adoption
- 2) division of the matrimonial home
- 3) spousal support

My husband and I have been married for five years. My husband bought us a house in our first year of marriage and we have lived there ever since. It is my dream home. It has a light-filled studio for me (I'm an artist) and a perfect room for a cozy little nursery. All I could think about was raising a family there.

We are a same-sex couple, so over the last year we have been looking into the process of adoption. I did most of the research because my schedule is more flexible. My husband is a computer programmer and he works non-stop. We had talked a lot about whether we should do a public or a private adoption, but we didn't make a decision.

About six months ago, our relationship changed dramatically and we decided that we should split up. We have agreed to apply for a divorce order together. Since then, my husband keeps talking about how much money he will have after the divorce, since he can sell the house and he won't have to support me.

After my divorce I would still like to adopt a child, but I'm worried that the divorce will affect that process. I would also like to stay in the house, because I love it so much and I still want to have my family there, but my husband is the legal owner. I am worried about my financial situation as well; for the past five years, he earned most of our family's income. Should I be worried? What should I do?