**5 Ways To Protect Your Children From The Potential Harms Of Divorce**

Sadly, many parents get immersed in their own pain and suffering when their relationship breaks down irretrievable and they can, understandably and unintentionally, lose sight of the effect this may have on others around them, especially any children who are particularly perceptive to a change in atmosphere in the family home.

Whilst you cannot guarantee our children will not suffer emotional and psychological harm on a family breakdown there are steps you can take to minimise the risk.

1.Take Steps to Manage Your Own Stress. If you appear to be coping and in control this may remove any anxieties the children are feeling and may make them feel more settled about the changes that are taking place around them. Whilst counselling or attending a support group can help with the emotional issues early legal advice can help restore confidence and give you back control on a day to day basis.

2. Agree a time when you and the other parent will sit down and talk constructively about the children. One of the biggest things that can harm a child is witnesses ongoing conflict between parents that is never resolved. Setting an agreed agenda may help you keep focused on the important child related issues and avoid discussions disintegrating into name calling and arguments.

3. Avoid negative comments about the other parent or critising the other parent in front of the children. Always speak positively about the other parent and reassure the children that they are loved equally by both parents even though their parents no longer want to live together. Reassure the children that parents can never fall out of love with their children because it’s a different and special kind of love.

4. Take steps to make time to talk and listen to your children individually. It is important to have these conversations regularly and in a place where the children feel happy and safe from conflict. Most importantly be honest with your children.

5. Minimise the changes that the children will encounter wherever possible. If it is practical, try to keep them in the same school, make an effort to ensure they spend time with the same friends if you have to move home and make sure they continue to see extended family members. The less changes to the children’s lives and daily routine the more secure they will feel and this will help them adapt more readily to the unavoidable changes around them.

Children are more resilient then we give them credit for nurturing them in a positive way helps them flourish into stable secure adults who are able to have fully functioning relationships of their own.

Sarah Hull – April 2018