

Why divorces are spiking during the COVID-19 pandemic



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage and disrupt our daily lives, with the obvious effects on our income, child care, education and the government – it’s no surprise that divorce is also an issue at hand and due to quarantine “rules” that were set in place, divorce rates are surging!

Couples – new and old – are used to spending about two or so hours together before the pandemic, and now together 24 hours, seven days a week.

In addition to rocky times at home, people are seeing the values of their businesses going down, making it a good time to file so they would have to pay out the spouse less money,

during a divorce.

Meet [Carly Krasner Leizeron](#), Partner at **Chemtob Moss Forman & Beyda, LLP** in New York City. Carly practices in all areas of matrimonial and family law including high conflict financial cases, child custody, relocation, child support modification actions, and the negotiation of prenuptial and separation agreements.

Carly, a litigator by training, is a zealous advocate for all of her clients. Her deep understanding of the unique emotional and financial challenges facing families and individuals during the separation and divorce process allows her to find creative out-of-court solutions whenever possible, and her litigation background provides her with the tools and experience to aggressively litigate cases through trial and appeals, when necessary.

Thrive spoke to Carly about how COVID-19 is taking a toll on marriages, why the pandemic is effecting so many and beyond.

Why is COVID-19 changing our relationships?

Carly Krasner Leizeron: *We have seen many couples having issues because most couples have defined roles and responsibilities in their relationships. Regardless of whether a household has one or two working spouses, typically, each spouse has specific roles and responsibilities, and the couple would "divide and conquer." Now that everyone is home all day together, many couples are finding that the lines for those roles and responsibilities have been blurred.*

Why do pandemics lead to divorce? Is it because lockdown means more time together? Money stress?

Carly Krasner Leizeron: *Both increased time together and financial stress are the primary causes of the increase in divorce cases that we are seeing. People were not meant to spend 24/7 with their spouses. Whereas you may have spent 2-4 hours per day with your spouse pre-pandemic, people are now spending upwards of 12 hours per day with that person. I always say that I didn't marry my husband for lunch. I married him for dinner. But now, during the pandemic, I've come to learn that I apparently married my husband for breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner and dessert.*

It's extremely difficult to spend so much time with someone that you otherwise weren't used to spending all day with. Every act, every routine, and every habit is now under a microscope because

we are all home together, all the time, compounded with the fact that many couples are now being forced to work from home together at their dining room tables. Moreover, people are now finding that they have very different views than their spouses on a wide variety of issues – everything from politics to daily child-rearing, especially while children are home all day, remote learning. For example, if there was one spouse who typically took a more hands-on approach to their children's education, the other spouse, now that they are home all day, may not like the approach that the other spouse is taking with respect to homework, that in a normal situation, they never would have been home to see.

Another big factor is the financial stress that the pandemic has placed on couples. Financial uncertainty and pressure are magnified. Not only is financial stress a big contributing factor in the uptick of divorces, but filing for divorce now can be a strategic decision for many monied spouses now that their incomes, and the value of their businesses and assets have decreased. People can take advantage of lower incomes for spousal and child support purposes and reduced valuations of assets for equitable distribution.

What are some stats that you can share as to the #s of divorce rates pre and during COVID-19?

Carly Krasner Leizeron: *I do not have specific statistics, but I can say that whereas we used to get approximately 5-10 inquiries for individuals seeking matrimonial counsel per week, we are now seeing double and sometimes triple that number in a single week.*

How long will the divorce process take during the pandemic?

Carly Krasner Leizeron: *It all depends on whether a case is going to proceed on a settlement or litigation track. On average, a divorce takes anywhere from 9-12 months to complete. The courts in New York have been phenomenal in dealing with both newly-filed and existing cases since the pandemic began, but naturally, things are taking longer than usual.*

Is there an alternative to going to trial now?

Carly Krasner Leizeron: *Yes. Parties can always choose to settle, even on the eve of trial. During the Pandemic, we have actually be able to settle many cases that we otherwise did not think would settle by initiating four-way Zoom Settlement Conferences. We have found that in some instances, the pandemic has forced parties who were in the middle of getting divorced and still living together, to resolve their differences.*

What are 5 tips you tell a new client when considering divorce?

Carly Krasner Leizeron:

1. *Be aware of your financial situation*
2. *Have your financial documents organized and accessible*
3. *Make sure to consult with an attorney so that you know your rights*
4. *Work with a therapist to try and help you resolve your issues before you choose divorce*
5. *Make sure you are emotionally and mentally prepared for a drawn-out process, because even the quickest and most amicable of divorces can take a minimum of 6 months from inception to completion*

What are 5 tips you tell a client when they begin the divorce process?

Carly Krasner Leizeron:

1. *Be reasonable – there is an opportunity cost to everything. You have to consider the cost in counsel fees of getting what you want versus what you will actually end up with.*
2. *Have a long-term goal in mind – know what you're willing to compromise on, and know what you're not willing to give-in on, but be patient with the day-to-day frustration that will inevitably arise.*
3. *Choose an attorney who you trust to protect your interests, but that you also feel a connection with, because you will be speaking with them a lot*
4. *Make sure to have one trusted confidant (other than your lawyer) to confide in and vent to when things get difficult. You do not want to be the one bad-mouthing your spouse to anyone and everyone who will listen*
5. *Be aware that everything is fair game – if you would be embarrassed to tell your grandmother what you said, what you did, or what you posted, don't do it.*

For more on Carly and Chemtob Moss Forman & Beyda, LLP, visit: <https://www.cmfb.com/>.