

Oxfordshire Family Mediation

Who Are OFM?

Oxfordshire Family Mediation are the leading providers of family mediation in the county. We help separating couples make practical decisions about long term arrangements for their property, finance and children, in a neutral environment with the help of a professionally qualified mediator.

Our Work With Children

We understand the impact that family breakdown can have on the children who are involved. This can be an extremely distressing time in a child's life and we aim to provide help for children who may not be coping so well with the transition.

Family Plus: Children's Voice

Our Children's Voice service offers children ages 6–18 with up to six sessions with a Children's Worker. Our Children's Workers have a wealth of experience in working with children and families in turmoil. There is an opportunity to provide feedback to the parents if the child wishes, to enable them to say those things that may be difficult to say at home.



How Can We Help?

If you know of, or work with, a child or young person who may be struggling as a result of parental separation then our Children's Voice service may be of interest to you.

Referrals

There is no formal method of referral, but if you think that a child in your setting would benefit from our help please ask their parents to get in touch with us. A referral form is available to download from our website.

Cost

The Children's Voice service is available to children free of charge. As we are a charity, we will ask for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of each session. There will be an introduction meeting with the parents for the Children's Voice service which is chargeable at £30. This meeting is important in helping us assess whether the Children's Voice service would be appropriate for your child.

Location

You can access the Children's Voice services in four locations: Headington, Banbury, Didcot and Chipping Norton. If you would like further information please contact us using the details below.



Oxfordshire Family Mediation

125 London Road Tel: 01865 741781
Headington Email: admin@ofm.org.uk
Oxford OX3 9HZ www.ofm.org.uk

Family Break Up: The Impact on Children

A 'what you need to know'
guide to the impact of parental
separation on children

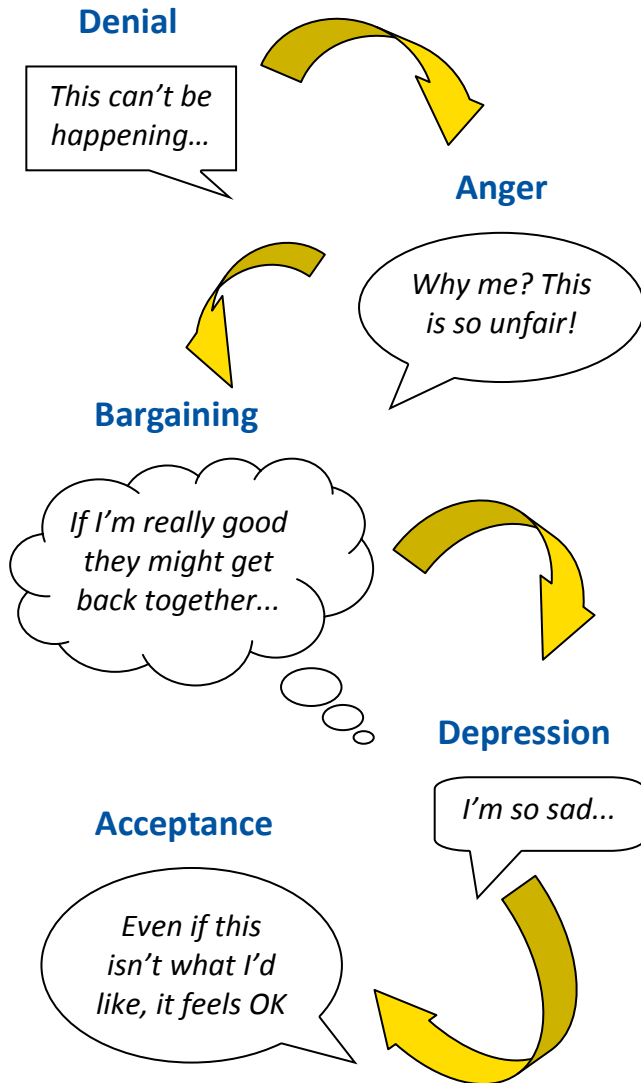
Understanding is the first step
to helping



**Oxfordshire Family Mediation
Family Plus**

The Separation Journey

During separation, children may go through a cycle of emotions and feelings. It is important to recognise that this is a normal part of the separation journey.



Behaviour Children May Exhibit

Aged 2—4

- Tearfulness
- Clinginess
- Aggression or temper tantrums
- Regression
- Mysterious aches and pains
- Bed wetting

Aged 5—8

- Lack of concentration
- Withdrawal
- Absenteeism
- Attention seeking
- Longing for absent parent
- Confusion

Aged 9—12

- Depression
- Premature adolescence
- Acting as the parent
- Aggressive response to criticism
- Siding with one parent

Aged 13—18

- Drop in academic standards
- Rude or antisocial behaviour
- Defiance of authority
- Premature independence
- Showing contempt for others
- Rejection of one or both parents

What Children Need for Healthy Transition

1) To acknowledge the reality that their parents have separated

Many young people pretend it has not happened and resist any attempts by their parents or siblings to talk about it.

2) To disengage from parental conflict

Young people need to be allowed to regain their childhood, to continue with their own lives, at school and with friends.

3) To be allowed to grieve their loss

This could include not only the loss of one parent from the family home, but the loss of special family occasions, extended family members etc.

4) To be able to work through their anger

To accept that they are not to blame for the separation. It is easy for children to feel responsible.

5) To accept that the separation is permanent

Some young people go on hoping for a reconciliation for many years, often even after one parent has remarried.

6) To achieve realistic hope about their own future relationships

The experience of their parents' separation can leave young people feeling insecure and fearful that any relationship they have with their resident parent, friends or teachers, will not last. They need to learn somehow that not all relationships end, and that relationships can endure though separation and time.