



Partner and Director - Divorce Litigation Division

- Divorce Financial Planning
- · Life Transition Planning
- Wealth Management Financial & Tax Consulting



Senior Manager - Divorce Finance & Litigation Support

- Divorce Financial Consulting & Mediation
- Divorce Financial Planning, Strategy & Analysis
- · Forensic Accounting



Senior Manager of Litigation Support & Forensic Services

- Divorce Financial Planning & Consulting
 Litigation Consulting
 - - Forensic Accounting
 - Tax Strategy and Consulting

2

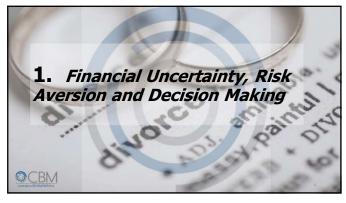
Learning Objectives

As a result of participation in this course,

- Attendees will learn to identify how and why people are influenced in their financial decision making and will be provided tools and discussion techniques to assist their clients in option generation, evaluation, judgement and decision-making of their finances.
- Attendees will be able to identify primary areas of uncertainty that may create impasse and will be provided discussion points to aid resolution.
- Attendees will develop an understanding of customized financial analyses and projections that may be used to provide the clients and team with information to help reach a financial settlement.







Introduction to Behavioral Economics

Study of how and why people behave the way they do in the real world. Considers people as human beings who are subject to emotion and impulsivity and who are influenced by their environments and circumstances.

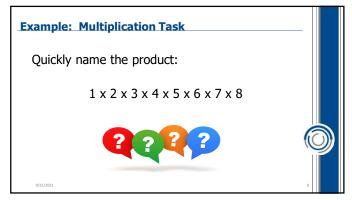
Contrasts traditional economic models that assume people are rational, have perfect self-control and never lose sight of their long-term goals.

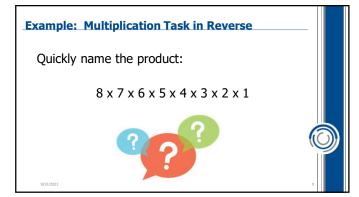
1/22/2022

5

Behavioral Economics People do not always make rational decisions even if they have the information and tools available to do so. Examines what people *should* do vs. what they actually do.

Uncertainty and Risk	
Research of Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman: origins of modern behavioral economics.	
Identified consistent biases in the way people make judgements:	
People often rely on easily recalled information based on past experiences, rather than actual data, when evaluating the likelihood of a particular outcome. This is called the Availability Heuristic.	
9/22/70022	





Example: Multiplication Task Conclusion

Participants who were presented the equation with the larger numbers first (8x7x6...) estimated a significantly higher result than the participants who were presented the lower numbers first (1x2x3...).



9/22/202

10

Application in Collaborative Practice:

- \bullet How we share and present information matters. (How we frame options).
- People are forming their judgement based on their own easily recalled information from their past experiences.
- \bullet If parties are stuck or thinking irrationally ask questions to $\,$ understand their thinking:

What information or experiences are you using as a reference when forming your judgement on this decision?

- Offer your own observations.
- Provide other reference points to help them open their perspective.

9/22/202

11

Application in Collaborative Practice:

 Carlos and Yasmin are getting a divorce. They are stuck on spousal support payments. Yasmin's option is to pay Carlos \$4,000/m for 5 years. Carlos is concerned the amount is too low. How might you use behavioral economics concepts to help them move forward?





9/22/2

Application in Collaborative Practice:

- Availability Heuristic: change the order of payments. i.e. \$5,000/m for 2 years, \$4,000/m for one year, \$3,000/m for 2 years.
- **Prospect Theory and Loss Aversion:** emphasize gain vs. loss. i.e. Nonmodifiable fixed payments vs modifiable, indefinite payments.
- <u>Nudge/Anchoring:</u> reference points: i.e. Cash Flow Projections and need. The law, what a court would do.

9/22/20

13

Risk and Loss Aversion: Prospect Theory

- Framing and loss aversion influences the choices people make. Human nature is to avoid loss and tendency to choose the safe or certain option to avoid a loss. The pain of loss is greater than the happiness of equivalent gains.
- Responses tend to differ if choices are framed as a gain or a loss.

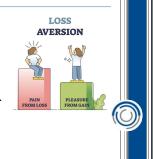


9/22/2

14

Example: Prospect Theory

- Which option would you choose?
- a) Win \$100 for **certain**
- b) **Gamble** on a 25% chance to win \$500 and a 75% chance to win nothing.



9/22

• Which option would you choose? a) Lose \$500 for certain b) A 25% chance of losing \$800 and a 25% chance of losing nothing

16

Modern Theories of Behavioral Economics

Research of Richard Thayler, awarded Nobel Prize in 2017

Factors that guide economic decision making:

- <u>Sunk cost fallacy:</u> people are less willing to give up on something they have personally invested in, even if it means more risk.
- Examples: Both parties be responsible for payment of process fees.

 Spouse's preference is to keep their own retirement plans.



17

Modern Theories of Behavioral Economics

 Nudge: conceptual tool for leading people to make better decisions. People treat money differently based on context.



Nudge example:

Would you be willing to drive across town to Walmart to:

- a) Save \$10 on a \$20 pack of toilet paper or
- b) Save \$10 on a \$1,000 TV?



19

Transparent Nudges:

Order effect: the order in which we receive information is a critical factor in decision making.

Example: candidates whose names appear at the top of a ballot have an advantage over those whose names appear lower on the list.

Application: alternate options of each party when listing them. List preferable options first.

9/22/20

20

Transparent Nudges:

Simplifying Messaging: reduce the overall amount of information, highlight the important information helps decrease cognitive burden and improve decision making.

Examples: supersizing, use of bold font, "Quick Start Guide"

Application: create a simple summary page for highlighting and comparing information.



Non-trans	parent	Nudges
-----------	--------	--------

Limiting the Number of Options: too many options can paralyze decision making. Research shows that an abundance of options leads to people feeling less satisfied with their final decision than they would be if they were originally presented with fewer options.

Decoy Effect: choices are often made relative to what is offered rather than based on absolute preferences. Adding a third option creates contrast between two other options. The presence of a third, less desirable option makes the other two seem like a better deal.

Anchoring: reference point from which we make adjustments when evaluating

Example: value of marital home in a buyout.

Framing: emphasizing a gain vs. a loss

Opt-out Default: make the default the most desirable choice.

22

What Will Be Done with the Marital Home?

- Carlos and Yasmin are getting a divorce. They own a marital home and Yasmin wants to stay in the home and buy out Carlos' share.
- They obtained an appraisal, which values the home at \$500,000.
- Yasmin thinks the appraisal is overstated because their home is older than the comps and has deferred maintenance.
- Carlos agrees with the appraised value. His friend down the street just sold his house for \$495,000 and the friend's lot wasn't as big as the lot Carlos and Yasmin's home is on.



23

What Will Be Done with the Marital Home?

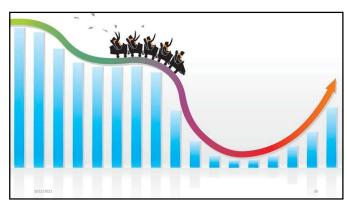
- You ask each party separately "Is there any other information or experience you are using as a reference when forming your judgement on this decision?"
- Yasmin shares that she is concerned that housing prices are overinflated and will soon fall and she will have paid peak price for the equity in the home.
- · Carlos shares that his parents divorced when he was a child. His father had to move out of the home, couldn't afford to buy a new home and ended up being homeless.

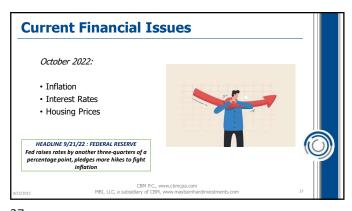
Which theories of behavioral economics can you identify in this scenario?

How might you apply the concepts to help the parties move forward?



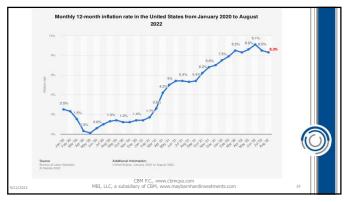






Changes in Cash Flow Cash flow challenges Overall budget issues Income Expenses Housing Issues Joint ownership Taxes Forbearance Paying for the process

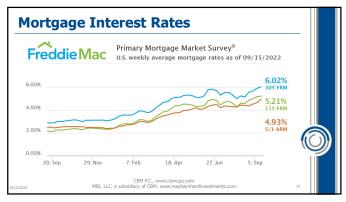
28

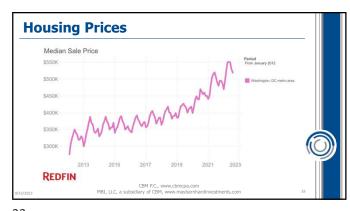


29

Overall Budget Issues The current market effect of inflation on income (wages, dividends, interest, appreciation) The current market effect of inflation on expenses (fixed vs. variable, discretionary vs. non-discretionary)

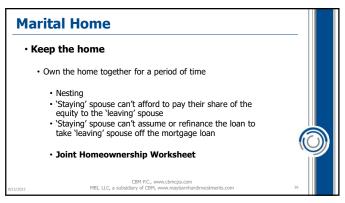


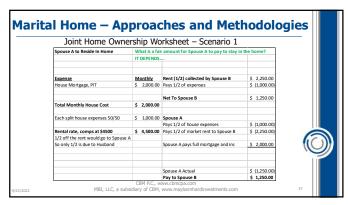


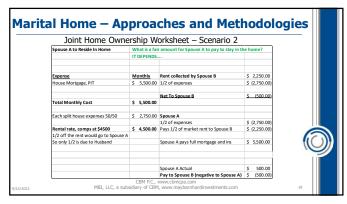




Marital Home Keeping the marital home Tax consequences to consider Forbearance (Suspended Mortgages) is Ending The borrower(s) and the mortgage company agreed to temporarily suspend or reduce the monthly mortgage payments for a specific period of time. (CARES Act)

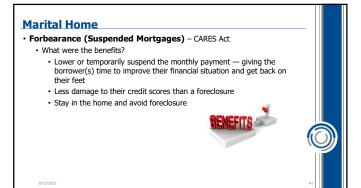


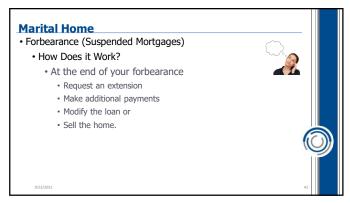




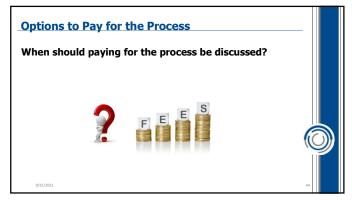
Marital Home Taxes to Be Considered? • Capital gains • 2-out-of-5-year test for the Capital Gains Exclusion • Prior or current rental or business use (HINT: the government wants their money back) • Depreciation recapture • Possible additional taxes – • NIIT, Medicare, additional state

(E)	CAPITAL C	APITAL GAINS CALCULATION			
		Original Purchase I	Price (a)	\$	590,000
		(per Alexandria Pro			
		Improvements (b)	\$	135,000	
		(per client provided			
		Other Costs			
		Depreciation taken		\$	(44,820)
		TOTAL		<u>s</u>	680,180
		NET SALE PRICE			863,300
		GAIN (LOSS) ON S	ALE		183,120
		EST. CAPITAL GAI	NS TAX		23,157
		EST. DEPRECIATI	ON RECAPT	URE	13,334
		EST. NIIT			
		EST. ADD'L MEDIC	CARE		
		EST. ADD'L STATE			-
		TOTAL ESTIMAT	ED TAXES		36,491









Options to Pay for the Process Use savings (marital or non-marital) O% interest credit card (usually a 12-month period, will it affect credit score, will it matter?) Loan from 401(k) or TSP (restrictions, interest, does not affect credit score, payback period) Withdraw and redeposit funds in an IRA within 60 days (risk of forgetting to redeposit or incorrect paperwork)

Options to Pay for the Process Withdraw from a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC) Loan from a family member or friend Loan from an investment account Personal line of credit (unsecured) Divorce loan – DivorceLoan.com; DivorceFunding.info

46

Options to Pay for the Process • What are the effects of using one or more of the options? • Will there need to be an Agreement to Be Relied Upon? • Will it affect the credit score of either party? • Will it reduce the ability to qualify for a mortgage loan? • Will one of the parties be at higher risk of not being reimbursed if they withdraw funds from their own account? • There may be a cost to borrow.

47

Presentation Options – What will help the clients understand the issues and ask relevant questions and make informed decisions for their future? Side by Side One asset class / QTBA at a time Percentage Change in Asset(s) Shange in Asset(s) Averages CBM P.C., www.cbmcpa.com MBI, LLC, a subsidiary of CBM, www.raybarnhardinvestments.com MBI, LLC, a subsidiary of CBM, www.raybarnhardinvestments.com



The Collaborative Process, Tools and Success

Sometimes we must take the journeys not knowing where it will end.
Other times we must know our destination before taking the voyage.

50

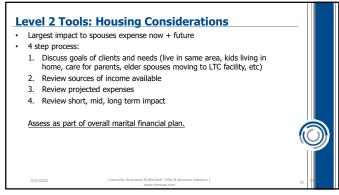


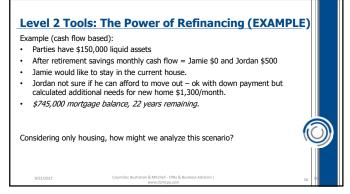
Identify the proper tool Financial sticking points Capability or ability to implement Understand the different ways tools can be used Length and brevity As part of the solution vs. As the solution Compile meaningful options to all parties Put the final touches on the job How we frame and deliver products matters Discuss the impact options may/could have Setting clients up for success post engagement

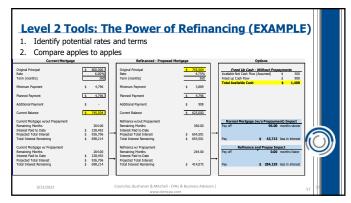
52



Level 2 Tools Intermediate tools meant to aide the team when uncertainty exists relating to general financial matters. Top Level 2 Tools in Times of Volatility or Uncertainty Housing Considerations and the Power of Refinancing Tax Impacts - Timing and Filing Status Cash Flow and Budget Impacts Fears of the Unknown Job Loss and Asset Draws Volatile Income Other Fixed vs Variable vs Discretionary Medical Related Expense/Large One Time Unknown Expenses Option Overload Put a \$ figure on it + Consider Nonfinancial consequences







Level 2 Tools: Tax Impacts

Volatile economic conditions mean increases and decreases in asset values and income. Careful planning during volatile times can result in tax minimization, net value increase, and in some cases tax avoidance completely.

- Gap Years = Tremendous planning opportunities
 - · Highly appreciated assets
 - Retirement Distributions
 - Sale of Rental Properties
- Asset mix = best approach to successful LONG term tax planning
- Head of Household And Pandemic Situations
- Timing of Divorce Filing 12/31 vs 1/1

*** All professionals must be aware that pending tax regulations are continuously changing and can impact discussions and projections. This disclosure should always be added or made to any financial analysis, discussions, and separation agreements.

58



- · Continuous change
- Projection, Projection + What If's (within reason)
- How to handle with clients?
 - Proactive > Reactive

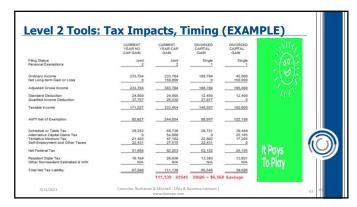


59

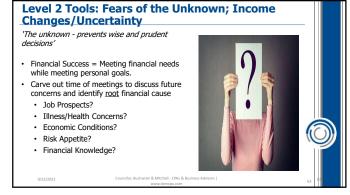
Level 2 Tools: Tax Impacts, Timing (EXAMPLE) Example:

- Yasmin is self employed, \$200,000 net income this year.
- Arlen has \$45,000 of W2.
- Arlen has \$200,000 of Tesla stock, that appreciated \$150,000. The divorce is nearing completion and Alex would like cash as soon as possible.
- 2 kids, standard deduction, DC resident.
- · They will file jointly if not divorced.

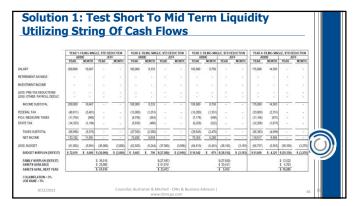








Level 2 Tools: Fears of the Unknown, Job Concerns (EXAMPLE) Example: - Abbie earns \$200,000/year, and Jeff is not able to work. - Abbie was informed her company would be dissolving next year due to material and labor shortages. - Abbie can find jobs that pay \$100,000/year due to current market conditions but expects to find a job at \$150,000 4 years from now. - Abbie budget = \$5,091/month, Jeff Budget = \$3,000. - They have \$25,000 in cash on hand. - They are confused on how they can brave the storm, without racking up debt. Question: - How can we work with Abbie and Jeff to move passed this sticking point?



		SELF		SELF		SELF			FIXED	DISCRI	ETIONARY		Minus line and a second	
		\$	2,800	5	2,800			•	Visualize amounts					
HOME				_		_	- 0		potentially available to					
		6	200		200	-			trim					
		5	700	5	350	5	350		Discuss the net impact to					
9		5	100	_		\$	100		cash flow and savings					
		\$	150		150	-								
RTATION		5	250	.6	250	_			(prior slide)					
10N		5	400			1	400	•	Temporary trim or long-					
ON - SELF ONLY		-				4			term trim					
INTENANCE		1	200	5	200	-			term ann					
		3	50	_		1	50							
L CARE		8	200	1	125	1	75							
rvice		-				2								
URSED BUSINESS EXPENSES				_		-								
NEOUS		5	194		100		94							
	TOTAL	_	5,244		4,175		1.000							

Level 2 Tools: Fears of the Unknown, Bonus Tied To Market Performance (EXAMPLE)

Example:

- · Gary and Anita both sell cars for a living.
- Gary sells luxury vehicles. Anita sells basic vehicles.
- Their income is <u>entirely</u> based on sales generated. Generally tied to market conditions and is extremely volatile.
- 2021 was an excellent year for both, due to escalating vehicle prices.
- Gary usually earns double what Anita does, but it is not uncommon for Anita to periodically have a better year then Gary
- $\bullet\,$ Gary and Anita (and the team) are confused about how to approach support.

Question:

 How might we work with Gary and Marcia to discuss/develop a support framework?

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisors

67

Level 2 Tools: Fears of the Unknown, Bonus Tied To Market Performance (EXAMPLE)

Solution/s

- Consider creating a formula based on each income
 - Base + %
 - % only
 - Bracketing
- Consider supplementing support with lump sum of assets
- Consider multi year look back and average salaries
- Illustrate framework using string of cash flow analysis



9/22/2022

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisor www.cbmcpa.com

68

Level 2 Tools: Option Overload, What's Best?

- Stop, Look, Listen Analyze
- K.I.S.S. for your clients
- Focus on framework, worry about the "i" and "t" later

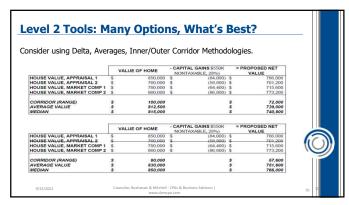


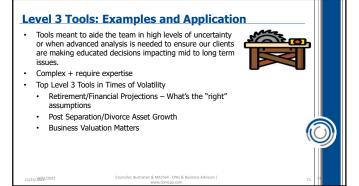




9/22/2022

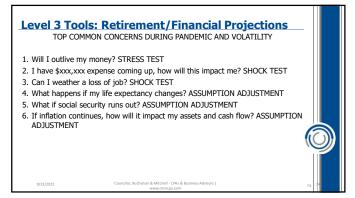
Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisors www.cbmcpa.com

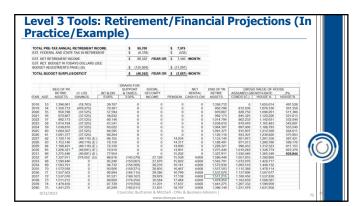


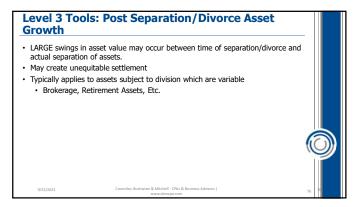


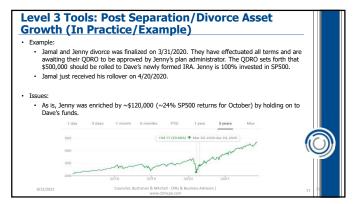


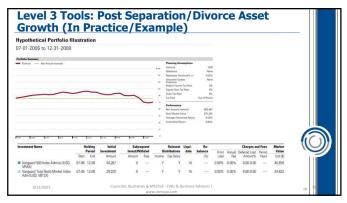












Advanced Tools - Implementation

- The goals and path to get there are "impossible"
- One party is financially sophisticated
- Overly nervous about the future
- · Wrapping up the Engagement

How:

- Provide options and homework to each
- Consider all scenarios, within reason
- Compare and Contrast Options
- · Identify unrealistic financial expectations vs. realistic
- Quorum as beneficial to the client (while sharing information afterwards)
- K.I.S.S.

9/22/

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisors

79

BONUS DISCUSSION:

Setting Clients up For Success; Tools and Considerations

- Starts even before the engagement begins
- Provide value during our engagements
- Demonstrate a vested concern in our client's success
- Develop meaningful day-to-day strategies, in addition to mid and long term

9/22/202



80

BONUS DISCUSSION: Setting Clients Up for Success

- Document and Data Checklists + Record Retention (Pre, During, Post Divorce)
- A who's who list of important contacts
- Post Divorce Financial Checklist
- Budgeting and Cash Management
- Financial Considerations when drafting separation agreements



9/22/2022

Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisors | www.cbmcpa.com

BONUS DISCUSSION: Setting Clients Up for Success — M.S.A. and Gotchas

- Clear and examples/exhibits where necessary.
- Preemptive Buy Out and Lump Sum Clauses?
- Tax considerations
 - Form 8332
 - Specify how carryovers/forwards are divided
 - Hold harmless provision =/ immunity for marital tax liability
 - Responsibility for loss of tax benefit (Sec 121 example)
- Specific modification, windfall, etc clauses
- What actually constitutes income?
- Using percentages, have a reference point/be specific!
- Expectations of fiduciary responsibilities while holding other assets

9/22/2022

ncilor, Buchanan & Mitchell - CPAs & Business Advisors |

82



83

