

Intell

April 17/04 By Henry Bury

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THE INTELLIGENCER

As a clinical therapist, Cissy Pulikunnel has witnessed how mediation can help resolve family disputes.

That is the main reason why she and Belleville lawyer Heidi Breier have launched their own mediation and facilitation business in the city.

"As part of my practice, I have seen the effectiveness of mediation in assisting couples resolve their disputes around parenting, custody and access and it is our hope that by opening this mediation service, we can offer this important service on a full-time and broader way," said Pulikunnel.

Mediation makes sense in many ways, she noted.

"There is a new direction in the legal system for couples who are going through separation or divorce to resolve their disputes around custody and access through mediation as opposed to litigation because it is less stressful on both parents and children. It is also time and cost efficient," Pulikunnel said.

Breier, Pulikunnel and Associates is a unique company, she believes, because it offers facilitation services as well as mediation.

"In facilitation, we go into the workplace to help the organization find ways to enhance productivity, teamwork and moral."

Pulikunnel has been a professional therapist for more than 15 years, treating clients for depression, anxiety, relationship difficulties, attentional and hyperactive problems in children, conduct and behaviour problems in adolescence and abuse issues.

She founded the Centre for Family Preservation and Wellness in 1993 and moved it three years ago to 121 Dundas St. East. The mediation and facilitation business is now being operated from the centre.

As part of her practice, Pulikunnel said she has been providing some mediation services to assist couples who are separating or have separated to resolve disputes around custody and access and families who have disputes with estates.

With the new business, Pulikunnel said they can expand their services to deal with landlord-tenant disputes, disputes involving teachers and students and employees and employers.

Pulikunnel and Breier, a lawyer with 22 years' experience, are both trained mediators because they have completed the required mediation courses.

They are now available for referrals and new clients. They will be operating on flexible hours, including evenings and weekend.

They can be reached at 968-1485.

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