

Mediate 393 on “Voces Latinas” Radio in Toronto

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On January 29, 2016, I went ‘live on-air’ on Voces Latinas, a Spanish radio talk show in Toronto to talk about Mediate393 and what it is like being a roster mediator. I began the show by providing information about Mediate393 and the services offered by our team of roster mediators. The mediators at Mediate393 are comprised of mental health professionals and lawyers to help deal with family matters post-separation and/or families involved in the court system. I also shared with the listeners the important fact that Mediate393 is a subsidized program through the Ministry of the

Attorney General, and clients can receive services on a sliding scale based on income.

Mental health professionals at Mediate393 typically deal with parenting and child related issues that may arise from the separation. For instance, developing a comprehensive parenting plan, developing communication protocols, managing conflict using a children’s best interest lens and resolving issues around major decision making would be typical issues that I as a mental health mediator would encounter at 393.

I also provided examples of some typical situations lawyers encounter to help assist families. Lawyers at Mediate393 can help with income determination issues, support calculations, information about child support guidelines, as well as help people understand the impact different parenting arrangements may have on child support in order to help families make good decisions about who will move from the home, and who will pay what amount to the other.

The issues we hear and deal with are deeply personal and often highly emotional. It is without a doubt that it is most helpful to discuss and negotiate with the assistance of a trained mediator with knowledge and expertise in the area of law and/or child development.

The main feature of this program was the ability for Spanish community members to call in and ask questions. The questions were asked and answered in Spanish. I answered questions related to mediation in the context of domestic violence or presence of restraining orders, all types of custody/access related questions, general questions about Ontario’s *Family Law Rules* and the *Child Law Reform Act*, questions involving whether children can participate in mediation or at what point can children make decisions and many more. The phone lines went off **NON-STOP** with listeners wishing to ask personal questions. It is evident that mediation to help resolve family issues is necessary, beneficial and valued amongst community members. We should all be proud of the work we do at Mediate393!

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