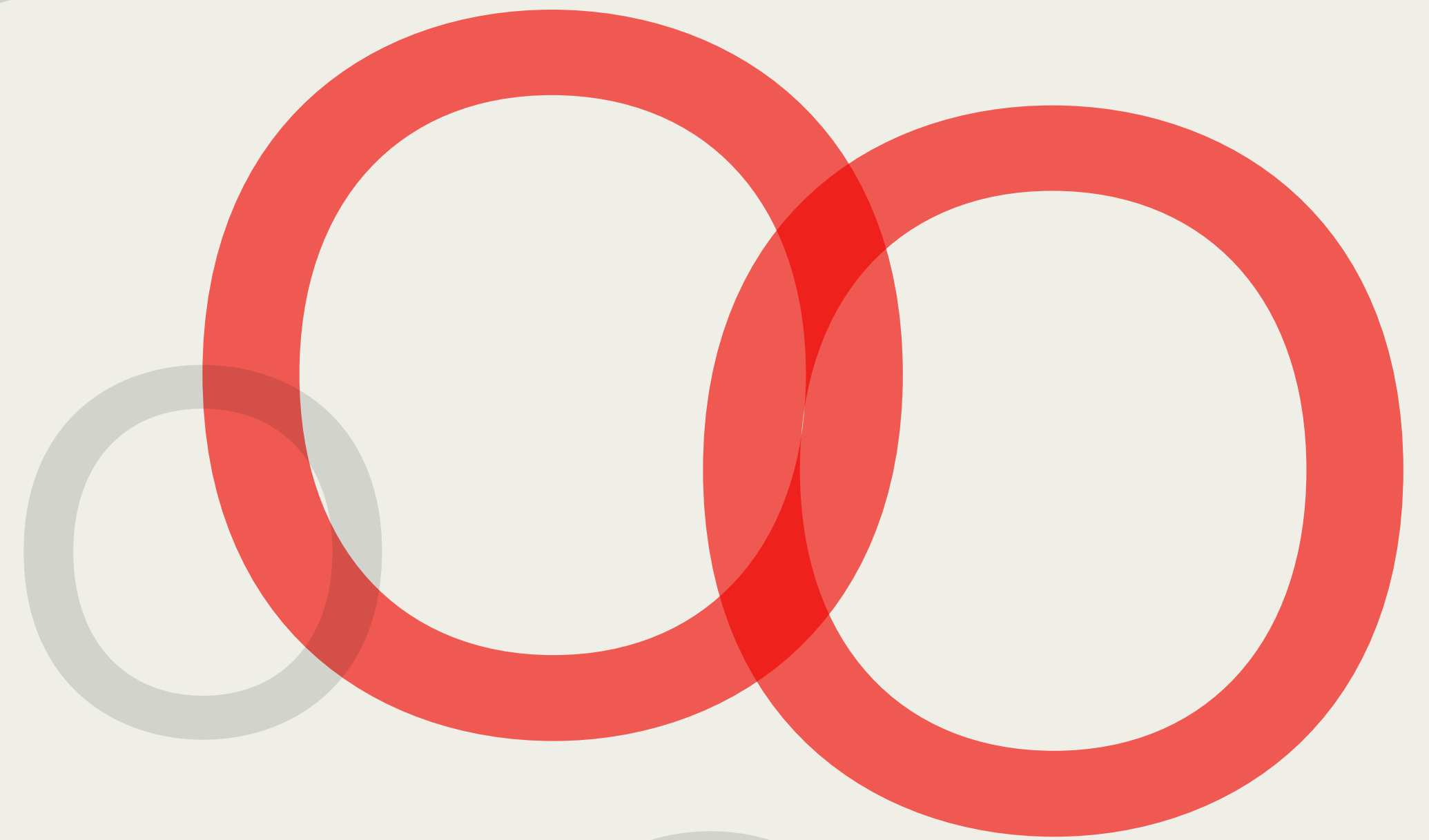


Onward[™] Guides:

Sharing Your Decision to Divorce with Your Family

Telling your parents, siblings, cousins, and other relations about your divorce is a significant step, and it's essential to approach it thoughtfully. By communicating clearly and allowing for open dialogue, you can help your family understand your decision and enlist their understanding and support.



Here are some steps to consider when preparing to talk about it:

1

Choose the Right Time

The Two Ts – Timing and Tone: Choose a time when your family members are not preoccupied or stressed with other commitments. Avoid times that may coincide with family celebrations or gatherings to minimize additional emotional strain.

2

Prepare Your Thoughts

Outline Your Reasons: Think about what you want to say beforehand. Consider your reasons for the divorce and how you can convey them without going into excessive detail.

Anticipate Reactions: Be prepared for various reactions, including shock, sadness, anger, or confusion, or even relief. Understand that any of these emotions are normal.

3

Communicate Clearly and Compassionately

Be Honest and Direct: Clearly state the fact of your divorce without being overly negative or placing blame.

Share the Decision Respectfully: If appropriate, you can briefly explain the circumstances leading to your decision, emphasizing that it's a mutual decision or something you felt was necessary for your well-being.



4

Acknowledge Their Feelings

Allow for Reactions: Give your family members the space to react emotionally, expressing their feelings about the situation. Encourage them to share their thoughts and let them know that it's okay to feel upset or concerned.

Validate Their Emotions: Recognize their feelings by communicating that you understand this is difficult to hear, and you appreciate the support

5

Reassure Them About Your Well-Being

Share Your Intentions: Let your family know that you are taking steps to take care of yourself and that you are committed to navigating this transition as smoothly and sensibly as possible.

Talk About Your Support System: Mention any support systems you have in place, such as friends, community, or therapy, to reassure them that you're seeking help and support.

6

Discuss the Impact on Family Dynamics

Preempt Concerns About the Family: Address any concerns they might have about how the divorce will affect family dynamics, especially regarding relationships with children, holidays, or family gatherings.

Emphasize Your Commitment to Healthy Co-Parenting: If you have children, reassure them that you will continue to prioritize your children's well-being and maintain a healthy relationship with both parents involved.

7 Be Open to Questions

Encourage Dialogue: Invite them to ask questions or discuss any concerns they may have. Be prepared to answer honestly while keeping the focus on your feelings and decisions.

Set Boundaries When Needed:

If questions become too personal or intrusive, it's okay to set boundaries.

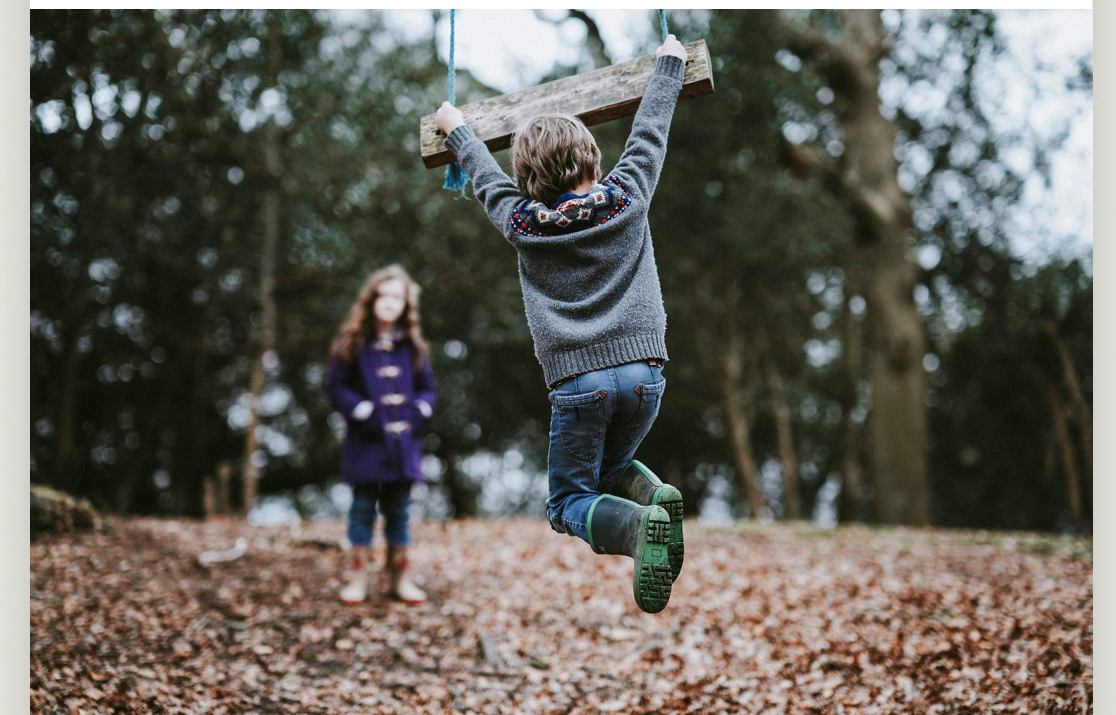
7 Offer a Path Forward

Discuss Future Interactions: Talk about how you hope to maintain family connections in the future. Let them know that you value their support and want to keep a positive relationship moving forward.

Provide Updates as Necessary:

Depending on their reactions, you may want to keep them informed about significant developments or changes as you navigate the divorce process.

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Finding the words to begin...

There are gentle ways to begin this important discussion with family members. These phrases create a calm, safe space while preparing them for significant news.

"I wanted to gather everyone together because I have something important I need to share with you."

"I've been thinking about how to tell you this, and I decided it was best to be direct and honest with all of you."

"Thank you all for being here. I have some news that might be difficult to hear, but I wanted you to hear it from me."

"I need to let you know about a big decision I've made, and I want to talk about what it means for our family."

Explaining the Decision

Start with clear, honest explanations of your decision while emphasizing your commitment to family relationships.

"After a lot of thought and consideration, [Spouse] and I have decided to get a divorce."

"This has been a long time coming, and while it's difficult, I believe this is the right decision for both of us."

"I want you to know that this decision comes from a place of wanting what's best for everyone involved, including the children."

"We've tried to work through our differences, but we've realized we're not happy together anymore."

Reassuring About Family Bonds

Provide security by emphasizing that family relationships will continue and remain important.

"This doesn't change how I feel about you or our family bond. You're still incredibly important to me."

"The children will still have both their parents, and they'll still have all of you in their lives."

"I want you to know that our family relationships will continue to be a priority for me."

Addressing Practical Concerns

Help family members understand how family dynamics might change while emphasizing stability.

"I know you might be wondering about holidays and family gatherings. We'll figure out new ways to stay connected."

"I understand this affects all of us, and I'm committed to working through any changes together as a family."

"We're working on [or have agreed upon] a co-parenting arrangement that will keep the kids' lives as stable as possible."

"We'll need to navigate some new territory, but I'm hopeful we can do it in a way that keeps our family close."

Asking for ongoing communication and support.

Use phrases that keep the door open for questions and ongoing dialogue.

"I know this is a lot to process. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have."

"I want this to be an ongoing conversation. Your feelings and concerns matter to me."

"If you need time to think about this, that's completely understandable. We can talk more whenever you're ready."

"This is just the beginning of how we'll navigate this together."

"I hope we can support each other through this transition, just like we always have."

A few more things

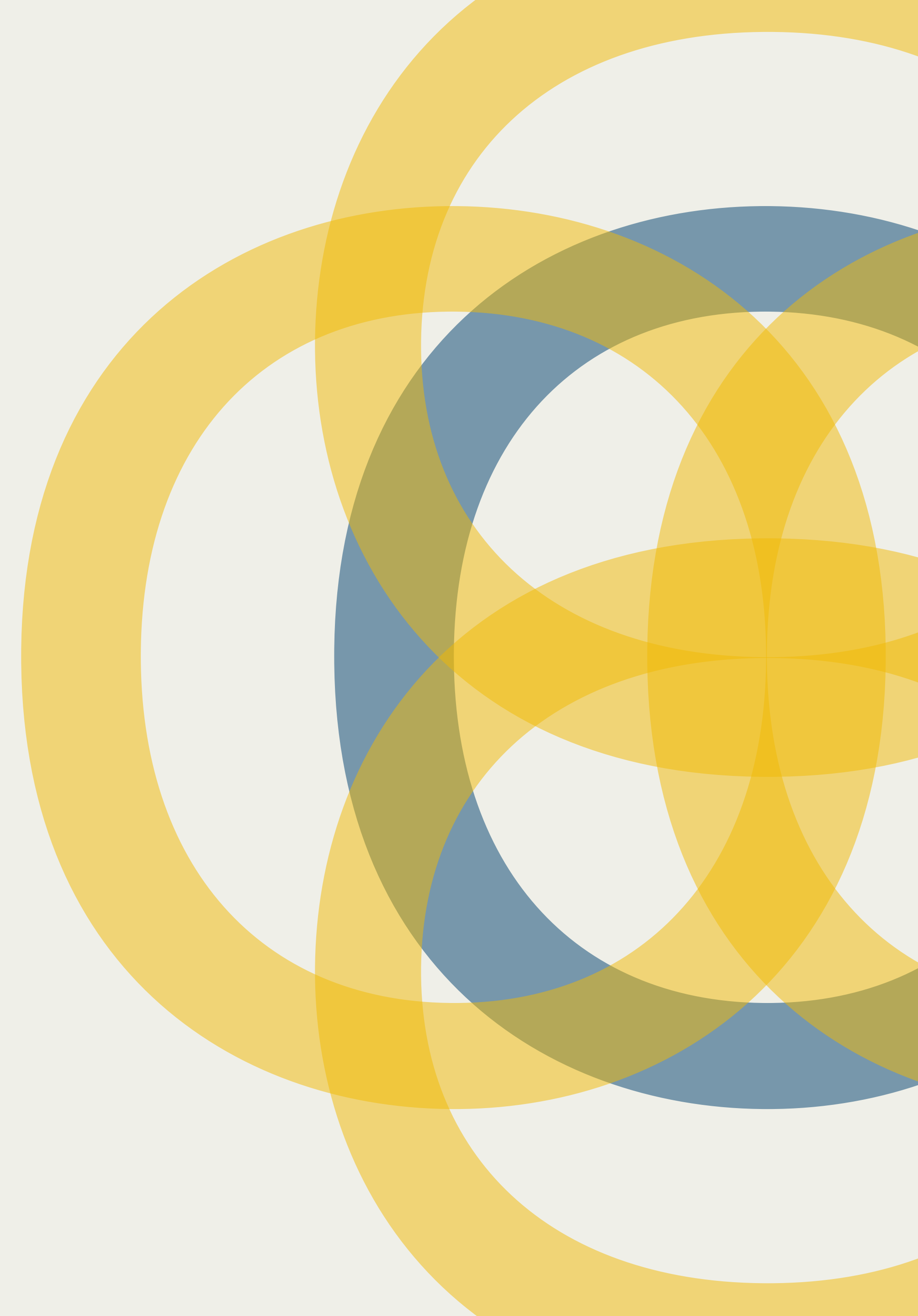
- It is essential to understand that there are many variables at play, and a variety of different dynamics present in each individual case .
- It's important to tailor the way that news is broken to those individual circumstances.
- It is useful to practice what will be said ahead of time and role-play it with a therapist or close friend of the family.

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Open communication is essential, and preparing yourself to face the challenges with resilience and self-awareness is critical. [Join our Onward community](#), where you will have a safe place to organize your thoughts and everything else to get you through your divorce.

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