

## Peer Mediation

**Introduction/Purpose:** Peer mediation is a negotiation-based strategy that teaches peer mediators alternative strategies to help resolve conflict among their peers. In peer mediation, individuals are trained as conflict managers and apply problem-solving strategies to assist their peers in settling disputes in a manner satisfying to all parties. Such a strategy may help keep many minor incidents from escalating over time into more serious incidents. More importantly, peer mediation teaches individuals an alternative set of skills that they can apply in conflict situations.

**Theory:** In mediation, an impartial third party attempts to help others come to a win-win, rather than a win-lose resolution of conflict. In peer mediation, student mediators are taught a process of communication and problem-solving that they apply to help their peers reach settlements of their disagreements without confrontation or violence. In the process of training, mediators learn that conflict can be constructive and positive, and that their role as mediators is not to judge, nor to force an agreement or solution. Rather, students come to mediation voluntarily, and are guided by peer mediators to move from blaming each other to devising solutions acceptable to all parties.

### The Mediation Process

#### 1. Introduction:

- Mediators introduce themselves to the parties involved, ask for their names, and explain the process, including confidentiality.

#### 2. Sharing Perspectives

- Each party tells his/her story of what happened.
- Parties share their interpretation of what happened and how the conflict made them feel.

### 3. Getting More Information

- Mediators ask open-ended questions to clarify and verify.
- Mediators ask, “Is there anything else that we need to know?”

### 4. Defining the Problem

- Mediators paraphrase and restate each parties account.
- Mediators guide parties to come to an agreement about what the problem really is.

### 5. Brainstorming Solutions

- Parties brainstorm possible solutions.
- Mediators ask parties to talk about which solutions the parties are willing to agree on and which ones are not agreeable.

### 6. Possible Solutions

- The parties decide how they will proceed.
- Parties come to an agreement on which solutions are the best.
- Mediators ask if the parties are satisfied and if they need anything else from the mediation.

### 7. Closing

- Mediators thank the parties for participating and remind them, if necessary, of confidentiality.
- Mediators mention that if the parties need help in the future, the mediation process is always available to them.

### Helpful Mediator Questions (use during the mediation process and for role-play practice)

1. What would you like to talk about?
2. Can you say more about that?
3. How does this make you feel?
4. What do you need or want?
5. What is it that bothers you most about this?

6. What ideas do you have about this?
7. What would you like to see happen?
8. Is there anything else you would like to talk about?
9. What would you find helpful right now?
10. What needs to change for you to feel better about this situation?
11. Is there anything you could do to make this situation better?
12. I am not quite clear about this. Could you help me get a better understanding?
13. What could you do differently if this conflict happens again?
14. Do you feel this conflict is resolved?