

What is Peer Mediation?

- Peer mediation is a confidential process used to solve conflicts
 - Mediated by another student who facilitates the conversation so that it is productive.
 - There may not always be a resolution but everyone gets to be and feel heard.
 - In the end there should be a contract where the two parties agree on what they want the future to look like between them.
- Peer mediation was first implemented in schools in the 1980s, where only a handful of people were interested in the program. During that time only “elite” or “genius” students were given the opportunity to participate. But, over time, it was observed that peer mediation is best done by a diverse group of students. (Malek and Burgess)
- Who can request mediation?
 - Anyone can request mediation including students, teachers, counselors, etc. to help students solve a conflict.
- When is mediation useful?
 - When students have trouble resolving a conflict on their own
 - Can be used as an alternative to (immediate) suspension
 - To prevent escalation of a conflict
- What're the long term benefits?
 - Less suspensions/expulsions according to “Mediation Works: An Action Research Study Evaluating the Peer Mediation Program from the Eyes of Mediators and Faculty.” (Cook, Jacqueline Yvonne, and Susan R. Boes)
 - Students learn problem solving skills, communication skills, and how to advocate for themselves.
 - Unites the community

- Peer mediation looks great on college applications because it shows
 - Commitment
 - Leadership skills
 - Time management skills
 - Communication skills

How to Become a Mediator

- Mediators will be recruited through the advisory memo and activities fair at the beginning of the school year.
 - Facilitator and Lead Mediators will ask applicants for their email, phone number, and name
- Depending on the sign up method, applicants will be emailed a [google form](#) to fill out or find the google form in the advisory memo.
- Lead mediators/facilitator(s) will conduct interviews with potential candidates and use [this rubric](#) as a scale to how well the candidates did in their interview
- Mediators will be finalized at the conclusion of all interviews.
- Mediators will be introduced to mediation through [this module](#)

The Role of Mediators

- Guide the Conversation
 - Follow a script until you are comfortable using your own words.
- A mediator should...
 - Be unbiased, meaning they favor neither side of the conflict
 - Empathetic, respectful, and are self guided
 - Have impeccable time management skills
- Mediators interject when...
 - There is a lengthy pause during the conversation
 - Disputants start to argue
 - To help guide understanding in the conversation
- Mediation should stop when...
 - Disputants threaten violence
 - Disputants refuse to engage in the mediation (i.e wastes mediators' and class time)
 - The conflict has been resolved
- Committee make up
 - One mediator from each stream, in each grade
 - 4 senior mediators
 - One Senior Lead would run the program. They'll be in control scheduling mediation and communication between mediators and staff alongside the facilitator. The Senior Lead is the former Junior Lead.
 - One junior vice leader. A junior leader ensures the longevity of the program. The junior leader takes over when the senior leader graduates and a new junior leader is elected by the facilitator and senior leader.
- Most importantly...

- Be yourself
- Mediation works best when you're authentic but still professional

Facilitators

- An adult figure, usually a school staff member
- Facilitators work closely with senior and junior leaders to ensure the program stays organized and ensures the integrity of the program.
- Facilitators come in when...
 - Mediators have to stop mediation due to threats of violence or mediation is not being taken seriously.
 - Mediators aren't working well together
 - Disputants can't come to a solution
- At the conclusion of the mediation, facilitators check up on disputants to ensure all parties follow through with the agreement at least 1-2 weeks after the mediation.
 - If the agreement is not being upheld, administration will follow through with traditional methods including suspension, expulsion, parental involvement, etc.

Scheduling Mediation

- Mediations should happen within the same day or same week as the conflict to prevent further escalation
- Mediations happen primarily during lunch or free periods to avoid mediators and disputants missing excessive class time.
- Preferred spaces for mediation would take place in the conference room or a private office
- Head student mediator will coordinate with the facilitator to identify a time that works for all parties
- You are a student before a mediator
 - Missed work is expected to be made up

Mediating Conflict

- Follow the script until you are comfortable with getting the messages across.
- Find the root of the problem
 - Don't focus too much on he said, she said
 - Don't argue about minor details
- Avoid "airing each other out"
 - Revealing unflattering details about one another takes away from the conversation.
- Make sure that participants are using "I" messages.
 - This avoids the "blame game"
 - Avoids identifying who's "wrong" or "right"
 - Helps to get feelings across effectively
 - Ex. "You never do what you're supposed to do for the project on time, you're so inconsiderate."
 - "When you don't come on time, I feel frustrated because I want to turn the project in on time."
- Restate what each disputant says to avoid miscommunication
- An effective mediator will:
 - Sets rules for mediation
 - Emphasize confidentiality
 -
 - Ensure each side tells their story uninterrupted
 - Summarize each side afterwards and pinpoint core feelings.
 - Identify issues/needs of each participant

- Identify clear solutions

Scenario 1: Mike and Tom have been assigned to work on a science project. Mike says he is doing all the work but Tom says Mike is too bossy.

Mediator 1: Hi, My name is ____

Mediator 2: And my name is ____

Before we start we want to emphasize confidentiality. Everything discussed here should stay within this room. Also, in order for mediation to be successful you have to tell the truth and be willing to listen to one another. Each of you guys will be able to tell your side of the story without interruption. Afterwards, we will come up with ways to move forward.

Mike: When we were first assigned the project, I waited for Tom to say anything about the plan for the project but he didn't. I made a copy of the work doc and shared it with him but it didn't seem like he had any intent on doing any work.

Tom: That's not-

Mediator 2: You'll get a chance to tell your recollection of events without interruption after Mike tells his side.

Mike: After a few minutes, I picked whatever parts of the project I preferred and told him which parts to do. The next time we worked on the project in class, he barely did anything I told him to do. Then during the time we had until our next work period, no matter how many times I tried to get him to do work he did nothing. During work periods we would go back and forth instead of getting anything done. We had to get an extension in order to finish "on time".

Mediator 1: How exactly did that make you feel?

Mike: I was frustrated the whole time. Getting anything lower than a B because of him would be aggravating. He wasn't considerate of anyone's time.

Mediator 2: Just to be clear, the lack of communication has made you feel frustrated and aggravated, is that right?

Mike: Yes

Mediator 2: Okay, now Tom, explain your side of things.

Tom: When we were first assigned the project Mike was acting all stuck up like he didn't want to talk to me. Then out of nowhere he started to boss me around. The more he tried to tell me what to do, the more I didn't want to do it and I barely got any work done at first. I also didn't do as much outside of work periods because I had other stuff to do. But I did pick up the slack later on despite his bossiness. We argued a lot because we didn't agree on certain things and I didn't do as much as he did outside of class work time. No matter what I do he's not satisfied.

Mediator 1: and how did that make you feel?

Tom: I was annoyed, he always acts so stuck up and like everything has to be done his way.

Mediator 1: Remember to make sure we're not placing blame on one another. The goal of the conversation is not to establish who is more at fault but how the situation made us feel, why it made us feel that way and how to move forward.

Tom: I wish that you weren't so bossy, I don't have the same work ethic as you but I'll get it done.

Mediator 2: Lets remember to be respectful to each other during the mediation project. Work on expressing yourselves without name calling and playing the blame game.

Mike: I'll try to be more patient, I just think we need to discuss the project a bit more to make sure we're both satisfied with it.

Mediator 2: How do you guys suggest moving forward?

Mike: We could come up with a work schedule that works for the both of us. That way we can both pick which days we want to work on the project and not pressure each other.

Tom: We also won't be clueless as to who is doing what and when.

Mediator 1: Alright, we'll just create the contract and if you guys aren't following through then you'll have to

Mediators will read the scenario below and the claims of each disputant.

Scenario 2: Sarah claims Destiny started the conflict by talking about her. Destiny claims that Sarah started the conflict by being weird towards her.

How the exercise works:

- 2 students will be mediators
- 2 students will be disputants
- Read the scenario and the two disputants sides of the story and improvise from there
- Remember: challenge mediators to display every expectation mentioned in the
- “Role of mediators” section

Sarah: We haven't been talking much anyways and then one of my friends had told me she was talking about me. I had never had an issue with Destiny, we used to be close but then she got some new friends and all of a sudden switched up.

Destiny: I had stopped talking to Sarah some time ago because she was just acting very weird. She wouldn't pick up my calls and make up excuses not to hang out with me. I didn't really care but someone had asked me why we dont hangout anymore and I told them. No one was talking about her but she could never mind her business.

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