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**RECOMMENDED STANDARDS
FOR SCHOOL-BASED
PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS**

The Association for Conflict Resolution

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2nd Edition 2007

RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL-BASED PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS

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Table of Contents

Introduction
Definition of Terms
Principles & Conduct for Peer Mediators
Program Development
Training
Evaluation
Resources

The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is a professional organization dedicated to enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. ACR represents and serves a diverse national and international audience that includes more than 6,000 mediators, arbitrators, facilitators, educators, and others involved in the field of conflict resolution and collaborative decision-making. ACR was launched in January 2001, when the Academy of Family Mediators (AFM), the Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet), and the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR) merged into one organization.

We wish to acknowledge the generous support we received from the JAMS Foundation and the Compton Foundation, without which this project could not have been completed.

We are particularly grateful to the groundbreaking work of the committee that created the original standards in 1996. Their efforts provided a foundation and a guide for this project.

We thank the following readers who reviewed this document in its draft stage and provided valuable input into its final form: Kathy Bickmore, Chuck Bryant, Richard Cohen, Ellen DeBenedetti, Ken Dunham, Tara Fishler, Bob Garrity, Tricia Jones, Diana Wege Sherogan, Bill Warters, Terry Wheeler and Leah Wing. Special thanks are due to Sharon Press who became an ex-officio member of the committee as she shepherded our work on the Model Conduct for Peer Mediators section.

Both editions are available on-line at <http://www.mediate.com/acrededucation>.

Introduction

Peer mediation can be a successful approach to facilitating student-centered, negotiation-based management and resolution of interpersonal conflict in schools. Such programs provide a unique opportunity for diverse students to use communication, human relations, and problem-solving skills in real-life settings. Effective programs help to create a safe and welcoming school environment and can assist in reducing school conflicts and violence and improve interpersonal and inter-group relations, especially when part of a comprehensive violence prevention plan. The qualities that mark an effective peer mediation program include youth empowerment, cultural competence, diversity, responsiveness to the specific needs of the population it serves, fair **resolutions** to student conflicts, and measurable outcomes.

In 1996, the Standards Committee of the National Association for Mediation in Education (a forerunner of ACR) published “Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs.” This responded to the growing number of peer mediation programs in schools and the need for leadership from experts in order to ensure quality. Ten years later, to reflect developments in the field and current research, the Education Section of the Association for Conflict Resolution convened the Peer Mediation Standards Committee to update and significantly expand the original version in order to create more rigorous standards.

The Peer Mediation Standards Committee drew upon diverse practitioner knowledge and relevant research to provide comprehensive standards for school-based peer mediation programs. The updated “Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs” set forth the components necessary to develop and sustain an effective peer mediation program.

These standards are designed to ensure quality and stimulate thought among participants in peer mediation programs. This document is designed to be helpful in

- Applying for funding
- Designing and implementing programs
- Designing evaluation
- Developing and selecting curricula
- Ensuring that programs are welcoming and accessible to all
- Improving established programs
- Promoting programs
- Providing professional development
- Setting guidelines for research

[This document is intentionally not a “how-to” manual. It lays out what should be done, and the reader is encouraged to seek out any number of fine books that instruct how to set up and manage a peer mediation program.](#) While the primary focus of these standards is school-based peer mediation programs, they can be easily adapted for use in other settings, such as community-based youth programs, before and after-school programs, youth residential settings, etc.

The members of the Peer Mediation Standards Committee were:

Leigh Jones-Bamman, Committee Chair
The Governor's Prevention Partnership, Hartford, CT

Marsha S. Blakeway, ACR Education Section Chair
National Peace Foundation, Washington, DC

Marge Bleiweis,
Safe and Drug Free Youth Section, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, VA

Gina L. Buckley
Oakland Mediation Center, Bloomfield Hills, MI

Priscilla Prutzman
Creative Response to Conflict, Nyack, NY

Melinda Rivas
Langston Hughes Middle School, Reston, VA

Antonio Sanford
Winning Against Violent Environments (WAVE), Cleveland, OH

Jill Smith
Center for Peace Education, Cincinnati, OH

Madeleine G. Trichel,
Interfaith Center for Peace, Columbus, OH

Dr. Robert T. Whipple
Graduate Program in Negotiation, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding,
California State University Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA

Sharon Press, Ex-Officio Member

Definition of Terms

Standards - the minimum requirements for an effective program.

Mediation - A process in which an impartial third party facilitates communication and negotiation and promotes voluntary decision-making by the parties to the dispute.

Peer mediation – Students who have been trained in mediation help their peers in the above process.

Peer mediation program - A program which trains and supports student mediators to offer mediation as an option for resolving conflicts within the school community.

Peer mediator – a student who has been trained and has the competence to facilitate the resolution of disputes between student peers using a mediation process.

Program Coordinator(s) - a person or team who have been trained and who coordinate the daily operations of a peer mediation program.

Model Conduct for Peer Mediators

Peer mediators are responsible for following these model standards of conduct in order to maintain the integrity of mediation. They must conduct themselves in a way that instills confidence in the mediation process and the competence of mediators.

These model standards of conduct serve three primary goals:

1. To guide the conduct of peer mediators;
2. To inform the disputants; and
3. To promote confidence in peer mediation as a process for handling disputes.

These Standards are to be read and considered as a single document. There is no significance to the order in which the Standards appear.

The use of the term “mediator” is meant to include co-mediator models.

Some of the matters covered by these Standards may be affected by school regulations, policies and procedures which may create conflicts with, and may supersede, these Standards. A mediator is still required to make every effort to comply with the spirit and intent of these Standards.

Note: Adults who mediate in school settings should adhere to the Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators (created by the Joint Committee of the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution, American Arbitration Association and the Association for Conflict Resolution) found at <http://www.acrnet.org/about/initiatives/QualityAssurance/JCMSCM.htm> or other applicable mediation ethical standards. This Model Standard of Conduct for School-Based Peer Mediators is consistent with the Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators while adapting the Standards for peer mediators.

I. Self – Determination

- A. A mediator is required to conduct a mediation based on the principle of self-determination of the disputants. Self-determination means the disputants participate voluntarily and make voluntary choices for themselves in mediation without pressure from administrators, mediators or others. A mediator should not interfere with party self-determination for any reason, including getting the parties to reach agreement.

II. Impartiality

- A. A mediator is required to mediate in an impartial manner. Impartiality means freedom from favoritism, bias or prejudice.

- B. A mediator should agree to mediate only if he or she can mediate in an impartial manner. The mediator avoid doing anything which gives the appearance of taking a side or showing favor to one of the disputants, including action based on the disputants' personal characteristics, background, values, beliefs or the way they act during the mediation.
- C. If at any time the mediator is unable to conduct mediation in an impartial manner, the mediator must withdraw.

III. Conflicts of Interest

- 1. A mediator is required to avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest during or after a mediation. Conflicts of interest occur when a mediator has a personal connection with a disputant or the conflict that causes an impression of partiality.
- 2. Before agreeing to mediate, a mediator is required to tell the program coordinator about any past, present or possible future relationship or connection the mediator may have with any of the disputants or the conflict. Some connections are so close that the mediator cannot mediate impartially, and the mediator should decline the mediation. Recognizing that there may be different situations or cultural expectations in which a relationship is not seen as a conflict of interest, the mediator may mediate if the disputants agree.
- 3. If the mediator is not aware of the relationship or connection until after the mediation has already started, the mediator should tell the coordinator and the disputants as soon as the mediator becomes aware of the connection. The mediation may proceed if all of the disputants agree and if the integrity of the mediation will not be compromised.
- D. After mediation, a mediator should not do anything that gives the appearance of partiality to any of the disputants.

IV. Competence

- A. Mediators have the obligation to maintain competence and to refuse a case if they believe it would require skill that exceeds their expertise. Mediator competence involves training, cultural understanding and mediation skills and experience.
- B. If a mediator realizes during mediation that she or he does not have the skills required to mediate the case, the mediator should let the coordinator know so that steps can be taken to provide assistance to the mediator or to bring in a co-mediator or new mediator.

C. Mediators are role models for other students, and as such, are expected to observe school rules, codes of conduct and all disciplinary policies. Mediators are expected to follow mediation program policies and procedures.

D. The role of the peer mediator is unique, with specific training required, and mediators should not confuse or combine mediation with any other roles (e.g. peer helper, peer counselor).

V. Confidentiality

- A. A mediator must keep confidential everything said, done and written during the mediation, unless required by school policy and mediation procedures or as agreed to by the disputants.
1. A mediator may discuss with the coordinator and other mediators what happened during the mediation for training and debriefing so long as the mediator respects the disputants' privacy and preserves the confidentiality of the mediation as much as possible.
 2. A mediator should not tell administrators how the disputants acted in mediation, but may report whether the disputants came to mediation and whether they reached an agreement.
 3. If an exception to confidentiality arises during a mediation, the mediator takes appropriate steps, including reporting it to the coordinator and, if necessary postponing or ending the mediation.
- B. At the beginning of the mediation, the mediator is required to explain confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality to the disputants.
- C. A mediator who meets in private session with any disputant during a mediation, must not disclose directly or indirectly information to any other disputant without the agreement of that disputant.

VI. Quality of the Process

- A. A mediator must conduct mediation fairly, respectfully and in a timely manner consistent with these Standards. A mediator should strive to conduct an equitable process in which all disputants have the opportunity to speak, to be heard, to propose, evaluate, reject or accept potential solutions to their conflict.
- B. A mediator should encourage honesty between and among all disputants and the mediator. If a mediator believes that the actions of a disputant make it impossible to conduct a mediation consistent with these Standards, the mediator should postpone, withdraw from or end the mediation.

C. A disputant may have difficulty understanding the dispute, the process of mediation or agreement options, or may have difficulty participating in the mediation. In this case the mediator should consult with the co-mediator and/or program coordinator to determine if something different can be done to help the disputant or the mediation should be ended.

VII. Advertising and Promotion

- A. A mediator must be truthful in advertising and promoting the mediation program. A mediator should not make any promises as to specific results of mediation.
- B. A mediator shall keep confidential the names of disputants and not use them in advertising of the program without their permission.

VIII. Advancement of Mediation Practice

- A. A mediator shall act in a way that advances the practice of mediation. A mediator promotes this Standard by engaging in some or all of the following:
 - 1. Fostering diversity within the school-based mediation program.
 - 2. Assisting newer mediators through training and mentoring.
 - 3. Networking or meeting with fellow mediators.
- B. A mediator should demonstrate respect for differing points of view within the field of mediation; seek to learn from other mediators and work with other mediators to better serve people in conflict.

Program Development and Management

A peer mediation program may be implemented in a single school or as part of a district-wide initiative. Creating, managing, enhancing and sustaining a program involves the following components.

Needs Assessment

- Assess the need for a peer mediation program in a school from the administrators', staff's and students' points of view.
- Assess whether the school has the resources and commitment to implement a program that meets the standards put forth in this document.
- Assess administrators', staff's and students' knowledge about conflict resolution concepts and skills.
- Assess cultural customs and attitudes about conflict resolution.
- Design the program, using the results from the needs assessment.

Administrative Support

Obtain clear administrative support at the district and/or building level to

- build the capacity of the program to meet these standards;
- facilitate access to staff, students and resources, if choosing an outside organization/agency to train or coordinate the program;
- empower students to be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the program;
- ensure that all students and staff have access (physical, language, cultural, procedural) to the program;
- refer students to mediation and encourage staff to refer;
- provide funds for training, curricula and program promotion;
- provide time for mediations, program coordination, on-going training and promotion; and
- provide location/space for training and mediations to occur
- set program goals.

Program Models –

The program coordinator, in collaboration with administrators and trainers, chooses the program models. These can change as the program develops.

Philosophical/theoretical styles

Programs can choose to train students in a style of mediation, such as the problem solving/facilitative, transformative or narrative style. Peer Mediation may also be a part of a restorative justice or victim/offender program.

Structural models:

- Cadre: A group of students is selected and trained to be mediators.
- Whole classroom/school: Skills are taught to all students in the class/school, and all students have the opportunity to mediate conflicts with their classmates.

Scheduling models:

- Mediators on call: The program coordinator has the mediators' schedules and calls them shortly after a referral is made. Mediators and disputants are allowed to miss class (or certain classes) in order to mediate.
- Scheduled hours: The mediators are stationed in the mediation room during certain times each day or each week. If there are no cases, the mediators may do role-plays, training with the coordinator, program tasks or schoolwork.
- Playground: The mediators are scheduled to be on duty during recess times on the playground. If they see a problem arising or if a conflict is referred to them, they can mediate the situation on the spot. Trained playground aides or program coordinators supervise the mediators.
- Combination of the above models

Policies

School Policies:

School systems and schools develop policies regarding the appropriate and inappropriate behavior of students; the consequences of inappropriate behavior are usually included in discipline policies or codes. School disciplinary policies should include peer mediation as an option for resolving incidents brought about by interpersonal disputes and a clarification of the types of disputes that are and are not appropriate for mediation.

Most student disagreements and disputes do not need intervention or may only need referral to the school mediation program for assistance. Whenever possible, students should be referred, or refer themselves, to mediation when they have an interpersonal conflict that involves issues that they are not able to resolve themselves. For mediation to be a viable option for resolving student disputes, certain circumstances are necessary. These include a safe and respectful environment, a balance of power between the disputants and the willingness of both parties to take responsibility for resolving the dispute. Incidents involving drugs, weapons, other illegal behaviors, abuse, harassment or bullying do not meet these criteria, are not appropriate for mediation and need other types of interventions.

Mediation is typically not appropriate when a student commits hurtful acts against another person or persons or commits other serious acts that are grounds for disciplinary action involving separation from other students. However, if a school has a restorative justice or community conferencing component in addition to mediation as part of their dispute resolution program, the program coordinator may refer the disputants to the appropriate process.

Peer mediation is appropriate for **discussing and exploring options** related to an interpersonal conflict. Interpersonal disputes between students may underlie a fight or other situation which violates other disciplinary policies or codes regarding student

safety. Schools determine how administrators may use discretion in referring a dispute to mediation as an alternative to suspension with or without imposing other consequences. In the case that consequences are imposed, the underlying issues of the dispute may still not be resolved and the students may be referred to mediation before returning to classes. Even though the students may be referred to mediation by administration, the principles of voluntary participation, self-determination, confidentiality, mediator impartiality and other standards of conduct for mediators still apply.

School policy regarding mediation should determine if an adult presence is required in the room or is nearby to monitor during mediations involving only students.

In general, peer mediators should mediate student/student disputes. Well-qualified adult mediators may mediate, or co-mediate with a peer mediator, a student/student dispute involving difficult issues.

Policies Concerning Adults Who Mediate Under the Auspices of the Peer Mediation Program:

A co-mediation team of a qualified adult and a qualified student mediator may mediate adult/student disputes. Qualified adult mediators mediate disputes between adults in the school setting, such as those involving administrators, teachers, other staff, and parents. Peer mediators do not mediate disputes involving only adults.

Policies Concerning Student Mediators:

Policies that deal with student mediator behavior are clearly articulated to the mediators. They include the following and any other issues deemed necessary by the school or district.

- Adherence to the Model Conduct for Peer Mediators (Section III)
- Minimum grades necessary for participation in the program, if any
- Program and school responsibilities

Procedures

The Program Coordinator establishes efficient operating procedures to encourage referrals to and utilization of the program, provides structure **and support** for mediators and builds a strong program. The Coordinator develop an action plan with timelines and responsibility for implementing and maintaining the program. Depending on the age and abilities of the student mediators, they can be responsible for establishing and implementing many procedures.

Selection of Student Mediators

- The peer mediation team reflects the diversity of the schools community in all senses, including age, race, ethnicity, gender, academic standing, socio-economic status and interests, so that all students feel comfortable participating in the program.
- The selection process can include teacher, student and self-referrals; an interview; a written application; teacher recommendations; and parent permission.

- The selection committee can include current mediators, program coordinator(s), and other members of the school community.
- The selection committee sets the criteria for selection, which can include communication and problem solving skills, responsibility, honesty, flexibility, ability to keep confidentiality, etc.

Program Promotion

Programs communicate information about their purpose, goals, benefits, procedures and outcomes to a variety of audiences, including administration, staff, peer mediators, disputants, other students, parents and the local community. This is done on an on-going basis and is essential to program success.

Sustainability

Mediators and coordinators strive to maintain the high quality of their program.

Programs may incorporate the following in order to sustain and enhance the program:

- Advanced training for the coordinator and mediators;
- Community outreach;
- Fundraising;
- In-service presentations to new staff;
- Integration of conflict resolution concepts and skills into school curricula;
- Networking with programs at other schools;
- Presentations, workshops and training at conferences, other schools, community functions, etc.;
- Small and large-group mediation, with appropriate training and skills
- Teacher-student mediation, with appropriate training and skills
- Special events to acknowledge and sustain the mediators

Staffing

Every program needs an on-site Program Coordinator who is responsible for administering and maintaining the peer mediation program as part of their job description. This function may be filled by a single person or a team of people who share the tasks and responsibilities. (See Training, Section IV for Program Coordinator qualifications.)

Programs also need a Trainer, Educator of Trainers and/or an Advanced Practitioner who provides initial and on-going training to the Coordinator and the student mediators. Trainers train students to mediate in a school-based peer mediation program. Educators of Trainers coach and train Trainers, Program Coordinators and student mediators. Advanced Practitioners train at all levels and all ages. The person who trains school staff and students may be a school district employee or staff from an outside organization. (See Training, Section IV for Trainer, Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner qualifications.)

A single person may meet the qualifications to be and fulfill the functions of a Program Coordinator and a Trainer, Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner.

- Some school systems have a district level Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner who provides training for staff and student mediators, maintains district-wide records, advocates for programs, coordinates among the programs and supports the on-site coordinators.
- The Coordinator (or peer mediators they supervise) receives referrals, determines each case's suitability for mediation, schedules the session, assigns mediators to the case, maintains records and follows-up with the disputants to determine if they are upholding their agreement and if they are satisfied with the program.
- The Coordinator, Trainer, Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner supervises the mediators during the mediation, either in the same room or close by, and debriefs them after the mediation. While not all Coordinators are required to have received mediation training, coordinators who supervise mediations and debrief mediators must be trained mediators.
- The Coordinator supports the peer mediators so that they uphold the Model Conduct for Peer Mediators (Section II).
- The Coordinator is ultimately responsible for ensuring that mediations are based on the principles of self-determination, voluntary participation, impartiality, mediator competence and confidentiality.

TRAINING

Training for Student Mediators

A successful peer mediation program requires many levels of training and support. The proficiency of student mediators may range from basic to advanced. A peer mediator with basic skills has the ability to succeed as a member of a peer mediation team. An advanced peer mediator can use a variety of conflict management processes and serve as a mentor to other peer mediators. Evaluation is an important part of training and is covered in the Evaluation Section of this document (p.).

Training Techniques/Methods

The training consists of a variety of teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles, including, but not limited to presentations, demonstrations, interactive and written exercises, role-plays and various media. The student training may serve as a training for Program Coordinators and other interested school staff. As many members of the coordinating team as possible should attend this training.

Training Content for Student Mediators

Student Mediators conduct mediations for their peers and work with the Program Coordinator to manage a peer mediation program for the school. At a minimum, their initial training content includes the items listed below.

(This is the part, where I can give you my 2 cents, but the folks at the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation, are the experts. They have spent time looking at how to evaluate programs and can articulate this much better than I. I hope they contact you or that you are able to contact them to look at, particularly, this section, as I feel my input is not compete.

That said, all I can figure out to do with this section is to have 2 strands, one for problem- solving mediation, one for transformative, and perhaps a third for narrative (I am not sure where you can get the information for narrative.) I say this because the premises underlying problem-solving and transformative mediation are different. This affects the moves mediators make, how they use their strategies and skills, and which skills they use.)

(Here is my first attempt at a strand for Transformative. There are a few items from your list that I have left, even though they may not be part of a “standard” transformative curriculum, because I have found them to be important. I will try and use your format

1. Foundations

- a) What is conflict
- b) How conflict affects our ability to function

- c) Empowerment and Recognition and how they interact
- d) Conflict resolution styles
- e) Ways that cultures view and handle conflicts
- f) Perception/ misperception and bias awareness, cultural diversity, prejudice reduction
- g) Understanding mediator influence
- h) Appropriate issues for peer mediation

2. Communication

- a) Why it is important
- b) Non-verbal communication; good and poor listening skills
- c) Active listening (summarizing, reflecting, listening for feelings)
- d) Open-ended questions
- e) Staying close to party language
- f) Silence

3. Mediation

- a) Definition
- b) Preliminary assumptions (voluntary participation, confidentiality, self determination)
- c) Mediator orientation to being supportive
- d) Recognizing opportunities to be supportive
- e) How and when to use supportive strategies
- f) Being comfortable with conflict and expression of emotions
- g) Supporting the parties in developing ground rules
- h) Adopting a micro focus
- i) Points of view (including multicultural perspectives and perceptions, etc.)
- j) Introductory remarks
- k) Writing agreements
- l) Co-mediation
- m) Other issues: (caucus, agreement to mediate forms)

4. Program Policies & Procedures

- a) See Program Development (Section IV)
- b) Model Conduct for Peer Mediators

1. Conflict

- i) What it is, how we can learn from it
- j) Conflict resolution styles
- k) Types of conflict
- l) Ways that cultures view and handle conflicts
- m) Perception/ misperception and bias awareness, cultural diversity, prejudice reduction

- n) Understanding power imbalance and equity
- o) Appropriate issues for peer mediation

2. Communication

- g) Why it is important
- h) Non-verbal communication; good and poor listening skills
- i) Active listening (paraphrasing, restating, summarizing, clarifying, reflecting, reframing, encouraging, listening for feelings)
- j) Open-ended questions
- k) Neutral language
- l) "I" messages
- m) Understanding diverse cultural and gendered (masculine/ feminine) styles of communication and negotiation

3. Mediation

- n) Definition
- o) Preliminary assumptions (voluntary participation, confidentiality, neutrality, etc.)
- p) Ground rules
- q) Steps/stages of mediation
- r) Points of view (including multicultural perspectives and perceptions, etc.)
- s) Identifying issues (including positions vs. interests, etc.)
- t) Generating options/brainstorming
- u) Evaluating and synthesizing potential solutions
- v) Choosing a resolution
- w) Writing agreements
- x) Co-mediation
- y) Managing anger and other strong emotions
- z) Other issues (remaining neutral, cooperation, affirmation, etc.)

4. Program Policies & Procedures

- a) See Program Development (Section IV)
- b) Model Conduct for Peer Mediators

Length of Training

School-based mediation programs operate in a variety of ways. The training of Student Mediators may vary to accommodate a particular school's schedule or the age and developmental level of the students. For example, a training for elementary students might be conducted in 90-minute sessions over a several week period, while a training for high school students might be done in full-day sessions over a one or two week period.

The hours below reflect a minimum total of time needed for the students to be prepared to mediate. Length of session and span of time should be determined by the trainers in consultation with school staff. Students are expected to attend the training in its entirety.

Schools in which conflict resolution or violence prevention training has already taken place may fall at the lower end of the number of hours below:

1. Elementary: 12-18 hours
2. Middle School: 12-18 hours
3. High School: 15-20 hours
4. Ongoing Mediator Training: 12 plus hours per year

When student mediators move from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school, they receive additional age-appropriate training that builds on what they have learned previously and enhances their skills and knowledge of the mediation process.

Ongoing Mediator Training

Program Coordinators and Trainers should look at the specific needs of the program to develop ongoing mediator training. This covers such topics as:

- a) Adult/student mediations
- b) Assertiveness
- c) Coaching other mediators
- d) Continued bias awareness
- e) Difficult situations
- f) Multi-party disputes or group facilitation
- g) Power issues
- h) Problem solving skills
- i) Reflective practice (critiquing one's own work as a mediator)
- j) Representing and marketing the peer mediation program and the field
- k) Review and reinforcement of skills taught in the mediation training
- l) Teambuilding
- m) Using technology resources or multimedia (i.e. online dispute resolution)

Professional Development for Adults

Adults play a variety of roles in supporting a peer mediation program. Some or all of the following roles are needed for each program: Program Coordinators, Trainers, Educators of Trainers and Advanced Practitioners. In some settings, a single person may perform more than one of these roles. Students can perform some of the functions of Program Coordinators and Trainers. Outside trainers can be brought in if there is no one qualified in the school or district. The minimum knowledge, skills and experience necessary to perform the functions of each of these are detailed below and should be covered in any preparatory training for the position.

Program Coordinators

Program Coordinators are responsible for administering and maintaining the peer mediation program. The Coordinator may be a single person or a team of people who

share the tasks and responsibilities. Ideally, Coordinators are not responsible for administering schoolwide discipline, so as to keep separate the school's discipline and mediation functions. Program Coordinators who also supervise and debrief mediators should be trained mediators. Each program needs a Program Coordinator.

By the end of their preparatory training, Program Coordinators should be able to

1. Uphold the Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs
2. Commit to program creation and support
3. Commit to learning new skills
4. Schedule time to run the program
5. Foster administrative, faculty, student and parent support
6. Advocate the benefits of a mediation program
7. Articulate the goals of the program
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to bias awareness, cultural diversity and prejudice reduction
9. Conduct a needs assessment
10. Review various models to help tailor the program to the needs of the school
11. Establish policies, procedures and forms
12. Maintain necessary records
13. Recruit and select students
14. Handle intake and case management
15. Expand and promote the mediation program
16. Generate ideas for sustaining successful programs
17. Empower students to coordinate the mediation program, as appropriate developmentally
18. Access resources, services, and advanced training available to support the program

Trainers

Trainers train students to mediate in a school-based peer mediation program. As part of their preparation, Trainers have completed a 20 – 40 hour mediation training. Students who are Trainers should also be experienced mediators.

By the end of their preparatory training, Trainers should be able to

1. Work effectively with students
2. Mediate competently
3. Teach all peer mediation skills
4. Demonstrate sensitivity to bias awareness, cultural diversity and prejudice reduction
5. Facilitate student learning effectively using a variety of interactive teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles:
 - a) Brainstorming

- b) Coaching
- c) Demonstrations
- d) Group work
- e) Multimedia based learning
- f) Presentation
- g) Role plays
- h) Student input

It is important that the content for Trainers be aligned with the student mediator and Program Coordinator training content.

Educators of Trainers

Educators of Trainers coach and train Trainers, Program Coordinators and student mediators. They can evaluate, select and coach students to become Trainers. They also help set up programs, monitor progress and deal with special situations or problems. Although these Educators of Trainers may be outside trainers, school districts may want to have qualified people within the district.

An Educator of Trainers meets the following requirements:

1. Possesses Program Coordinator and Trainer skills and knowledge
2. Completed two years of experience as an effective Trainer
3. Completed a basic adult mediation course
4. Mediated or observed at least five adult mediations
5. Continues to receive advanced training (university courses, workshops, conferences, district sponsored professional education) in peer mediation, conflict resolution or adult mediation
6. Networks with other conflict resolution trainers and professionals
7. Able to guide Trainers and Program Coordinators to information and resources on issues such as the following:
 - a) Bullying prevention
 - b) Conflict resolution education
 - c) Conflict resolution theory
 - d) Dynamics of classroom management
 - e) Funding
 - f) Negotiation and facilitation
 - g) Online dispute resolution
 - h) Peace education
 - i) Problem-solving skills and methods

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced Practitioners train at all levels and all ages. The Advanced Practitioner is a resource for other trainers, programs in trouble, large-scale programs and complex program designs.

An Advanced Practitioner meets the following requirements:

1. Possesses all Educators of Trainers skills and knowledge
2. Developed expertise in the field of mediation, peer mediation, conflict resolution, professional development models and/or multicultural education
3. Worked with peer mediation programs at least five years
4. Designed a portfolio of training materials, conference presentations and advanced workshops related to effective peer mediation training and program coordination
5. Demonstrates an understanding of a systematic process for training and evaluating Student Mediators, Program Coordinators, Trainers and Educators of Trainers
6. Capable of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of peer mediation programs

Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential component of a peer mediation program. It is important for program improvement and sustainability, promotion to school and community, and reporting to funders and stakeholders.

Program Evaluation:

Schools should evaluate programs based on the standards listed in this document. This can be self-assessment, district evaluation, and/or outside evaluation involving both students and adults. Evaluation begins with the needs assessment and is ongoing.

Data may be collected to answer the following evaluation questions and to provide measurable outcomes:

- How many cases were referred to mediation?
- How many were mediated?
- How many mediations resulted in agreement?
- How many agreements were kept?
- How many mediations did each mediator do?
- What was the frequency of mediator participation?
- Where do referrals come from?
- **Have referral patterns changed?**
- Did the program meet its goals?
- What are the demographics of mediators and disputants?
- What percentage of the student population used the program?
- How many and in what ways were parents involved?
- How satisfied are people (mediators, disputants, other students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents) with the program?
- What did the program cost?
- How many staff hours did it use?

Educational research may also examine the impact of peer mediation programs by correlating program data with other school information such as changes in numbers of fights, disciplinary referrals, test scores, academic achievement, attendance, school climate, truancy, dropout patterns and **impact on relationships**. Because of the many variables in school settings, experienced educational researchers should do this type of analysis.

Training Evaluation:

The training of Student Mediators, Program Coordinators, Trainers and Advanced Practitioners should be evaluated for effectiveness. Methods for training evaluation may include the following:

- Pre and post test;
- Skills checklist or rubric to assess performance readiness;
- Trainee feedback on training and instructor effectiveness; and
- Trainer self-assessment.

Mediator Competence Evaluation

Student mediators are evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine capability to mediate and needs for skill development. Methods for evaluating mediators can include the following:

- Core knowledge test
- Feedback from disputants;
- Mediator self assessment and mediation debriefing; and
- Observation of skills, performance and commitment.

Resources

Please visit the Education Section on the ACR website at <http://www.mediate.com/acrededucation/>.