



**Community
Mediation
Center**
Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice
Services and Training
165 South Main Street, Suite A
Harrisonburg, VA 22801



PEER MEDIATION

Students helping
students
resolve conflict
peacefully
at school



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What is Peer Mediation?

Peer mediation is a system that allows students to work together to solve their problems in appropriate ways. Using peer mediation, students express their feelings and state their side of the story. Students create their own solutions, and then sign an agreement form showing that they will live up to the conditions of the agreement.



"I'm ready to sign, if you are!
I'm glad we're going to be
friends again."

The Philosophy of Peer Mediation

Peer mediation is based on the idea that conflict is a natural part of life. By turning conflict into opportunities for change, peer mediation allows everyone to benefit. Peer mediation offers students the opportunity to take appropriate responsibility for solving their own problems.

Why Implement a Peer Mediation Program?

- The availability of a peer mediation program in your school empowers students to resolve minor disputes that would otherwise interfere with the education process.
- Peer mediation decreases tension and hostility in the school environment while improving student participation, self-esteem, and performance.
- Building communication and life skills among students creates a stronger sense of cooperation within the school community.

How To Implement a Peer Mediation Program

Community Mediation Center trainers come to your school to conduct a staff orientation. Your school then selects appropriate students to be peer mediators, and CMC trains the students. Your Peer Mediation program is on its way!

A program coordinator from your school can also attend a *Peer Mediation for Educators* workshop offered by the Community Mediation Center. Although this training is not essential, our training staff recommends the workshop to help establish a solid foundation for the program coordinators.

A Peer Mediation Program Benefits the School

When conflict is managed through peer mediation, the entire school reaps the benefits.

School Staff Gains:

- More teaching time by preventing the growth of small problems.
- A better relationship with the students.
- The means to handle staff tension by providing an alternative method of dispute resolution.

Peer Mediators Develop:

- Leadership skills.
- Enhanced language and communication skills.
- The ability to solve problems in many situations.
- Academic self confidence.

Student Body Learns:

- To share their problems and feelings appropriately.
- Problem-solving skills.
- To take responsibility for their problems.



Support for Your Program

The Center conducts staff orientations to help develop a comprehensive approach to school problem-solving. Teachers who understand program goals are empowered to reinforce the use of peer mediation and make referrals. Three areas are covered:

- Understanding conflict.
- Learning the mediation process.
- Implementing the school program.



Student Training

Student training is the heart of the program. Peer mediation training concentrates on turning students into effective peer mediators. The training is generally held over a two day period while school is in session, with six hours of training each day. Role plays and fun exercises are designed to reinforce the mediation lessons.

Booster Trainings

We are committed to providing support to existing programs. Our "Tools for your Mediation Toolbox" is a refresher training to help experienced student mediators learn from their past mediations. We also offer a "Next Step for Educators"—an advanced training for peer mediation coordinators. Other training opportunities are also available through the Community Mediation Center.