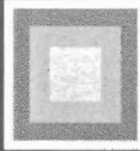




**Community
Mediation
Center**

Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice
Services and Training

165 South Main Street, Suite A
Harrisonburg, VA 22801



Parent-Teen Mediation

BRINGING
YOUR



FAMILY TOGETHER



Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice
Services and Training

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Serving Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro
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The Mediation Process

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a way for parents and teens to work out differences and problems safely, privately and with the help of trained mediators. Mediators do not take sides or tell family members what to do. Rather, mediators help a family talk with each other and come up with their own solutions. Mediators listen and help families talk things out until everyone's needs are met.

Why Consider Mediation?

Often problems in school such as truancy, as well as problems outside of school, create difficulties at home. Parent-teen mediation is a way to resolve serious differences between family members. Mediation helps to lessen stress and further disruption within families by addressing underlying issues that contribute to conflict between parents and their children.

The Focus of Parent-Teen Mediation

Mediation helps families to discuss options for making changes in behaviors and attitudes that have led to conflict, confusion of roles and expectations and breakdowns in communication. Mediation helps families to move away from the past and look to the future. One goal is for the parties to create a written agreement that each person feels is fair, balanced, realistic and accurately reflects the issues addressed during the mediation process.



Outcomes Of Mediation

Mediation Empowers the Family?

Mediation seeks to empower the family instead of causing them to feel more helpless and dependent. However, mediation is not the same as counseling or therapy. Even if a written agreement is not reached, one goal is to have parents and youth leave the session feeling that they have more control of their lives. Mediation seeks to put family members in a position where they have the power to make some changes. The changes may seem small, but can have a big effect on how family members treat one another in the future.

Mediators Help Family Members to:

- Voice their worries and say what they see as the problem(s).
- Build a sense of respect and openness among one another while discussing issues.
- Break down misunderstandings and identify issues.
- Clarify ways the situation could change and identify steps towards making those changes.
- Find new ways of dealing with conflict that can be used if future problems occur.

Resolutions

Mediators record your points of agreement, and a written document is usually formed at the end or within a few days of the mediation. For court-referred cases, a signed agreement could be taken to court and entered as an Order. You are welcome to bring an attorney to the mediation. If your attorney is not present and you reach an agreement, you are encouraged to consult with him/her before you sign the agreement.



Issues appropriate for Mediation

Who Serves as the Mediator?

Court-referred cases and most non-court-referred cases go to mediators who have special training and are certified by the Supreme Court of Virginia. Often mediators work in teams of two and have experience with cases similar to yours. Mediators have backgrounds in law, human services, business or other areas that are helpful with understanding the dispute. Regardless of a mediator's background, mediators are not allowed to give legal advice.

Possible Issues for Mediation:

- Responsibilities in the home.
- Money — allowance, employment.
- Parental authority.
- Curfew.
- Friends, social activities.
- Independence and privacy.
- Communication.
- Spending time together as a family.
- Social behavior.
- Running away from home.
- Academic performance.
- School attendance and tardiness.
- Respect for school authorities.
- Completion of school assignments.
- Parent follow-through on school recommended evaluations or counseling.
- Parent support and involvement in homework completion and attendance at parent-school conferences.



Next Steps Toward Choosing Mediation

What is the First Step?

Contact the Community Mediation Center and ask to speak with a case manager. You will be given the chance to briefly explain your side of the situation, have questions answered, and look at possible times to schedule the evaluation and mediation. With few exceptions, what you say to the case manager is treated as strictly confidential and would not be repeated without your permission.

The Evaluation Session

Mediation is a voluntary process. The evaluation session provides an opportunity for the parties to have the mediation process explained and to assess the appropriateness of the case for mediation. The evaluation session typically takes 15 to 30 minutes depending on the complexity of the case and other factors. The Center will attempt to schedule the evaluation session at a time that is convenient to you and the other parties. Generally, the mediation session will begin immediately after the evaluation session if the parties agree to participate. For court-referred cases, participation in mediation should not delay your court trial date.

What is the Cost?

The evaluation session is conducted at no charge. If your case qualifies, the mediation process may be offered free-of-charge through a contract with the Supreme Court of Virginia. If your case does not qualify, the case manager will inform you of the cost which is typically shared by the parties and charged on a sliding scale.