



**Conflict Happens . . . . .**  
**Anywhere. Anytime.**  
**And, YOU can help!**

**By becoming a mediator for CDRC**

CDRC, the Community Dispute Resolution Center, provides mediation to individuals in Chemung, Schuyler and Tompkins County. Mediation offers people the chance to come together to talk things out, work out agreements or plan what their next steps will be.

Examples of common cases include:

- Separated or divorced parents discussing how to share responsibility for their children;
- Adult children discussing Mom and Dad's living situation now that one of them is not well;
- Neighbors reaching an agreement about noise and lawn care;
- A homeowner and contractor who disagree about the quality of work done;
- Co-workers talking through difficulties on the job.

CDRC mediators help people reach their own agreements. Our training is based on the transformative framework of conflict intervention, first articulated in The Promise of Mediation by Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger.

Mediators learn to:

- Understand conflict as a crisis in human interaction
- Listen well and deeply to what people are saying
- Reflect and summarize what they hear, helping people hear themselves and each other
- Support those caught in conflict in making the best decisions they can given the situation they face and the perspective of others involved.

Mediators make a commitment to volunteer for at least two years after completing their apprenticeship.

CDRC's volunteers participate in a three step training program:

1. **Attend an orientation session.**

At the orientation session, staff will discuss CDRC's approach to conflict intervention, the mediation services offered, the agency's relationships with the courts and the community, the agency's commitment to its volunteers and what we ask in return. They are scheduled for one hour in Elmira and in Watkins Glen by the volunteer coordinator. At or soon after the orientation, we will let you know if you are accepted as a volunteer.

2. **Complete the two-part Mediation Training.**

Session I: The first three days of the training (October 28, 29 and 30) includes principles of transformative conflict theory, the mediator's role as an intervener in conflict, skills for responding supportively and opportunities to practice skills. Coaches provide feedback during small group role plays. These three days are also open to individuals not interested in volunteering, who pay for the training.

Session II: The second three days (November 4, 5, and 6) include information related to Parenting Plan mediations, CDRC's relationship with Family Court, co-mediation, state ethical standards and agency policies. Additional role play practice allows volunteers to refine skills with feedback from coaches. Near the end of the training, each volunteer is videotaped mediating a role play session.

3. **Apprentice under the supervision of a coach/mentor.**

The first step of the apprenticeship process is an assessment of skills. Volunteers complete a detailed self-assessment based on the videotaped role play. A trainer or coach does a separate assessment. They meet to discuss the tape and the volunteer's readiness. If skills are insufficient, targeted skill practice and additional role plays may be arranged. Volunteers then move on to observations.

Apprentices attend one or more sessions that describe CDRC's intake and case coordination process, agency policy and procedures, and details on staff-mediator interactions.

Apprentices observe at least two mediations, completing a written observation form after each session. They discuss their observations with the mediators after the session. Then the volunteer coordinator will contact the apprentice to discuss what they saw. When apprentice and volunteer coordinator agree about readiness, apprentices then co-mediate with experienced mediators for at least two sessions. After each session the apprentice will get feedback from their co-mediator and the case coordinator. The volunteer coordinator will contact the apprentice to discuss their experience. At this point, a volunteer is certified\* as a CDRC mediator.

## **Being an Active CDRC Mediator**

To remain a mediator in good standing with CDRC, the following on-going requirements must be met:

- A mediator must participate in at least six mediation sessions each year. Most cases are co-mediated. Up to three of the sessions each year may be observations. CDRC uses a slot calendar, scheduling mediation slots for four month periods three times each year. Mediators are asked to hold their assigned times for a session until 24 hours before. Some fill-in opportunities are available.
- Additionally, a mediator must participate in six hours of continuing education each year. CDRC provides mediator check-ins, workshops, and other opportunities to assist you in meeting these requirements.
- Advanced trainings are offered periodically, and each mediator is strongly encouraged to participate. These targeted trainings are required before mediators can mediate for special programs and with specific populations. Currently, CDRC offers advanced training in the following areas:
  - Elder mediation for our Wise Talk Program
  - Parent-teen mediation for our Family Talk Program
  - Child-protective conferencing for our Permanency ProgramAdditional advanced training is developed as needs arise.

\* In New York State, mediators are certified by the Centers for whom they mediate, not by the state. Centers are responsible for maintaining quality assurance through apprenticeship, continuing education and observation.