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Introduction

USING THIS MANUAL



This manual has been produced for use in training peer mediators. It covers all aspects of the training - activities for improving the desired skills of the mediators, an understanding of what mediation is, the mediation process and how mediation will operate within the school. It also looks at why mediation is being introduced into the school.

The training is divided into three sessions. I recommend that the first two sessions be conducted in one day. The third session, Getting Underway, can be scheduled soon after as a meeting with your mediators. If it is not practical to conduct the training in this way, then the sessions can be broken up and delivered in smaller parts - e.g. during the lunch break.

Each session is detailed and all the information and activities provided. Copies of overheads are also provided for each topic.

Remember:

- a) Mediation provides a system which is used by students to report problems they would not take to teachers or parents.
- b) Mediation training helps students to better understand themselves and others and provides them with lifetime skills.

'Our schools are training the decision-makers of the future.'

Peer Mediation

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

The word 'mediation' derives from the Latin, 'mediere' which means 'to divide in the middle'.

In mediation a third party literally steps between the parties in dispute and assists them in finding a solution to their problem. It generally involves the disputing parties meeting face-to-face in the presence of a neutral party, with whose assistance they negotiate an agreement - which often involves compromise. Mediators do not decide on the guilt or innocence of the parties. They do not give advice, nor are they judges. They assist the parties to voluntarily reach an agreement which is acceptable to both. The mediator is an outsider to the conflict and has no investment in how the dispute is settled, except that it follows the principles of fairness and equity.

The mediator makes suggestions, regarding how parties can reach agreement and encourages them to expand their range of possible solutions. But he/she does not impose a resolution on the parties. They must accept the responsibility for the decision-making and whether an agreement is reached or not.

FOCUS ON FUTURE

If mediation is to be successful, then it needs to be a voluntary process - one to which both parties agree. The parties have to want to reach agreement and to work out how they can best relate in the future, i.e. how they will react towards each other when they come into contact. The focus is on the future, not on the past. In mediation, there is no place for blame, punishment or revenge. It is a forum for putting your case and negotiating an agreement in which both parties get at least some of what they want.

SUCCESS RATE

Will mediation always be successful? No, not all the time, although statistics show a success rate of 85%. Alternative means of resolution may need to be provided for those 'difficult' cases and this can be addressed in the school policy.