



*Providing high quality
conflict resolution services
and training*

MEDIATION DORSET
*22 High East Street
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*Helping to
build bridges*

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RESOLVING CONFLICT IN THE COMMUNITY

Conflict is part of life. Through it, we make choices... and grow

It is destructive when it:

deepens prejudice ; lowers confidence and security ; hardens attitudes or causes aggressive behaviour

It is constructive when it allows those in disputes to:

define their problem ; state their feelings, needs and fears ; explore what they really want ; negotiate and agree a course of action and review progress

Mediation is not:

discovering who is right and who is wrong ; finding out what ought or ought not to have been done ; a take-over of the problem by the mediators

Mediation does:

break the vicious circle of accusation and hostility ; uncover common interests and a wider range of options ; allow people to take responsibility for their own decisions

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is a voluntary process in which the mediators help people who are in dispute to work together to solve their problem. The solution is chosen, negotiated and agreed by the people themselves.

Mediation is increasingly accepted as an effective way of dealing with disputes. Mediation has been used effectively for many years to resolve disputes between neighbours, in the workplace, in schools, between family members and to resolve the effects of interpersonal tensions.

THE MEDIATION PROCESS

- ❖ **Welcome** - introductions and a request for an acceptance of basic ground rules; reminder of each person's willingness to solve the problem.
- ❖ **Stating the problem** - each party has the opportunity to speak without interruption about the problem as it affects them.
- ❖ **Responding** - an opportunity is given to respond to what has been said, to say what it has meant personally and what it still means to each person.
- ❖ **Exploring possibilities** - an opportunity to discuss ways of putting things right.
- ❖ **Moving towards agreements** - of what can actually be done. These may be written down, if that is felt helpful.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

Voluntary

It is for the individuals to choose whether or not they wish to solve their problem by mediation. Nobody should put them under any sort of pressure to do so.

Non-legal

Agreements made during mediation are not binding in the way that legal contracts are and mediators have no power to make, or even persuade, anybody to do anything. Individuals have the right to seek independent legal advice at any point in the mediation process to ensure decisions made are in their best interests. There may be publicly funded legal help, if appropriate.

Impartial

Mediators do not act on behalf of either or any of the parties to the dispute, and they are not there to give advice. His or her role is to help to provide a secure atmosphere in which everyone is able to work towards a solution. If a joint mediation meeting takes place it will be at a neutral venue which is convenient for both or all parties.

Confidential

Everything that is said within the mediation is confidential. If there is a written agreement, it will only be available to all the parties who signed it. No personal details will be disclosed to anyone outside the mediation service without the client's permission. If the case has been referred by an outside agency, only the outcome - e.g. agreement has been reached, situation is improved, etc - will be reported back. No details are given. The only exception to confidentiality is if mediators believe that anyone's personal safety is at risk or they believe that there is a legal requirement to disclose information. All clients will be advised of this exception before mediation begins.

Comfortable

Mediation should be agreeable experience and all mediators from Mediation Dorset will make it as easy and pleasant as possible for the individuals involved.

Competent Mediators

Every mediation will be in the hands of a mediator who has had extensive training and experience; he/she is supported by a second mediator who has also successfully completed our training programme. Mediators regularly update their training and are linked with a supervisor to provide support and advice where needed.

Equally accessible to all

Mediation Dorset is committed to equality of opportunity for all our clients, staff, and volunteers and equal access to everyone in the community.

A full version of our Code of Practice, which includes our Equal Opportunities Policy, is available from the office.

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