

CONFLICT MEDIATION IN ACTION

Framing and Things to Remember

- Conflict is not bad or wrong. Conflict is common, and when handled well, the process of resolving or moving through conflict can help us grow and strengthen our friendships and relationships.
- I am not impartial or unbiased; I am human. I will be working to be partial and biased towards everyone involved.
- My role is going to be to reflect back to you what you've said. This is because it can be helpful for you to hear what you've said. Additionally, my reflecting can help to clarify and prevent misunderstandings.
- I might try to offer emotions to parts of your story. Please tell me if they fit or are off a little.
- I'm committed to helping make a space where everyone can feel safe to be vulnerable.
- I'm committed to creating a space where you can get clear.

Agenda

It can be great to have the "agenda" depicted as a map. It might start from bottom to top and go in this order:

1. Check ins. Generally how was everyone's day? How are you feeling?
2. Community Agreements. (Make these together.)
3. Compass/Intentions
4. Dialogues
5. Discussion
6. Towards moving forward
7. Writing Letters
8. Check outs

Compass/ Intentions

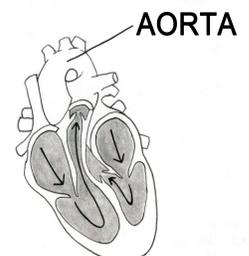
Give people 5 minutes of quiet to think about and write what they hope to get out of the mediation and HOW they want to be. They can write them on big sheets of paper. When they are done place them in the center of the room. Explain that these are your collective compass, which will help keep us on track as we navigate. We want to work towards these things.

Dialogues

Dialogues are most helpful in tense situations, where people are having a hard time talking to each other or really listening to what the other is saying. It's helpful for people to have the opportunity to talk to someone who is less involved (you). And, because the other participants are specifically requested to not engage in the conversation, it can make it easier for them to really listen, and can help them develop some compassion and empathy for the other people involved.

Each person present takes a turn in having a dialogue with the facilitator. They should answer the following questions:

- What do you perceive to be at the root of the conflict?
- How has it affected or impacted you?



- What do you need to be able to move forward?
- What are you willing to do to help everyone move forward?

Everyone else should be actively listening and *not* saying anything. It's important that this is a *dialogue*, rather than a monologue. So, jump in to stop and ask questions, notice how something might have felt, pull out relevant details or overarching themes, and reflect. When they are done you can ask them if they want to read their compass piece. Ideally, plan for between 15 and 20 minutes for each person.

Discussion

If it is feeling possible, and is what people want, you can open it up to discussion between the group or specific people. It can be helpful to frame this as, "how can you get **clear**." People might have questions for each other, big factual gaps in each others' stories to work out, etc. Ideally, leave 20-45 minutes for this part.

Moving Forward

Let's all take a look at the compass. What specific things might need to happen for those intentions to come true? If someone put down "clarity" do more conversations need to happen? Do people feel clear? If people put "moving forward" what does that look like? Regaining a friendship? Not icing each other in public? Is there an action that needs to happen? Does someone need to commit to learning more? Attending a workshop? Reading something? Do people want to collaborate on an art project, event, educational thing?

Writing Letters

Take 5-10 minutes for each participant to write a letter. This should be to themselves and it should include things they want to remember, remind themselves of. This could be about how they feel in that moment, a book to read, a person to talk to, a reminder like, "don't get defensive when you are telling someone else this..." etc. Have envelopes for people to self address and hand to you. Send these out 3-4 weeks post mediation! This is just enough time for people to forget.

Checkouts

How are people feeling right now? In their bodies? Is this what they expected? Do they need anything?

Reminders about Conflict Mediation

- Be prepared to add 30% more time than your agenda indicates. People's nervous energy will be off the charts most likely and folks might deal with this by getting up to use the bathroom, getting more water/ cigarettes, having chatty awkward conversation, etc.
- Food!!! Lots and lots of food. Both sweet and savory. Drinks! Tea, sparkly water, juice, coffee!
- Play Dough (or other things for people to quietly occupy their hands)! Having hands occupied can help people focus and stay calm.
- It can be nice to have music on hand for breaks or writing.
- Make sure to write down what people's intentions were from the compass. This can be a nice thing to include in a follow up email.

