

WHO IS THE MEDIATOR?

The mediator is a VOLUNTEER who has successfully completed a mediation training which includes mediation techniques, communication, negotiation, and conciliation skills, and laws appropriate to the cases mediated; an apprenticeship; and a performance evaluation.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE PARTIES CANNOT REACH AN AGREEMENT?

If an agreement cannot be reached, the mediator will assist the parties in determining what they want to do next.

When the parties agree to mediate, they understand that the information obtained during intake, the mediation process, and follow-up is confidential and will not be used in any legal proceedings on the matter.

IS MEDIATION BINDING?

When agreements are incorporated into a court order, the agreement is as binding as if the case was decided by a judge. In privately referred cases, the mediated agreement may serve as a contract between the two parties'. In divorce and child custody cases, the mediator will help the parties prepare a "memorandum of understanding" summarizing the parties' decisions. The document is not legally binding for either party. The parties should obtain legal counsel to review the mediated settlement and draft the agreement papers to be filed in court.

COMMENTS FROM DISPUTANTS AS THEY LEAVE MEDIATION

"...this was so much better than dragging it out..."

"...so convenient. We didn't have to travel downtown, pay for parking or lose time from work..."

"...it was just a communication problem. I didn't know that..."

"Let's shake on it!"

"I tend to have a bad temper. I'm sorry."

"What a relief. Thanks."

"Now we can go home and live in peace."

For more information, contact:

Good Shepherd Mediation Program

Where Conflict Can Be Resolved

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Family Passages Initiative



**Mediation for Couples and
Families in Transition**

Good Shepherd
MEDIATION PROGRAM

Where Conflict Can Be Resolved

A LOOK AT THE MEDIATION PROGRAM

Good Shepherd Mediation Program, established in 1984, is a neighborhood justice center located in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. People in conflict come to the Mediation Program to resolve their disputes through mediation.

WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is a voluntary dispute resolution process designed to bring people in conflict together in a face-to-face meeting to work out solutions to their differences. The meeting is facilitated by a specially trained, neutral third-party called a “mediator.” The parties negotiate their own settlements. The mediator does not force them to do anything.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF USING THE MEDIATION PROGRAM?

- Cost savings
- Flexible scheduling, including evenings and Saturdays.
- Confidentiality; there is no public record.
- Parties are generally more satisfied with settlements they negotiate personally, as opposed to those that are ordered by someone not involved.
- Working cooperatively to resolve a conflict preserves the parties’ relationship instead of pitting them against one another in a WIN/LOSE contest.
- Mediation is a collaborative process that results in a WIN/WIN agreement or no agreement.

WHAT KINDS OF ISSUES MAY BE MEDIATED?

PRE-MARITAL

For inter-faith, inter-racial and/or previously divorced couples to meet and discuss issues that impact on life together, such as: the marriage celebration, in-laws, blending households and families, holidays, rites of passage, parenting, adoption, finances, education, retirement

FAMILY

For families to meet and discuss issues such as: communication, truancy, chores, curfews, peer associations, allowance, sibling issues, parenting, moving to a new home, intra-family relationships

DIVORCE AND CUSTODY

For married couples who are divorcing to meet and discuss issues such as: terms of separation, divorce, child custody, child support, spousal support, alimony, division of property, visits with grandparents or other relatives

PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION

For couples who were not married and who are separating to meet and discuss issues such as: terms of separation, child custody or visitation, child support, partner support, property distribution

ADULT GUARDIANSHIP

For senior citizens and their families to meet and discuss issues such as: eldercare, guardianship, power of attorney, finances, medical directives and other end-of-life decisions

TRUSTS AND ESTATES

For families to meet and discuss estate planning issues such as money, gifts, property, equity, intangibles, multiple marriages and family businesses; inheritance disputes; end-of-life decisions; family foundations; and interpersonal dynamics.

HOW CAN I HAVE MY CASE RESOLVED AT THE MEDIATION PROGRAM?

Call **215-843-5413** for an appointment.

Mediation is a confidential, voluntary process. Both parties must agree to mediate. When one person asks to mediate, the Mediation Program will notify the other party by mail or by phone, explain that mediation has been requested, and invite that party to participate in mediation. If both parties agree, a mediator is assigned to the case and a mutually acceptable date, time and location are scheduled for mediation.

REFERRAL SOURCES

- Self-referrals
- Philadelphia Legal Assistance
- Community Legal Services
- Domestic Relations Court
- Family Court
- Orphans Court
- Private attorneys
- Community organizations
- Religious organizations
- Schools