

Our Mediators

are skilled and experienced in assisting participants to hear and be heard, understand each others' perspective, clarify interests, generate and explore solution options, focus on the future, and move toward resolution.



All mediators have received at least 30 hours of approved mediation training and have additional specialized training in the Victim/Youth Conferencing process.

Participant Responses

"It lets you talk to the people you affected. It gets emotions off your mind and makes you feel better."

"Glad that I could do this as opposed to court. It was very effective."

"As the victim, I also valued being able to meet and speak with the offender, which is not as possible in the court system."

"I liked the mediators a lot. They were very helpful. I'm extremely satisfied with this process!"

"Puts all parties on neutral ground, with help if needed. Allows for everyone to tell their 'story'."

"... can reach a solution for both parties versus being forced into a solution or resolution."



The Mediation Center fills a unique and important niche in our community. With staff possessing expertise in the areas of conflict resolution, consensus building, and collaborative strategies, along with the commitment of more than 50 extensively trained, highly skilled mediators, the Center is dedicated to providing our community access to professional mediation services.

Established in 1992 as a 501c(3) The Mediation Center is the only nonprofit organization in the Lincoln community where efforts are devoted exclusively to the resolution of conflict. Over the years, thousands of mediations have benefited thousands of individuals.

The Center's professional space has been carefully designed around the specific needs of mediation, including soundproof mediation rooms that safeguard the integrity of the confidential mediation process.

The Mediation Center is one of six mediation centers across the State approved and regulated by the Nebraska Office of Dispute Resolution under the jurisdiction of the Nebraska Supreme Court.

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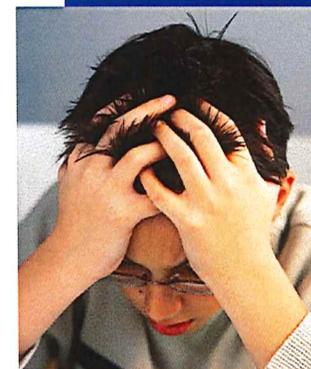
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The Mediation Center is a proud member of  Community Services Fund of Nebraska



Victim/Youth Conferencing

A Restorative Justice Program



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What is Victim / Youth Conferencing?

Victim/Youth Conferencing is a face-to-face meeting, in the presence of a trained mediator, between the victim of an offense or a youth surrogate for the victim, and the youth who committed the offense. They talk about the impact of the offense by identifying who was affected by the offense and how they were affected, express feelings, and discuss how the youth can repair the harm done.

Victim/Youth Conferencing is based on the principles of **Restorative Justice** where an offense is seen as an act against another person or the community instead of the state and the law.

Strategies used in a Conference focus on the offense's impact on the victim, the offender, and the community. In the philosophy of Restorative Justice, "justice" is the process of **restoring the inequity** and **repairing the damage done** as a result of the offense.

Victim/Youth Conferencing is part of a course of action referred to as Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice . . .

- Sets a higher priority on restoration of the victim than on punishment of the offender
- Elevates the importance of the victim in the criminal justice process
- Holds the youth directly accountable to the victim
- Involves the entire community
- Can promote healing for the victim *and* the youth offender



Victim/Youth Conferencing

- Provides a process which helps to acknowledge the facts as perceived by both parties.
- Recognizes the injustice done and gives the youth a chance to see the human consequences of their offense and to work to make things right.
- Provides for expression of feelings.
- Provides an opportunity for victims to reassert control over their lives after an offense.
- Gives youth an opportunity to take ownership and initiative to reshape their future.
- Provides closure for all people affected by the offense.
- Assists the parties in reaching an agreement on the reparation needed.
- Helps to clarify future intentions, actions, and relationships.
- May produce a written agreement for restitution or reparation that all can sign.

What Can I Expect To Happen?

A Victim/Youth Conference is a 2-part process.

1. Personal Interview Before the actual conference is held a facilitator meets with each party individually to familiarize the youth with the process so that they can be well prepared. It is important that everyone understand the process and how to best benefit from it.

2. Conference While everyone else listens, each party is asked to describe the situation as he or she sees it (tell their story). The youth and the victim or youth surrogate for the victim talk to each other about what happened, the effects of the offense on their lives, and their feelings about it.

The mediator asks questions that encourage both sides to participate in the dialogue. Offending youth have an opportunity to take responsibility for what they have done and learn the impact of their actions on others. At this meeting they take an active role in making things right, for example, through a written apology or community service. Options for repairing the damage done are explored by the parties with the help of the mediator.



Do Parents Attend?

Parents and family members are included in a conference in a supporting role. Mediators maintain constructive communication between the youth involved. Parents are not part of the dialogue between the youth but their presence is a valuable asset to the process.