

**RECOMMENDED STANDARDS
FOR SCHOOL-BASED
PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS**

The Association for Conflict Resolution

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RECOMMENDED STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL-BASED PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS

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The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is a professional organization dedicated to enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. ACR represents and serves a diverse national and international audience that includes more than 6,000 mediators, arbitrators, facilitators, educators, and others involved in the field of conflict resolution and collaborative decision-making. ACR was launched in January 2001, when the Academy of Family Mediators (AFM), the Conflict Resolution Education Network (CREnet), and the Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR) merged into one organization.

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Peer mediation can be a successful approach to managing interpersonal conflict in schools. Such programs provide a unique opportunity for diverse students to use communication, human relations, and problem-solving skills in real-life settings. Effective programs can help to create a safe and welcoming school environment, assist in reducing school conflicts and violence, and improve interpersonal and inter-group relations, especially when part of a comprehensive violence prevention plan. The qualities that mark an effective peer mediation program include youth empowerment, cultural competence, diversity, responsiveness to the specific needs of the population it serves, fair resolutions to student conflicts, and measurable outcomes.

In 1996, the Standards Committee of the National Association for Mediation in Education (a forerunner of ACR) published “Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs.” This responded to the growing number of peer mediation programs in schools and the need for leadership from experts in order to ensure quality. Ten years later, to reflect developments in the field and current research, the Education Section of the Association for Conflict Resolution convened the Peer Mediation Standards Committee to update and significantly expand the original version in order to create more rigorous standards.

The Peer Mediation Standards Committee drew upon diverse practitioner knowledge and relevant research to provide comprehensive standards for school-based peer mediation programs. The updated “Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs” set forth the components necessary to develop and sustain an effective peer mediation program.

ACR is committed to diversity and equity in its membership, structure, and organizational work, and this document strives to mirror that commitment. A culturally diverse peer mediation program is one that recognizes, supports, values, and utilizes people's differences and similarities in support of the program's goals and objectives. Diversity and equity mean recognizing and working to eliminate injustices in access, process, and consequences of the program's efforts to strive to meet the needs of diverse students.

These standards are designed to ensure quality and stimulate thought among participants in peer mediation programs. This document is designed to be helpful in

- Designing and implementing programs
- Designing evaluation
- Developing and selecting curricula
- Ensuring that programs are welcoming and accessible to all
- Funding programs
- Improving established programs
- Promoting programs
- Providing professional development
- Setting guidelines for research

This document is intentionally not a “how-to” manual. It lays out what should be done, and the reader is encouraged to seek out any of the manuals that instruct how to set up and manage a peer mediation program. While the primary focus of these standards is school-based peer mediation programs, they can be easily adapted for use in other settings, such as community-based youth programs, before and after-school programs, youth residential settings, etc.

SECTION II: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Conflict resolution – the process by which people resolve a dispute or a conflict so that their interests are adequately addressed and they are satisfied with the outcome.

Conflict resolution education – models and teaches, in culturally meaningful ways, a variety of processes, practices and skills that help address individual, interpersonal and institutional conflicts, and create safe and welcoming communities.

Best practices – Experience has shown these to be important for the success and institutionalization of a peer mediation program, but these are not required. (Best practices are in *italics* throughout the document.)

Facilitation – the art of guiding others during a meeting, discussion or collaborative process to reach some desired result (i.e. goal setting, decision making or written agreement).

Mediation - A process in which an impartial third party facilitates communication and negotiation and promotes voluntary decision-making by the parties to the dispute.

Negotiation – a process involving at least two people where ideas and possible solutions are explored and discussed to form a mutual agreement to a problem or conflict.

Peer mediation – A program in which students who have been trained in mediation skills and processes mediate the conflicts of other students.

Peer mediation program - A program which trains and supports student mediators to offer mediation as an option for resolving conflicts within the school community.

Peer mediator – A student who has been trained and has the competence to facilitate the resolution of disputes between student peers using a mediation process.

Program Coordinator(s) - A person or team who have been trained and who coordinate the daily operations of a peer mediation program.

Standards - The minimum requirements for an effective program.

SECTION III: MODEL CONDUCT FOR PEER MEDIATORS

(Standards are in regular typeface; Best practices are in *italics*.)

Peer mediators are responsible for following these model standards of conduct in order to maintain the integrity of mediation. They must conduct themselves in a way that instills confidence in the mediation process and the competence of mediators.

These model standards of conduct serve three primary goals:

1. To guide the conduct of peer mediators;
2. To inform the disputants; and
3. To promote confidence in peer mediation as a process for handling disputes.

These standards are to be read and considered as a single document. There is no significance to the order in which the standards appear.

The use of the term “mediator” is meant to imply co-mediator models.

Some of the matters covered by these standards may be affected by school regulations, policies and procedures that may create conflicts with, and may supersede these standards. A mediator is still required to make every effort to comply with the spirit and intent of these standards.

Note: Adults who mediate in school settings should adhere to the Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators (created by the Joint Committee of the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution, American Arbitration Association and the Association for Conflict Resolution) found at <http://www.acrnet.org/about/initiatives/QualityAssurance/JCMSCM.htm> or other applicable mediation ethical standards. The Model Conduct for Peer Mediators section is consistent with the Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators, while adapting the standards for peer mediators.

I. Self – Determination

- A. A mediator is required to conduct a mediation based on the principle of self-determination of the disputants. Self-determination means the disputants participate voluntarily and make voluntary choices for themselves in mediation without pressure from administrators, mediators or others. A mediator should not interfere with party self-determination for any reason, including getting the parties to reach agreement.

II. Impartiality

- A. A mediator is required to mediate in an impartial manner. Impartiality means freedom from favoritism, bias or prejudice.
- B. A mediator should agree to mediate only if he or she can mediate in an impartial manner. The mediator should avoid doing anything which gives the appearance of taking a side or showing favor to one of the disputants, including action based on the disputants' personal characteristics, background, values, beliefs or the way they act during the mediation.
- C. If at any time the mediator is unable to conduct mediation in an impartial manner, the mediator must withdraw.

III. Conflicts of Interest

- 1. A mediator is required to avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest during or after a mediation. Conflicts of interest occur when a mediator has a personal connection with a disputant or the conflict that causes an impression of partiality.
 - 2. Before agreeing to mediate, a mediator is required to tell the program coordinator about any past, present or possible future relationship or connection the mediator may have with any of the disputants or the conflict. Some connections are so close that the mediator cannot mediate impartially, and the mediator should decline the mediation. Recognizing that there may be different situations or cultural expectations in which a relationship is not seen as a conflict of interest, the mediator may mediate if the disputants agree.
 - 3. If the mediator is not aware of the relationship or connection until after the mediation has already started, the mediator should tell the coordinator and the disputants as soon as the mediator becomes aware of the connection. The mediation may proceed if all of the disputants agree and if the integrity of the mediation will not be compromised.
- D. After mediation, a mediator should not do anything that gives the appearance of partiality to any of the disputants.

IV. Competence

- A. Mediators have the obligation to maintain competence and to refuse a case if they believe it would require skill that exceeds their expertise. Mediator competence involves training, cultural understanding, mediation skills and experience.
- B. If a mediator realizes during mediation that she or he does not have the skills required to mediate the case, the mediator should let the coordinator know so that steps can be taken to provide assistance to the mediator or bring in a new mediator.

- C. *Mediators are role models for other students, and as such, are expected to observe school rules, codes of conduct and disciplinary policies. Mediators are expected to follow mediation program policies and procedures and to bring their own interpersonal conflicts to the mediation program when needed.*
- D. The role of the peer mediator requires specific training. Students should not confuse their role as mediator with any other student leadership role (e.g. peer helper, peer counselor, hall monitor).

V. Confidentiality

- A. A mediator must keep confidential everything said, done and written during the mediation, unless required by school policy and mediation procedures or as agreed to by the disputants.
 - 1. A mediator should not tell administrators or other referring parties what was said or done in mediation, but they may report whether the disputants came to mediation and whether they reached an agreement.
 - 2. If an exception to confidentiality arises during a mediation, the mediator takes appropriate steps, including reporting it to the coordinator and, if necessary postponing or ending the mediation.
 - 3. *A mediator may discuss with the coordinator and other mediators what happened during the mediation for training and debriefing so long as the mediator respects the disputants' privacy and preserves the confidentiality of the mediation as much as possible.*
- B. The mediator is required to explain confidentiality and the exceptions to confidentiality to the disputants at the beginning of the mediation.
- C. A mediator who meets in private session with any disputant during mediation, must not disclose directly or indirectly information to any other disputant without the agreement of the first disputant.

VI. Quality of the Process

- A. A mediator must conduct mediation fairly, respectfully and in a timely manner consistent with these standards. *A mediator should strive to conduct an equitable process in which all disputants have the opportunity to speak, to be heard, and to propose, evaluate, reject or accept potential solutions to their conflict.*
- B. A mediator should encourage honesty among all disputants and the mediators. If a mediator believes that the actions of a disputant make it

impossible to conduct a mediation consistent with these standards, the mediator should postpone, withdraw from or end the mediation.

C. *A disputant may have difficulty understanding the dispute, the process of mediation or agreement options, or may have difficulty participating in the mediation. In this case the mediator should consult with the co-mediator and/or program coordinator to determine if something different can be done to help the disputant or if the mediation should be ended.*

VII. Advertising and Promotion

- A. A mediator must be truthful in advertising and promoting the mediation program. A mediator should not make any promises as to specific results of mediation.
- B. A mediator shall keep confidential the names of disputants and not use them in advertising the program without their permission.

VIII. Advancement of Mediation Practice

- A. A mediator should demonstrate respect for differing points of view within the field of mediation, seek to learn from other mediators and work with other mediators to better serve people in conflict.
- B. *A mediator shall act in a way that advances the practice of mediation. A mediator promotes this standard by engaging in some or all of the following:*
 - 1. *Fostering diversity within the school-based mediation program.*
 - 2. *Assisting newer mediators through training and mentoring.*
 - 3. *Networking or meeting with fellow mediators.*

SECTION IV: PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT

(Standards are in regular typeface; Best practices are in *italics*.)

A peer mediation program may be implemented in a single school or as part of a district-wide initiative. Creating, managing, enhancing and sustaining a program involve the following components.

Needs Assessment

- Assess the need for a peer mediation program in a school from the administrators', staff's, students' and parents' points of view.
- Assess whether the school has the resources and commitment to implement a program that meets the standards put forth in this document.
- *Assess administrators', staff's and students' knowledge about conflict resolution concepts and skills.*
- *Assess cultural customs and attitudes about conflict resolution.*
- Design the program, using the results from the needs assessment.

Administrative Support

Obtain clear administrative support at the district and/or building level to

- build the capacity of the program to meet these standards;
- make at least a three-year commitment to fund and support the program;
- facilitate access to staff, students and resources, if choosing an outside organization/agency to train or help coordinate the program;
- empower students to be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the program;
- ensure that all students and staff have access (physical, language, cultural, procedural) to the program;
- refer students to mediation and encourage staff to refer;
- ensure funding for training, curricula and program promotion;
- provide time for mediations, program coordination, on-going training and promotion;
- provide location/space for training and mediations to occur;
- set program goals
- define the role of mediation as separate from discipline or counseling

Staffing

Every program needs an on-site Program Coordinator who, as part of their job description, is responsible for administering the peer mediation program and supervising and debriefing student mediators. A single person or a team of people who share the tasks and responsibilities may fill these functions. (See Section IV for Program Coordinator qualifications.)

Programs also need a Trainer, Educator of Trainers and/or an Advanced Practitioner to provide initial and on-going training to the coordinator and the student mediators. Trainers train students to mediate in a peer mediation program. Educators of Trainers

coach and train Trainers, Program Coordinators and student mediators. Advanced Practitioners train at all levels and all ages. The person who trains school staff and students may be a school district employee or staff from an outside organization. (See Section IV for Trainer, Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner qualifications.)

A single person may meet the qualifications to be and fulfill the functions of a Program Coordinator and either a Trainer, Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner.

- The Coordinator (or peer mediators they supervise) receives referrals, determines each case's suitability for mediation, schedules the session, assigns mediators to the case, maintains records and follows-up with the disputants to determine if they are upholding their agreement and if they are satisfied with the program.
- The Coordinator supervises the mediators during the mediation, either in the same room or close by, debriefs them after the mediation and provides on-going training and support. Coordinators must be trained mediators.
- The Coordinator supports the peer mediators so that they uphold the Model Conduct for Peer Mediators (Section II).
- The Coordinator is ultimately responsible for ensuring that mediations are based on the principles of self-determination, voluntary participation, impartiality, mediator competence and confidentiality.
- *A district-level Educator of Trainers or Advanced Practitioner provides training for staff and student mediators, maintains district-wide records, advocates for programs, coordinates among the programs and supports the on-site coordinators.*

Program Models

The program coordinator, in collaboration with administrators and trainers, chooses the program models. These can change as the program develops.

Philosophical/theoretical styles

Programs can choose to train students in a style of mediation, such as the problem solving/facilitative, transformative, social justice or narrative style. Peer mediation may also be a part of a restorative justice or victim/offender program.

Structural models:

- Cadre: A group of students is selected and trained to be mediators.
- Whole classroom/school: Skills are taught to all students in the class/school, and all students have the opportunity to mediate conflicts with their classmates.
- Combination of the above models

Scheduling models:

- Mediators on call: The program coordinator has the mediators' schedules and calls them shortly after a referral is made. Mediators and disputants are allowed to miss class (or certain classes) in order to mediate.

- Scheduled hours: The mediators are stationed in the mediation room during certain times each day or each week. If there are no cases, the mediators may do role-plays, training with the coordinator, program tasks or schoolwork.
- Playground: The mediators are scheduled to be on duty during recess times on the playground. If they see a problem arising or if a conflict is referred to them, they can mediate the situation on the spot. Trained playground aides or program coordinators supervise the mediators.
- Combination of the above models

Policies

School Policies:

School disciplinary policies should include peer mediation as an option for resolving incidents brought about by interpersonal disputes and a clarification of the types of disputes that are and are not appropriate for mediation. Peer mediation is appropriate for discussion to increase communication and understanding, improving relationships, and facilitating the negotiated resolution of behavior related to an interpersonal conflict. Mediation programs can accept conflicts dealing with difficult topics such as race, religion, sexuality or personal beliefs, as well as the more typical issues such as relationships and property. However, for mediation to be a viable option for resolving student disputes, certain circumstances are necessary. These include voluntary participation, a safe and respectful environment, a balance of power between the disputants, and the willingness of both parties to take responsibility for resolving the dispute. Incidents involving drugs, weapons, other illegal behaviors, abuse, harassment or bullying do not meet these criteria, are not appropriate for mediation and need other types of interventions.

When student disagreements and disputes do not need disciplinary intervention, they may be referred to the school mediation program. In the case that an interpersonal dispute involves behaviors that violate the school's disciplinary policy, the school administrator determines the consequences. In addition, the interpersonal issues that caused the dispute may be mediated. Even though students may be referred to mediation by administrators, the principles of voluntary participation, self-determination and confidentiality still apply.

School policy regarding mediation should determine if an adult presence is required in the room or nearby to monitor mediations involving only students. Well-qualified adult mediators may mediate, or co-mediate with a peer mediator, a student/student dispute involving difficult issues.

Mediation can be an appropriate strategy for resolving issues between a student and a teacher or other adult in the school, if both parties agree to the mediation. A co-mediation team of a qualified adult and qualified student mediator may mediate adult/student disputes. Qualified adult mediators mediate disputes between adults in the school setting, such as those involving administrators, teachers, other staff, and parents. Peer mediators do not mediate disputes involving only adults.

Policies Concerning Student Mediators:

Policies that deal with student mediator behavior are clearly articulated to the mediators. They include the following and any other issues deemed necessary by the school or district.

- Adherence to the Model Conduct for Peer Mediators (Section III)
- Program and school responsibilities

Procedures

The Program Coordinator establishes efficient operating procedures to encourage referrals to and utilization of the program, provides structure and support for mediators, and builds a strong program. The coordinator develops an action plan with timelines and responsibility for implementing and maintaining the program. Depending on the age and abilities of the student mediators, they can be responsible for establishing and implementing many procedures.

Selection of Student Mediators

- The peer mediation team reflects the diversity of the school's community in all senses, including age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, academic standing, socio-economic status and interests, so that all students feel comfortable participating in the program.
- The selection process can include teacher, student and self-referrals; an interview; a written application; teacher recommendations; and parent permission.
- The selection committee can include current mediators, program coordinator(s), and other members of the school community.
- The selection committee sets the criteria for selection, which can include communication and problem solving skills, responsibility, honesty, commitment, enthusiasm, flexibility and ability to maintain confidentiality.

Program Promotion

Coordinators ensure that information about program purpose, goals, benefits, procedures and outcomes is communicated to a variety of audiences, including administration, staff, peer mediators, disputants, other students, parents and the local community. This is done on an on-going basis and is essential to program success.

Sustainability

Coordinators strive to maintain the high quality of their program. Retaining a committed, enthusiastic person or team to coordinate the program is crucial to sustainability.

Programs may incorporate the following in order to sustain and enhance the program:

- Adapting the process to meet cultural needs
- Advanced training for the coordinator and mediators
- *Community outreach*
- *Fundraising*
- *In-service presentations to new staff*
- *Integration of conflict resolution concepts and skills into school curricula*
- *Networking with programs at other schools*
- *Presentations, workshops and training at conferences, other schools, community functions, etc.*

- *Small and large-group mediation, with appropriate training and skills*
- *Teacher-student mediation, with appropriate training and skills*
- *Special events to acknowledge and sustain the mediators*

SECTION V: TRAINING

(Standards are in regular typeface; Best practices are in *italics*.)

Training for Student Mediators

A successful peer mediation program requires many levels of training and support. The proficiency of student mediators may range from basic to advanced. A peer mediator with basic skills has the ability to succeed as a member of a peer mediation team. An advanced peer mediator can use a variety of conflict management processes and serve as a mentor to other peer mediators. Evaluation is an important part of training and is covered in Section VI of this document.

Training Techniques/Methods

Student training consists of a variety of teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles, including, but not limited to presentations, demonstrations, interactive and written exercises, role-plays and various media. *The student training may serve as training for program coordinators and other interested school staff. As many members of the coordinating team as possible should attend this training.*

Training Content for Student Mediators

Student mediators conduct mediations for their peers and work with the coordinator to manage a peer mediation program for the school. At a minimum, their initial training content includes the items listed below. These standards reflect the necessary content for a program using the facilitative/problem-solving model. In cases where another model is used (i.e. transformative, narrative, restorative, social justice, etc.), please refer to the ACR website for content specific to that model.

1. Conflict

- a) What it is, how we can learn from it
- b) Conflict resolution styles
- c) Types of conflict
- d) Perception/ misperception and bias awareness, cultural diversity, prejudice reduction
- e) Understanding power imbalance and equity
- f) Appropriate issues for peer mediation
- g) *Ways that cultures view and handle conflicts*

2. Communication

- a) Why it is important
- b) Non-verbal communication; good and poor listening skills

- c) Active listening (paraphrasing, restating, summarizing, clarifying, reflecting, reframing, encouraging, listening for feelings)
- d) Open-ended questions
- e) Neutral language
- f) "I" messages
- g) *Understanding different styles of communication and negotiation*

3. Mediation

- a) Definition
- b) Preliminary assumptions (voluntary participation, confidentiality, neutrality, etc.)
- c) Ground rules
- d) Steps/stages of mediation
- e) Points of view (including multicultural perspectives and perceptions, etc.)
- f) Identifying issues (including positions vs. interests, etc.)
- g) Generating options/brainstorming
- h) Evaluating and synthesizing potential solutions
- i) Choosing a resolution
- j) Writing agreements
- k) Co-mediation
- l) Managing anger and other strong emotions
- m) *Other issues (remaining neutral, cooperation, affirmation, etc.)*

4. Program Policies & Procedures

- a) See Program Development & Management (Section IV)
- b) See Model Conduct for Peer Mediators (Section III)

Length of Training

School-based mediation programs operate in a variety of ways. The training of student mediators may vary to accommodate a particular school's schedule or the age and developmental level of the students. For example, a training for elementary students might be conducted in 90-minute sessions over a several week period, while a training for high school students might be done in full-day sessions over a one or two week period.

The hours below reflect a minimum total of time needed for the students to be prepared to mediate. Length of session and span of time should be determined by the trainers in consultation with school staff. Students are expected to attend the training in its entirety. Schools in which conflict resolution or violence prevention training has already taken place may fall at the lower end of the number of hours below:

1. Elementary: 12-18 hours
2. Middle School: 12-18 hours
3. High School: 15-20 hours
4. Ongoing Mediator Training: 12 plus hours per year

When student mediators move from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school, they receive additional age-appropriate training that builds on what they have learned previously and enhances their skills and knowledge of the mediation process.

Ongoing Mediator Training

Program Coordinators and Trainers should look at the specific needs of the program to develop ongoing mediator training. This covers such topics as:

- a) Continued bias awareness
- b) Difficult situations
- c) Power issues
- d) Problem solving skills
- e) Reflective practice (critiquing one's own work as a mediator)
- f) Representing and marketing the peer mediation program and the field
- g) Review and reinforcement of skills taught in the mediation training
- h) Teambuilding
- i) *Adult/student mediations*
- j) *Assertiveness*
- k) *Coaching other mediators*
- l) *Multi-party disputes or group facilitation*
- m) *Using technology resources or multimedia (i.e. online dispute resolution)*

Professional Development for Adults

Adults play a variety of roles in supporting a peer mediation program. Some or all of the following roles are needed for each program: Program Coordinators, Trainers, Educators of Trainers and Advanced Practitioners. In some settings, a single person may perform more than one of these roles. Students can perform some of the functions of Program Coordinators and Trainers. Outside trainers can be brought in if there is no one qualified in the school or district. The minimum knowledge, skills and experience necessary to perform the functions of each of these are detailed below and should be covered in any preparatory training for the position.

Program Coordinators

Program Coordinators are responsible for administering and maintaining the peer mediation program, as well as supervising and debriefing student mediators. The Coordinator may be a single person or a team of people who share the tasks and responsibilities. Ideally, Coordinators are not responsible for administering schoolwide discipline, in order to keep separate the school's discipline and mediation functions. Program Coordinators are trained mediators. Each program needs a Program Coordinator.

By the end of their preparatory training, Program Coordinators should be able to

1. Mediate disputes, by having participated in student or adult mediation training
2. Uphold these Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs
3. Commit to program creation and support
4. Schedule time to run the program
5. Foster administrative, faculty, student and parent support
6. Advocate the benefits of a mediation program
7. Articulate the goals of the program
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to bias awareness, cultural diversity and prejudice reduction
9. Establish new or maintain current policies, procedures and forms
10. Maintain necessary records
11. Recruit and select students
12. Handle intake and case management
13. Promote the mediation program
14. Ensure a needs assessment is conducted
15. *Review various models to help tailor the program to the needs of the school*
16. *Explain the role of mediation in the school as part of a comprehensive violence prevention/school climate improvement plan*
17. *Generate ideas for sustaining successful programs*
18. *Empower students to coordinate the mediation program, as appropriate developmentally*
19. *Access resources, services, and advanced training available to support the program*

Trainers

Trainers train students to mediate in a school-based peer mediation program. As part of their preparation, Trainers have completed a 20 – 40 hour mediation training. Students who are Trainers should meet the following criteria and also be experienced mediators.

By the end of their preparatory training, Trainers should be able to

1. Work effectively with students
2. Mediate competently
3. Teach all peer mediation skills
4. Demonstrate sensitivity to bias awareness, cultural diversity and prejudice reduction
5. Facilitate student learning effectively using a variety of interactive teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles:
 - a) Brainstorming
 - b) Coaching
 - c) Demonstrations
 - d) Group work
 - e) Presentation

- f) Role plays
- g) Student input
- h) *Multimedia-based learning*

It is important that the content for Trainers be aligned with the student mediator and Program Coordinator training content.

Educators of Trainers

Educators of Trainers coach and train Trainers, Program Coordinators and student mediators. They can evaluate, select and coach students to become Trainers. They also help set up programs, monitor progress and deal with special situations or problems. *Although these Educators of Trainers may be outside trainers, school districts may want to have qualified people within the district.*

An Educator of Trainers meets the following requirements:

1. Possesses Program Coordinator and Trainer skills and knowledge
2. Completed two years of experience as an effective Trainer
3. Completed a basic adult mediation course
4. Mediated or observed at least five adult mediations
5. Continues to receive advanced training (university courses, workshops, conferences, district sponsored professional education) in peer mediation, conflict resolution or adult mediation
6. *Networks with other conflict resolution trainers and professionals*
7. *Able to guide Trainers and Program Coordinators to information and resources on issues such as the following:*
 - a) *Bullying prevention*
 - b) *Conflict resolution education*
 - c) *Conflict resolution theory*
 - d) *Dynamics of classroom management*
 - e) *Funding*
 - f) *Negotiation and facilitation*
 - g) *Online dispute resolution*
 - h) *Peace education*
 - i) *Problem-solving skills and methods*

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced Practitioners train at all levels and all ages. The Advanced Practitioner is a resource for other trainers, programs in trouble, large-scale programs and complex program designs.

An Advanced Practitioner meets the following requirements:

1. Possesses all Educators of Trainers skills and knowledge

2. Developed expertise in the field of mediation, peer mediation, conflict resolution, professional development models and/or multicultural education
3. Worked with peer mediation programs at least five years
4. Designed a portfolio of training materials, conference presentations and advanced workshops related to effective peer mediation training and program coordination
5. Demonstrates an understanding of a systematic process for training and evaluating student mediators, Program Coordinators, Trainers and Educators of Trainers
6. Capable of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of peer mediation programs

EVALUATION

(Standards are in regular typeface; Best practices are in *italics*.)

Evaluation is an essential component of a peer mediation program. It is important for program improvement and sustainability, promotion to school and community, and reporting to funders and stakeholders.

Program Evaluation

Schools should evaluate programs based on the standards listed in this document. This can be self-assessment, district evaluation, and/or outside evaluation involving both students and adults. Evaluation begins with the needs assessment and is ongoing.

Data may be collected to answer the following evaluation questions and to provide measurable outcomes:

- How many cases were referred to mediation?
- How many were mediated?
- How many mediations resulted in agreement?
- How many agreements were kept?
- Where do referrals come from?
- Did the program meet its goals?
- What are the demographics of mediators and disputants?
- How satisfied are people (mediators, disputants, other students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents) with the program?
- *How many mediations did each mediator do?*
- *What was the frequency of mediator participation?*
- *Have referral patterns changed?*
- *What percentage of the student population used the program?*
- *How many and in what ways were parents involved?*
- *What did the program cost?*
- *How many staff hours did it use?*

Educational research may also examine the impact of peer mediation programs by correlating program data with other school information such as changes in numbers of fights, disciplinary referrals, test scores, academic achievement, attendance, school climate, truancy, dropout patterns and impact on relationships. Because of the many variables in school settings, experienced educational researchers should do this type of analysis.

Training Evaluation

The training of student mediators, Program Coordinators, Trainers, Educators of Trainers and Advanced Practitioners should be evaluated for effectiveness. Methods for training evaluation may include the following:

- Pre and/or post test
- Skills checklist or rubric to assess performance readiness
- Trainee feedback on training and instructor effectiveness

- *Trainer self-assessment*

Mediator Competence Evaluation

Student mediators are evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine capability to mediate and needs for skill development. Methods for evaluating mediators can include the following:

- Mediator self assessment and mediation debriefing; and
- Observation of skills, performance and commitment.
- *Core knowledge test*
- *Feedback from disputants;*

RESOURCES

Please visit the Education Section on the ACR website at <http://www.mediate.com/acrededucation/>.