

Workplace Mediation & Conflict Resolution

Improving Relationships at Work



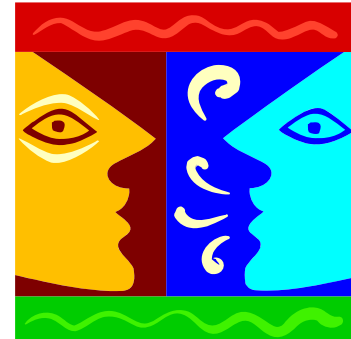
Conflict between staff takes a toll on individuals, teams and the whole business. While it is normal for some level of conflict when people work together, sometimes conflict persists leaving staff stressed and unable to work together effectively. Mediation provides a bridge for rebuilding effective work relationships and communication.

How does mediation help?

Independence & Impartiality: The mediator is an impartial professional. It is quite common that a conflict may have undermined trust to such an extent that it is very difficult to manage and repair the situation in-house. The input of a mediator provides the independent perspective that is needed to move forward.

Effective Communication: It is essential that communication improve so that people can discuss important issues. Mediation provides a confidential process that manages discussion of sensitive issues in a respectful way and gives everyone a voice.

Positive Focus: Mediation does not get bogged down in the past. There is a positive focus on the future working relationship, which helps people to reach agreement on how they will successfully address challenges and communicate effectively in the future.



What types of situations can mediation address?

Mediation is an important tool for helping people to work together in a respectful way. You can address issues where there has been one-off conflict and also long-standing stress. Situations that can be addressed include:

- Resolving conflict
- Breakdown in communication
- Clash of personal styles
- Complaints about bullying or harassment
- Facilitating an apology
- Re-building teamwork and trust

Mediation often involves only two parties. In situations where there are more people involved, the process can include all key participants. Mediation can be effective at times of crisis but it is also very effective as a preventative approach at early stages of conflict or communication difficulty.

A way forward

Each person involved in mediation is given the opportunity to speak about their concerns and will also be invited to reflect on their own communication.

The mediator will provide information, tips and strategies to help with making communication and agreements work. This has a number of elements, including:

Communication

- Guidelines to make communication easier
- How to raise issues and give feedback

Conflict Resolution

- Self awareness and avoiding conflict escalation
- Strategies to manage stress & emotions

Negotiation & Decision making

- Building understanding & common ground
- Reaching clear agreements

The mediation process

Mediation provides an effective process which can move forward in a time-efficient way:

Briefing: The mediator first talks with the workplace contact to clarify expectations and to understand how mediation fits in with any organisation policies or other strategies that have been taken.

In complex matters involving many team members, the mediator can provide a team conflict assessment by consulting with team members.

Recommendations are made by the mediator on how to implement mediation or other support services. The mediator is not an investigator and it is important to distinguish mediation from any investigation process that may be applicable.

Pre-Mediation Meeting: The mediator meets with each person individually, usually face to face. This allows the mediator to understand each person's situation and to begin to provide coaching and support on how to resolve the situation.

Joint Mediation Session: A joint meeting between the parties will then be facilitated by the mediator (this can sometimes be on the same day as the individual pre-mediation meetings). Parties have the confidence that all discussions in mediation are confidential.

Outcomes: The agreed outcomes will be written up by the mediator and the agreements will provide clear guidelines that the parties will commit to following in their work relationships.

Review: There is the option of one or more review meetings, if required, this can help to track progress and address any challenges that arise in putting agreements into practice.

Prevention: The mediator can also give feedback to the organisation on other strategies to prevent conflict.

Other consulting services

To assist with sustaining improved work relationships and to prevent conflict in future we also offer:

- **Coaching:** one-to-one coaching for staff or management on areas such as interpersonal styles; assertiveness; discussing performance issues; and conflict resolution.
- **Training:** a range of communication and interpersonal skills training workshops can support the development of communication, negotiation and resolution skills of team members.
- **Team facilitation:** independently facilitated team discussions to improve team communication.

Contact

Mediations can be conducted on-site or in our consulting rooms in Prahran.

Inquiries about the type of service that can assist with a particular situation are welcome.

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