

# MEDIATION SERVICES

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Mediation is a process that helps people resolve their conflicts so they can move forward in their lives.

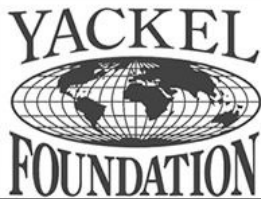
Mediation Services is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that has been providing no-cost or low-cost peaceful dispute resolution alternatives since 1987.

Specially trained volunteer mediators provide both sides with the opportunity to discuss and resolve their disagreement.

If you'd like more information on our services, please check out our website at [www.mediationservice.org](http://www.mediationservice.org) or give us a call at 763-422-8878.

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Mediation Services efforts to reduce conflict and promote peace in the community is supported by the



# A GUIDE TO dealing with conflict

*Helping people work through and resolve their own disputes.*

## Are you in the middle of a conflict?

## Would you like to have it resolved?

This guide was developed to offer ideas on how to prepare for discussing disagreements and *can be helpful in disputes with*

- Neighbors
- Family & Friends
- Post-Divorce Shared Parenting
- Landlords – Tenants
- Colleagues at Work
- School Issues
- and many other situations.

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*Mediation Services for Anoka County is a community focused 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are very much appreciated and are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the law*

## STEP #1: PREPARE

### WHAT TO DO

- Have your emotions under control. Calm yourself and be prepared – or consider waiting until you can get to that place.
- Prepare your description of the conflict in as small and specific way as possible.
- Be prepared to respect the other person's response and openness to discussion.

### WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't assume you know how the other person feels or why they did what they did.
- Don't create a long list of problems – focus on one or two that are most important to you.
- Don't be surprised to hear that you are also contributing to the conflict in some way.

## STEP #2: ACTION

### WHAT TO DO

- Pick a time when you and the other person are likely to have a few minutes and the problem is not "hot".
- Ask – "May I talk with you about something?"
- Describe your plan - "I would like to tell you about a problem I am having and then I would like to hear how you see it."
- Describe the conflict/problem as you experience it and why it is important to you.
- Invite the other person to explain how they see the situation and listen closely to their response.
- Check your understanding of the other person by summarizing what you heard.

### WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't discuss the reason you believe they do it or their intentions ("You did that because...").
- Describe your feelings when the conflict occurs, but don't act them out.
- Don't communicate those feelings as judgments or "you" statements ("You make me angry"), but instead as "I" statements ("I feel angry when this happens").
- Don't jump to conclusions and solutions. This is a time for understanding both sides of the conflict.

## STEP #3: SOLUTION

### WHAT TO DO

- Identify any areas where you both agree. ("Sounds like 'x' is important to both of us.")
- Exchange ideas on actions that might help the situation. ("How about if we tried 'x'??")
- Look for actions that will work for both of you ("Would 'x' work for you?")
- Keep the conversation focused on today and the future, not the past. ("That's what I have done in the past, what would be helpful going forward?")
- Propose solution(s) that meet your interests and theirs.

### WHAT *NOT* TO DO

- Don't give in or come to an agreement too quickly without careful thinking
- Don't rehash the conflict without moving to solutions
  - Don't blame one another
- Don't be disappointed if the discussion does not lead to an agreement. Don't make the problem worse by overreacting in frustration.

## STEP #4: AGREEMENT

### WHAT TO DO

- Check to be sure you are in agreement about who will do what and by when.
- Thank the other person for their willingness to listen to you and work with you.
- Remember to hold up your end of the agreement.
- Watch for opportunities to recognize when the other person follows up as agreed.