



International Social Service-USA in collaboration with
National Association for Community Mediation



OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL FAMILY MEDIATION

Q: ***What is mediation and why would I use it?***

A: Mediation is a process in which a trained mediator helps people who are in disagreement talk about the issues that are keeping them from reaching a mutual decision on the best course of action to take.

Q: ***What is the goal of mediation?***

A: The ultimate goal of the mediation is for the people involved to have a positive conversation about the issues of concern to them. The purpose of the mediation is to have a conversation about what each side needs to consider when making a decision. The mediator does not support one decision over another.

Q: ***Who are the parties?***

A: The parents are usually the parties in the mediation but if both parents agreed other people may also be involved.

Q: ***What do they do in the mediation?***

A: The parties have a conversation about the issues and concerns they have about the situation. The mediator tries to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to explain their view, and encourages every one involved to listen to the concerns raised by the other party. The mediator's role is to ensure that there are no misunderstandings and that both parties are able to express their concerns freely.

Q: ***Who are the mediators?***

A: The mediator is an impartial third party who is accepted by both parties. The mediator is a trained, professional conflict resolution expert. He or she has no connection to either party and acts to ensure that the mediation process is fair and productive. The mediator gives no advice or makes any judgment as to which decision, if any, should be reached by the parties.

Q: ***When and how does mediation end?***

A: The mediation can end in several different ways. The parties can decide when they have reached the appropriate stopping point. If they reach an agreement they may wish to stop at that point. However, if they have on-going issues or concerns that they feel would benefit from a continued facilitated conversation they can choose to meet again. Often the parties will set a time limit on the mediation and decide at that point whether they are making progress or not and continue if appropriate. If the parties reach an impasse the parties may decide that continuing is not justified.

Q: ***How is the agreement implemented?***

A: The parties choose how they want the agreement implemented. Agreements can be formal and filed with the courts or they can be more informal and used as a guide for

their future behavior. Parties can ask that the court or their lawyers to fashion the agreement into an order to be signed by the court.

Q: *What happens if there is no agreement?*

A: If the parties reach no agreement they go back to whatever process they were engaged in prior to the mediation, or choose another process to try to resolve their concerns.

Q: *Do I have a choice to participate in a mediation?*

A: The party's participation in mediation is voluntary. The parties can stop the mediation process if they decide that it is not productive.

Q: *Is the mediation confidential?*

A: The mediator holds any and all information disclosed in the mediation in confidence with a few notable exceptions (Threats, child abuse, and criminal activity).

Q: *What happens if I agree to participate in mediation?*

A: The other party will be contacted and if both agree to mediation a mediator will be selected and a time set for the mediation.

All parties in a mediation:

- ✓ Will participate in an intake interview.
- ✓ Will be explained how mediation works.
- ✓ Will be asked to sign and return an agreement to mediate form.
- ✓ Will be scheduled to participate in a mediation with a trained expert family mediator.
- ✓ Will be asked for feedback about the process when it is complete.

For more information or to begin the intake process, please contact Candice Johnson, 443-451-1215 or cjohnson@iss-usa.org.

www.iss-usa.org

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