

The Junior Mediation Process

This junior class mediation model can be facilitated at set times every week or spontaneously in the classroom when a conflict arises.

Students can be placed on a "Classroom Peer Mediator" roster so that the opportunity is given for different individuals to facilitate the mediation process. Certain students will 'shine' in this role. These students (no more than two per class) can become the Classroom Mediation Managers. They can take on extra responsibilities to help the teacher with administration of the junior mediation process in the classroom. E.g. Putting the "Mediation Rules" on the whiteboard before class mediation time.

Introduction and Rules

A class mediation begins with all students seated in a circle formation. Place 3 chairs at the front of the circle; two for the disputants and one for the peer mediator who sits in the middle chair between the two disputants.

The mediator begins by welcoming the class to 'mediation time'. The mediator then points to the "Mediation Rules" with a baton and reads the rules aloud with the rest of the class.

Mediation Rules:

Listen to each other
One person speaks at a time
Be respectful
Be honest
Agree to solve the problem together

N.B. The rules have been discussed by the teacher beforehand so that students understand what each rule means.

Defining the Problem (Storytelling)

The mediator chooses which disputant will talk first.

The mediator asks the first disputant: ***What is your problem?***

After the disputant tells their problem story, the mediator then asks:

How are you feeling about this?

The mediator demonstrates good listening by giving the speaker eye contact and nodding when appropriate.

The questions above are repeated with the second disputant.

Finding Solutions

The mediator asks the second disputant: ***Do you have any solutions to help?***

If a solution is given, the mediator then asks the first disputant the same question. If a solution is also given by the first disputant, the mediator then asks;

Have you both solved your problem?

If the answer is 'yes' from both disputants, the mediator then says:

Congratulations for solving your problem.

The mediator shakes hands with both disputants and asks them to shake hands too. This concludes the class mediation

If the disputants can't think of any solutions between them, the mediator asks the class circle for help: ***Does anyone have a solution to help?***

Students with solutions are encouraged to share these.

The mediator then asks the second disputant: ***Did you hear any solutions that you liked? What did*** (name of student with solution) ***say?***

The disputant repeats back to the mediator what the solution is they liked. If they can't remember, the student with the solution repeats this information. The disputant repeats the solution to the mediator to show that they have heard clearly. This process is repeated for the first disputant if they too do not have their own solution to the problem.

Reaching Agreement

The mediator restates what each disputant is going to do to solve the problem.

The mediator asks: ***Have you both solved the problem? Are you happy now?***

The mediator then says:

Congratulations for solving your problem.

The mediator shakes hands with both disputants and asks them to shake hands too. This concludes the class mediation.

Optional Activity to Follow a Class Mediation

To end a class mediation on a positive note, the mediator asks the disputants to give each other a 'warm fuzzy' (affirmation).

Example:

Disputant 1 says to Disputant 2: *You are a good friend*

Disputant 2 responds with: *Thank you _____*. (says name of Disputant 1)

Disputant 2 says to Disputant 1: *I like the way you always play with me.*

Disputant 1 responds with: *Thank you _____*. (says name of Disputant 2)

The rest of the class then pair off and do the same affirmation activity.

Important Reminder:

The class mediation model used by junior students can be adapted and used by older students in a primary school. This is often a great way to start practicing a basic mediation when learning about the mediation process as a class.

Refer to the Cool Schools Primary and Intermediate Training DVD – Primary Section - Roleplay 1 – for a good example of the Junior Mediation Process in action. Do show your students this role play. As the old saying goes ... *a picture is worth a 1000 words!*