

LtPM Training for Secondary Students

Notes for Coaches

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General points

1. The aim of the training is to give students a sense of what it is like to be a mediator, and for them to leave the training having enjoyed the experience. We make it clear that they will need further training if they are to practice as a mediator in their school.
2. The lead trainer will facilitate the day. Your role is to observe and help with the mediation skills exercises in the morning (see 'The Exercises' below) and then lead a group of 4-6 students through the role-plays (see pages 2 - 4). You may also be asked to tell all the students a 2-minute mediation story from your own experience (see page 5), which highlights the 'power of mediation' in the real world.
3. One of the purposes of the training is to give students the benefit of your experience as a practicing mediator, so feel free to tell them about your work and answer their questions.
4. When correcting a student, always try to say one or two things they are doing well first. Be very gentle with your corrections.
5. If at any time during the training day there is anything you would like to say to all the students (e.g. adding a relevant story) have a word with the lead trainer and, if time allows, we will include it. We like to develop new material and insights from the trainings. Your feedback to us after the training day would be much appreciated. Please allow for a 30-minute coaches debriefing meeting at the end of the training.

The Exercises

The role of the coaches during the practical exercises in the morning is to observe and pick up on learning points, so they can refer back to these when coaching the students through the role-plays.

Warm-up/Rapport Building Exercise - Your role is to participate in it in the same way as the students (instructions will be given on the day). You will be working with a group of 5-6 students. This will be the same group you will be working with for the first two mediation role-plays you will be coaching later on in the day.

Orange Exercise - A mini role-play in groups of 4 with two parents trying to resolve an argument between two siblings. Leave the students to run this mainly without interference, but if any group has a question as to what they should be doing, give help or summon the trainer. The purpose of this role-play is; 1) for students to discover for themselves the difficulties of solving disputes without a proper process, and 2) that solutions emerge only if the needs of the disputants are known. This role-play is run before the students have been given any mediation skills, so they are not using the mediation process in this exercise.

Running the Role-Plays

The Role-Plays will be run after lunch. There will be at least 2 role-plays. In each you will support a group of 4-6 students. Your primary role is to help the role-play work well.

The students in your group will decide between them who will be:

- the two mediators
- the two parties in dispute (the disputants)
- the peer coach or coaches (if there are more than 4 in the group)
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Assure the students that they will swap round for each role-play so everyone has an opportunity to take on each role. Explain that the role of the peer coaches is to prompt the mediators, if the peer coaches think they can assist while the mediation is in progress, and to give feedback at the end.

As the students become more accustomed to the mediation process, the support you give will change. It will be broadly as follows:

Role-play 1 – leading them through the process (use the Mediation Process Sheet to help you and them)

Role-play 2 – letting the mediation run with less support, but still encouragement and guidance

Role-play 3 – same as role-play 2 but giving even less support and lots of praise at the conclusion

Where mediations are running well, leave them to run without interruption. If mediators get stuck or are asking the wrong type of questions, ask the peer coaches if they can help. If they do not know what to do, help the mediators out yourself. If you want to make a criticism, make a mental note and leave it to the end in the debriefing. After each role play there is a debriefing in small groups. After all three role-plays there is lead trainers' debriefing with all students at the end of the day. More detailed guidance on debriefing is given below.

Role play 1. Key Learning: the mediation process.

Your tasks are:

Adult coach is to read out the scenario to all the students.

- Help the students decide who are going to be the 2 mediators, the two 2 disputants and the peer coach or coaches.
- Ask the disputants to put on a name label. They must then read through their role in the conflict scenario. Encourage the disputants to act as authentically as possible. **They must not reveal all their information at once.** Slow unpacking is advised.

- Using the Mediation Process Sheet to help you brief the mediators and peer coaches in your group:
 - a) Ask the mediators to decide who is going to read the opening statement on page 1 of the Mediation Process Sheet. If they prefer, both of them can share the reading.
 - b) Guide them through the stages of a mediation on Page 2 of the Mediation Process Sheet and the questions that can be asked at each stage.
 - c) Remind them of the importance of summarising each time any of the disputants speak
- Lead the students through the mediation, rather than letting it run out of control. (They are being plunged in the deep end and may need quite a bit of help)
- Announce each stage of the mediation as it occurs and make sure they have completed each stage before moving on to the next.
- Give encouragement to the mediators. Ask the peer coaches to chip in with suggestions if the mediators get stuck.
- When they reach agreement, prompt the mediators to ensure it is sufficiently clear.
- At the end of the role-play, have a debriefing session when you ask each of the students in the group of their experience of the mediation (see page 3 for further details)

Role Play 2 . Key Learning: Uncovering the real problem

The set up for this role-play is the same as for role-play 1 in that you:

- Help the students to rotate the roles and decide who are going to be mediators, disputants and peer coaches.
- Use the Prompt Sheet to help you brief the mediators and peer coaches.
- After running the role-play, debrief the students on their experience in your group

However in this role-play:

- Let the mediation run itself more but help if students get stuck and gently correct if they are doing something that is not good mediation practice.
- In particular stop the mediators from moving too quickly from the storytelling phase, and encourage them to ask more open questions until all the facts have emerged.
- If the mediators ask a biased question, get the disputant to whom it is asked to say how this made them feel.
Help the mediators to ensure the agreement reached a solution or solutions that will prevent the problem happening again.

Role-Play 3 – Similar to Role-Play 2 but give less input during the mediation and plenty of appreciation and praise at the conclusion

Debriefing after each role-play

This is crucial to the learning experience of the students. They will learn much from discussing what went well, what they found difficult and hearing what the persons in dispute and the peer coaches in their group have to say. **The ideal is for all the learning points to come from the students themselves as they feed back to each**

other in the group. Summarise good learning points made by the students. If you feel they have missed an important point, try and prompt the students to articulate it (for example by asking a disputant “*what did it feel like when the mediator did X?*”). Any points you feel you need to make, keep to the end and combine with positive affirmations of the students’ performance.

The following is a suggested guide on how to debrief. When a role-play ends, ask everyone to remain ‘in role’ and:

Ask Peer Coaches (it is important to involve them first)

- What did the mediators do well?
- What could they do differently next time?

Ask Mediators

- What did you do well?
- What would you do differently next time?

Ask persons in dispute (still in role):

- How do you feel at the end of the mediation?
- What did the mediators do well?
- Is there anything you would like them to have done differently?

De-role the parties (important – some people really ‘take on’ the role they are playing!)

- Ask them to physically change position in the group
- Welcome back the real person
- Ask them to say one further observation on the process – preferably one that does not come from the perspective of the role they played

Add your own feedback :

- Things they did well
- One thing they could each do differently (but only if not already mentioned)
- Invite general discussion about how they all found the experience
- Add any examples of things from your own observation/practice as a mediator
- Be very gentle

Above all, be encouraging. If at any time you are in doubt as to what you are meant to be doing, ask the lead trainer.

Tasks in small groups

Different groups sometimes take different lengths of time to complete and de-brief on the role-plays. If you should come to an end of the role-play earlier than others and need a ‘filler’ exercise, use one or both of the following:

1. Scenarios for mediation. Ask the students in your group what situations arise in their school which may be suitable for mediation. The purpose of this is to come up with scenarios which could be used for future role –plays and to help the students understand how mediation could be used in their school life.

2. Definition of mediation. Ask the students in your group to write down on a piece of paper a few sentences which describe what mediation is about. Say that these could be

for the purposes of including in the mediator's opening statement or explaining to a friend who has not been on the training. This can be done as a group exercise or by asking each of the individuals in the group to come up with their sentences. We may ask the groups to read out their sentences if there is time.

Telling a mediation story

Each coach may, at some point in the day, be asked to tell a personal story about a mediation in which he/she has been involved. This is a valuable way to bring the subject alive for the students. However, time is tight on the day and in order to get the maximum value from your contribution, we ask you to adhere to the following guidelines in preparing and delivering your mediation stories:

- **Stories must be told in a maximum of 2 minutes.** Keeping them within such a very short time limit requires preparation and rehearsal.
- Think of one main learning point which your story illustrates. This may be about the skills required by a mediator, the mediation process itself or some other aspect which is covered in the training. Make this learning point the purpose of the story. You may want to state at the outset what your story illustrates if the trainer has not already done this.
- Avoid making the story about YOU and make it more about MEDIATION, e.g. *"One of the things that can happen is... and here is how to deal with it..."* or *"Something to avoid is..."* Stories can be about either a positive and negative experience.
- Keep it simple. Edit out any unnecessary details or facts about the case which will distract the listener. Model the skills of a good mediator: clarity, conciseness etc.
- Use age-appropriate language and no technical legal words.
- If you are not a natural public speaker be aware of any tendency to speak in a monotone or with repeated inflections in your voice and make a conscious effort to speak with energy and variety in tone and pace.
- Have the last line of your story in mind before you start. This will help you work towards an end point so you know where your story is going. It may be as simple as repeating the learning point which you began with.
- If possible present your story to a colleague or partner and ask what they learned from it. Be available for their feedback on anything that was not clear or could be improved.

Important differences in the mediation process as taught to the students

There are five aspects of the mediation process we teach students which should be noted:

1. The participants are kept together from start to finish. No breaking into separate rooms.
2. We ask the mediators to summarise **each time** one of the disputants says anything in Stage 2 (
3. We teach the students how a mediator can ask questions which inquire on facts, feelings etc, but **not**, at this stage, how to challenge the disputants on their views.
4. The disputants are asked to talk to the mediator, not each other. Only at Stage 4 (Generating Solutions) can there be constructive dialogue between the disputants.
5. The mediators have to ensure the disputants complete the 'story-telling' stage before asking what the disputants need from the mediation.

This may be different from your own practice, but we find is appropriate for school students.

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