



Mentee Learning Accelerator

Welcome! We're so glad to have you as a mentee! So now what? Whether you are a seasoned mediator, or someone just starting out, this document is meant to guide you on an accelerated path toward a great learning experience.

New mediators, and experienced mediators who have not mediated for NMC, or have been absent from NMC for over a year, go through an observation and mentoring process that typically involves multiple supervised observations/mediations before co-mediating or leading a mediation. Depending on experience level and the mediator, this timing will vary. Progress of the Mentee is monitored by the Mentors and staff, to keep them advancing through the process.

Mentee – a mediator who has been accepted into the NMC program, and works under the supervision of a Mentor(s). Acceptance into the program decision is made by either the Executive Director, the Program Director, or both.

Mentor – A seasoned mediator, designated by NMC as a Mentor, who guides, teaches, supervises and keeps track of a Mentee's progress from Observer to Independent mediator. The decision on who is a Mentor is made by both the Executive Director and the Program Director.

After being accepted into the program, and assigned to one or more Mentors, the basic trajectory of moving from observing to independent mediator is this:

1. Observation
2. Co-Mediation
3. Independent Mediation

Observation

(Mentees observe multiple mediations)

Observing a mediation may seem simple enough, yet the complexities involve the observer's ability not to show bias with expression, body language, or in any other way. Observers have the power to shift the mediation trajectory and must maintain diligence around their own actions in every moment of the mediation. As part of this diligence, be sure to check-in with the mediator(s) and Mentors to make sure you are following their expectations.

The Mentor(s) in some cases, will start to get comfortable with the Mentee contributing to the mediation, and will start to advance the Mentee from observing, to having some input, to co-mediating. Mentees should be prepared to debrief the mediation with the mediators and ask reflective questions that will support the learning for everyone.

1. As part of the observation phase for all levels of experience - You Must before your first observation and then for each following mediation:
 - Talk with and understand the needs and expectations of each mediator you work with, every time you observe or mediate.
 - Read and be familiar with the entire Mediators Protocol Handbook, and carry a copy with you to all mediations.
 - Prepare for and be ready to open the mediation.
 - Prepare for and be ready to be called on to describe and lead the confidentiality process and signing.
 - Prepare for and be ready to deliver the Coordinator’s Opening Presentation. As you become familiar and confident, the coordinator may call on you to present to all parties in the court room prior to the mediation.

2. For the beginner observer/mediator you must start these practices as soon as possible in your observations/mediations and be working on all of them by your fourth observation.
 - a. **Log Book:** Start your own personal confidential log book. Record entries for all mediations and include notes that will help you reflect on the learning. For example: Date; Title; Venue; What puzzled me most? What went really well? What could have gone better? Would I have made the same process decision(s)? Why? Why not? Log anything that will help you learn and reflect. Continue this practice at least through all phases of the mentoring process.
 - b. **Notes:** Take notes with no party identifiers (so you can keep them after the mediation). At a minimum, each set of notes for each mediation must include at least one key interest for each party in the mediation. If for some reason a key interest did not surface for one or more parties, you should take a best estimate at what their needs were. Continue this practice at least through the co-mediating phase, and as long as it supports your learning.
 - c. **Notes Phase 2:** Once it has become routine to identify the party interests, write down a possible problem frame (or problem frames) in your notes. Remember - a “Problem Frame” is a tool in the form of a question that moves the conversation from the what and the why and the interests, into the brainstorming or options phase of the process. A problem frame question will always include at least one interest from each side and an

ask for ideas about how to resolve the issue. For example; “You both want the orange. And, I’ve heard that Alex most wants the rind from the orange and what Chris wants most is the juice from the orange. So, can you think of some options for how you can make this work for everyone?” Continue this practice as long as it supports your learning.

- d. **Map Your Location:** Use the “Circle Model of Negotiation” map diagram to locate where the mediation is at in the process, at least 4 times during each mediation. You can do this mentally while looking at the map, or better yet, make notes on the map as you go. Continue this practice as long as it supports your learning.

Co-Mediating

(Mentees participate in multiple mediations working under a lead mediator Mentor)

For the beginner mediator, the typical mentoring lead mediator will start to involve you in more and more complex parts of the mediation at exactly the pace you are ready for. You may start with delivering the confidentiality agreement, move to opening and closing the mediation, and then start to open the mediation including deciding on and initiating the opening strategy. For experienced mediators just entering the NMC program, co-mediation with a Mentor is a time to become familiar with the specific NMC processes, in a variety of venues.

1. As progress is made and confidence grows in both the Mentor and Mentee, the Mentee will naturally be moved into the lead mediator role, with the support and presence of the Mentor as the safety net being there as co-mediator. Typically, the first cases the Mentee will lead will be simpler ones, moving from there to more complex situations.
2. Mentees at this point in their development should be prepared to participate in a debrief of the mediation with the other mediators and are expected to ask reflective and self-reflective questions that will support the learning for everyone.
3. During, and toward the end of this co-mediating process, the Mentor will assess the progress of the Mentee and deliver constructive feedback. In at least one co-mediation prior to advancing the Mentee to the Independent mediator role, the Mentor will use the NMC Mentee Evaluation Form to assess the competency of the Mentee, and deliver the evaluation in an organized way back to the Mentee.
4. The Mentor and NMC staff together make the decision on moving the Mentee to the independent mediator role.



Independent Mediator

Mentees graduate from the Mentee role by passing the Mentee evaluation process. The mediator is then allowed to mediate without the advantage of a Mentor or co-mediator. NMC strives to advance the practice of co-mediation wherever possible, and welcomes those who like to and are capable of mediating independently.

Independent mediators should be prepared to participate in and potentially lead the debrief of the mediation with other mediators and are expected to ask and answer reflective questions that will support the learning for all.

All information described here can be found in its most current form in the Volunteer Resources area of the NMC website.