



**NEIGHBORHOOD
MEDIATION CENTER**

200 Ridge St., #230 ■ Reno, NV 89501

The Mediation Monitor

Issue 6

October—December 2014

Empowering people and organizations with alternative methods for resolving disputes

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Group Facilitation - An Essential Process for Organizational Planning and Conflict Management

Although mediation is a highly effective process for the resolution of conflict in the workplace, the process is most appropriate for conflict between individuals and very small groups—usually not more than 6 people. So what do you do if you have a workplace conflict involving larger groups? Hire a facilitator.

A facilitator is a skilled, third-party neutral who guides group members through a process. Highly skilled facilitators have many successful techniques they use depending upon the situation.

For instance, if a group is struggling with important organizational decisions, the facilitator might use a consensus building tool that incorporates a series of systematic steps that include creating common goals, setting timelines, and projecting outcomes.

Like mediation, the outcome belongs to the parties, or in the case of facilitation, the group.

BENEFITS OF FACILITATION

- ◆ Increases the chance that all voices will be heard
- ◆ Reduces manipulation, complacency, and bullying
- ◆ Demonstrates a commitment to a more open and inclusive process
- ◆ Increases the likelihood that the outcome will be implemented

For more information call the Neighborhood Mediation Center 775-788-2127

Happy Holidays to you and yours from the Board and



Staff -

*Of the Neighborhood
Mediation
Center*

***Beginning Mediation
and Conflict
Resolution
Certificate****

**April 14-18, 2015
Tuesday—Saturday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**\$1,050 by March 13;
\$1,250 after
March 13**

**Instructors:
Claudia Wahl
Monica Kales**



Beginning Mediation Training Certificate

UNR Extended Studies offers an intensive skill-based 40-hour certificate program in Facilitative Mediation. Trainees will learn conflict management/resolution skills that are applicable in employment, education, medical or consulting settings in private, public and non-profit arenas. For more information about the field of mediation and conflict resolution, call the Neighborhood Mediation Center at 775-788-2127 or visit www.mediatenmc.org. You can find the link to register for the Beginning Mediation Training class on the NMC website under the Training tab.

NDRC Training

**January 30, 2015
8:30 a.m.4:30p.m.
Registration
8:00—8:30**

Link to
registration form
[http://
www.nvdrc.org/
futuretrain-
ings.html](http://www.nvdrc.org/futuretrainings.html)

**Nevada Dispute Resolution Coalition
Advanced Mediation Training**

**THE DANCE OF OPPOSITES:
Insights & Practical Techniques
for Successful Mediation**

**Kenneth Cloke, PhD, JD, LLM
An AFCC & ACR Approved Trainer**

Registration Fee:

◆ **Early Registration**

Postmarked by January 9, 2015

NDRC Members (2015) \$150

Non-Members \$200

- ◆ **Postmarked between January 10 – 27, 2015* \$220**
- ◆ **After January 28th*(call 813-0838 to register) \$240**

**No NDRC member discount*

NDRC Membership:

General Member \$20

Practitioner \$40

Advanced Practitioner \$70

*All membership categories are eligible for
the early registration discount*

Valerie Cotta, NMC Volunteer Mediator

Valerie Cotta (MA, MBA, BEng) is a transformative business consultant, executive coach, and mediator who co-founded Evolve Human Systems to provide sophisticated expertise in business, strategy, and human dynamics to organizations and individuals. Val has spent 20 years refining her understanding of why and how “human interaction” affects thinking, performance, and morale in business and personal life. She says, “Six months into my professional career, I was shocked that my work had unexpectedly less to do with engineering, and mostly involved working with people. That insight drives my education and business consulting practice.”

Valerie’s diverse professional experience creates a substantial knowledge base, starting with an international career spent with Fortune 500 companies as a metallurgical and environmental engineer, then as a marketing and business manager for 3M Canada. Her uniquely expansive perspective is tempered by education that marries the “thinking style” of her engineering Bachelor’s with two complementary advanced degrees. Val’s Master’s in “Conflict Analysis & Management” fostered the critical aspects missing from her MBA program. Atypically diverse technical, strategic, and relational skill sets are essential to operating her full-service business consultancy and cultivating advanced business practices that achieve greater productivity and collaborative results for clients. Benefits include effective innovation and increased profits reclaimed through improved team alignment and integration, more robust and effective communication, and increased employee energy and morale. In short, Val’s approach elevates “getting on the same page” and “work smarter, not harder” to new level of sophistication and effectiveness. Val uses conflict management skills (i.e., mediation) to help companies/teams move effectively through situations in which normal tensions or differences escalate to unproductive levels. Her clients seek more productive “Human Interaction” processes and support during:

- Organizational transition (e.g., mergers, acquisitions, leadership transitions, changes in organization or team culture);

- Departmental re-alignment based on shared understanding of goals;

- Polished navigation of challenging “conversations;” and

- Mediation of open disputes with internal and/or external stakeholders.

As an executive coach, Valerie teaches how to “Get UnStuck” through identification and removal of hidden barriers to greater connection, productivity, and performance.

Val is pleased to back in Reno. She engages in continual research on human potential while improving her “systems thinking” through permaculture gardening and flying her air foil kite. Trail running, skiing, and salsa dancing keep Val grounded!

Unleash the human capital in your team. Navigate smoothly through the current complex challenge or attain the next level of performance. Connect with Val at 775.240.2465 or valerie@evolvethrive.com.

NMC Volunteer



“If you are not a part of the solution, you are a part of the problem,” correct? Perhaps not.

More accurately, the most important aspect of both business and personal success is summed up in this revision:

“You can’t be part of the solution UNLESS you are a part of the problem.”

The best solutions emerge when we choose our accountability for what currently exists in order to connect to our personal power which moves us forward into what we want and need.”

Upcoming Conferences

February

20-21, 2015

Conference
Co-Chairs
Kathleen Dial
and Pattie
Porter



<http://www.txmediator.org/conference/>

NEIGHBORHOOD
MEDIATION CENTER

775-788-2127
WWW.MEDIATENMC.ORG



NMC is primarily funded
by Washoe County
from court filing fees.

From the Program Director's Corner..... Small Claims Court Refreshers

Recently, Claudia held two agreement writing workshops here at NMC. Volunteers were asked to come to one of the sessions for a refresher on agreement writing skills. When mediation ends in agreement, the written agreement provides a framework crafted in party self-determination and good faith that enables parties to move beyond their dispute.

Writing an agreement is a collaborative process that includes both/all parties. It's the parties' agreement, not the mediator's. The mediator is essentially a scribe who articulates in writing the decisions that the parties have made together. By the time you are scribing an agreement, all conversation and negotiation should be finished and the terms finalized. Balance and detail are important components of the agreement. A balanced agreement includes terms that both plaintiff and defendant agree to; i.e., "Mr. Smith, Plaintiff, agrees to accept \$500.00 from Mr. Jones, Defendant, to settle their dispute over ..." "Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith agree that payment will be made as follows:" Although the level of detail is ultimately up to the parties, terms should be detailed enough that all involved know what is expected of themselves and each other; who, what, where, when and how. A detailed agreement also provides the court with a clear picture of what parties agreed to in mediation.

When \$ becomes a sticking point...

When the perceived solution in a mediation is money, mediators sometimes find the negotiation phase of the mediation to be quite frustrating for the participants. One minute everything is moving toward resolution, and in a blink of an eye the parties are stuck because they find themselves haggling over numbers as opposed to negotiating over what's really important. The harder each pushes for their number, the worse things get until both feel helplessly dead-locked. Sound familiar?

To move parties forward the mediator must step in before the parties get too locked into position. Stepping in means using open-ended questions to help the parties discover and articulate to one another the interests behind the numbers. Use questions to prompt the parties to explain why the number feels fair and how it will solve the problem. Having the ability to hear each other's interests will often result in an adjustment of numbers that work to satisfy each party.

Some open ended questions you might consider:

What does this number mean to you?

How did you arrive at that figure?

How will this satisfy the claim you're making?

What's most important to you, the money, or is there something else we need to explore?

Are there other ways your needs can be met?

Beyond the money, what other issues need to be put on the table?

Defining the Joint Problem in Mediation

Defining the Joint Problem in mediation can be a challenge for any mediator, and it goes without saying that solving a problem takes an understanding of the problem. For some participants the problem has been going on for so long that issues have piled one on top of the other until the real problem is no longer visible. Other participants may have such a difficult time articulating the problem that it becomes confusing for the mediator and the other party. Or, the mediator may hear such different descriptions of the problem from the participants that one has to wonder whether the participants were ever in the same room. All of these scenarios are common and they can make it quite difficult for the mediator to initiate the problem solving process.

In order to assist the parties in defining the joint problem the mediator can use the tool of Joint Problem Analysis. To use this tool, the mediator needs to develop a set of questions around the following significant areas:

- ◇ How has the situation affected the parties (emotionally, physically, financially, etc.)?
- ◇ Why has the situation been so difficult for the parties to resolve (what is blocking the parties from resolution)?
- ◇ What are the parties' fears or anxieties about the situation?
- ◇ What needs do the parties have in either keeping the conflict going, or in resolving the conflict?

Once this information is available to the parties and the mediator, the mediator has a much greater chance of helping the parties jointly define the problem so the mediation can progress.

"The courts of this country should not be the places where resolution of disputes begins. They should be the places where the disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried." ~

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor