

Conflict Resolution Resource Center

Policy/Procedure

For many of us, conflict is fraught with negative associations and experiences. How we handle conflict creates an enormous impact not only on the parties directly involved, but also for the other people indirectly associated through living and working relationships. Conflict resolution covers a broad range of informal and formal interventions, whether between the two parties directly or with the assistance of an appropriate "third party." The training that the Center offers provides individuals with the opportunity to increase their own ability to deal with conflict effectively.

The Conflict Resolution Resource Center offers the following services:

Conflict Resolution Coaching

Dickinson College wants to encourage an atmosphere where life's everyday conflicts can be successfully resolved in a respectful and productive manner. Sometimes when faced with a conflict situation, it is useful to have a neutral and confidential resource—someone with whom to discuss approaches to conflict resolution, consider options, or clarify the underlying issue that is most important to you. The Conflict Resolution Resource Center offers "coaching" sessions on an individual or group basis.

Conflict "coaching" is an application of conflict mediation skills and training to work with one party to a conflict. In a coaching session, the individual experiencing a conflict with another party has the opportunity to consider a full range of options and responses in the conflict situation. Individuals can prepare mentally and emotionally to approach the other person involved in the conflict and develop a plan for constructively addressing the conflict situation.

The "coach" is a neutral "third-party" who is trained to help people in a conflict assess their situation and their options. The coach will not "take your side," nor will the coach make specific recommendations for your course of action. Rather, the coach will ask you questions about the conflict: the preconditions to the dispute, the unfolding of the dispute, your position and possible interests, why and what about this conflict matters to you, what you know of the positions and interests of the disputing party, etc. These questions will be designed to expand your perspective and help you create and consider options.

Conflict coaching is useful when you feel stuck in a conflict situation and do not know what your next step should be, or you think that your next step will only escalate the conflict and you want to seek a more constructive alternative. The responsibility to choose a course of action remains your own, but the conflict coaching can help you explore more options that may help you resolve the conflict.

To request such conflict resolution "coaching", you can schedule an appointment by completing the form available at http://alpha.dickinson.edu/departments/crrc/sched_coaching.html.

Conflict Resolution Skill Building Sessions

College Centers and Programs: Conflict Resolution Resource Center

Conflict resolution is a skill that can be learned! Skill building sessions are available to student groups on campus. Contact the CRRC (mediate@dickinson.edu) with inquiries about scheduling conflict resolution skill building sessions.

CRRC staff offers the following Conflict Skill Building sessions:

Level I: What we each bring to conflict; introducing the "conflict cycle; escalation and de-escalation.

Level II: "Conflict Styles" and "Conflict IQ"--both with an accompanying self-assessment instrument and discussion to understand how these concepts apply to conflict situations individual participants have encountered.

Level III: Getting to "Win-Win"--building collaborative approaches to conflict resolution.

Mediation

Mediation is a conversation between two parties in conflict, structured and assisted by a neutral third party, the mediator. The structure of a mediation session allows both parties to move beyond their initial positions to discover their own and the other's underlying interests. The parties can then generate options to address their needs. When mediation is successful, the parties review and select the best options, and conclude with a written agreement.

Mediation is typically voluntary, though in some cases conflicting parties can be encouraged by persons with authority. Because the parties do come to the session willingly, the typical rate of successful resolution is extremely high. And, because the parties themselves created the solution, it is typically a long-lasting solution.

Mediation is confidential. Even in cases where two parties may be encouraged to mediation (as in the case of a supervisor referring staff members to mediation to work out a problem, or two students who choose the mediation option within the judicial process of Community's Standards), the only information that is disclosed would be that the parties did indeed attend a mediation session and that they did, or did not, reach agreement.

In short, mediation is:

- Voluntary.
- Confidential.
- A structured, problem-solving conversation.
- A resolution process in which the parties involved in the conflict make the decisions, not the mediator.
- Highly successful in solving conflicts of all types.

Types of Conflicts That Might Benefit From Mediation

- Roommate and other residence hall disputes where resolution has not been achieved by the parties or with the help of an RA.
- Student clubs/associations intra-group conflict, student-advisor conflict, and inter-group conflict.
- Intra- and inter- fraternity/sorority conflicts.
- Student-faculty/staff/administrator conflicts.
- Campus-Carlisle resident incidents such as noise complaints, parking issues, and landlord conflicts.

Cases which are covered by formal grievance or other procedures in the Community's Standards, Student Handbook, Employee Handbook, or Faculty Handbook should follow those procedures. Cases may be referred for mediation if appropriate through those procedures.

Who will mediate my case?

Disputes involving students will be mediated by student peer mediators. Dickinson College is fortunate to have a talented pool of students with prior experience as high school peer mediators. These students participated in a training session to assure that all mediation services at Dickinson will adhere to the CRRC's mediation framework and standards. Student mediators are supervised by Assistant Provost Shalom Staub, who directs the CRRC.

Disputes involving administration, staff, or faculty members will be mediated by Assistant Provost Shalom Staub, who has years of experience in conflict resolution and mediation and/or administrators, staff, or faculty members who have received a 40 hour training to become members of the CRRC Workplace Mediation team.

Disputes involving students with administration, staff, or faculty will be handled by a peer mediation team of a student peer mediator and the faculty, staff and administrator network of CRRC's workplace mediators.

All mediators are bound by mediation procedures and ethics, which include neutrality and confidentiality.

Where will mediation sessions be held?

Mediation sessions will be held at the CRRC, 179 West Louthier Street.

All mediation sessions are scheduled in advance.

Related Information

History/Revision Information

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: Conflict Resolution Resource Center Web Site
(<http://alpha.dickinson.edu/departments/crrc/>)