

Who we are

I *Imagine yourself in a workforce free from the dynamics and impact of destructive conflict. A workplace where conflict promotes change, creativity and understanding. A place where conflict ignites opportunity for respectful dialogue. A work culture that supports a working environment where people can engage in conversations that aid in mutually respectful work relationships.*

Conflict in the workplace, as in other areas of life, is normal. Whether that conflict is destructive or ultimately constructive to the workplace depends on how it is responded to. Conflict which is not effectively addressed or is left unresolved can result in serious costs and consequences to management and employees alike. But when conflict is managed thoughtfully, it could lead to desirable, dramatic and healing change.

The New York City Center for Mediation Services is leading an initiative to encourage change in the way workplace conflicts are addressed in City government. Established in 2003, the Center serves as an independent conflict resource center for the City of New York, operating under the auspices of the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

How can we help

The Center's aim is to assist government personnel in resolving and learning more about workplace conflict. We offer an alternative, neutral, private and safe forum for City workers to address difficult situations early on before matters escalate.

Our services are designed to be broad in scope, and allow us to respond effectively to situations that range from simple misunderstandings to more complex interpersonal disputes.

Mediation at the Center

As practiced by the Center, mediation is a constructive conversation facilitated by mediator(s) who serve as third party neutrals. Mediators do not make decisions about who is right or wrong. Instead, they help promote a bias-free, safe and structured environment for parties to listen to one another, begin to understand each other and come to agreements that aid in mutually respectful work relationships. Mediation is:

- Free—provided free of cost to agencies and employees
- Voluntary—participation is always voluntary
- Confidential—with limited exceptions, what is discussed in mediation is not shared outside the session

Group Facilitation

Group facilitation is a flexible process designed to assist large or small work units in achieving specific goals. They can be conducted on or off site and may also be combined with other services as appropriate.

Training

Conflict Management Initiatives: Part of the Center's work is focused on designing and implementing professional development courses aimed at assisting personnel in better understanding workplace conflict, and in honing skills and learning new tools that help in making decisions on how to best manage difficult situations. These initiatives are typically tailored to address specific areas of interest or concern by an agency or work unit.

Mediation Training: In collaboration with the NYU Law School Mediation Clinic, the Center conducts an annual four-day mediation training that emphasizes basic mediation techniques and theory, along with discussion and practice of mediation in the workplace context. Class participants typically include City personnel, as well as, second-and-third year law students. This training can also be designed to accommodate specific interests of an agency or work-unit.

Conflict Consultation

Center staff can also assist individuals on a one on one basis, in managing workplace conflict. The aim of the service is to assist City personnel to think through and proactively respond to conflicts they are responsible for managing. Consultations are confidential and may occur by phone or in person.

How

to access our Services

Services and General Inquiries

If you are interested in learning more about mediation or any of the Center's other services, please contact Jason Pinheiro at 212-442-8914 or email: jpinheiro@oath.nyc.gov.

You may also contact Justo A. Sanchez at 212-442-4920 or email: jsanchez@oath.nyc.gov

To learn more about the Center, please visit our website at www.nyc.gov/html/oath and click on the link "Mediation Center."

Location

NYC Center for Mediation Services
40 Rector Street, 6th floor
New York, NY 10006

Our staff is committed to the notion that through honest, open and transparent communication, and the sharing of individual perspectives and personal experiences in a discreet and private setting, many conflicts can be quickly and effectively resolved.

We believe that through accessible conflict work initiatives and shared resources, through the sharing of our personal experiences working through conflict and our respect for its power, through conviction in our mantra—"to be of service", through our accountability to ourselves and the clients we serve, and through our transparent approach in communicating what we believe, that the Center can make a difference, and will continue to evolve and further assist the City workforce with excellence, commitment and humility in our quest for a workforce free from the destructive potential of conflict.

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