
Many people who are in a dispute or disagreement are not sure whether they can come to mediation to find resolution. **However, the short answer is that almost any issue can be raised and addressed through mediation.** These are just some of the issues we commonly see in a community setting and can be resolved without relying on a judge in court. The worst outcome is for people to leave an issue unaddressed which can lead to it becoming more destructive, unproductive or even escalate into a more serious and unforeseen problem.

- **Neighbor/Neighbor Disputes:** These types of disputes can involve a very broad range of issues such as property line issues, trees, shrubs, fences, children, parking, use and maintenance of driveways, pets and animals, cars, uses of the home and lot, noise and bright lights, party-walls, trash disposal, basket ball hoops, homeowners associations, etc. The type of dispute alone does not determine the level of conflict or degree of complexity in a case. Many neighbor/neighbor disputes are resolved almost instantly as the parties sit down and begin to talk with each other. Other cases involve a history of personal attacks, the calling in of authorities in a tit-for-tat cycle of revenge and retaliation, and/or multiple levels of conflict and involvement of other neighbors – sometimes up to hundreds of neighbors!
- **Public Disputes:** Public disputes, or public policy disputes or community-wide disputes, are conflicts that involve more than just a few people and where a public policy issue may be at stake. Public disputes process can involve government, police, and residents examine issues and make some decisions that will work best for the community.
- **Landlord/Tenant:** There are many small landlords who manage just one or a few properties for rent. Frequent issues can arise with their tenants concerning such issues as return of the security deposit, responsibility for damage, presence of pets and additional people in the unit, care and upkeep of the property, relations with neighbors who may complain of noise, trash or other issues, etc.
- **Parent/Teen Mediation:** We will use adult mediators or sometimes pair up a youth and adult mediator to assist parents and teens in resolving conflict or making decisions. The goal of the mediators is not to intervene in or challenge parental authority but to provide a relatively safe, quiet and structured atmosphere for discussions between a parent and teen to take place. Teens respond favorably to this process because they are treated with the same level of respect and consideration as the adult parent. Parents respond well because they have a structured environment within which to conduct discussions and one in which the mediators are not trying to evaluate, judge or correct them.

- **Roommates & Housemates:** There is as much conflict between roommates or housemates as there are within families. Issues such as sharing of facilities, responsibility for utility payments, noise and lifestyle differences are common.
- **Consumer/Merchant:** Many relatively small disputes between consumers and merchants are not easily susceptible to settlement through the courts either because of the cost or the difficulty of implementing a court judgment. For example, a consumer might purchase a used car from an independent used car dealer or just someone selling their car. Shortly after purchase, the car blows a gasket or starts to leak fluids or stops running. This is actually fairly typical for older cars costing only a few thousand dollars. Both the seller and the buyer are often persons of limited financial resources. If they go to court neither may be able to collect on their judgment. The seller cannot readily refund the purchase price. In mediation parties can work out the kinds of solution beyond what the court can and are only limited by their imaginations.
- **Youth Issues:** There are a number of youth issues that are often susceptible to resolution through mediation even when they cannot be resolved through other methods. Runaway teens, truancy, intra-family assaults, and others can often be mediated when there are no other viable alternatives. Additionally, anyone who needs to be involved in making a decision can be included whether they are parents, school officials, police representatives, social service office representatives, etc.

For more information or questions about whether your
conflict can be addressed through mediation or one of our
other services,

Please contact us!



**4041 University Drive, Suite 101
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
703.865.7272**