



# YORK DIOCESAN MEDIATION SERVICE

## Introduction

Wherever people see a situation differently, there is the potential for conflict. Add some tension, or misunderstanding, and things can escalate to the point where helpful communication has broken down and good working relationships seem impossible.

We can sometimes work through conflicts ourselves, but there are times when calling on someone from outside our situation can help to get positive communication going once more.

Mediation provides an independent structure and forum to bring disputing individuals together to:

- \* tell their own story and listen to others
- \* identify issues
- \* start to problem solve together
- \* form healthy working relationships
- \* find healing.

This kind of Transformative Mediation follows a process which seeks to effect change rather than simply to contain or manage a situation.

This service is now available within the York Diocese. A small group of people with appropriate training can be called on as mediators.

## Who is it for ?

Anyone in our churches who feels that they might be helped by mediation. Clergy, church wardens, lay leaders, co-workers etc

## What happens ?

A mediator will contact each individual to outline the process and hear from individuals about their experience of the situation separately. Then, as soon as possible, the disputing parties are invited to work together face to face somewhere that feels safe for both parties.

## Confidentiality

The level of confidentiality needed is agreed by the disputants. Mediators are neutral and treat everything in confidence,

## When ?

As soon as possible. Asking for mediation need not be seen as an admission of failure, but a pathway to resolving differences.

## Does it work ?

Evidence shows that where all parties are willing to engage fully with this kind of process, there is an excellent chance of success.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-19



## What can I expect?

Conflict is an inevitable part of life – including church life and work. Not all conflicts can be neatly resolved but they do not have to continue to be destructive. Mediation can transform relationships and help people with different personalities and very different approaches to handle conflict in creative ways that lead to growth and change.

### Mediation does not give people:

- \* an opportunity to justify or excuse themselves
- \* a means to continue fighting at another level
- \* access to formal disciplinary process
- \* a means of inflicting hurt on another



### Mediators do not:

- \* take sides
- \* make judgements
- \* work outside the process

### Mediation does not:

- \* take the place of counselling

## Am I too late?

Mediation can still produce effective results long after disputants have reached an impasse.

## What is required?

A desire to try and find a positive way forward with the help of others. The willingness to listen and be open to understand the other person's position.

## Where do I go from here?

First contact is made through Rev Andrew De Smet. Andrew is Diocesan Co-ordinator and Advisor in Pastoral Care, with training in community mediation. Kirkdale Vicarage, Main Road, Beadlam, Nawton, York. YO62 7ST  
01439 770760 email: [andrewdesmet@btinternet.com](mailto:andrewdesmet@btinternet.com)

Others involved in the mediation service:

Mark Rance: with a background in commercial mediation.  
01904 624190  
[mark.rance@stmichaelsyork.org](mailto:mark.rance@stmichaelsyork.org)

Jonathan Evans: a member of the Bridge Builders Network with training in Congregational Conflict Consultancy as well as interpersonal mediation.  
01482 881458  
[evansfamily@macunlimited.net](mailto:evansfamily@macunlimited.net)



## Training

### **Bridge Builders**

is a programme of the London Mennonite Centre which offers mediation and training throughout the country. It provides a supportive network and consultancy service to its members. More information can be found at [www.menno.org.uk](http://www.menno.org.uk)



# Caught Up In Conflict ?



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