

Mediation News

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Newsletter

Summer-Fall 2012

Practice Makes Perfect?

As the Summer Olympics are now in full swing, I am reminded of that familiar saying - *practice makes perfect*. In fact, there are many wise sayings that convey the idea that to get better at something you must practice, practice, practice. Who hasn't heard that old adage, "if you want to succeed – try, try again" or what about the more philosophical quote from 1st Century B.C. Roman author, Publilius Syrus, "practice is the best of all instructors?" However you say it, we all know that practice usually has something to do with success...but it's not the only factor that contributes to growth and improvement.

The Commission recently conducted an on-line survey of its volunteer mediators (thanks to those of you who took the time to reply ☺) and one of the questions asked was: [Do you have a post mediation "ritual" or practice that helps you to debrief each mediation session and prepare you for the next?](#) Although several of you replied that you don't, many of you shared your own special practice tips.

One response noted the practical suggestion to "*make sure you have at least a half-hour between multiple mediations in the same day and go outside for some air in between*", while another response enthusiastically suggested "*Zumba!*"

Many of you suggested taking the time to "*debrief or talk to your co-mediator after the session to discuss what was done well and what could have been done better*" or to speak about "*tricky aspects of the mediation or interactions that were problematic.*"

Others mentioned self-reflection techniques such as spending "*time thinking about what went right or wrong and reflect on ways of improving.*" Another mediator said "*review notes and reflect on the effectiveness of my behavior during the mediation.*" A few of you also mentioned that you find *journaling* after a session to be helpful. Others mentioned that you use a specific mediator *self-evaluation form* to reflect on the mediation. Although the Commission has provided mediator self-assessment forms in the past, we haven't done so in quite some time. As an additional tool, I will be emailing everyone on the roster examples of these forms that you can use if you are interested.

Practice doesn't always guarantee perfection (as many of the hard-working Olympic athletes would attest to this month) but practice along with some of the wonderful suggestions above ARE guaranteed to give you a few more ways to continue to grow and improve as a mediator. Thanks everyone and keep up the good work!

Upcoming Mediation Events

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| SEPT 2012 <hr/> 12 – 15th | Association for Conflict Resolution Annual Conference New Orleans, LA (visit www.acrnet.org/annual2012 for more info) |
| 20th (6:30p – 9p) | MCDR (MD Council for Dispute Resolution) Quarterly Meeting: Forum on Mediator Licensing and Certification (Howard Community College), www.mcdr.org for more info |
| OCT 2012 <hr/> 4th (9:30a-4:30p) | MCCR In-Service: Diversity Workshop (see Save the Date below) Facilitators - Cheryl Jamison, Esq. & Lou Gieszl, MACRO |
| 7th (1p-4p) | 2012 Walk for Peace in Our Communities Rash Field, Baltimore Inner Harbor, www.tinyurl.com/PeaceWalk2012 to register |
| NOV 2012 <hr/> 15-17th | Maryland's 4th Restorative Justice Conference Hosted by Howard Community College and Towson University (www.crimaryland.org for more info) |
| DEC 2012 <hr/> 7th (All day) | 2012 Maryland Mediator's Convention Conference Center at the Maryland Maritime Institute, Linthicum, Maryland |

*All MCCR trainings are held at the Baltimore office unless otherwise noted and only open to current MCCR mediators. To register for any MCCR Training contact Tara Taylor.

Diversity Work for Mediators Workshop:

Thursday, October 4, 2012

9:30 am - 4:30 pm

At the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights
6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore MD

This engaging, high energy, interactive workshop helps mediators to (1) understand the importance of diversity in the dispute resolution field, (2) become more aware of how their experiences with aspects of diversity affect their mediation abilities, (3) be more comfortable in addressing diversity issues that arise during the course of a mediation, and (4) develop a heightened awareness of diversity of practice in the mediation field. The workshop is designed to take participants on a journey moving from looking at the group, then at themselves and their assumptions, and finally to their role as mediators. Using interactive activities, videos, role plays and discussion, the session participants explore strategies they may use as mediators when diversity issues are at the heart of a conflict. Participants will have an opportunity to be the mediator, try out some strategies, and discuss their past experiences. The safe space created provides an opportunity to discuss cases, successes, failures and promising practices, as well as to discuss life experiences through a diversity lens.

Meet the facilitators:

Lou Gieszl is the Deputy Executive Director of the Maryland Judiciary's Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) and is the immediate past-president of the Association for Conflict Resolution. He has a Masters of Public Policy Degree and teaches graduate-level courses on conflict management at the University of Baltimore and at UMBC. **Cheryl Jamison, Esq.** also works at MACRO and is responsible for a statewide program designed to assist mediators enhance their mediation practice. She is the former Vice President of the Association for Conflict Resolution. An attorney, mediator and trainer, Cheryl is currently teaching a class on Race and Conflict at the University of Baltimore.

Please RSVP to Tara Taylor at taylor@mccr.state.md.us or at 410-767-6459

...Save The Date!

Praise for MCCR Mediators

The following comments have been collected throughout the year from mediation participants who complete the MCCR Participation Surveys in response to the question, "What was the most helpful part of the mediation process?":

"Providing a forum for constructive dialogue."

"Guidance from the mediators as to how to facilitate the conversation."

"The impartiality and professionalism of the mediators."

"The mediator helped me to feel safe."

"The opportunity for all parties to state their points of view in a non-threatening and respectful environment."

"That it ended with a positive tone."

"Time spent to be made fully aware of issues at hand; no short-cuts were taken."

Don't Be Dismayed!

If you haven't been able to get in to mediate recently, please keep trying and replying to available dates. Since the Commission now offers fact-finding conferences as another option for disputants, we have had fewer mediations in our Baltimore office. Mediations are still happening and we are still trying to give everyone a chance to regularly mediate. Thanks for your understanding!

"Better than a thousand hollow words is one that brings peace."

-Buddha

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Special thanks to our intern, TAYLOR NOVAK, who assisted in the production of this edition of *MediationNews*