

Peer Mediation

By Jennifer Kenny

¹ Life is filled with good things. Life is filled with problems, too. Every day people try to come up with ways to solve problems. Kids in school need to find ways, too. They are no exception.

² For as long as there have been schools, there have been difficulties between children. This can include name-calling, the taking of someone else's property, or even pushing on the playground. Many times adults intervene - maybe a teacher, a parent, the principal, or a lunchroom monitor. This is important in the sense that most schools have zero tolerance for bullying, or one student harming another in any way - physically or verbally. However, a grown up stepping in sometimes only helps temporarily. That's where a program called peer mediation comes in.

³ Peer mediation sounds like a complicated term. However, it's not so complicated when it's broken down. A peer is someone your own age. A mediator is someone who helps fix conflicts.

⁴ What exactly does a peer mediator do? A peer mediator is usually chosen in a school situation because of the person's helpful nature. The peer mediator may be very academic or not, be very athletic or not, be very popular or not, etc. The peer mediator is trained by an adult in many schools through role playing. He or she learns about conflict resolution by thinking up different ways to solve problems. After training, the peer mediator uses his or her skills in real-life school situations.

⁵ The way the peer mediation program works may be slightly different in each school. In general, if a child is having a problem with another child, he or she may fill out a form requesting a time for someone to listen. This is CONFIDENTIAL, so the whole school does not find out about it.

⁶ A time is set up for a few mediators to meet with the two or more people involved in the conflict. An adult is also present to supervise. There are ground rules that all must follow. Everyone must agree they will try to solve the problem so everyone must be respectful with no interrupting. Everyone must be responsible to tell the truth and carry out any agreement.

⁷ The peer mediators guide the process. However, they are not judges. They need to stay neutral, or not take sides. The peer mediators can't tell the children what to do, look for witnesses, or accuse. Instead, they try to get the children involved to work it out. They attempt to get each side to listen carefully and be fair.

⁸ At the end, the two sides hopefully agree to work it out. The peer mediators paraphrase what they heard, and a written contract is signed which states what each party will do to help make peace. The peer mediators keep the information confidential. They also check in later to see if the problem has de-escalated, or gotten any better. Hopefully, it has, and the program has worked because the two sides agreed, with the help of peers, to solve something together.

⁹ Peer mediation can be used for fighting, rumors, threats, pushing, teasing, or even friendship issues. The problem may have occurred in the hallway, on the playground, in the cafeteria, on the bus, or even the classroom. All kinds of solutions may be developed as long as both sides agree to them.

¹⁰ Name-calling, for example, can be a real problem. Both sides may have part of the solution. The person who did the name-calling may need to come up with a more positive way to speak. The person who was called a mean name may need to learn to speak up or ignore the name-calling. When someone's property, like a book or pencil, has been taken, it may be resolved by teaching the "taker" to ask next time to share and return. It might also be suggested to the other child to label things or put things in a safer place.

¹¹ The list goes on and on. Rumors can be stopped or corrected. Someone who feels bossed around may work on sensitivity; the other child might work on more positive ways of asking if others need help.

¹² Friendship issues are big ones. Even friends can have issues. Through peer mediation, friends can work out problems and learn to express feelings while showing care and consideration.

¹³ Peer mediation helps kids come up with solutions to their problems using what they have - each other. In a safe, nonjudgmental way, issues can be discussed and worked out, bringing peace to an already complicated childhood.

Name _____

Date _____

Peer Mediation

<p>1. Which word means someone your own age?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Neutral</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Mediation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Peer</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Teacher</p>	<p>2. Who is someone who helps fix conflicts?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Peer</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Neutral</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Mediator</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Fighter</p>
<p>3. A peer mediation session should be a public display in front of all classmates.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>4. Which problem would not be handled in a peer mediation session?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Teasing</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Name-calling</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C What color dress to wear</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Rumors</p>
<p>5. The job of the peer mediator is to seek witnesses.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>	<p>6. Peer mediators need to ____.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Stay neutral</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Talk throughout the process</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Accuse</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Tell the students what you do</p>
<p>7. Both sides need to ____ at the end of the session in order for the process to work.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Yell</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Agree</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Cry</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Fight</p>	

Name _____

Date _____

Peer Mediation

Describe the peer mediation process at CMS; include how problems get referred to Peer Mediation and how participants come to a resolution.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.