

Peer Mediation

Contributed by nvcresolutions
Thursday, 17 May 2007
Last Updated Tuesday, 22 September 2009

Peer Mediation Training for Schools

Peer mediation is currently the most popular conflict resolution training programme that NVC Resolutions is delivering in schools. Peer mediation training equips pupils with essential conflict resolution skills that will be valuable throughout their lives. It contributes to an ethos of listening and respect within a school, and also to a more peaceful playground environment. It increases students' self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. It helps to deal with bullying in schools. And it provides valuable support for staff, freeing up their time from dealing with less serious, though still important, conflicts between students.

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How Peer Mediation works

Peer mediators are available on a rota basis to mediate in a room or playground space during lunch or other times. Any two pupils who are having an argument have the choice to go to peer mediation to facilitate resolution of their conflict. They can be encouraged in this by midday supervisors, teachers or other staff members. If only one person goes to the mediators, the mediators can discuss the conflict with them informally, helping them decide what they could do about the conflict. Through thorough and careful training, peer mediators are encouraged not to boss others around or give advice, but rather to use active listening skills to help others make their own decisions about how to solve their problems. Mediations can also take place in the classroom during lessons, if teachers value using the mediators in this way. Peer mediation training and schemes can help to deal with issues of bullying, as one of several anti-bullying strategies that schools can adopt.

No of pupils: 12 - 20 depending on size of school. Year 5 / 6 (possibly yr 4) in primary schools. Any year in secondary schools.

Length of training: 3 days training over period of 2 weeks + 1 day follow up 2 months later.

Outline of our Peer Mediation training programme

Our training is based around 5 'stepping stones' to conflict resolution. Activities are designed to be experiential, fun and to engage pupils physically, mentally and emotionally.

Main themes:

Introduction: Creating group norms for group safety; exploring participants own responses to conflict - how do they react when they get into conflict; getting overview of peer mediation process; introduction to core concept of 'needs'.

Stepping Stone 1 - Creating Trust and Safety: Exploring trust; exploring anger - how it feels in our bodies; safe ways of transforming anger; supporting someone who is feeling angry.

Stepping Stone 2 - Sharing Stories: Core listening skills, including distinguishing fact from interpretation; empathising with feelings; translating 'blame' language into 'need' language.

Stepping Stone 3 - Connecting Heart-to-heart: supporting the students in the conflict to hear each other's feelings and needs.

Stepping Stone 4 - Finding Solutions: Helping the students in the conflict to find their own solutions.

Stepping Stone 5 - Ending in Harmony: Clarifying what the students have agreed to do about their conflict; closing.

Role-play Practice: Day 3 of the peer mediation training is based around role-play practice of full mediations; fun activities that strengthen teamwork and mediator pair work are also included.

Follow-up (day 4): A fourth day of peer mediation training (or two half days) occurs after the scheme has been running for two months. On this day we explore difficulties that the peer mediators have been experiencing - in mediations, as well as with the peer mediation scheme as a whole - and engage in activities that deepen the peer mediators skills.

Requirements to run a Peer Mediation scheme

Staff member to coordinate scheme:

For ownership and effective running of the peer mediation scheme, a member of staff is required to act as coordinator - e.g. a teacher, teacher assistant, or learning mentor. The coordinator would provide ongoing support and supervision of the peer mediation team, involving weekly or fortnightly meetings and day-to-day support. We strongly recommend that a second adult is involved to support the peer mediation scheme and ensure continuity over time. It is essential that the coordinator is present throughout the peer mediation training (ideally the assistant also).

Room for peer mediations:

Best where there are a few adults around. An adult needs to be keeping a background eye on peer mediations at all times - this role could be shared amongst staff.

Scheme launch:

Assemblies or classroom demos by peer mediators. Teachers and midday supervisors need to be informed and supportive. Badges, caps or other ways of identifying mediators are used in primary schools.

Funding: Contact Daren to discuss how your school could fund a training programme.

Interested in Establishing Peer Mediation in your School?

Are you interested in establishing a Peer Mediation Scheme in your school? Contact Daren De Witt at NVC Resolutions to discuss our services and how we might be able to support you. Phone Daren or email him - details are on the right hand side of this page, towards the top.