



July 2020

MV Mediation Program

We Can Work it Out!

MEDIATION MUSINGS



Diversity and Inclusion: The Racial Justice Movement & MV Mediation

Sara Barnes,
Executive Director, Lead Mediator

At the May MV Mediation Board of Directors meeting, we worked together to finalize our

organization's new Core Values statements. We all agreed to statements describing:

- **Community First**
- **Access to All**
- **Quality Matters**
- **Guided by Principles.**

Then we began working on how to describe our • **Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion** core value. The Board members went back and forth. Should we have a list of all the different groups that are included in diversity, and name all those who have been subject to discrimination? Or should the statement be one that is all encompassing, and more simple? We decided to table the topic, think about how to articulate our dedication to non-discrimination, and to take up the discussion again in the summer.

Then, on Memorial Day weekend, George Floyd was murdered by the police. And the movement for racial justice, against systemic racism and police violence took hold on our Island, across the country, and the world. As a conflict resolution organization, we knew that it was important for us to take a stand. We attended a number of events, our goal was to demonstrate solidarity and alignment with the movement. Why?

As students of conflict resolution, we know that all forms of discrimination lead to indelible conflicts. Systemic marginalization serves to create chasms that are difficult for individuals to bridge. In the process of mediation we work to create a more even playing field at the mediation table and to minimize any power differential between disputing parties. When we work with conflict coaching individuals, the conflicts that many are working to handle are rooted in their life traumas, often derived from personal degradation and lack of access. As group facilitators we know that any work to undo divisions between groups of people is about helping to create the equality necessary for conflicts to be meaningfully resolved. We want to be part of the solution and not a band aid on the problem.

Since May we have made the focus on Diversity and Inclusion a year long goal for our organization. What aspects of this goal should we address? How can we better meet the needs of our diverse community? How can we apply conflict resolution tools to this important work? Who is left out and should be included? We want to hear from you--what are your thoughts?

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Here is the statement that was issued by MVMP on June 1, 2020:

Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program's Board of Directors is participating in the demonstration of public outrage at the murder of George Floyd. As a conflict resolution organization, we work to create positive change through mutual processes of dispute resolution. We do not condone violence. Our vision is: **To create an island of competent, capable and effective conflict resolvers.** We are working hard to provide education and support for those who want to develop more productive methods of resolving conflict. As an organization we are against racism and all forms of discrimination. As part of a network of community mediation centers through the Massachusetts Office of Collaboration, we support the statement of our network which is printed below.

Resolution Massachusetts Community Mediation Centers' Statement on Racism and Injustice:

As mediators we encourage respectful engagement for diverse perspectives to be heard and offer a place where people can have constructive conversations. The ideas of access, diversity, quality and service are what defines us as community peacemakers. We stand with all communities in our state, country and world in saying that racism and injustice in any form are unacceptable and the right to peacefully speak out against these whenever they are encountered. We cannot close our eyes to the consequences when we stay silent.

[Register for Upcoming Events](#)



Parent Mediation Program

Parents, it's hard to have the kids all the time. Are you having trouble handling conflict at home? We can provide mediation or conflict coaching through phone or video conference. We have mediators with child development experience and can consider parent - teen mediation sessions based upon your circumstances.

If you need help talking with your spouse or partner, we are part of the Statewide Parent Mediation Program (PMP) providing parents--married, unmarried, divorced or separated--with up to 4 hours of free mediation. MVMP Family and Divorce mediators can provide you with mediation sessions to discuss parenting issues custody schedules, financial decisions, communication or to renegotiate existing plans. Please contact the office to schedule an intake call. We are here to help.

Do you need some conflict resolution ideas? Check out our Blog!

During this time where people are staying home and social distancing it's a great time to delve deeper into conflict resolution. We have been putting out a newsletter with great information including links to more materials and suggested activities. Whether to better understand conflict and how you react to conflict or to help with the conflicts that may arise during this time of sheltering-in-place check out our Blog where you can read all of the past newsletters.

[Check out our Blog here.](#)

Youth Mediation Update

Nine Youth Mediators have graduated from the program. Conflicts among young people? Bring it on--we have mediators for you. A few of them are working on the final training video for other youth mediators--with Portuguese translation! What a great group of Youth mediators. Let the young lead the way! Congratulations Bella, Chloe, Delilah, Felix, Jeho, Klara, Lucas, Tripp, Vittoria.

Financial Conflict Coaching Workshop

We are excited to announce our first financial conflict coaching workshop:

Your Income and Expenses--Get it Together!

When: August and September TBA - Two workshops running two hours each

How: Via Zoom video conference

Who: Anyone who is having life conflicts because of finances

[Register here to be notified of the final date and time](#)

Our Mission

To serve our community by providing education, outreach, mediation, conflict coaching, facilitation and related services to help prevent and resolve conflicts.

Our Vision

To create an island of competent, capable and effective conflict resolvers.

Visit our website

You can support MVMP with a donation.
Make MVMP your charity when you use Amazon Smile.

FOR MEDIATORS AND APPRENTICES

Mediator Saturdays: Suspended due to COVID 19

Small Claims Dates: Suspended due to COVID 19

District Court Coverage: Suspended due to COVID 19



Solidarity Fund

Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program Waives Fees to Support Island Community
Solidarity Fund Will Allow Waiver of Community, Family and Coaching Fees Throughout 2020

The Board of Directors of Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program has created a **Solidarity Fund** in order to raise the operating costs in order to waive client fees for the remainder of the year. "This is a hard time for everyone, and we want to make sure that members of the community can make use of our services, without worrying about their ability to pay," said MV Mediation Executive Director, Sara Barnes. MV Mediation has a generous sliding fee scale, based on income, but decided that even these nominal fees might be too costly for some under the circumstances. As of June, \$4,000 worth of services to clients in more than two dozen mediation sessions or conflict coaching consultations have been waived.

Donations to the organization are welcome to help to extend the waiver policy.

All of MV Mediation's services are confidential including mediation cases, family and divorce services, conflict coaching and financial conflict coaching. Many of the services offered by MV Mediation have been found to be particularly useful during these challenging times.

Financial Conflict Coaching - Financial Conflict Coaching allows the client to work with a coach and leave with a self-determined plan for a new approach to their financial situation and the tools to resolve or avoid financial conflict. Organizations can schedule video conference workshops about this service.

Conflict Coaching - This popular service is a 1:1 process that takes place over two 1-hour sessions. With the qualified Conflict Coach, the client builds a step-by-step plan and develops a new conflict resolution *toolbox*, improving their approach to future or present conflicts. The client leaves with a realistic plan.

Parent Mediation Program - The Parent Mediation Program provides free mediation sessions with a qualified, neutral Family Mediator in order to negotiate or revise parenting plans, child support, visitation or family communication systems. MV Mediation offers divorce or healthy separation mediations.

Why I Mediate.

Mediator Spotlight: Cindy Trish

I have always been fascinated about the aspect of self determination associated with mediation and was finally able to make attending the mediation program a priority. It feels like there is an endless number of opportunities in our daily lives to handle differences of opinion in a more empowered way. Up-skilling myself is the first step in helping to make this change more broadly.

MVMP FY2021 Smart Goals

Each June at the annual meeting the board sets four goals we would like to spend the year working to meet as an organization. Areas that we would like to grow or work on in our organization. For this coming year we have set our four goals: making sure that our organization is meeting our core value of diversity and Inclusion, setting up a solidarity fund to better serve our community during this pandemic, outreach to community programs with a focus on aging communities and families, and beginning a program of financial conflict coaching and financial education.

Diversity & Inclusion core value

This is a clear need that developed in the Board of Directors' adoption of core values. Our organization would grow and be strengthened through the collaborative process establishing a shared understanding of this as a core value. MVMP's commitment to the community would be enhanced as we work to understand diversity & inclusion as a verb as well as a noun—something we do every day and defines our commitment to our work.

This goal would be an internal goal for our organization, with ongoing workshops, articles, use of other resources including the Board and our Roster members. As well we would welcome members of our community to broaden and deepen the discussion. .

Solidarity Fund

Our community is hurting financially. All indications point to a very difficult upcoming winter financially for those Islanders who are dependent upon wages to survive. Raising \$10,000 or more can provide the organization with a sustaining replacement of the case income that we rely on. Our commitment to our community is represented by this effort and puts our 'money where our mouth is.' If we believe in our Vision: **An island of competent conflict resolvers** and our core values: ...**Serving our Community** and **Services Accessible to All**, then the Solidarity Fund is the right thing to do.

Outreach to Community Programs with focus on Aging Community and families

We have ongoing work with a number of schools, non-profits, municipal organizations and other community programs. Expanding on these previous efforts and providing the support, developing partnerships and deepening our already-developed connections is an important next step for our organization. As we know Martha's Vineyard is higher on the age spectrum and consequently issues of family decision-making unique to the aging population are an area for growth for the organization.

Financial Conflict Coaching and Educational Programs ,

This is an effort already underway and we are intending for this effort to gather momentum over the course of fiscal year 2021. We continue to find potential clients who are in need of this training and support. With the present-day financial downturn, this need will only expand.

At MVMP our slogan is ***We Can Work it Out***, Would you like to borrow this slogan? Feel free. ***You Can Work it Out!*** We are here if you need our help.



**Thank you for the amazing support of our donors and sponsors
and to Rockland Trust Foundation, Cape Cod 5, and
Cronig's Market for their continued support.**

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