



Student Led Peer Mediation

GUIDE





Conflict Resolution Center St. Louis is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community mediation center that offers mediation services in the city of St. Louis. The mission of CRCSTL is to provide professional dispute resolution services that are accessible to all and to be a leader in the St. Louis area in promoting peaceful, lasting, and effective solutions to conflict.

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Introduction

What is peer mediation?

Peer mediation is a process where trained students act as neutral mediators. Students in conflict work with a trained student mediator to uncover the root causes of their disputes and together decide on fair ways of resolving the conflict. The role of the peer mediator is to help students develop their own solution to the conflict. Peer mediation offers the unique opportunity to strengthen the school community by mentoring student advocates for peace.

Peer mediation, restorative practices, and effective conflict engagement provide students with a deserved sense of inclusion and belonging within the school community rather than pushing students out due to punitive disciplinary actions. Peer mediation offers the opportunity to establish and improve healthy communication between families and schools, and is confidential, creating an environment of open and peaceful communication that allows for students and their surrounding community to excel.

Peer mediation reimagines the current punitive approach to discipline within schools and offers a chance for healing that is a long-lasting and effective solution to conflict.

For many conflicts in schools, punitive, zero-tolerance, or “one size fits all” disciplinary measures do not serve the needs of the students


and do not address the root cause of harm. Students are capable of collaboratively coming up with their own forms of peaceful resolution that allow all involved to feel heard and convey a sense of justice and peace moving forward for all participants.

Conflict Resolution Center St. Louis, with the support of the St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission, developed this guide for a youth-led peer mediation program for St. Louis City public schools as part of a Safer Summer St. Louis campaign. CRCSTL engaged high school student advisors who acted as key thought leaders for the project. Student Advisors provided input and suggestions for program development, created content for promotional materials, and learned how to use effective conflict engagement strategies in their daily lives. CRCSTL followed the lead of Student Advisors, and their recommendations for a model program are included. This guide is the culmination of the hard work these students put in this summer to encourage non-violence in their school communities. Our hope is that this guide gives schools, administrators, and community members insight into what a youth-led peer mediation program could look like and demonstrates how those entities can call on student experience and expertise to get there.

The Benefits of Peer Mediation for St. Louis Schools

The school-to-prison pipeline is an unfortunate reality across the St. Louis region. The term “school-to-prison pipeline” describes the trend of students being pushed out of the education system and into the juvenile and criminal justice system. This trend often stems from school discipline policies that increase the likelihood of a student going to prison. Evidence abounds that school disciplinary measures disproportionately affect students of color, which are then disproportionately escalated to law enforcement, resulting in suspension and expulsion all too often. Students that face multiple suspensions have an increased likelihood of recidivism and become increasingly isolated from the school community. For many schools, due to lack of resources and time, reimagining a school culture that offers a new approach to discipline can be an overwhelming task. However, taking the time to foster a culture of conflict competency is essential in finding reconciliation within schools as well as the criminal justice system. Implementing effective strategies of conflict engagement in schools can transform the way students experience interpersonal conflict and offer a sense of inclusion and empowerment for every student.

Restorative climate practices are based on principles that emphasize the importance of positive relationship building as central to the process of restoring relationships where harm

An illustration of a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a black top and a green patterned skirt, with a blue backpack. To her left is an orange speech bubble containing text.

“Students get suspended every day for things that could just be talked out”

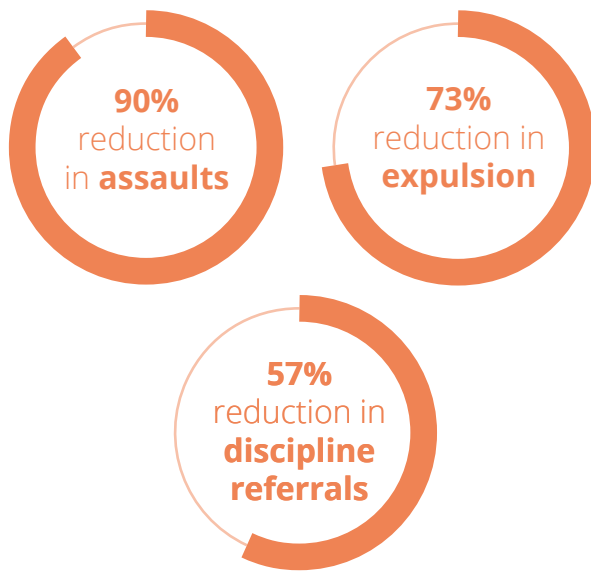
— Student Advisor

has occurred. Through effective communication and intentional problem solving skills, all parties are held accountable while creating a community focused solution to conflict rather than a punitive one. While there are many restorative practices within the framework of restorative justice that can benefit schools, peer mediation is an example of a restorative practice that allows for student leadership and empowerment in transforming school culture around discipline and conflict.

CRCSTL believes that mediation has the power to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Further, youth-led peer mediation has the position, perspective, and opportunity to destroy the

school-to-prison pipeline by utilizing restorative practices over punitive ones. By teaching students to resolve their own conflicts, student mediators learn about autonomy and are more likely to perceive fairness in the outcomes of a problem solving process.

The US Department of Education attributes peer mediation programs with impressive results:



Peer mediation programs are therefore ideal for schools seeking to directly reduce the number of disciplinary actions, suspensions or expulsions. In addition to the improvements peer mediation can bring to a school's climate in general, peer mediation is also a unique leadership opportunity for students and a timesaver for faculty. Schools may additionally choose to pursue mediation programs because their faculty or administration may be spending too much valuable time and resources addressing peer-to-peer conflict.

CRCSTL's Student Advisors offered direct insight into the ways that St. Louis students can benefit from a peer mediation program at their school. They assisted in providing a clear vision of how a program in their own school could transform the student experience and promote non-violence and peacebuilding.

When student advisors were asked: **Why do you think conflict is important?**

"It is important because you are getting the other person's point of view."

"Conflict is important if you are learning!"

"Conflict can quickly escalate to physical violence if you are not learning how to solve the problems and cope."

Getting Started with a Peer Mediation Program

Deciding to Start

A school or a school district must first decide to start a peer mediation program. This can be done in a number of ways, including polling faculty and students to gauge whether they think such a program would be beneficial in their school or if enough conflict exists for the creation of a robust program that the school community can use.

In an initial needs assessment from CRCSTL's student advisors, they shared that approximately 50-60% of the conflicts experienced in their schools are between students, compared to about 20% of conflicts being between students and teachers.



Resource and Needs Assessment

A school or district should additionally conduct a resource and needs assessment to gain an idea of what is needed to begin the program. While many peer mediation programs can be administered at little to no actual financial cost to a school, there is a great deal of time required to implement a program, integrate the mediation process into the school's schedule, train the students to become peer mediators, and mentor students throughout the process. Schools may consider offering an in-service for staff administered by an outside trained mediator to conduct conflict awareness training on interpersonal conflict between students, between staff and students, and between staff members.

Schools should encourage all staff that interface with the student body to reflect on what types of interpersonal conflicts take up the most staff time to mediate and which conflicts are most often handled with a punitive discipline approach. School staff and any key stakeholders of the program (including parents, partner agencies, and community volunteers) should be aware of the amount of interpersonal conflict within the school before deciding what type of model will work best for implementation. While each school culture is unique, taking the time to reflect as well as envision ways that peer mediation can transform the existing school culture as it relates to discipline procedures will help in choosing a model that is effective, inclusive, and realistic.

Schools should appoint at least one dedicated adult sponsor to administer the program. The adult sponsor can be a school counselor, teacher, administrator, or representative from a community mediation organization. The adult sponsor is responsible for making sure the referral process is clear and accessible, facilitating and scheduling training, and making sure peer mediators have a safe space to reflect and receive feedback. The sponsor of a student-led peer mediation program should make time for students to offer feedback about the program throughout training, usage, and follow-up and ensure that any changes to the program involve student voice.

Selection of Model

After a district or school decides to move forward with a program, schools must decide which program model to implement. There are three approaches:

- 1. Cadre Model:** An administrator selects a small group of students to serve as peer mediators for the entire school. The peer mediators receive ongoing training and feedback throughout the school year.
- 2. Whole Classroom Model:** The Whole Classroom model requires that all students receive conflict resolution and mediation training. Every student has the chance and ability to mediate a conflict if necessary.
- 3. Hybrid Model:** The Hybrid Model employs a combination of both of the above models. Schools select a cohort of students to become mediators, but employ conflict resolution curriculum to the entire school as an overall method to prevent escalation.¹

Student Advisor Recommendations

After discussing the needs of their schools and the advantages and disadvantages to peer mediation models, CRCSTL Student Advisors agreed that a Hybrid Model is preferred for their school. They found the Cadre Model may dissuade students from using peer mediation as a resource if there were only few trained and involved in the program. Student Advisors also discussed the benefits of a Whole School method as it allows students that may not normally see themselves in a leadership role the ability to become a mediator and educates the whole school on conflict resolution skills. However, there was concern from Student Advisors regarding potential difficulties to structure and operate the program on the administrative level. The hybrid program model allows for students to be designated mediators, guaranteeing they will be effectively trained and follow policies for conduct. Additionally, as part of the curriculum for the whole school, all students learn conflict resolution skills and gain an understanding about the benefits of peer mediation as well as a general education on how to access their school's program. CRCSTL's Student Advisors believe that combining the Cadre and Whole Class models would be the best way to integrate the purpose of mediation into school culture, and ensure sustainability.

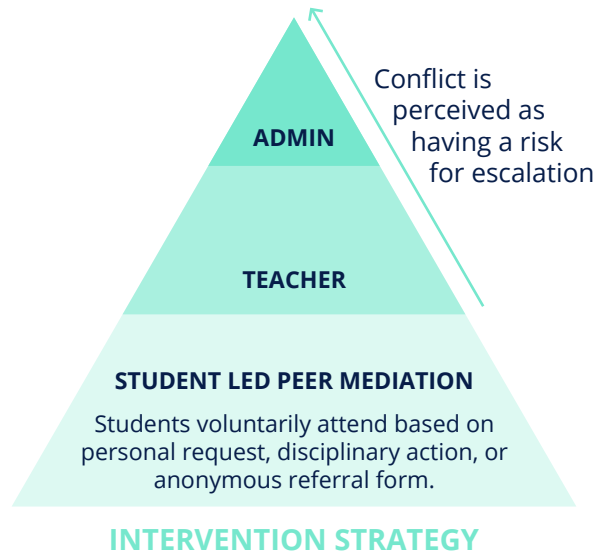
¹ Jones-Bamman, L., Blakeway, M.S., Bleiweis, M., Buckley, G.L., Prutzman, P., et al. (2007). Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs 2007. The Association for Conflict Resolution.

Student-Led Peer Mediation Policy Considerations

The policy of a peer mediation program outlines the structure and expectations of when and how mediation is conducted. Peer mediation can be included as an alternative or a supplement to existing disciplinary procedures.

CRCSTL’s Student Advisors believe student choice should play a role in shaping a peer mediation policy in accordance with existing school discipline policy. If a school policy states that fighting between students leads to an immediate suspension, Student Advisors suggest that students involved in a fight are offered an option to attend a student-led peer mediation session as an alternative to suspension or before disciplinary action. Student Advisors also believe that offering peer mediation as an alternative choice to discipline would be an effective prevention method to address conflict before escalation.

This intervention strategy outlined by CRCSTL’s Student Advisors suggest student-led peer mediation as a foundation and first step for the majority of school conflict. There are alternative options for discipline as conflicts are perceived as having a risk of escalation and peer mediators have the ability to make decisions on when to refer conflicts to other school officials.



Student-led peer mediation is always a **voluntary** process and should be offered as an opportunity to settle disputes, learn communication skills, repair harm, and rebuild relationships. CRCSTL's student advisors outlined three main suggestions for schools to consider as avenues to access the school's peer mediation program:

1. Students voluntarily attend based on personal request to a school staff member or peer mediator.
2. Students are suggested to attend peer mediation at the beginning of a disciplinary action for a conflict and are given the choice to attend before the school decides on a disciplinary approach.
3. Students not associated with the conflict nominate specific conflicts for peer mediation through an anonymous referral form and students have the option to attend a session with a peer mediator. Peer mediators review anonymous referral forms on a regular basis.

Deciding Which Conflicts to Mediate

Each school and school district will need to decide what types of conflicts are appropriate for peer mediation as well as conflicts that are not appropriate for a mediation session. This will help peer mediators feel prepared to filter referrals and will ensure the likelihood of lasting agreements. While this is not something that needs to be widely announced to the student body, selected peer mediators should be aware and educated on the policy around which conflicts should and should not get sent to mediation so they can make informed, student-led decisions around when to decline mediation. Peer mediators should always consult an adult sponsor when receiving referrals that may not be appropriate for mediation, but student-led peer mediation allows peer mediators to make this decision for themselves and inform disputants directly when mediation is not an option.

CRCSTL's Student Advisors reviewed comparable research around program policy and suggest peer mediation is appropriate for conflicts such as gossip, rumors, teasing, and relationship issues. Student Advisors also agree that peer mediation is beneficial for most conflicts that involve fighting or physical violence if disputants are allowed sufficient time for reflection and de-escalation before a peer mediation session. Student Advisors suggest that peer mediation should not be used for conflicts that involve severe bullying, drugs and alcohol, or sexual assault. Existing school discipline policy may inform decisions around which conflicts respective schools and school districts decide are appropriate for peer mediation.

Recruitment of Peer Mediators

As CRCSTL's Student Advisors recommend the use of a hybrid model for a peer mediation program design, implementing this design involves recruiting select students to become trained mediators. Students trained in peer mediation receive extensive education on conflict engagement skills and gain valuable interpersonal skills including active and reflective listening, critical problem solving, and empathy. Therefore, when recruiting students to become peer mediators, it is not necessary to find students who already embody the role of an effective mediator.



Things to consider when recruiting peer mediators:

- Peer mediators should represent the diversity of the student body including, race, gender, differing degrees of extracurricular involvement, discipline history, and grades.²
- Allow students to apply for the position to become a peer mediator, or consider an option of a nomination form for individuals within the school community to nominate students in order for a wide range of students to be considered for the role. Schools and districts may decide to promote the nomination form to outside community members and parents.
- Schools and districts may consider including parents, teachers, and community members in informational sessions for the recruitment of peer mediators and solicit feedback from these key stakeholders on best practices to reach as many students as possible in the initial recruitment phase.

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Considerations (Con't)

- Students applying to become a peer mediator should be given adequate time to reflect on the types of interpersonal conflicts that they see in school most often and which conflicts they believe peer mediation may benefit the most from. The adult sponsor of the program can use student reflections to inform policy choices when finalizing the program structure.
- Schools should decide how often they would like to train new mediators and re-open the application and recruitment process for student mediators. This can occur on a semester or annual basis depending on school capacity for adequate training.
- Schools may consider waiting until the school year has begun to open the application and nomination process. Each school year comes with its unique and unforeseen challenges and opportunities for students and teachers alike. It may be helpful for students to reflect on the ways they may best fit into a school's conflict resolution initiatives. Schools should allow adequate time to advertise the program to a wide range of students and allow students time to offer their insight into the ways that they can be beneficial to building the peer mediation program once they are settled in their school routine.

²Bodine, R. J., & Crawford, D. K. (1998). *The handbook of conflict resolution education: A guide to building quality programs in schools*. Jossey-Bass.

Peer Mediator Training Goals for Consideration

After a sponsor selects a team of peer mediators, a robust training program can begin. Training should happen in a safe environment where students feel comfortable to share their ideas in shaping the program and can stay engaged.

Training curriculum can focus on issues and interpersonal conflicts that are unique to the school. Students should walk away from each training session feeling empowered, supported, and prepared to become peer mediators. CRCSTL recommends combining lessons with multimedia and hands-on, practical application of new skills through the use of role-play. Community building for teams of peer mediators can be beneficial in building trust and communication among students to share ideas and insights from mediation sessions. Certain peer mediation sessions may warrant a co-mediation model (two peer mediators facilitate a mediation session together). Team building activities in training can foster a sense of community among co-mediators. Becoming an effective peer mediator takes time. Training should take place over multiple sessions to give student participants the opportunity to explore and reflect on their new skills as they progress through the process.

Peer mediation skills are not dissimilar from normal mediation skills. Individuals establishing peer mediation programs should themselves

receive professional mediation training prior to engaging peer mediators. Programs are readily available. Experienced mediators from community mediation organizations may be able to provide training for program sponsors and participants. Schools should also consider offering intermittent conflict resolution training to parents to encourage the use of effective conflict engagement and restorative practices at home and to promote buy-in of the project. CRCSTL's framework for effective mediation can be adapted and used for training sessions with students.

CRCSTL believes that effective mediation practice should:

- Provide an opportunity for people to understand each other and transform their relationship.
- Ensure that participants make their own decisions about the outcome of their conflict.
- Assist people to develop long-term solutions that meet the needs of everyone involved.
- Occur at times convenient to the participants in a safe and private place.

Conflict, Communication, Mediation, and Procedure

Student Advisors at CRCSTL explored training curricula that emphasize conflict management, communication, mediation, and procedure.

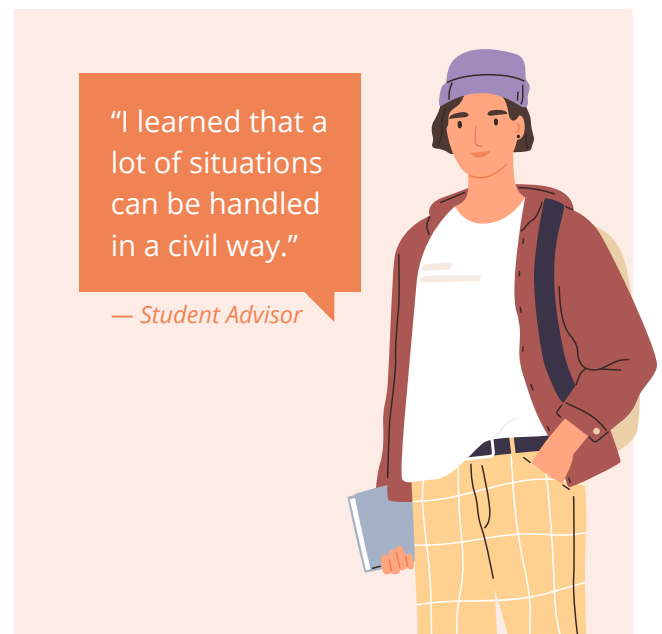
Under the Association for Conflict Resolution's Standards for School-Based Mediation Programs (2007), through understanding conflict, peer mediators learn to define healthy conflict, differentiate conflict resolution styles, understand the types of conflict, identify bias and types of conflict, reduce prejudice, and address balances of power.³ Similarly, students learn to understand what conflicts are appropriate for peer mediation and the role that peer mediation can play in a school environment.

After establishing a framework to approach and understand conflict, emphasis shifts to communication. Here, peer mediators learn to engage in active and reflective listening, summarize viewpoints, reframe issues, and learn about non-verbal cues. Students will also explore how culture can influence styles of communication and negotiation.

Students will learn the basics of mediation, including ways to establish ground rules, identifying issues and interests, brainstorming solutions and strategy, and, finally, drafting an agreement that is specific and reality-tested.

Students will learn co-mediation models, identification of underlying needs, how to address anger in a mediation, and how to ensure parties are heard.

Finally, at the end of their training program, students can be introduced to program-specific policies and procedures. Each school will have their own avenue of access to the program that peer mediators should be involved in creating and promoting.



³Jones-Bamman, L., Blakeway, M.S., Bleiweis, M., Buckley, G.L., Prutzman, P., et al. (2007). Recommended Standards for School-Based Peer Mediation Programs 2007. The Association for Conflict Resolution.

Promotion and Student-Led Outreach

Central to the structure of a peer mediation program in schools should include education on how to access the peer mediation program. Students (both mediators and non-mediators) should act as the main promoters of the program.

CRCSTL's Student Advisors found it important to develop a unique name and logo for the program in order to better promote and speak with their peers on the effectiveness of peer mediation in a relatable way.



Student Led Peer Mediation



In addition to student input on promotional materials for the program, students should lead any outreach efforts to promote accessibility of the program. Coordinating outreach efforts will require the support of the adult sponsor(s). Ideas for outreach include:

- Student-led announcements and/or role-plays at school assemblies that highlight the effectiveness of peer mediation;
- Student led presentations during school staff professional development days;
- Homeroom or designated classroom sessions dedicated to a student-led presentation on a conflict resolution technique or how to access the school's peer mediation program;
- Peer mediation tables at school events;
- Peer mediation social media accounts.



In addition to reviewing resources for classroom education, CRCSTL's Student Advisors also decided that using Instagram is an effective way to spread messages about non-violence and to promote the use of peer mediation. Several advisors created content in the form of educational social media posts and personal testimonies.

These posts will be highlighted on CRCSTL's Instagram page (@crcstlouis).

Program Operation

Time and Location

When a case is referred for peer mediation through a mediation pipeline (direct student request, staff/known third party recommendation, or anonymous referral) the matter can proceed to mediation.

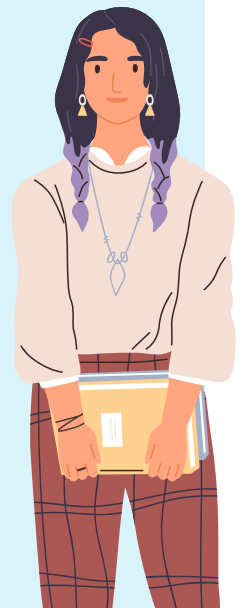
Schools will need to determine the proper time and forum for mediation to take place. One option is to hold a mediation day each week wherein all mediations for an allotted time can occur (e.g., Wednesday afterschool, mediations can occur in the following classrooms). This could ensure that students are prepared for mediation days and understand expectations in advance of their mediation. Schools may decide to implement a peer mediation class in the curriculum that allows peer mediators to be stationed in the school's peer mediation room to receive referrals and mediate disputes during an allotted time.

Alternatively, schools could consider hosting mediations on a rolling/as needed basis. Depending on the need and availability of sponsors and students, this method could ensure that matters are mediated without delay. Schools can decide if peer mediators will have the ability to leave class in order to mediate immediately upon referral.

If possible, a peer mediation program should have its own room for operation that is not already associated with in-school discipline. Schools should consider consulting students on what type of space they would feel safe and empowered to participate in a mediation session and peer mediators should take the lead on arranging the room.

"I've learned that I can better control how I react when it comes to conflict. Being here has helped me realize that"

— Student Advisor



Beginning the Peer Mediation Process

When the time has come for a mediation, student participants should first be given time alone in a safe space to reflect. CRCSTL's Student Advisors recommend that disputants use this opportunity to reflect on the conflict prior to entering the mediation session. This allows for the student to filter initial thoughts and emotions related to the conflict. For this period, students could be given pieces of paper and pencils to collect their thoughts in advance of the mediation. Peer mediators or an adult sponsor should collect phones and electronics to eliminate distractions before and during the mediation session. Mediation encourages an approach to communication that is future oriented. During the pre-mediation reflection stage, students should consider ideal outcomes of a mediation session.

For the mediation process itself, schools should refer to the six steps of peer mediation. The stages of peer mediation are empirically supported and are fairly standard across the majority of programs for all school levels. CRCSTL's Student Advisors created a role-play video to showcase the process of peer mediation and to understand the process for themselves. This video will be available on request from CRCSTL.

One way to ensure peer mediations are conducted in a standardized, neutral way is to follow a protocol for the mediation itself. By following a consistent roadmap to peer mediators for each mediation, students can ensure that impartiality is maintained and that the approach to each mediation is uniform.

After designing a model role-play, CRCSTL Student Advisors researched and outlined the **Six Steps of Peer Mediation** in their own words:

- 1. Planning:** Everyone agrees to the mediation session. Next is explaining ground rules, introducing each party, and agreeing to confidentiality.
- 2. Explanation of the Conflict:** Both parties explain their sides of the story. Everyone should be listening.
- 3. Joint Discussion:** Everyone explains what they desire to resolve the issue which leads to negotiation.
- 4. Negotiation:** Each party tries to find common ground to resolve the issues at hand. Both parties should be willing to compromise.
- 5. Reaching an Agreement:** Parties find a way to be on neutral terms in order to make an agreement known as a "contract."
- 6. Signing the Agreement:** Everyone signs the agreement and goes their separate ways. Remember to keep everything confidential.

Continuing Education for Student Mediators

When mediations have concluded, peer mediators should be given the opportunity to debrief (mindful of confidentiality) with their cohort. Finding time to discuss the challenges they faced in a collective fashion will encourage ownership of their new skillset.

Ongoing skills education will also provide quality assurance for the school and the students. Every few months, student mediators could participate in an additional workshop where they are given a case study of a conflict to explore collectively. Adult sponsors will develop an evaluation checklist that assists them in monitoring a mediator's ability to navigate conflict and assess areas of potential growth.

Additionally, CRCSTL Student Advisors believe it would be beneficial to provide follow-up questionnaires to the student mediation participants after a mediation (see e.g. Appendix D). The questionnaire may involve a simple check-in to see if the conflict has settled, how the student has been using communication skills they gained through mediation, and whether they are in need of additional support from a peer mediator or adult sponsor.

CRCSTL Student Advisors recommend inclusion of conflict resolution education into a school's curriculum to ensure students learn how to handle conflict, build social-emotional skills, and collaborate to foster a school culture that promotes peace.

CRCSTL STUDENT ADVISOR TIP:

It is not uncommon that a student might have the belief that attending peer mediation is a sign of weakness or allowing someone to walk all over them. We suggest giving students time to discuss attitudes and school culture around conflict. Additionally, it is beneficial to promote mediation as an option for real, positive change regarding a conflict.



Challenges and Conclusion

Potential Roadblocks to Implementing Peer Mediation Programs

Schools implementing peer mediation programs should be mindful of the potential pitfalls such programs can face. According to Nathan Makdad, some challenges begin at an administrative level, including providing enough training time to the faculty or adult sponsors who in turn must provide adequate training time to the students. Because of this, schools may not have the time or resources to implement such a program. Some scholars state that student mediators should have between 10-20 hours of mediation training, which is both costly and labor intensive. Further, staffing a program and applying a consistent philosophy to the program presents numerous bars to entry. Turnover is sometimes unavoidable, but having a mechanism in place to ensure that students and student mediators don't lose trust in a system is integral to a sustainable program.

In order to address some of these roadblocks, school administration can seek out assistance from local community conflict resolution groups. These groups can act as independent advisors to schools by using curricula they already have developed and in-house training expertise to onboard faculty and students. Some groups may be able to provide mediation sponsors to ease the load on the school.

Participating in peer mediation is voluntary, and students in conflict may refuse to participate in a mediation. Low mediation numbers could impact morale for the peer mediators and the faculty sponsors. It's also difficult to predict how often mediation will be used or declined. As

such, for proper planning and implementation, developing a peer mediation program requires a great deal of outreach and buy-in from schools and students. Many students will have never learned conflict resolution skills prior to exposure to such a program, and time must be allotted to thoroughly explain what mediation is and how it can empower the school community. When presented as an alternative to traditional disciplinary methods, more students may be encouraged to participate in mediation to have agency over the outcome of their disputes.

By using some of the tools the CRCSTL Student Advisors recommend in this guide, speaking to students about mediation in terms that they can relate to may benefit a school as they launch a program. Changing school culture and pedagogy around conflict and discipline takes time. Schools and districts must dedicate energy and resources to their own education of conflict engagement and to the formation of student leaders. CRCSTL recommends a school partner and consult with trained community mediators and mediation organizations throughout the process. The need for alternative approaches to discipline and conflict resolution in St. Louis is great. The unique opportunity to merge the field of mediation with the efforts for education reform in the region has the power to transform the student experience. Educators, policymakers, parents, and community members will all benefit from a student-led approach to peacebuilding and our hope is that this guide starts the conversation on ways to begin.



Appendix

Example Case for Student Assessment: Presentation of Viewpoints

Student 1 and Student 2 were close friends who sat next to each other in class every day. Student 2 joined a new school club and started hanging out with a new group of friends. Student 1 has a difficult time in chemistry class and is constantly worried about grades. Student 2 stopped sitting next to Student 1 in class and started sitting with her new group of friends. Student 1 was very upset about this. A teacher overheard the two students yelling at each other in the hallway one day about some kind of “fake social media post.” The teacher referred the situation to peer mediation and students arrived at a peer mediation session after school. The peer mediator welcomed the parties, established ground rules and confidentiality, and asked both parties to share their stories:

Student 1: “A few weeks ago my friend’s sister told me that Student 2 started spreading rumors about me to her new group of friends that I was failing chemistry class. I was too upset and embarrassed to go up to her personally about it, so I made a post saying she cheated on the last chemistry test. I wanted to make her feel as bad as I did when I heard there were rumors being spread about me. I did not know that it would reach as many people as it did. Today, she came up to me and I just acted like I did not know what she was talking about because I was too upset. Things escalated and the teacher told us to come to peer mediation.”

Student 2: “Last week I got messages from a lot of people telling me to go to (Student 1)’s Instagram page. When I clicked on their story it said that I cheated on the chemistry test! I was confused as to why (Student 1) would even post something like this, because we never had any issues before. Today I went up to (Student 1) to ask what it was about, but they acted like they did not know what I was talking about, so I got really angry and started yelling. I could have gotten in serious trouble if a teacher saw that post.”

Reflection questions for peer mediators:

What questions could peer mediators ask each party to learn more about the issues?

What might be some underlying needs for both parties in this conflict?

Steps of Mediation and Openings

Opening a Mediation Roadmap

1. **Introductions**
2. **Ground Rules: Explaining the Hallmarks of the Peer Mediation Process**
 - a. Voluntary
 - b. Confidential
 - c. No recordings
 - d. Speaking one at a time
 - e. Truthful
 - f. Polite
3. **Defining the Role of the Peer Mediator**
 - a. Impartial
 - b. Not giving advice
 - c. Guiding the Process
 - d. Reporting Threats
4. **Overview of the Mediation Process (6 Step Process)**
 - a. Signing the Agreement to Mediate
 - b. Viewpoint presentation
 - c. Understanding Interests
 - d. Identifying solutions
 - e. Evaluating solutions
 - f. Writing an agreement if reached
5. **CRCSTL Student Advisor's 6 Step Process to Mediation**
 - a. Planning
 - b. Explanation of the Conflict
 - c. Joint Discussion
 - d. Negotiation
 - e. Reaching an Agreement
 - f. Signing the Agreement
6. **Reviewing the Agreement to Mediate**
 - a. Provides a formal agreement that participants sign prior to mediation
 - b. Reiterates all of the above points:
 - i. Role of the mediator
 - ii. Responsibilities of each party
 - iii. Process of mediation
 - iv. Voluntary
 - v. Confidentiality
7. **Taking Questions**
 - a. Be patient and stay positive
 - b. Gathering Signatures

Example Peer Mediator Worksheet⁵

Participant Names: _____

Mediation Information

Date of Mediation: _____

Location of Mediation: _____

Time of Mediation: _____

Arrangement of the Room: _____

Peer Mediators

Lead Mediator: _____

Co-Mediator: _____

Ground Rules

Agreement Signed

Roles of Mediator Discussed

Explaining Role of Mediation

Step 1: Explanation of the Conflict

Story from Disputant 1: _____

Story from Disputant 2: _____

Step 2: Discussing the Conflict and Exploring Feelings and Needs

Disputant 1's Feelings and Interests: _____

Disputant 2's Feelings and Interests: _____

Appendix D

Example Follow Up Questionnaire

Peer Mediators can administer follow up questionnaires to participants of a mediation as a way to receive feedback on their mediation styles.

Example:

Name of Disputant: _____

Peer Mediator(s) that facilitated your mediation session: _____

Did you reach an agreement? _____

What was one thing the peer mediator(s) did to show active listening during your mediation session?

What would like the peer mediator(s) to do differently next time?

Can you use one word to describe how you felt after the mediation session?

References and Resources

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