



How to Get the Most from Mediation

CHECKLIST

Mediation is a structured dispute resolution process in which the people involved in a conflict – the parties – work with a qualified neutral third party to identify and commit to solutions to their issues. Unlike more formal processes, mediation has several important advantages.

- ✓ It's forward looking. -- "How do we go forward?" not "Who's to blame?"
- ✓ It's faster. It requires less time than other conflict resolution options to prepare or participate, and conflicts do not linger.
- ✓ Parties jointly work on solutions instead of having decisions imposed on them.
- ✓ It's simpler, less costly, and allows parties to restore relationships.

For more than 20 years, mediation has been a positive and efficient tool at the Air Force for resolving disputes and restoring commitment to the mission. Here is how you can get the most from mediation.

- Act early. Mediation is most effective early in the dispute, before it becomes more positional.
- When issues arise, talk with the person, listen to their concerns and share your own. Try to find solutions that work for you both and talk to your NDR team to see if mediation might help.
- If you are asked to mediate, respond as quickly as possible, indicate your willingness to participate, and make room for prompt scheduling.
- Approach mediation in good faith to resolve the issues for both you and the other party.
- Do a self-check. If you have become distracted by the dispute or upcoming mediation, consider talking with the mediator in advance.
- Identify your issues, interests and possible options for resolution, and which options meet enough of your interests to be better than not reaching an agreement. (To learn more, see the segments on *Preparing and Delivering an Opening Statement* from the AT THE TABLE series.)
- Consider the interests of the other person and possible solutions, including what you believe the other party's least acceptable options might be, their "bottom line".
- At the table, be as open as possible to options that could address the issues for all parties. This builds trust and creates a way to handle future disputes.

Remember the Air Force is working toward resolving conflict to allow everyone to get focused back on the mission. To learn more, download the companion segments of the *At the Table* series and contact the Air Force NDR Program. For information about how to access mediation services, contact your Local, MAJCOM, DRU or FOA NDR Program Office or SAF/GCR at www.ndr.af.mil.