

Campus Employee Dispute Resolution Services (CEDRS) is a confidential and private program that provides mediation and community conferencing services to assist faculty and staff of Western Michigan University with resolving interpersonal disputes. The CEDRS program provides consensual resolution alternatives as an addition to the other complaint or grievance procedures available through the University or its collective bargaining partners. CEDRS may be used prior to pursuing other resolution options, or as a complement to other processes, in order to address interpersonal and interest-based issues not resolved by the rule-based resolution procedures.

CEDRS' mediators and community conference facilitators help WMU employees find their own solutions, which in turn strengthens workplace relationships, enhances individual satisfaction, and promotes teamwork.

CEDRS provides mediation and conferencing services whenever and wherever it is convenient for the people who are involved. We are available at any time and any place.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a confidential way to find a solution to a problem between people. A trained person who doesn't take sides (the mediator) meets with the people who are experiencing the conflict and helps them to talk about how the conflict has affected them, hear each other's points of view, clarify the issues, identify common interests, generate resolution options, design a collaborative strategy that will resolve the problem, and articulate the steps they will take to implement their agreement. Mediation is particularly well suited for negotiating settlement agreements between two or three people, and focuses on producing a clear plan for resolving the problem.

Who Comes to a Mediation Session?

The intention of mediation is to give people who are involved in a dispute an opportunity to meet face-to-face in a safe and structured setting, to gain a greater understanding of one another's positions, and to develop an agreement for how to resolve the problem and move forward. The primary disputing persons in mediation are asked to speak and negotiate for themselves. On occasion, these people may wish to bring others for support, advice, or decision-making authority. These additional individuals will *only* be allowed in the mediation session if all of the primary disputing persons agree to their participation.

CEDRS Mediation is . . .

☞ Informal

Mediation is a way to have private, off-the-record conversations, allowing people involved in a dispute to explore their concerns and identify possible solutions.

☞ Effective

Mediation focuses on what can be done in the future to address everyone's needs and resolve the problems that led to the dispute.

☞ Neutral

Mediators are not judges and they do not conduct hearings, find fault, decide outcomes, or impose penalties. Neutral mediators help those in conflict to imagine, design, and implement their own collaborative solutions.

☞ Free

Absolutely.

☞ Private & Confidential

The mediation process offers a safe and open environment to talk about concerns and to explore resolution options. All mediators are ethically bound to standards of confidentiality. The mediators and staff of the CEDRS program will not share any information that is disclosed to them unless they are required to do so by law or judicial order, or unless the person sharing the information authorizes the disclosure. Participants agree at the outset to keep what happens in the mediation confidential.

What is Community Conferencing?

Community conferencing is a facilitated process that is especially useful when a dispute between two people has escalated into a conflict involving others. Often, in these circumstances, "sides" begin to form, open communication between factions breaks down, job performance and satisfaction drop, and a sense of tension deepens. People may spend more energy talking to their allies *about* those with whom they are in conflict—and reinforcing their perceptions—than they spend talking *with* those with whom the conflict originated and resolving their differences.

A conference brings together all of the people who have been affected by the conflict to discuss and to better understand what has happened, to deepen their understanding of how everyone has been affected, and to explore ways to make the situation better. Having everyone who has been affected meet together at one time and place can help the whole community or workgroup understand and resolve past issues and transform their working relationships for the future.

Who Comes to a Community Conference?

The intention of conferencing is to involve the whole community of people who have been affected by a conflict. The primary disputing persons in conferencing will be encouraged to invite supporters and others who have been affected by the conflict to participate in the conferencing session. CEDRS staff or facilitators may also include others whom they have identified as having been affected. Everyone who is invited and wishes to attend will be included.

C·E·D·R·S



"We don't find fault, we find *solutions*."

Who Can Use CEDRS Services?

Any employee may request CEDRS to help resolve a workplace conflict. Supervisors are especially encouraged to make use of this program, and are authorized to permit employees to participate in these services on work time.

CEDRS May Be Especially Helpful for:

- ✎ Disputes, communication breakdowns, and “personality conflicts” between supervisors and subordinates, coworkers, or colleagues.
- ✎ Frustrations and disagreements related to perceived unfairness; or lack of clarity or consensus regarding mission, vision, work assignments, responsibilities, goals, evaluations or expectations.
- ✎ Interdepartmental conflicts.

Some examples of circumstances where CEDRS services will generally not be appropriate are:

- ✎ Disputes primarily related to the interpretation of a collective bargaining agreement.
- ✎ Cases involving claims of sexual harassment or employment discrimination.
- ✎ Cases involving some types of discipline and/or discharge for misconduct, criminal charges, or serious threats to persons or property.

Prohibition of Retaliation

University policy prohibits retaliation against any person solely for requesting or participating in a facilitated dispute resolution process or for raising an issue during mediation or conferencing.

Enforceability of Agreements

Mediated agreements between supervisors and their subordinates which do not violate University policy, state or federal law, or any relevant collective bargaining agreement, will be considered binding. It is important that supervisors who come to the table have the authority to enter into a settlement, or have access to such authority during the mediated session if necessary, and that all parties make a good faith effort to uphold their agreements.

How Do I Get Started Using CEDRS?

Contact CEDRS at (269) 387-3406. CEDRS staff will provide a confidential consultation about your situation and will help you choose which CEDRS service or other available resolution option may be of most assistance to you. If you choose to use one of our facilitated services and our staff determines that your case is appropriate, CEDRS will contact all participants, explain our services, and encourage participation in the mediation or community conference. If all those who need to be involved agree to participate, impartial mediators are assigned to the case, and a session is scheduled. Cases are often resolved during the first session.

Further Information About CEDRS

More information about CEDRS, and a link to the full policy document outlining the scope, services, and protections of this University program are available at:

www.wmich.edu/cedrs/



It is the policy and commitment of Western Michigan University not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, disability or Veteran status in its educational programs, activities, admissions or employment policies in accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Executive Order 11246 as amended, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and all other pertinent federal and state regulations.



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