

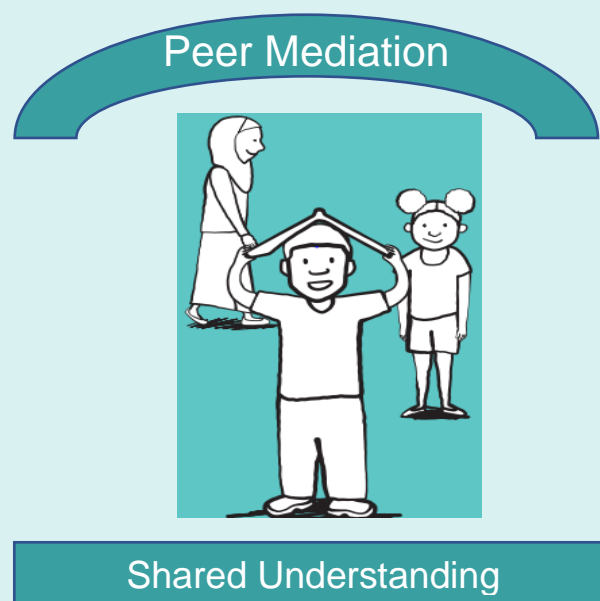
Peer Mediation

Overview description

Peer mediation is a process by which children and young people themselves help their peers resolve conflict in a constructive and neutral manner. It involves two trained peer mediators helping their peers deal with conflict through a series of mediation steps. It can be used for children and young people of all ages. The conflicts can include fights in the playground, rumour-spreading, or different types of bullying behaviour. During peer mediation disagreements are faced and brought out into the open with the help of the peer mediators. Importantly, shared understanding and agreements are worked toward through careful exploration of the conflict. Peer mediation is one specific application of **Restorative** approaches (see Section 2 of this toolkit).

Peer mediation allows children and young people to:

- Define the problem from their point of view
- Identify and express their feelings and needs
- Hear the feelings and needs of the other person
- Acknowledge each person's viewpoint
- Create solutions
- Agree a course of action



The peer mediation process not only helps to equip children and young people with the skills needed to calmly and systematically address disputes/conflicts but research shows it helps to develop confidence, communication skills, leadership skills and feelings of self-efficacy in the mediators.

How does it work?

Peer mediators are trained to follow a systematic and structured set of steps which allow them to guide their peers to resolve minor conflict. Peer mediators work in pairs and the process is voluntary so if either child/young person in conflict doesn't wish to continue at any point they can stop and matters can be dealt with according to the usual behaviour and discipline approach.

Different programmes organise the training in different ways but one successful way is to provide 6 sessions each lasting an hour over the course of 3 or 6 weeks. Typically, this training is led by an Educational Psychologist and the key member of staff in the educational setting who will be leading the peer mediation programme. Frequently educational settings choose to train Year 5 (primary) and Year 9/10 (secondary) children and young people to support the younger pupils.

Evidence-base

Research shows that many pupils who engage in aggressive behaviour have limited knowledge and social skills in resolving conflicts in a constructive manner. The standard response of these pupils to conflict is either withdrawing or forcing a situation. A well-conducted peer mediation program teaches children and young people alternative strategies that promote constructive communication and a safe educational environment (Stomfay-Stitz, 1994; Sim, Whiteside, Dittner, & Mellon, 2006; Smith-Sanders & Harter, 2007)

Research shows that programmes are successful in improving educational climate by teaching pupils to constructively deal with conflict and improving relationships between peers as well as between pupils and teachers. Research has found that, when asked, children and young people, report being satisfied with the mediation outcome and generally pupils report that they feel it makes school/college a fairer place. Parents and teachers, too, have reported high levels of satisfaction with the process and believe mediation supports the interpersonal and socio-emotional skills of all participants. (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Burrell et al. 2003, Harris, 2005).

Studies have also shown that peer mediation training gives pupils skills to use in their lives outside of the classroom, and has a significant impact on the strategies pupils use to resolve conflicts in their homes. Being a mediator helps pupils approach conflict in their own lives and in their communities with new perspective and skill (Johnson, Johnson & Dudley, 1992; Cohen, 2005; Harris, 2005).

Useful Resources

Videos

A Youtube video where children describe the process can be found here: <https://youtu.be/hYr9sTMMMW8>

And here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBxERTNoyFw>

A Youtube video where a teaching assistant describes the process can be found here: <https://youtu.be/ENoLEbEyYnY>

Presentations

A powerpoint presentation for parents and one for teachers explaining the process can be accessed here:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/restorative-approaches-peer-mediation/>

Posters/Pictures

Lots of pictures/posters can be downloaded free if you are a member from here:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?term=peer%20mediation>

Information/Research

A useful PDF (albeit American) that provides a good overview about peer mediation and the research

<https://k12engagement.unl.edu/peer-mediation/>

Ideas for conflict role plays

<https://www.mediation.com/articles/peer-mediation-role-plays.aspx>

<http://invla.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Peer-Mediation-Role-Plays.pdf>

Mediation scripts and skills

<http://www.uft.org/files/attachments/peer-mediation.pdf>

Books

Students Resolving Conflict: Peer Mediation in Schools. R.Cohen. 2005

Peer Mediation: A Process for Primary Schools. J Tyrrell. 2002

Peer Mediation: Citizenship and Social Inclusion Revisited: Citizenship and Social Inclusion in Action. Cremin, H. 2007

Other Useful links

- <https://education.gov.scot/resources/restorative-approaches-peer-mediation/>
- <https://www.scottishmediation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Research-on-Peer-Mediation-Overview-2015.pdf>

Contact an Educational Psychology Service who can provide Peer Mediation training for your school.

Also:

Online Training: <https://inclusive-solutions-school.teachable.com/p/peer-mediation>

Other ways to access training:

<https://www.peermediationnetwork.org.uk/>

<https://www.cresst.org.uk/resource/peer-mediation-co-ordinators-pack/>

References

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- Smith-Sanders, A.K. & Harter, L.M. (2007) Democracy, Dialogue, and Education: An Exploration of Conflict Resolution at Jefferson Junior High, Southern Communication Journal, 72:2, 109-126, DOI: [10.1080/10417940701316328](https://doi.org/10.1080/10417940701316328)
- Stomfay-Stitz, A.M. (1994) Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation: *Pathways to Safer Schools*, *Childhood Education*, 70:5, 279-282.