

Team Mediation Workshop

Pulling together...not pulling apart

When is this Workshop Useful?

Very often, what might have started as a minor disagreement between two individuals gradually spreads to others and erodes the team bond. The team leader, or the next level of management, may start to notice that relationships generally have deteriorated and are strained. Coalitions may form, and communications become confrontational, often resulting in bullying allegations. It is highly likely that the team's performance will have been adversely affected. If the situation is not resolved, it is likely to escalate and start to impact the smooth running of the business. It may also affect individuals' health and well-being, with increased sickness absence. Some team members may bring formal complaints, and/or threaten to leave if the situation does not improve.

A skilled and experienced manager may be able to resolve the situation themselves. But it's a situation that managers are unlikely to come across often and a well-meaning, but unskilled, attempt at resolution presents considerable risks to the business. However, a Team Mediation Workshop, facilitated by impartial, expert mediators, will help bust the problem quickly and effectively. It also encourages a full and frank discussion, which might not be forthcoming if more formal HR processes are used. The Workshop allows the team to find a solution that works for everyone.

We will tailor the process to the situation and the specific needs of the team. Therefore, before we recommend a Team Mediation Workshop, we will discuss the issues with you to analyse what is needed and recommend a process. Therefore, the format of the Workshop may vary to that set out below.

Why use Team Mediation?

If the business values the skills, experience and contribution that every individual in the team makes, it will not want to lose anyone. In which case, there is a strong case for investing time and money in reconciling differences within the team and improving its overall cohesiveness. Mediation is an effective way to do this, as it tackles the underlying causes of the conflict.

By the end of the Workshop, the team members will have a much better understanding of each other, and how to work more effectively together in the future.

What happens in the workshop?

The work actually starts before the Workshop! In order to maximise the benefit of the Workshop, we ask each team member to produce an "issues statement" setting out their perception of the current situation, and what they would like the future working environment to look like. This helps the mediators to tailor the Workshop, so that the focus is on resolving the team's most problematic and shared issues.

Part 1

- Each team member will complete a TKI Conflict Handling Assessment. This will allow them to discover what their most and least used conflict-handling styles are (i.e. competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating) when interacting with colleagues.
- They will learn about the theory behind the five TKI conflict styles and the benefits and disadvantages of over and under-use of each when dealing with workplace conflict.
- These results will be used throughout the rest of the Workshop to help everyone understand why they may have responded to situations in certain ways in the past. Everyone will also learn how to use the conflict styles more flexibly and effectively in the future.

Part 2

- The team will apply what they have learned about themselves to one of the identified "issues", selected by the mediators. This will be done through a discussion facilitated by the mediators using a collaborative, mediation, approach. In this way, a win-win solution should emerge which will improve the working relationship.
- The mediators will give instant feedback as they observe how different individuals are using the conflict styles, and how they could adapt their style.
- The team will be encouraged to reflect on how they could have handled past conflict better.
- Team members will then select their own difficult workplace scenario to discuss and resolve under the guidance and instant feedback of the mediators.
- If time allows, the mediators will move onto a further issue. If not, we can either come back for another session, or the team can work through the other issue(s) together, using the process introduced by the mediators.
- At the end of the session, we would encourage the team to write up what they have agreed to do to improve their working relationship. We will follow up after the session to see what progress has been made.

How long is the Workshop?

The Workshop is a full day, but might need to be longer, depending on the complexity of the issues to be resolved, and the size of the team.

Who runs the workshop?

The Workshop will be run by two workplace mediators by deploying the complementary skills of the mediators, this will maximise the effectiveness of the mediation session, so we can quickly deal with any issue which arises on the day.

What we need from the team

Team members are encouraged to be as open and honest as possible during the process, otherwise it will not work effectively. To encourage this, we recommend that everyone agrees to keep the discussion confidential, and nothing said should be used against anyone in the future. Each team member will disclose to each other the results of their TKI Conflict Handling Assessment.

The mediators will control the process to ensure that the environment in the Workshop always remains professional.

Location

Provided we have available rooms, we are very happy to host the Workshop at either of our offices. Alternatively, we will attend a location of your choice.

Indicative Cost

A full day tends to be £3,525 plus VAT and reasonable expenses, which includes briefing with relevant managers/HR; process and workshop development; workshop delivery; debrief and follow up.

To book a Workshop

If you would like to discuss whether a Team Mediation Workshop would be the right dispute resolution solution for your organisation, please contact Rebecca Ireland, Partner, on 07383 437939 or rebecca.ireland@gunnercooke.com.



Mediators

Rebecca Ireland has been an employment lawyer for over 22 years and in the most recent edition of Chambers and Partners UK 2019 guide, Rebecca was highlighted by clients for being "*personable, professional and knowledgeable, and great at developing client relationships*". She is also recognised in Legal 500 2018. Rebecca is a qualified Mediator (UK Mediation's AIM accredited Level 4 Interpersonal Mediation Practitioner's Certificate).

Rebecca has carried out both workplace and employment mediations over the past 6 years and delivered numerous conflict resolution workshops. Rebecca has considerable practical experience of conflict resolution, guiding her clients (from various business and public sectors) through, often complex and sensitive, grievance and disciplinary processes and employment tribunal claims, in a myriad of contexts.

Her practical, commercial solutions-focussed approach often results in grievances and disputes being settled amicably, even where the parties' positions previously appeared polarised. Rebecca collaborates with Julian Evans of Littleton Evans when delivering team mediations.

Julian Evans has been dealing with conflict management issues in workplaces for over 26 years, between individuals and teams, and from top management level to regular staff. This has been in a wide variety of sectors and situations, from SMEs and public bodies to global household-name multi-nationals.

Julian is a multi-qualified Mediator for workplace, commercial and family issues. His expertise has been acknowledged by a variety of leading bodies such as the Institute of Directors, and ACAS invited him to join their independent panel of mediators/arbitrators.

Julian is also an executive coach, with qualifications rooted in the cognitive behavioural approach, and with further training in the use of several psychometric instruments. He often draws upon this expertise during mediations and afterwards with individuals as needed.