

Building A Better Community  
One Agreement At A Time

# Community Solutions

**HOA & Neighborhood Mediation**

**2015 PRINCE WILLIAM NEIGHBORHOOD CONFERENCE**

Prince William County Complex ❖ Woodbridge, Virginia

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# Building A Better Community

## One Agreement At A Time

- Homeowners associations (HOAs) were designed to help neighborhoods keep the peace by enforcing a set of common rules by which all homeowners agree to abide. Unfortunately, it's not always that simple, and HOA conflicts frequently arise between neighbors, between the board and community members ... even between board members themselves.

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- Trained and experienced mediators can assist you in resolving your dispute. Mediation is designed to provide a time-efficient, convenient and confidential forum for the resolution of disputes involving Neighborhoods and Homeowners Associations. Disputes involving association rules and regulations, neighbor relations, construction defects, maintenance, common areas and fees and assessments are a few of the types of disputes appropriate for mediation.

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- Mediation helps homeowners and homeowners associations take responsibility for resolving their conflicts and forming their own agreements. The resolution of disputes by mediation allows all parties to come away from conflicts with a sense that they have been heard, and, as much as possible, that their needs have been met. This can help build trust, improve relationships, and strengthen the community.  
Mediation is intended to provide efficient, cost-effective, and confidential methods for resolution of homeowners' association disputes.

# QUESTIONS PEOPLE MAY HAVE...

- **"But my neighbors are impossible. Can mediation do any good for us?"**

Many people come to mediation as a last resort, feeling frustrated by the situation. The success and relief that people feel after mediation assistance convince us that we can help resolve most of the difficult situations that come our way.

# QUESTIONS PEOPLE MAY HAVE...

- **"This is a sensitive matter that I don't want others to know about. How confidential is this?"**

The mediators and staff keep all conversations confidential. No information goes outside the program.

# QUESTIONS PEOPLE MAY HAVE...

- **"What if my neighbor doesn't keep the agreement?"**

Before the agreement is written, mediators try to make sure it can realistically be kept. But if it breaks down at any time, you can always call the mediation program and they can help you think of other solutions.

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DVD: TRY Mediation FIRST



# CONFLICT FOR ME IS LIKE. . .

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When you think of conflict, what words or word pictures come to mind?

# MYTHS CONCERNING CONFLICT

- The presence of conflict is a sign of poor management/organization
- Conflict is a sign of low concern for the org/business/neighborhood.
- Anger is negative and destructive.
- Conflict, if left alone, will take care of itself.
- Conflict must be resolved.

# TIP # 1

- Know your style of conflict management and size up the other person's style.  
*Know when to use which style.*

# Tip #2

- Diagnose the characteristic(s) of the problem. At its core, what is it really about?

# Tip #3

- Guard against anti-communication from the other person and from you.

# Secret #1:

## **THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- Separate the people from the problem.
- Focus on interests, not positions.
- Generate options for mutual gain.
- Assure a fair process.
- Practice direct communication.

# *What's The Problem?*

- A group of neighborhood teens play basketball loudly next door. You have to sleep during the day for your night job.
- Your neighbors two doors down park their cars on their front lawn. This is an eyesore to the neighborhood.

# Secret #2

**P.I.N.**

**Positions:**

*What We State*

**Interests:**

*What We Want*

**Needs:**

*What We Must Have*

# Secret #3

- Communication is all about listening so others can speak and speaking so that others can listen.

# Inside Information

- Responding to an Angry Person

# Inside Information

- The Iron Laws of Human Behavior

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- **"I feel so much relief now that we've worked it out."**  
*- Person reaching an agreement after a long dispute.*

