

Ohio Employee Assistance Program



Understanding the Employee Workplace Mediation Program



“Transforming Conflict to Conversation”

Overview for Managers/Employees

About this Module...



This training module will help you understand how the Employee Workplace Mediation Program can assist you in addressing workplace conflicts and disputes.

Statewide Competencies for Mediation...

Resolving Conflicts and Negotiating with Others
Making Decisions and Solving Problems

Learning Objectives

Understand the program purpose

Gain a better understanding of conflict

Provide a definition for “mediation”

Review the benefits of mediation

Explain the program and mediation process

Clarify the role of the mediator



Purpose

Be the **first choice resource** for employees to learn and practice effective ways of managing and addressing workplace conflict.

Create open dialogue that removes communication barriers, resulting in improved relationships.

Encourage **constructive and positive communication** by respecting and valuing each other.



Understanding Conflict

Conflict can be defined as a crisis in human interaction ...

Causes parties to feel...

Unsettled, confused, fearful or unsure of what to do.

Self-protective, defensive, suspicious and unable to see the perspective of the other person.

When conflict is productive...

Interaction shifts from confusion to clarity, better decisions are made and parties are open to each others' viewpoints.

Parties are calmer, more confident and responsive to the situations of others.



Types of Conflict

Conflicts may involve:	Issues such as:
Coworkers, workgroups, subordinates, supervisors	▪ Communication breakdowns
	▪ Confusion about work duties
	▪ Personality differences
	▪ Work performance and job responsibilities

When you become aware of conflicts, struggles or tension in the workplace, this is the time to refer an individual or request mediation.



Definition of Mediation

“Mediation is defined as a process in which a neutral third-party works with individuals in conflict to help them change their conflict interaction from negative to positive, while exploring possibilities for addressing their situation.”



Mediation is about ...

**Transforming and rebuilding
productive relationships.**



Transformative Mediation

Transformative Mediation allows individuals to have a choice and voice in addressing workplace issues, resulting in independent outcomes.

Transformative Mediation

Conflict



- Relational issues, challenges interactions with others;
- Causes uncertainty, self absorption; and
- Diminished ability to deal with the issues.

Transformative Mediation provides the ability to address workplace issues.

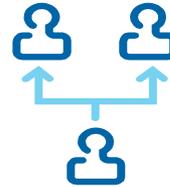
Optional Outcomes Chosen by Parties:

Agreement (Settlement)

No Agreement (Non-settlement)

Withdrawal

Mediation Process



The mediators:

- Assist parties in getting where they want to be and explore options;
- Stress to parties their ability to make decisions;
- Help the parties establish ground rules
- Explain and facilitate the process, which includes the right to stop, continue or hold private discussions; and
- Ensure the parties have a more productive conversation.

The mediators:

- Help parties to become oriented to one another;
- Identify shifts in conversation;
- Encourage parties to talk to each other;
- Allow conflict to surface;
- Make sure parties are heard; and
- Restate parties' comments and summarize key points.



The parties:

- Decide where to go in the discussion; and
- Have the ability to address the issues, reach agreement and decide on optional outcomes.

The parties:

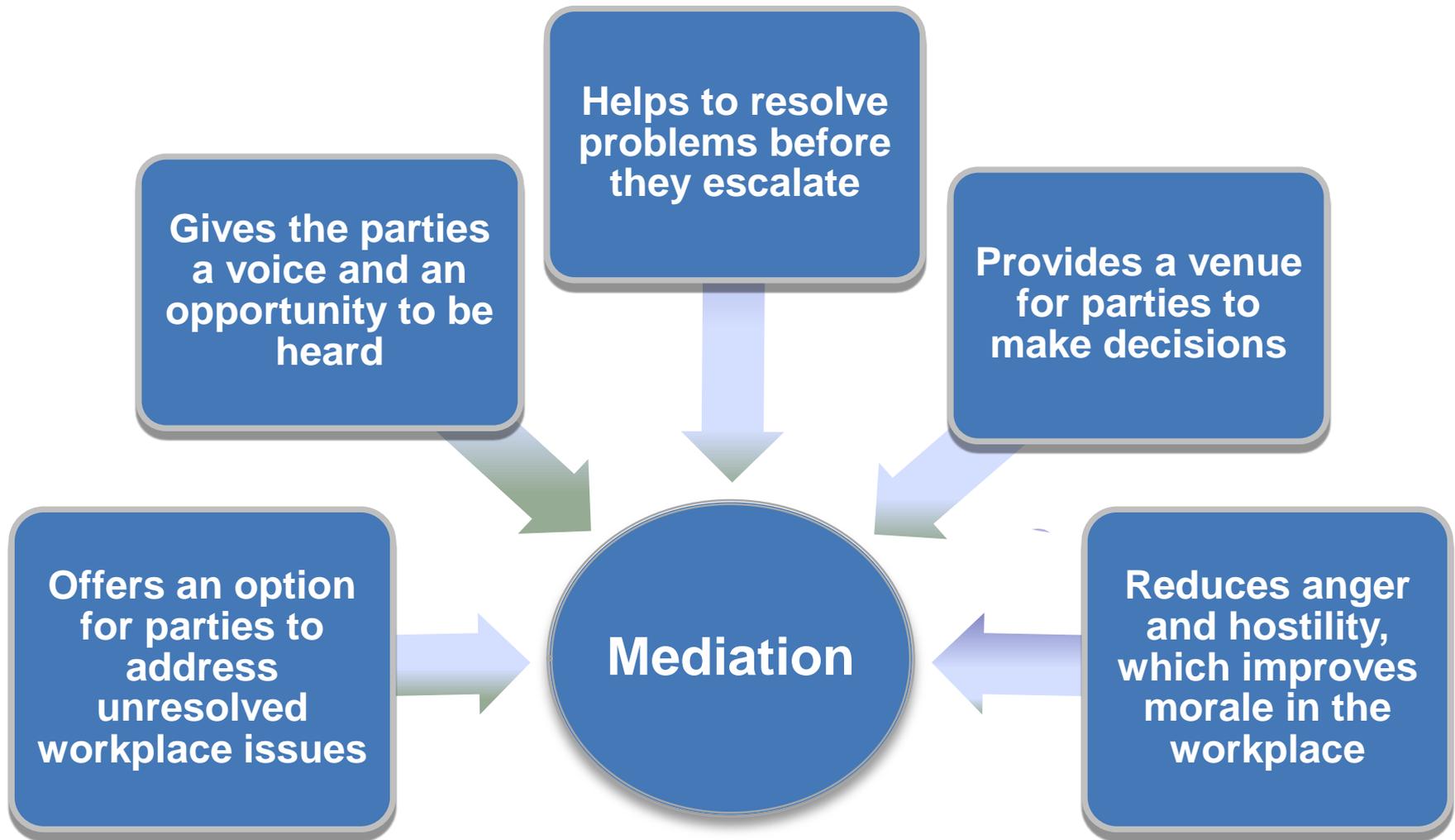
- Better recognize each other's perspectives;
- Become stronger and more empowered; and
- Shift to a more constructive and positive conversation.

Strengthened Relationships

Increased Conflict Resolution Skills

Improved Communications

Benefits of Mediation



Benefits of Mediation

The Bottom Line...

**Conflict in the workplace impacts everyone.
Mediation can benefit you.**



Major Program Components

Eligibility

- All full and part-time permanent employees
- Bargaining unit, exempt and management employees

Access

- Available to eligible employees at all levels and to all agencies / institutions
- Program Guide is available via the OEAP website

Making a Request / Referral

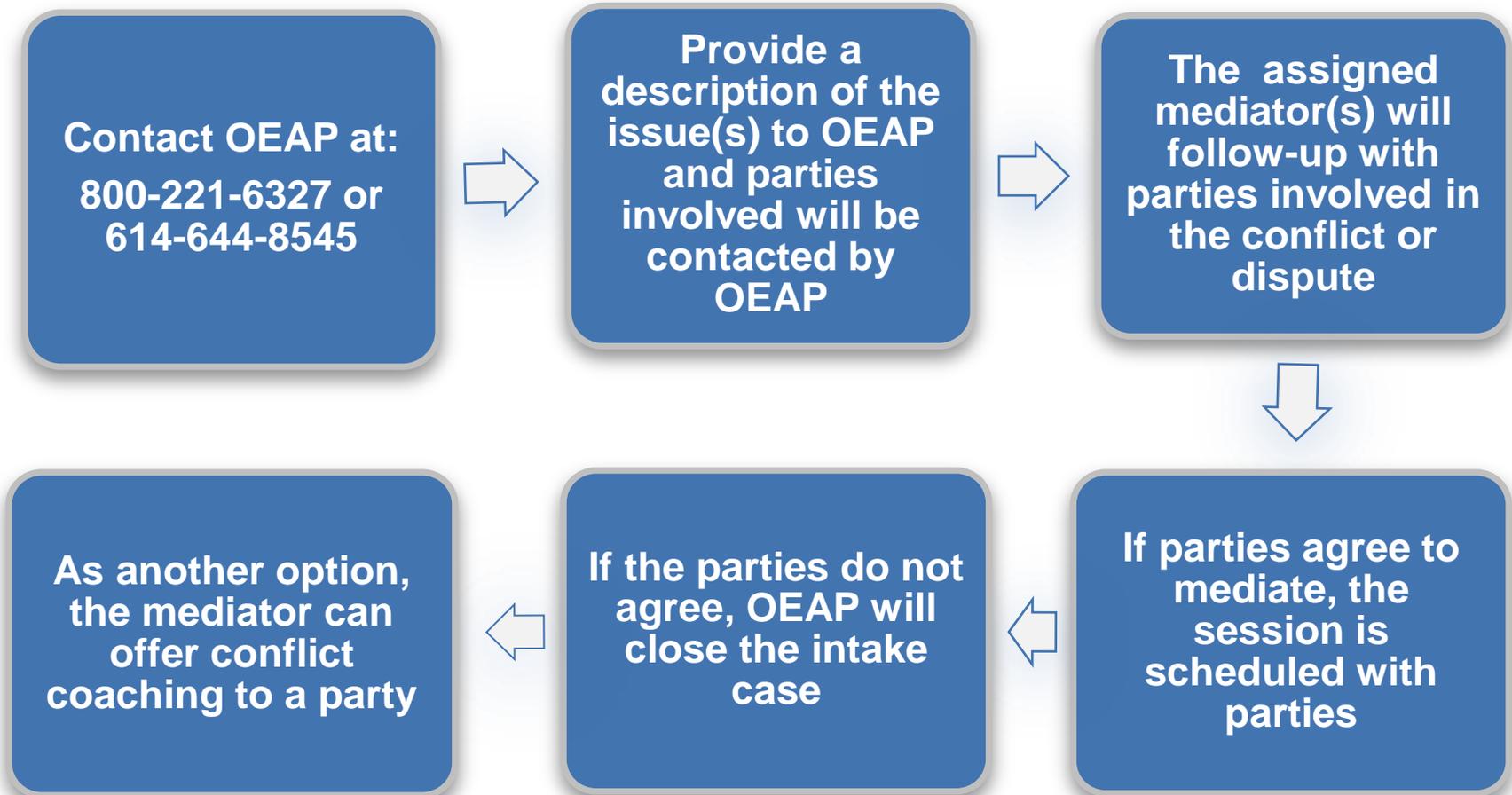
- Employees, managers, human resources, labor relations and union representatives
- By phone: 800-221-6327 or 614-644-8545
- Email: OEAP@das.ohio.gov
- Contact OEAP to learn more about mediation

**Program participation is voluntary,
the mediation process is confidential, and
there is NO COST to you.**



Making Referrals / Request

When a conflict occurs, simply follow these steps ...



More About Mediation

Mediation is held ...

At or near the party's workplace

In a neutral location such as a private office, conference room, or offsite (e.g. library)

During normal work hours



More About Mediation

Existing agency policies and union contracts will continue to apply.

In other words ...

- Applicable agency policies will remain in effect and are not impacted by mediation;
- Participation in mediation does not affect an employee's right to file a formal complaint or grievance; and
- Collective bargaining disputes will not be mediated.



More About Mediation

Exceptions to mediation:

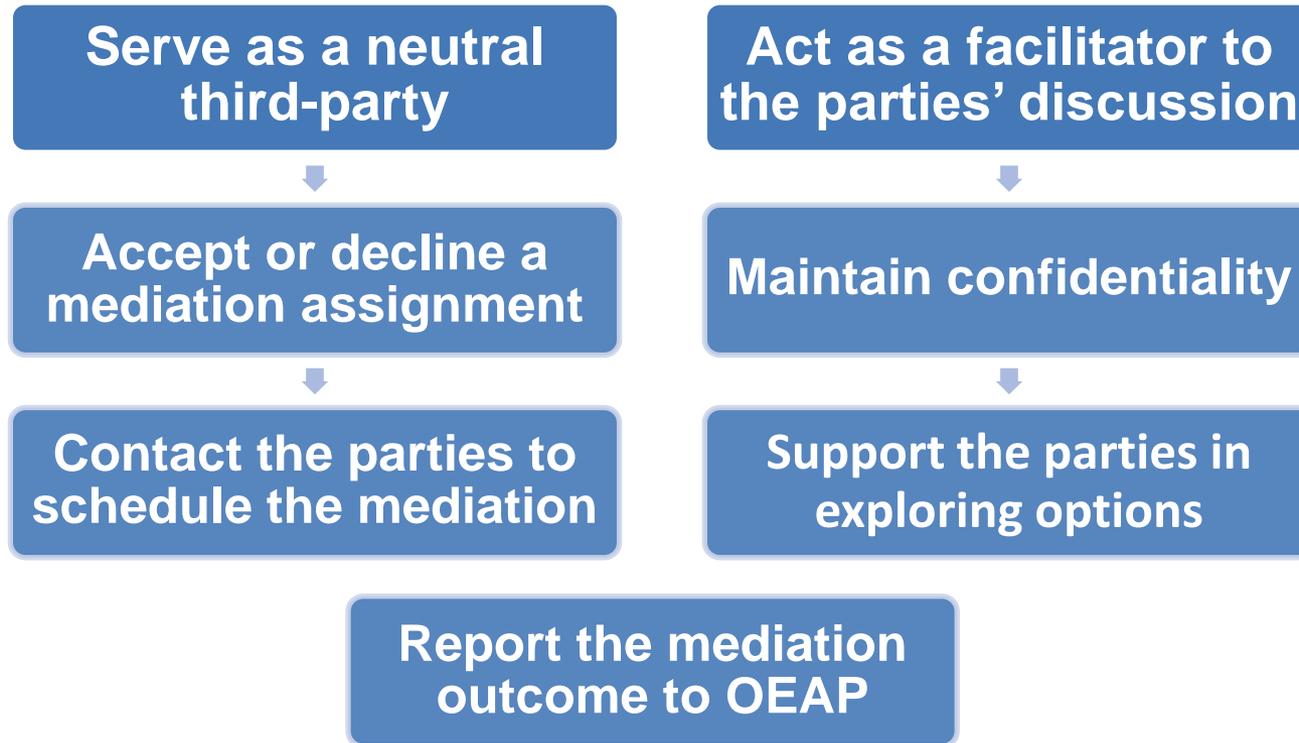
For example ...

- Any issue that is against the agency's policies and procedures, state or federal regulations.
- Nor will workplace violence, severe harassment (involving sexual contact) or issues outside of the scope of services provided by OEAP.



Role of the Mediator

The mediator(s) will...



Role of the Mediator

The mediator(s) will not...

Make decisions for the parties



Evaluate the merits of the conversation



Control the mediation in any way

Provide legal advice



Dictate how parties should address the dispute



Recommend any settlement language



Mediation...A Beneficial Resource

The Employee Workplace Mediation Program can be your first choice resource for you to learn and practice effective ways of managing and addressing conflict in the workplace.



Review of Key Learning Points

Clarified the program definition of “mediation”

Discussed the transformative mediation approach and it’s use

Shared the key benefits of mediation

Helped you to understand the program / processes



OEAP Contact Information

If you have questions about the Employee Workplace Mediation Program, please contact or visit OEAP at:

800-221-OEAP (6327)

or 614-644-8545

www.ohio.gov/eap

OEAP@das.ohio.gov

