

Conflict Resolution Team Training Services: Courses for Managers and Social Workers

Legacy

The following courses were initially developed and delivered by Graham Rutson and Sheilagh Gunston's Albany Mediation Services.

They now form part of the portfolio of training available from Conflict Resolution Team.

Sheilagh and Graham have a history of developing and delivering bespoke training and coaching on conflict resolution and mediation for professionals.

This package of training for social care workers and managers has been delivered to positive feedback and is available across Wales and beyond. The courses can be delivered in their current form or adapted to meet the needs of the workforce.

The Courses

Introduction Unit: Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills for Managers and Social Care Workers – One day introduction

Background

Conflict resolution and mediation are all about facilitating communication. They do this by making real conversation possible and safe. More formally, mediation is described as a well-established process for resolving disagreements in which an impartial third party (the mediator) helps people in dispute to find a mutually acceptable resolution.

Graham and Sheilagh believe that conflict resolution and mediation skills underpin social care work and that mediation principles reflect social care best practice.

Scope

This course is targeted at those who wish to develop their use of mediation and conciliation skills. It explores conflict theory and imparts useable everyday skills for dealing with conflict appropriate for social care organisations.

Assertive communication and interest-based negotiation will also feature as useful processes for professional and personal life. The day includes a range of elements from essential listening and communication skills to dealing with challenging people and referring to mediation.

This course will enable participants to:

- recognise the place of mediation skills in addressing and managing conflict
- achieve basic intervention and mediation skills
- use mediation skills to resolve issues with and between service users, colleagues and/or teams
- help themselves and others to resolve disagreements before they escalate to being a major problem
- have an overview of how disputes start, and how they can be perpetuated
- develop some of the skills and techniques used by mediators
- learn how to use mediation skills to assist disputing parties resolve their conflict
- understand how collaborative working can result in a win/win outcome that satisfies the interests of all

Complaints Unit: Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills Training for Dealing with Complaints – One or two days

Background

From June 2014, the document *A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations in Local Authority Social Services (Making Things Better)* replaced *Listening and Learning*.

The Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2013 introduced a new three stage procedure with an emphasis on local resolution and the complainant as the focus.

This training addresses the “principles of dealing with complaints” first raised in *Listening and Learning* and central to *Making Things Better*.

It also addresses “the complainant’s right to be listened to properly” and bringing the Social Services process closer into line with an *All Wales Model Concerns and Complaints Policy*.

Scope: Day 1

This course is targeted at those dealing with complaints who wish to develop their use of mediation and conciliation skills to resolve dissatisfaction, disputes and complaints. This enables services to avoid escalation and polarisation of entrenched positions through proactive use of conflict resolution knowledge, skills and techniques.

This course will give participants opportunities to:

- reflect on existing complaint resolution processes and skills
- understand role and impact of conflict resolution within complaints process
- recognise place of conflict resolution skills in local level resolution
- deal with complaints sympathetically *
- address dissatisfactions, concerns and other feelings that drive complaints *
- deal with forceful, determined behaviour: “people acting out of character” *
- resolve complaints before they escalate
- understand the role of apology in handling complaints and its effective use
- use mediative skills to resolve complaints
- understand how collaborative working can result in a win/win outcome that satisfies the interests of complainants and staff
- practise making response letters to complainants more effective

*“Principles for Dealing with Complaints” in [A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations in Local Authority Social Services](#), 2014

Scope: Day 2 (subject to feedback and requirements)

This course will give participants opportunities to further their skills, reflect on their practice and:

- understand and use types of apology
- prepare for Stage 1 meetings
- prepare workers and complainants for a Stage 1 meeting
- mediate in meetings between workers and complainants
- explore ways to support workers going through the complaints process
- understand the 'do's and don'ts' of effective and positive communication
- use skills for managing the Stage 1 meeting
- deal with "unreasonable" behaviour
- consider the learning from complaints, and how to make the complaints process a positive one for all
- explore what managers and care workers have found most challenging of the new Social Services Complaints Procedure

Delivery and Costs

"Introductory Unit : Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills for Managers and Social Care Workers – One day introduction" may be delivered as a "stand alone" unit or used as an introduction to "Complaints Unit: Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills Training for Dealing with Complaints".

"Complaints Unit: Conflict Resolution and Mediation Skills Training for Dealing with Complaints" can be delivered as a one or two day programme. Completion of Unit One would be useful but not essential. Day One will deliver the opportunities outlined in "scope" above.

Day Two of Complaints Unit allows participants to explore further and practice the conflict resolution skills introduced in Day One of Complaints Unit. Day Two content builds on that of Day One of Complaints Unit. If the days are spaced out there will also be an opportunity to reflect on post-course practice and learning. The day can also be tailored to suit participants and commissioners based on feedback at the end of Day One and desired learning outcomes.

The cost of the above training packages is £1200 per day plus expenses for delivery by two trainers. Discretionary discounts for repeat business and/or a minimum of two days' training contract will be considered.

Also available

Training and coaching

Albany Mediation Services offer bespoke training and coaching including:

- mediation and conflict resolution
- essential listening & communication skills
- dealing with difficult people
- referring to mediation
- advanced mediation skills workshops
- continuing professional development for mediators
- conflict coaching
- assertive communication
- principled negotiation skills

Conflict Coaching including The Albany Model

Conflict coaching is a useful opportunity for individuals, clients or staff of organisations who need support to develop their conflict management skills. Conflict coaching for professionals and individuals can be provided by Albany Mediation Services.

The Albany Model is a model of conflict coaching developed by Graham Rutson and Sheilagh Gunston for work with clients who lack the skills or experience to manage conflict well and are likely to be part of ongoing or repeat disputes and conflict.

The model draws on ideas and the core skills of one-party mediation, social work, coaching, counselling and advocacy and what the mediators see as individual capacity building. Lessons from both transformative and principled negotiation mediation models and skills applicable for work with one person are used to improve management of conflict and improve individual conflict resolution skills.

Such coaching enables individuals to develop their ability to deal with disputes and lessen their hurt and stress resulting from unresolved differences and poor conflict management skills.

A paper on the background of the Albany Model including a community case study is available on request.

Mediation for Vulnerable Clients and Those with Additional Needs

Sheilagh's and Graham's practice in health, education, housing, Social Services and the third sector have given them an awareness of the wide range of people for whom mediation could be both helpful and transformative.

As mediators they have provided services for people in conflict or wishing to make a complaint who are vulnerable or have additional needs. These may be due to:

- age
- mental health issues
- learning disabilities or difficulties
- literacy issues
- physical disabilities or illness
- low concentration levels

Conflict Resolution Team are wholly aware that not all people are able to be fully involved in a mediation process, but believe mediation to be a tool of empowerment that can be available to more people with the right support.

Conflict Resolution Team can:

- assess suitability of mediation for particular individuals and/or groups in conflict
- offer mediation to people from varied backgrounds with differing needs
- deliver conflict coaching to a broad selection of vulnerable adults
- provide mediation and conflict management training for those working with clients with specific needs, vulnerabilities or abilities
- assist with setting up suitable mediation systems for organisations working with vulnerable groups
- supply easy-to-read information and suitable processes for those who wish to mediate