Peer mediation: Training guide for teachers

Primary schools



Contents

[Overview 2](#_Toc617219784)

[Purpose 2](#_Toc47042364)

[Resources 2](#_Toc708657755)

[Session One: What is peer mediation? 2](#_Toc814923277)

[Rules of the day 2](#_Toc1771037537)

[Welcome the peer mediators 3](#_Toc904204238)

[Conflict resolution 4](#_Toc199201776)

[Qualities of a peer mediator 7](#_Toc1579688486)

[Benefits for student mediators 8](#_Toc322323401)

[Boundaries and confidentiality 9](#_Toc910916095)

[Session Two: How does peer mediation work? 11](#_Toc1161220527)

[Referral process: 12](#_Toc479837877)

[Disputes suitable for peer mediation 13](#_Toc386469602)

[Session Three: Communication skills 13](#_Toc344140283)

[Active listening 14](#_Toc72137558)

[Exploring fears, needs and feelings 20](#_Toc1232120421)

[What is empathy? 21](#_Toc1028135205)

[Session Four: Stages of peer mediation 21](#_Toc1708432949)

[Stages of mediation 22](#_Toc1742946506)

[Let’s practice - sample script 22](#_Toc582486007)

[Mediation agreement form 26](#_Toc1286759127)

[Debriefing form 27](#_Toc173341614)

[Practice script 28](#_Toc1670472893)

[Scenarios 31](#_Toc1254645744)

[Peer mediation code of conduct 33](#_Toc857928024)

[Peer mediation code of conduct agreement 33](#_Toc2048550350)

[Closing 34](#_Toc327826863)

# Overview

## Purpose

* define peer mediation and list qualities of a good mediator
* understand conflict resolution
* identify types of disputes suitable for peer mediation
* inform mediators about boundaries and confidentiality issues
* practise communication skills
* identify the stages of peer mediation
* give mediators opportunities to ask questions about the mediator’s role
* peer mediation role plays.

## Resources

* student training workbook for each mediator
* spare paper (one A4 blank sheet for each student)
* butcher’s paper and markers
* listening cards – role plays one, two, three.

# Session One: What is peer mediation?

## Rules of the day

**Activity:** Brainstorm rules that the group will follow over the training period. Use the whiteboard or butcher’s paper to write down student responses.

Examples might include the following:

* treat things seriously
* volunteer yourself only
* treat people with respect
* listen to each other
* be cooperative
* follow the rules
* keep on task
* speak to others with respect
* put your hand up
* respect others’ belongings.

It is a good idea to discuss with the group what each of the rules means in practice, giving examples. For example, what does ‘respect others’ belongings’ mean? It means ask others if you want to borrow something and making sure you return borrowed items to their owner.

## Welcome the peer mediators

Explain that this program will make a difference to the lives of students and will be a great personal achievement for them. There are times when people who are in conflict need help to solve their problems and mediation is a way to assist them.

Explain that mediators will be working with younger students, so it is important for them to reflect on their experiences in the early years of primary school and the feelings they had about school at this time.

Show students the personal reflection sheet on page 3 of the student workbook. Explain that this sheet can be used to record any questions or observations they have throughout the sessions.

**Activity:** Students engage in the welcoming scavenger hunt on page 2 of the student workbook.

**Student workbook excerpt: Find someone who:**

* likes going to the beach
* was born in another country
* can play a musical instrument
* likes to read
* has the same eye colour as you 
* enjoys art 
* was born in the same month as you
* ate breakfast this morning
* has a pet
* is left handed
* rides a bike
* likes pizza
* plays a sport

**Activity:** Class discussion on the below points to support a shared understanding on what peer mediation is.

**There are times when people who are in conflict need help to solve their problems and mediation is a way to assist them.**

**Mediation is helping other people who are in conflict to find solutions.**

**Peer mediation involves two trained students assisting other students through a structured process to reach a resolution of a dispute.**

**Activity:** Discuss what students think are the significant features of mediation as a form of dispute resolution?

Key background information that may guide student discussion is below.

Peer mediation:

* is a structured process
* supports mediators to be in control of the process
* enables parties to be in control of the outcome
* encourages parties to take responsibility for the past and the future
* fosters the impartiality of the mediators
* encourages people to change the way they negotiate by moving from positional bargaining to principled negotiation based on issues and interests.

## Conflict resolution

Understanding conflict

**Activity:** Discuss the points below and invite questions or comments from students.

* Conflict exists in our society.
* Most people would prefer to resolve conflicts.
* Feelings must be dealt with.
* Early intervention is necessary for successful resolution of conflict.
* Conflict is about emotions, relationships, and perceptions.

Levels of conflict

**Activity:** Refer students to the levels of conflict diagram on page 4 of the student workbook to support discussion of the points below. Invite questions or comments from students.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

**An explanation about the levels of conflict**

**Something happens**

which leads to 

**misunderstandings**

which leads to 

**bad feelings**

which leads to 

**payback**

which leads to 

**more bad feelings**

which leads to 

**more pay back**

which leads to **a crisis** **.**

**Discussion points**

1. It is important to recognise the level of the conflict. Some conflicts can be very difficult to resolve because of the level of the intensity of the feelings, or the conflict may be attached to particular values, beliefs or expectations.
2. Conflict levels vary along a continuum.
3. Discomfort: This is a feeling that something is not quite right.
4. Incident: An incident is often unintentional. Thoughtless action, an accident, not realised as an upsetting action.
5. Misunderstanding: A number of incidents with the same person can lead to misunderstandings and increase bad feelings.
6. Tension: When there is a high level of tension and feeling between students it is possible that the students view each other negatively and this can ignite negative feelings and judgments of the other person.

Activities

**Activity:** Discuss the points below and invite questions or comments from students.

* Conflicts can occur when people or groups of people have different needs.
* Conflict can arise between two or more people.
* Conflict can be negative or positive.
* Conflict involves differences in attitudes, values, expectations, understandings.
* Conflict can be destructive if not constructively resolved.
* Conflict can be a clash of wishes, needs or interests between people.

**Mediation is helping other people who are in conflict to find solutions.**

**Activity:** Split students into groups of three to read the script from page 5 of the student workbook. Students then complete the activity questions.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

Read through the following script in groups of three, with each person playing the role of ‘Alexis’, ‘Hannah’, or ‘Mum’. Then complete the activity below:

**Script**

**Alexis:** How am I going to tell Mum what happened today? She’s going to freak! Will you come in with me?

**Hannah:** No way! I’m still getting over the last time she raised her voice at me. I’ll see you tomorrow. You’ll be OK.

**Alexis:** Oh sure! Some friend you are!

**Mum:** Is that you Alexis? You didn’t put the garbage out last night. How many times do you need reminding? You know it’s your job. It’s about time you acted more responsibly.

**Alexis:** (mutters) Rave on.

**Mum**:: What did you say?

**Alexis**: Nothing.

Alexis walks into the bedroom, slams the door and turns on her music.

**Mum:** You don’t slam doors in this house, my girl!

Mum enters the room. Above the sound of the music can be heard Alexis and her mother yelling at each other.

**Activity**

What could have been done to stop the conflict at each level? Record how each person is feeling and discuss what could be done differently.

Level 1 Discomfort

* + Mum suggested responses:
	+ Alexis suggested responses:
	+ Hannah suggested responses:

Level 2 Incidents

* + Mum suggested responses:
	+ Alexis suggested responses:
	+ Hannah suggested responses:

Level 3 Misunderstanding

* + Mum suggested responses:
	+ Alexis suggested responses

Level 4 Tension

* + Mum suggested responses:
	+ Alexis suggested responses:

Level 5 Crisis

* + Mum suggested responses:
	+ Alexis suggested responses:

**Activity suggested answers**

Level 1 Discomfort

* + Mum: Annoyed
	+ Alexis: Worried
	+ Hannah: Didn’t want to see Alexis’s Mum

Level 2 Incidents

* + Mum: Alexis didn’t put the garbage out
	+ Alexis: Annoyed
	+ Hannah: Left to go home

Level 3 Misunderstanding

* + Mum: Mum feeling angry because of Alexis's behaviour
	+ Alexis: Alexis feeling angry

Level 4 Tension

* + Mum: Mum reacts
	+ Alexis: Alexis reacts

Level 5 Crisis

* + Mum: Mum reacts
	+ Alexis: Alexis screaming at her Mum.

## Qualities of a peer mediator

**Activity:** Discuss with students: Imagine you are in conflict with someone and you could get a third person to help you. What qualities and attitudes would you want the person to have, that is, what makes a good mediator?

Record the qualities on butcher’s paper. (Ensure that the following points are covered).

* stays neutral (that is, doesn’t take sides)
* treats people with respect
* treats problems with respect
* doesn’t give advice (tell them what to do).

**Activity:** Students complete the qualities of a peer mediator exercise on page 6 of the student workbook. Discuss the responses as a group. Remind students to use their personal reflection sheets in their workbooks to note any observations or questions.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

Select what you think are the five most important qualities for a peer mediator:

☐ kindness

☐ being interested

☐ tolerance

☐ good listening

☐ being judgemental

☐ friendliness

☐ creativity

☐ helpfulness

☐ being Cool

☐ honesty

☐ being impartial

☐ academic qualities

☐ being understanding

## Benefits for student mediators

Benefits of being a student mediator include:

* development of social, language and leadership skills
* increased self-esteem
* development of life-long skills including communication, listening and problem-solving skills.

**Activity:** Students record in their student workbook on page 7 what they think they will personally gain from being a peer mediator. Discuss the responses as a group.

## Boundaries and confidentiality

**Activity:** Lead a discussion on the importance of the mediators having firm boundaries, so limits and tolerances are established.

Key points to discuss: Inform mediators that one quality of a good mediator is to have firm boundaries. This means that a good mediator understands the limits of the role. Boundaries let a student know your limits and tolerances.

For example, good mediators:

* see themselves as having a different role from a teacher
* let students know what they expect of them
* help the disputants (students in conflict) solve their problems rather than telling them what to do.

Level of involvement (knowing your boundaries)

**Activity:** Discuss how students would know if they were getting over involved with a disputant.

* For example: you would find yourself worrying about the disputant at home
* For example: you can’t get the disputants problems out of your head.

Explain that one of the reasons there is a debrief after each mediation session is so that the mediator can let go of the disputant’s troubles.

**Activity:** Discuss: What is confidentiality?

Suggested response**:** Confidentially is about privacy, meaning that any information that is told to you is to be kept between you and that person. However, if during mediation any disputant reveals information about bullying or cyberbullying, sexual abuse, physical violence, racism, illegal drugs or the use of weapons, the mediation must be terminated and the program coordinator contacted immediately.

Difficulties that could arise in mediation

**Activity:** Discuss some of the difficulties students may encounter during mediation.

Suggested responses may include:

* remembering the peer mediation steps
* getting disputants to solve the problem themselves, e.g. don’t give answers
* mediators going too fast and reaching an agreement too quickly with disputants
* making sure that the disputants have equal time to tell their story
* working as a team.

**Activity:** Discuss what types of information mediators must pass on to their peer mediation coordinator?

If a mediation session is not progressing well OR if during mediation any disputant reveals information about any of the situations relating to sexual abuse, physical violence, racism, illegal drugs or the use of weapons, this mediation must be terminated and the program coordinator contacted immediately.

Suggested response: Thank the disputants for coming and explain that their situation is not the type of dispute that they are able to take care of. Assure them that their program coordinator will be contacted immediately.

Identifying boundaries

**Activity:** Read the following scenarios and discuss with the whole group. Invite questions or comments.

* Your disputant asks if you can keep a secret. What would you say or do?
* Your disputant tells you that they have stolen something from another student. What would you say or do?
* Some friends know that you are mediating a student and ask you what sort of things you talk about. What would you say?
* Your disputant tells you something of a personal nature, which is similar to something you have experienced. What would you say or do? That is, do you share your experience with them?
* Your disputant tells you that a student at school is bullying them and wants you ‘to sort them out’. What would you say or do?

**Activity:** Discuss peer mediation Dos and Don’ts listed on page 8 of the student workbook.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

The following is a list of things to do that help peer mediation.

 Peer mediation - Dos

* listen to both sides
* be fair and just
* help both sides work towards a win/win solution
* encourage disputants to solve their own problems and doesn’t jump in with answers.

The following is a list of things that do not that help peer mediation.

 Peer mediation - Don’ts

* gossip or tell other people what happened in mediation
* tell other people how to solve their problems
* judge whether other people are right or wrong
* take sides in a dispute
* allow witnesses and hangers-on to take part in mediation.

# Session Two: How does peer mediation work?

## Referral process:

Activity: Discuss the peer mediation referral process with students outlined on page 9 of the student workbook.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

**The student dispute may be discussed with teachers, school counselling staff, deputy principal, year advisor and friends before being referred to the peer mediation school coordinator.**

The process would then be:

**Student dispute**

Sent to



**School coordinator**

Sent to



**Peer mediator**

Leading to



**Dispute resolved**

## Disputes suitable for peer mediation

**Activity:** Discuss suitable disputes for peer mediation with students.

**Discussion guidance:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| C:\Users\kwafer1\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\3E09D197.tmp**Disputes suitable for peer mediation*** gossip and rumor spreading
* name-calling
* friendship problems
* teasing
* loss of property
* exclusion.
 | C:\Users\kwafer1\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.MSO\9247A59A.tmp**Disputes unsuitable for peer mediation*** bullying or cyberbullying
* sexual abuse
* physical violence
* racism
* weapons/drugs
* criminal behaviour.
 |

**Activity:** Students complete page 10 of student workbook where they identify suitable disputes for peer mediation. As a group discuss the responses.

**Student workbook excerpt with answers identified:**

**That kid won’t let me play:** [x] **yes ☐no**

**They took my ball: ☒yes ☐no**

**He is calling me “names”:** [x] **yes ☐no**

**He held me down on the field and kicked me: ☐yes** [x] **no**

**She hid my bag:** [x] **yes ☐no**

**He threw a sandwich at me and it hit me on the shoulder:** [x] **yes ☐no**

**She threatened me with a pocketknife: ☐yes** [x] **no**

**My friend doesn’t like me anymore:** [x] **yes ☐no**

**Those boys pushed me into the toilet and said they are going to get me after school: ☐yes** [x] **no**

# Session Three: Communication skills

Inform mediators that session three will focus on communication skills such as active listening, reframing and empathy.

Effective communication connects people, allowing for the exchange of thoughts, feelings and ideas, leading to an understanding.

**Activity:** Birthdates - Tell the group to organise themselves in the order of their birthdays, year, month, day, without speaking.

Discuss with mediators:

* What methods were used to try to achieve the task?
* Why was the task so difficult?
* How would the activity have been achieved more easily?

## Active listening

Listening role play

**Activity:** In groups of three, students take part in a listening role play. After the role play discuss how it felt to be listened to and what types of skills are necessary to be a good listener.

**Instructions:**

* Photocopy, cut out and distribute the role play cards on the next page so that every student has a card for their role play.
* Allocate each student a letter A, B or C. Each letter (A, B, C) is given specific instructions in the role play.
* Each group practices all three role plays, taking turns to be A, B and C.
* When the activity is completed, form a ‘Sharing Circle’ to debrief the three role plays.

**Discussion points:**

* Give attention to the listener (look at him or her and maintain eye contact where possible).
* Draw out (use questions that are open-ended, eg What happened next? How did you feel?).
* Give feedback about content and feelings.

**Resources required**

* Listening role play 1
* Cards for students A, B and C
* Listening role play 2
* Cards for students A, B and C
* Listening role play 3
* Cards for students A, B and C

**Listening role play scenarios**

**Listening role play 1:**

**A = Talk to B for one minute about a frightening experience.**

**Listening role play 1:**

B = Listen to A but try to change the topic. Interrupt by saying things like ‘that reminds me of the time…’ and constantly try to bring the conversation back to you.

**Listening role play 1:**

C = Observe A and B and after one-minute, give feedback on how they were communicating.

**Listening role play 2:**

**A = Talk to B for one minute about the best movie you have ever seen.**

**Listening role play 2:**

B = Pretend that you are not interested in A’s conversation, e.g. look bored, yawn and fidget.

**Listening role play 2:**

C = Observe A and B and after one-minute, give feedback on how they were communicating.

**Listening role play 3:**

A = Talk for one minute about how you would spend $2000.

**Listening role play 3:**

B = Listen to A and then after one minute reflect back to A, two to three things that A said.

**Listening role play 3:**

**C = Give feedback about how well B listened.**

What is active listening?

Ask mediators how they can tell if someone is listening to them.

**Activity:** Meet me at the zoo!

Choose three volunteers that think they are good listeners

They leave the room and one at a time come back and receive information which they must memorise and pass on

Tell them that they need to speak slowly and clearly, keeping to the essential information and not adding anything

**Purpose of activity**: Demonstrate that listening can be difficult.

**Instructions:**

Say the following to the first student:

* Meet me at the Zoo.
* Go in the front gate.
* Walk past the large Gorilla named Charlie.
* You will then pass the snake pit, but don’t get too close.
* Go by the elephants and meet me in front of the bears.

Ask the next participant to enter the room and have the first student pass on the zoo directions.

Allow the first student to sit down and call in the third student, to whom the second student should now pass on the zoo directions.

Ask the third student to tell the whole group the message and then ask the student to sit down.

**Discussion prompts:**

* How did the message change?
* What made it hard for the students to remember the directions correctly?
* What could have been done to ensure the directions were heard correctly? (repeated back)?
* If this were a real situation, what might have happened?
* Discuss as a group, the characteristics of effective and ineffective listening.

A guide for active listening

**Activity:** Discuss key components of active listening outlined for students on page 11 of student workbook.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

**Stop talking **

* You cannot listen if you are talking.

**Put the talker at ease**

* Have an environment they feel comfortable in.
* Smile and use positive body language such as nodding.

**Show the talker you want to listen**

* Look interested.
* Use verbal indicators to show you are following what they are saying e.g. “yes”, “I see”, “tell me more”.

**Remove distractions**

* Focus your mind on what is being said.

**Be patient**

* Allow time, don’t rush then to finish as a pause doesn’t mean that the speaker has finished what they are saying.

**Listen to the tone**

* Volume and tone both show the person’s reactions to what you have said.

**Listen for the message-not just the words**

* You want to get the whole picture, not just bits and pieces.

**Ask questions**

Really helpful for enhancing relationships and understanding what people have to say.

Effective and ineffective listening

**Activity:** Ask the students to complete the exercise (below) in their workbook on page 12. For each statement, identify whether it indicates ‘effective’ or ‘ineffective’ listening. Upon completion, review the worksheet with students.

**Student workbook excerpt with answers identified:**

For each statement, identify whether it indicates effective or ineffective listening.

Allow the disputant to finish what they are saying:

 [x] effective [ ] ineffective

Re-state in your own words what you think has been said:

 [x] effective [ ] ineffective

Ask to repeat what was said or ask questions when you don’t understand:

[x] effective ☐ineffective

Give advice or solutions to problems:

[ ] effective [x] ineffective

Get into arguments over what is being said:

[ ] effective [x] ineffective

Respond by nodding and making eye contact:

[x] effective [ ] ineffective

Be aware of others body language, e.g. facial expressions, gestures:

[x] effective [ ] ineffective

Let silences happen as they are a natural part of communicating:

[x] effective [ ] ineffective

Look distracted or continually stare at the disputant:

☐effective [x] ineffective

Focus on feelings, not just facts, e.g.  Ask “How did you feel”?

[x] effective [ ] ineffective

Interrupt the disputant or finish their sentences:

[ ] effective [x] ineffective

Reframing

Reframing is repeating what the speaker has said using different words. It confirms that you have heard correctly.

**Activity:** Students practice reframing or re-wording the following statements, using different words on page 13 of the student workbook.

**Student workbook excerpt with suggested answers identified:**

Re-word the following statements using different words.

Today I have my maths exam. I hope I pass.

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You are worried about your exam today?)

I hate it when I am late for school. I wish I could get there early.

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You like to get to school early so you are not late?)

I never get invited to parties. No one likes me.

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You feel that you are not invited to parties because no one likes you?)

How come I missed out on being in the school play?

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You are disappointed that you didn’t get selected for the school play?)

I can’t believe I won an art award. My parents will be pleased.

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You are surprised that you won the art award and happy that your parents will be proud?)

I can hardly wait for the holidays to come.

Reword to:

(Suggested response: You are excited about the holidays?)

## Exploring fears, needs and feelings

**Activity:** Divide the group into pairs. Using the scenario on page 14 of the student workbook, ask each pair to work out what each character is worrying about, needs and how they feel about the problem. Students then complete the questions. Share responses with the group.

**Student workbook excerpt with suggested answers identified:**

Consider the following scenario and answer the following questions.

**Scenario**

Jai borrowed some money from Amir. Amir asked Jai to return the money several times. Jai, however, always had an excuse for not giving the money back to Amir. One day, in between classes, Amir got into an argument with Jai when he tried to get his money back. The teacher spoke to them after class and suggested they talk with the peer mediator.

**Questions**

What is Jai worried about?

Answer: (Suggested response: Running out of excuses as he doesn’t have Amir’s money to pay him back.)

What is Amir worried about?

Answer: (Suggested response: Not getting his money back from Jai)

What does Jai need?

Answer: (Suggested response: Jai needs to know how Amir is feeling)

What does Amir need?

Answer: (Suggested response: His money returned to him)

What is Jai feeling?

Answer: (Suggested response: Guilty, indifference, intimidation)

What is Amir feeling?

Answer: (Suggested response: Worried and taken advantage of)

**Activity:** Discuss ‘What role does emotion play in conflict?’

Suggested discussion points may include:

* People can have problems with emotions.
* People in conflict have strong emotions.
* One person’s emotions can provoke another person’s emotions.
* Emotions may interfere with problem solving if they are not acknowledged and understood.
* The role of the mediator is to empathise or to enable the disputants to take a walk in “someone else’s shoes”.

## What is empathy?

**Activity:** Refer students to their student workbook, page 15. Discuss what empathy is-what it feels like, looks like and sounds like. Students record key discussion points on page 15.

**Key discussion point:** During conflict and mediation, feelings and empathy are important.

**Student workbook excerpt:**

**What is empathy**

Empathy refers to the intellectual identification of a person’s thoughts and feelings. It is the capacity of a person to understand another person’s point of view. On the other hand, sympathy refers to the feeling of pity or sorrow to the sufferings and distress of others. During conflict and mediation, feelings are very important.

**Scenario**

Jai borrowed some money from Amir. Amir asked Jai to return the money several times.

Jai, however, always had an excuse for not giving the money back to Amir. One day, in between classes, Amir got into an argument with Jai when he tried to get his money back. The teacher spoke to them after class and suggested they sort it out by talking with the peer mediators

**Activity: What is empathy**

Record what empathy feels like, looks like and sounds like.

Empathy feels like:

Empathy looks like:

Empathy sounds like:

# Session Four: Stages of peer mediation

## Stages of mediation

There are general stages to peer mediation which can be adapted for individual school needs and the age of the mediators.

**Activity**: Discuss what is involved in each stage of the mediation process (outlined below). Students refer to page 16 in their workbooks.

**Stage One: Introduction and ground rules**

* Peer mediators introduce themselves and the parties introduce themselves.
* Establish the ground rules: Ask the disputants “do you agree to…”.
* Be polite and tell the truth.
* Listen to each other without interrupting.
* Be willing to solve the problem.
* Take responsibility for what you agree to do.

**Stage Two: Telling the story**

* Decide who will start first.
* What happened?
* How did it make you feel?
* Repeat the procedure with the other student.
* Mediator summarises each issue.

**Stage Three: Searching for solutions**

* What do you want to happen now?
* Repeat the procedure with the other student (disputant).

**Stage Four: Choose the best option**

* Which could work best for you?
* Can this work?
* Repeat the procedure with the other student (disputant).

**Stage Five: The agreement**

* Mediator leads “So you both agree to…”.
* Disputant states “I agree to…”.
* Mediator records the agreement and students sign the mediation agreement form.

**Stage Six: Closing**

* Congratulate the students for solving the problem.
* Encourage them to work it out themselves next time or return to mediation.
* The disputants should be reminded that confidentiality will be respected by the mediator.

## Let’s practice - sample script

The sample script on the following pages (student workbook pages17-20) is an example of how two peer mediators carry out a mediation session with two students who have had a disagreement.

**Background information:** Aaron and Maya are good friends. Aaron buys a packet of chips from the canteen. Maya bumps into Aaron, who is coming out of the canteen, knocking the chips from his hands. Aaron calls Maya a clumsy idiot. A conflict erupts and they agree to go to mediation.

Maya says that Aaron was mean because he yelled at her and got angry. Maya identified that it was an accident, that she said sorry, but Aaron wouldn’t listen. Aaron says that Maya deliberately knocked the chips out of his hands. Aaron identified that he doesn’t usually get things from the canteen, so he was pretty upset.

**Activity:** Students read the sample script with four classmates, with each person playing one of the following characters:

Amalia: Scenario Mediator- (Who asks questions)

Stefan: Mediator- (Who takes notes)

Maya: Student

Aaron: Student

**Copy of script in student workbook:**

Introduction

**Mediator 1 - Amalia**: Hi, my name is Amalia. Welcome to mediation. I will be asking questions today.

**Mediator 2 – Stefan**: Hi, my name is Stefan. I will be taking notes today. What are your names?

**Student 1 – Maya:** My name is Maya.

**Student 2 – Aaron:** I’m Aaron.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Coming to mediation means you are both willing to solve your problem. Mediators don’t take sides. Our role is to help you solve your problem, but we can’t solve it for you. OK?

**Student 1 – Maya:** OK.

**Student 2 – Aaron:** Yes.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** There are some ground rules you have to follow for this mediation to work: be polite and tell the truth, listen to each other without interrupting, be willing to solve the problem, and take responsibility for what you agree to do.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Do you agree to these rules Maya?

**Student 1 – Maya:** Yes.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Do you agree to these rules Aaron?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** Yes.

Telling the story – What happened

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Who would like to start first?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** I would like to go first.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Maya, is it ok with you that Aaron goes first?

**Student 1 – Maya:** Ok.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Aaron, please tell us what happened?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Describe what happened from Aaron’s point of view, using the role play scenario above. For example:* Well, I hardly ever get pocket money for the canteen but today I did. So, I bought some chips. When I left the canteen, Maya came running up and deliberately knocked them out of my hands so they spilt everywhere.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** How did you feel when that happened?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Describe how you think Aaron would have felt. For example:* I was really disappointed and upset.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** *Summarise and clarify what Aaron said. For example:* So, to summarise, you’re saying that you’d just bought chips and Maya purposely made you spill them?

Ask:Is that right?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Answer yes or no and make corrections. For example:* Yeah, that’s right.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Thanks Aaron for telling us your story and thanks Maya for listening. Now Maya, it is your turn to tell us what happened please?

**Student 1 –** Maya: *Describe what happened from Maya‘s point of view, using the role play scenario above. For example:* Well, I was walking over to say hi to Aaron when someone bumped me and I accidentally knocked Aaron and he dropped his chips. He started yelling and calling me a clumsy idiot. I said sorry but he wouldn’t listen.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** How did you feel when that happened?

**Student 2 – Maya**: Describe how you think Maya would have felt. For example: I felt bad for him losing his chips but I was also really hurt that he was so mean to me, when it was only an accident. I thought we were friends.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** S*ummarise and clarify what Maya said. For example:* So, you’re saying that you got bumped and didn’t mean to knock into Aaron?

Ask**:** Is that right Maya?

**Student 1 – Maya:** *Answer yes, or make corrections. For example:* Yeah, and I said sorry.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Thanks Maya for telling us your story and thanks Aaron for listening. Now I’m going to sum up what I’ve heard you both say.

*Summarise what Maya and Aaron have told you. For example:* Aaron, you feel upset and disappointed about losing your chips because they were a treat. Maya, you didn’t mean to make Aaron lose his chips and you feel hurt that he yelled at you because it was only an accident and because you said sorry?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us Aaron?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Answer:* No.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Is there anything else you would like to tell us Maya?

**Students 1 – Maya:** Answer:No.

Searching for solutions

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Now we have heard both sides of the story we will ask you to think of some options that will solve your problem and make your time at school happier.

Maya, what do you want to happen now? Tell me any idea that comes to mind. Think of things that will be helpful to both of you.

**Student 1 – Maya:** *Use your imagination to come up with solutions. For example:* OK, I guess I could buy Aaron another packet of chips next time I have pocket money. And I’d like it if he said sorry for yelling at me.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Thanks for that Maya. What about you Aaron?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Use your imagination. For example:* She’s doesn’t have to get me more chips. Let’s just forget it.

**Student 1 – Maya:** *Use your imagination. For example:*How about we go halves in another packet of chips and both say sorry to each other for fighting?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Use your imagination. For example:* Sounds fair.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Thanks to both of you. Do either of you have any more ideas to help both of you?

**Student 1 – Maya:** *Answer:*No.

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Answer:*No.

Choosing the best option

Mediator 2 can share their notes with Mediator 1, and prompt and support when necessary.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** *Summarise the options discussed above. For example:*OK, you’ve both come up with three ideas: Maya buys Aaron another packet of chips and he says sorry for yelling at her; you both just forget the whole thing; or Maya buys another packet of chips and you go halves in it and both say sorry to each other.

Which option works best for you Maya?

**Student 1 – Maya:** *Pick the option you think works best. For example:* I like the idea that we share a packet of chips and both say sorry.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Aaron, how does that sound? Which option works best for you?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** *Pick the option you think works best. For example***:** Yeah, that option sounds like the best one.

If your disputants cannot come up with any options, end mediation and speak to the peer mediation coordinator.

The agreement

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** *State what they agreed to when they agreed to do it. For example:* So, you both agree that Maya will buy and share a packet of chips with Aaron, and both will say sorry to each other. When will you do that?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** Yes, I agree. How about tomorrow?

**Student 1 – Maya:** I won’t get more money until Thursday, can we do it then?

**Student 2 – Aaron:** Sure.

Closing

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** It’s great that you both have been able to reach an agreement that you’re both happy with. This is an agreement form (*next page*). This is confidential and won’t be told to anyone. You need to sign here.

**Mediator 1 – Amalia:** Thanks again for participating in this peer mediation and working to find a good solution that you are both happy with.

Complete the agreement form (student workbook page 21) with the disputants. Once completed, they can leave.

It is then important to debrief with your co-mediator. The debriefing form (student workbook page 22*)* will help this process.

## Mediation agreement form

Each disputant suggests what is written. Continue until an agreed solution is achieved. Refer students to page 21 of their student workbook.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Peer mediators** | **Date** |
|  |  |
| **Students involved in the mediation** |
|  |
| **Main points of conflict** |
| *
*
*
 |
| **Student (name):** **I agree to the following****Signature:**  |
| **Student (name):** **I agree to the following****Signature:** |

A copy of this agreement will be seen and kept by the peer mediation coordinator.

## Debriefing form

Refer students to their student workbook, page 22.

Peer mediators should debrief with each other after each mediation. After the students in dispute have signed their agreement and left the room, ask each other the following questions:

* Did the disputants attitudes towards the problem change? Yes or no? Explain
* Identify how you felt about each stage of the mediation. Describe if it was easy or difficult to obtain information and the disputants proactively engage in the process and come to an agreement.
* Any additional comments?

## Practice script

Please note that some of the scenarios described below may meet the [definition of bullying](https://schoolsnsw.sharepoint.com/sites/BehaviourandStudentParticipation/Shared%20Documents/General/Behaviour%20services/Universal%20resources/Peer%20Mediation%20resource/Please%20note%20that%20some%20of%20the%20scenarios%20described%20below%20would%20meet%20the%20definition%20of%20bullying%20if%20they%20were%20to%20be%20repeated%20and%20ongoing.%20%20Peer%20mediation%20is%20not%20suitable%20for%20responding%20to%20bullying.%20If%20mediation%20is%20unsuccessful%20and%20conflict%20continues%20staff%20should%20respond%20to%20both%20students%20in%20line%20with%20the%20anti-bullying%20processes%20in%20your%20School%20Behaviour%20Support%20and%20Management%20Plan%20%28SBSMP%29.) if they were to be repeated and ongoing. Peer mediation is not suitable for responding to bullying. If mediation is unsuccessful and conflict continues staff should respond to both students in line with the anti-bullying processes in their School behaviour support and management plan (SBSMP).

**Activity:** Students use the five role play scenarios on pages 28-29 of the student workbook to practice mediation. The script below (pages 23-25) can be used to help scaffold student practice.

Introduction and ground rules

**Mediator 1:** Let’s introduce ourselves. My name is, and I am a trained student mediator. I will be asking questions today.

**Mediator 2:** Hi, my name is, I will mostly be taking notes today. What’s your names?

**Student 1:** My name is

**Student 2:** My name is

**Mediator 1**: Coming to mediation means you are both willing to solve your problem. Mediators don’t take sides. Our role is to help you solve your problem but we can’t solve it for you. Okay?

**Student 1:** Okay.

**Student 2:** Yes.

**Mediator 1:** There are some ground rules you have to follow for this mediation to work:

* be polite and tell the truth
* listen to each other without interrupting
* be willing to solve the problem
* take responsibility for what you agree to do.

Do you agree to these rules (Student 1)?

**Student 1:** Yes.

**Mediator 1:** Do you agree to these rules (Student 2)?

**Student 2:** Yes.

Note: As a mediator, be sure to look at the disputants, speak clearly and confidently, be fair and don’t take sides.

Telling the story

**Mediator 1:** (Student 1) would you like to tell us what happened? While you are talking (Mediator 2) will take notes so we can be sure that we’ve heard you properly. Remember, no interruptions.

**Student 1:** *Describe what happened, using your group’s role play scenario.*

**Mediator 2:** Thanks (Student 1) for telling us about the problem and thanks to (Student 2) for listening. Now (Student 2) we would like you to tell us about what happened.

**Student 2:** *Describe what happened, using your group’s role play scenario.*

**Mediator 1**: Thanks (Student 2) for telling us about the problem and thanks to (Student 1) for listening. (Mediator 2) will read back the notes. We just want to make sure that we understand what is important to you.

**Mediator 2:** *Read Student 1’s recount.*Is this correct?

**Student 1:** Yes.

**Mediator 2:** *Read Student 2’s recount.*Is this correct?

**Student 2:** Yes.

Is there is anything not correct, clarify misinterpretations and adjust notes where necessary.

Searching for solutions

**Mediator 1:** Now we have heard both sides of the story we will ask you to think of some options that will solve your problem and make your time at school happier. (Student 1) what do you want to happen now? Tell me any idea that comes to mind. Think of things that will be helpful to both of you.

**Student 1:** Use your imagination to come up with solutions. Discuss.

**Mediator 1:** Thanks for that (student 1). What about you, (student 2)?

**Student 2:** Use your imagination to come up with solutions. Discuss.

**Mediator 1:** Thanks (student 2). Do either of you have any more ideas to help both of you?

**Student 1:** Answer yes or no

**Student 2:** Answer yes or no

Mediator 2 (taking the notes) can support or prompt Mediator 1.

Choose the best option

**Mediator 1:** Okay, you’ve both come up with some good ideas. Summarise the ideas discussed on the agreement form. Which option works for you (student 1)?

**Student 1:** *Pick the option you think works best.*

**Mediator 1:** (Student 2) how does that sound? Which option works best for you?

**Student 2:** *Pick the option you think works best.*

If your disputants cannot come up with any options, end the mediation and report to your peer mediation coordinator.

The agreement

**Mediator 1:** Do you think we can write down what you have decided to do? Remember it is your agreement. We want you to feel happy with it so it will work. *State what they have agreed to and when they agreed to do it.*

**Student 1:** I agree to …

**Student 2:** I agree to …

Remember, agreements must be easy to read. impartial, balanced, non-blaming and positive.

Closing

**Mediator 1:** It’s great that you have both been able to reach an agreement that you are both happy with. This is an agreement form (*next page*). This is confidential and will not be told to anyone. You need to sign here.

Refer to the agreement form and then debrief with your co- mediator.

## Scenarios

Please note the following scenarios are provided for the purpose of providing a context to support students in using role play to practice the mediation process. You can make adjustments to these scenarios to ensure they are suitable for the students you are working with. Changes to scenarios need to ensure that they do not include serious behaviours of concern including bullying or cyberbullying as these are not suitable for peer mediation.

Role play 1 – Gossip and rumour spreading

Maya and Aaron were yelling at each other in the playground.

**Maya says:** “Aaron has been really nasty to me. He has been going around telling everyone that I kissed one of the boys in my class, Marco. It’s just not true. I told him to stop, but all he does is make fun of me in front of the other kids.”

**Aaron says:** “Zeki told me that he saw Maya kiss Marco the other day. I didn’t start the story, it’s just what I got told. Maya gets so upset about it, it must be true. Why else would she get so upset?”

Role play 2 – Name calling

A teacher on playground duty sent these two students to see you because Aaron was giving Maya a hard time and teasing her.

**Maya says:** “Aaron is in my grade and he is always being horrible to me. Just because I got a really short haircut, he calls me ‘baldy’. Then he laughs and gets other kids to tease me too. Why can’t he leave me alone?”

**Aaron says:** “It was nothing more than just a joke. I didn’t know that Maya would get so upset about it. The other kids laugh when I make fun of her. What’s the big deal?”

Role play 3 – Teasing

Aaron was crying in the playground and said Maya caused it.

**Aaron says:** “Maya is horrible to me in class. She is always calling me stupid because she is better at maths than me. She was teasing me in the playground with some other kids.”

**Maya says:** “Aaron gets upset just because I always do better at maths than him. The other day he said he told his mum on me and his mum said I was stupid. He started it.”

Role play 4 – Loss of property

James and Aaron were arguing really loudly at lunchtime. It was suggested to them that mediation may help them work it out.

**James says:** “Last week I borrowed a book from the library. It was really cool. When I showed it to Aaron, he asked if he could borrow it, so I lent it to him. When I had to return it, I asked him for it back and he said he didn't have it. Now I’m in trouble with the library.”

**Aaron says:** “I’m really honest. I don't have that stupid book. Someone must have taken it out of my bag. Then James started shouting at me and said he stole it.”

Role play 5 – Being left out

Maya and Aaron are caught yelling at each other near the basketball court, by a teacher. They are usually friends.

**Maya says:** “Aaron is such a cry baby. Just because we wouldn’t let him play with us at lunchtime he grabbed the ball and ran off. When I told him to give the ball back he started yelling at me.”

**Aaron says:** “Maya is not fair. She asks me to play when there aren’t enough other players. Just because I’m not as good as they are she leaves me out sometimes, like today. And she makes fun of me, so I took the ball. Anyway, she started yelling at me first, I didn’t start it.”

## Peer mediation code of conduct

**Activity:** Discuss the peer mediation code of conduct on page 30 of the student workbook. Reinforce the serious nature of being a peer mediator.

Go through the code of conduct with mediators (see next page), discussing each element as you go:

* Confidentiality, including exceptions
* neutrality
* referrals
* responsibilities (what you have to do as a mediator)
* how to deal with difficult situations.

**Activity:** Students sign the code of conduct form if they agree to be peer mediators at the end of this training course.

## Peer mediation code of conduct agreement

Confidentiality (What you have to keep to yourself)

The information you get from the students during the mediation will not be repeated to anyone, except for any agreements they reach and sign on the peer mediation school agreement form (a copy of the agreement is given to the peer mediation coordinator).

**Exception to this rule:** If something serious happens during mediation, the mediators should stop the mediation immediately and ask for help from the peer mediation coordinator. This may include when:

* the dispute is unsuitable for peer mediation (see page 14 of this teacher guide and page 10 of the student workbook)
* someone is hurt
* someone is behaving in an unsafe way or makes you uncomfortable, or
* someone says something that makes you believe that someone is unsafe.

Neutrality (Not taking anyone’s side)

* If you are friends with one of the people being mediated, then you cannot be fair to both sides. In this case you cannot mediate. Also, you cannot mediate if you do not like one of the people being mediated.
* Mediators do not decide who is right or wrong or take sides with any student. That means you cannot have a favourite student.
* Mediators help everybody in the mediation equally.

Mediators on duty (What you have to do when on duty)

* Mediators will report to the peer mediation coordinator or follow the peer mediation roster.
* Mediators cannot accept any money, or favours for mediations.

Referrals (If a student you mediate needs something)

If a student needs information or assistance, the mediators will refer the student back to the peer mediation coordinator.

Responsibilities (What you have to do as a mediator)

* Mediators must participate in training.
* Mediators who do not go by the standards required will be withdrawn from further mediations by the peer mediation coordinator.

**Print name**:

**Signature**:

## Closing

Thank mediators for their attendance today. Tell them that if they feel after the day that this program is ‘not for them’ they should notify the coordinator.

You may like to say something positive about each student or get the students to write something positive about each other.

Peer mediator coordinators should sign certificates of achievement for each student. Certificates of recognition templates can be found in the NSW Department of Education [brand library](https://brand.education.nsw.gov.au/content/edam/en/home.html).