

Mediation:

Mediation as a collaborative process, is a method of dispute resolution in which an impartial third party [mediator] intervenes in a conflict with the consent of the disputants and assists them in negotiating a consensual and informed agreement. In mediation, the decision-making authority rests with the parties themselves. Mediation presents the opportunity to peacefully express conflict and to "hear each other out" even when an understanding or agreement is not reached.

As a mediator, I work as a non-coercive neutral, in a collaborative way, to enable each party in conflict, or persons within each party in conflict, to better understand their own and the other's interests, concerns and realities. I assist the disputants in defining and clarifying issues, reducing obstacles to communication, exploring possible solutions, and reaching a mutually satisfactory understanding. I then assist in drafting an agreement based on this understanding. My goal will be to help the parties negotiate an agreement that serves each party's interests better than with other options or other competing processes.

A simple **comparison of competing processes** follows:

	Cost	Time	Results	Client Control over Process	Relationship Satisfaction
Court Litigation	high	long	variable	poor	poor
Arbitration	average	average	average	fair	fair
Self-negotiation	average	average	average	good	variable
Mediation	low	short	good	good	good

Although mediation is not suitable for all conflict situations, the above common attributes are often the reasons the parties strongly consider mediation above other competing processes. Please note that the **choice of mediation** as the preferred method of conflict resolution must be **agreed upon** with sincere intent by both parties for the process to be successful.