

# FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS AND MEDIATION

“Helping People Talk  
To People”

*Encourage and enable people in conflict  
to discuss concerns and issues in a safe and productive  
environment, and arrive at a cooperative and beneficial  
resolution.*

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*Solutions agreed on in  
Facilitated Conversations are often more cost effective,  
timely, comprehensive and lasting.*

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*Individuals affected by the solutions are those  
making the decision, which promotes  
trust & responsible communication in the future.*

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## *Benefits include –*

**Effective.** Providing positive and lasting solutions because people involved and affected by the conflict are those creating the solutions. They have buy-in and a commitment to the solution they worked to create.

**Objective.** Mediators don't take sides, advocate, make decisions for or represent any of the people at the table. Mediators are objective, neutral, third parties you call when you're caught in conflict.

**Confidential.** All those involved agree to a level of confidentiality which creates the "safe place". This is necessary to move from positions to issues/interests, then to options and successful outcomes.

**A Real Difference.** We focus on problem solving, expectations, communication, and what it takes to truly resolve the conflict. As a result, attitudes and behavior are changed.

**Positive Learning Experience.** The parties learn effective skills for resolving conflicts which may arise in the future.

**More Satisfying.** Facilitated Conversations have proven to be much more satisfying than the traditional complaint process.

## *How Facilitated Conversations Work for You –*

**The citizen's complaint will be** selected based upon criteria the Police Department has agreed upon and then referred to facilitated conversation.

**We'll explain and answer questions.** CMC will contact each person involved and explain the value of mediation & facilitated conversations. We listen to your concerns and answer any questions you may have.

**Agreeing to Mediate.** Once you agree to participate your mediation or facilitation will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you. When we meet in the mediation process, a professional mediator helps the parties:

- Set ground rules that ensure a respectful and safe environment,

- Discuss each person's issues and concerns in a managed setting that is honest and respectful to everyone,
- Identify important issues,
- Constructively look for options and possible resolution, and
- Make decisions based on what it will take to resolve the conflict.

**Voluntary & Confidential.** Mediations and Facilitated Conversations are voluntary, confidential and generally last sixty to ninety minutes. All we need to get started is a good-faith commitment on your part to let CMC help you find resolution.

### *Reasons People Choose Facilitated Conversations –*

- ◆ Mediation is an opportunity for officers and citizens to hear, learn and understand the other person's perspective.
- ◆ Mediation allows officers and citizens to resolve the complaints themselves, with the help of a mediator. This often provides valuable feedback on how to avoid similar situations in the future and improves relationships between the police and community.
- ◆ Regain or improve confidence in the police department.
- ◆ Both the citizen and officer exercise direct control over a quick and acceptable resolution.
- ◆ Resolve the issue outside the formal complaint process, often in a more rewarding and meaningful manner.
- ◆ The opportunity to discuss real issues. When we're in conflict we generally focus on 'our' solution to the problem as we understand the situation. Life doesn't come in "one-size-fits-all," and neither do lasting solutions.
- ◆ Facilitated Conversations are confidential and provide the opportunity for honest and respectful communication.
- ◆ When both the citizen and officer agree to participate in Facilitated Conversations this participation will result in the citizen's complaint being dismissed.

## *Common Misperceptions*

- ◆ “I’ll be compelled to apologize or admit wrongdoing.”  
No. Mediation is a voluntary process. No one is required to say or do anything they don’t choose.
- ◆ “It won’t do any good. The person is unreasonable and unpleasant.”  
Generally not true. In an environment, facilitated by a professional mediator, the parties all behave in a much more constructive manner.
- ◆ “Mediation will just give them more time to complain and verbally attack.”  
No. Professional mediators are trained and responsible for managing a safe process.
- ◆ “If I speak freely and honestly my words will be construed or used against me in a legal proceeding.”  
No. The content of a mediation session is protected as confidential and not discoverable under a Colorado Statute. Each participant signs a legally binding confidentiality agreement prior to mediation.
- ◆ “What is my incentive to participate?”  
Mediation is an accepted alternative to the traditional adversarial conflict resolution process. When the parties sit down in mediation, they are able to discuss real issues and come to sustainable resolution.
- ◆ How can conflict be constructive?  
With a professional mediator in charge of the process, creative ideas are produced, lasting resolutions are made and people take personal responsibility for the outcome.