



ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY

Community Dispute Resolution Pre-Conference Guidelines

Adopted: 14 Oct 2014

Meet with all parties to the dispute separately in order to minimize the risk of escalating the issues between them. The Pre-Conference should focus on the following goals:

- Explaining the Community Dispute Resolution Process,
- Understanding the dispute from each parties' point of view,
- Stimulating the parties to think about their best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA).

More than one pre-conference may be required with some or all parties.

Action Steps:

1. Team members introduce themselves, briefly explain the Community Dispute Resolution Process and give a commitment to confidentiality.
2. Request a full description of the issue(s) in dispute and probe for the party's explanation. Show understanding by active listening.
3. Ask the party what they would like as a resolution to this dispute.
4. Ask the party what they think the other parties to the dispute might be expecting for a resolution.
5. In order to facilitate a discussion of the parties' alternatives to CDR process, introduce the concept of a BATNA. (*Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement*)
6. Express your personal appreciation for the party's full cooperation; explain that you will be having (or have had) a similar meeting with the other party to the dispute.
7. Set a follow-up date.
8. Have the party sign an "Agreement to Participate". This step may be done at any comfortable time in the pre-conference. It is vital legal protection for you and ACJS.
9. After the pre-conference, debrief with your team member to clarify your understanding of events, issues and feelings.