



Heartland Mediators Association

Newsletter for Midwest Mediators

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2011 Heartland Mediators Association

A Message From HMA President: Skills That Add to Success

As trained and experienced mediators we often see situations where our skills would be useful, but there is no open door for convening a mediation with the parties.

Conflict Coaching allows us an opportunity to share our skills with just one party to a dispute in a productive way, while further honing our own dispute resolution skills.

I first learned of Conflict Coaching from fellow HMA Board member Terrie McCants who, along with Art Thompson, will be presenting training on this topic sponsored by HMA, Oct. 21 in Salina.

As Terrie described Conflict Coaching as a mentoring process to increase conflict competency, I became intrigued not only as a mediator, but also an attorney who counsels employer clients on legal compliance and dealing with workplace disputes.

Further research led me to a groundbreaking book published in 2008 titled Conflict Coaching – Conflict Management Strategies and Skills for

continued on page 2

Conflict Coaching Planned in Salina on October 21

HMA's fall training will begin with introductions by HMA President Kathy Perkins at 9 a.m. Friday Oct. 21 at the Webster Center in Salina, Kansas.

Co-trainers Terrie McCants and Art Thompson will offer an overview of Conflict Coaching at 9:15 a.m. followed by the Comprehensive Conflict Coaching Model.

Conflict Coaching is a second generation alternative dispute resolution approach that is moving toward maturity. It is close to 15 years old and its practice has intensified. Although Conflict Coaching started as an offshoot of mediation, it has emerged as an intervention in its own right -- some refer to it as "ADR for One."

Conflict Coaching is a process of conflict prevention/intervention involving one disputant/client and one conflict resolution practitioner. The development and application of conflict coaching has taken place with interdisciplinary contributions, which most notably include works from scholars and practitioners in the conflict resolution and executive coaching communities.

Conflict Coaching may be used proactively in advance of conflict interaction (on the verge of conflict), concurrent to conflict interaction (in conflict), and/or retrospectively to make sense of and learn from conflict interaction (out of conflict). It can also be used in connection with other alternative dispute resolution processes.

Finally, Conflict Coaching offers the possibility of more broadly assessing and developing an individual's conflict understanding, strategies, and skills apart from involvement in a particular conflict (empowers and increases individual competencies).

continued on page 2

President's message

continued from page 1

the Individual by Tricia S. Jones and Ross Brinkert. Jones and Brinkert have organized their work in this area around a four stage process.

As a brief overview, Stage One focuses on techniques for "discovering the story", in other words helping a client understand what happened, in context. Stage Two involves analyzing the conflict

through three perspectives: identity, emotion and power. During Stage Three, the conflict coach helps clients define what a successful strategy will look like in their conflict. Finally, in Stage Four, is development of strategies and communication skills (confrontation, confirmation, comprehension) to bring the desired outcome.

These are skills and strategies that could improve effectiveness not just for mediators and ADR professionals but for a wide variety

of professionals. Some include attorneys who counsel clients on business and negotiation strategies, organizational development consultants, human resource professionals, psychologists and social workers, health care professionals dealing with patients who are making difficult decisions under enormous amounts of stress and so many more.

It's an exciting topic and I for one am really looking forward to the October 21 program.

HMA to Present Conflict Coaching

continued from page 1

The main objectives of Conflict Coaching are to coach participants to:

- Identify their goals for managing conflict effectively;
- Determine and take the required steps to attain those goals;
- Consider how to change their habitual behaviors that contribute to conflict;
- Reflect on the improved ways they react to and manage conflict;
- Shift unhelpful reactions to conflict to constructive responses;
- Improve language and communication skills in order to interact and address conflictual situations more effectively;
- Reduce the harmful impact of conflict on themselves and others

The team will set the stages for the methodology beginning at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 21 with "Client's Competence and Coaches Fit" and "Elements Critical in Contracting – Making It Your Own."

Stage 1 - Discovering the Story with Key Skills, Principles, and Goals with practice, debriefing will go until lunchtime.

Lunch will be included and participants will be on their own while HMA board of directors has a brief meeting during the lunch time break.

Stages 2, 3, and 4 will be explored during the afternoon hours with a final "Upsides and Downsides" discussion on the way to look forward with this type of process. The training will conclude about 4 p.m.

Terrie R. McCants is the Program Coordinator and Instructor for the Graduate and Undergraduate

Certificates in Conflict Resolution at Kansas State University. She holds a Master's Degree in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and has advanced training in workplace, public policy, divorce and child-custody, and parent/adolescent mediation.

She teaches five courses in the certificate programs, including a faculty-led study tour, Peace & Conflict in Northern Ireland. She is also the co-coordinator of the Conflict Analysis and Trauma Studies (CATS) minor that was first offered in 2010.

As a 'pracademic,' Terrie is not only a teacher, but also a conflict resolution practitioner. She is a state-approved mediator, mentor mediator, and mediation trainer, and works as a mediator and mediation supervisor at the School of Family Studies and Human Services' Family Center.

As a conflict coach she assists students, faculty/staff in developing both their understanding of their conflict and interaction strategies and skills for addressing their conflict.

McCants is also a facilitation associate at K-State's Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy. In that capacity she facilitates various strategic comprehensive plans and departmental/organizational leadership retreats for local, state, and regional entities.

Terrie has accompanied K-State delegations to Mexico, South Africa, and Botswana. She spent two months in the summer of 2008 on a faculty exchange with the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla in Mexico.

During the exchange, she participated in their Spanish language and cultural immersion programs, and taught various workshops and classes on conflict

HMA Again Helps With ADR CLE

Heartland Mediators Association will again be a sponsor for this year's 2011 Alternative Dispute Resolution CLE of the Kansas Bar Association on Friday, Nov. 18 at Crowne Plaza in Lenexa, Kansas.

The daylong training will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and a continental breakfast.

First program will be "Boot Camp Review of Family Law" at 9 a.m. with Linda D. Elrod, Washburn University School of Law, Topeka.

"Cognitive Obstacles to Conflict Resolution" with Patrick R. Nichols, Associates in Dispute Resolution LLC, Lawrence, follows at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch will be on your own at 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. when Art Thompson will discuss "The Changing Requirements for Mediator Approval" Thompson is coordinator in the Office of Judicial Administration in Topeka.

Elinor P. Schroeder, University of Kansas School of Law, Lawrence, will present a "Survey of Employment Law" at 1:45 p.m. followed by Ethics presentation at 3:10 p.m.

Scheduled breaks will occur during the training which will adjourn at 4 p.m. for 6 hours of CLE/CME hours.

Contact Ann Zimmerman for information.

**We Want to Know How
You Became Interested
in Conflict Resolution**

Send your stories to Janet
at hmaorganization@everestkc.net

HMA Conflict Coaching

continued from previous page

resolution topics to faculty, staff, students, and community members.

In June 2010, Terrie was selected to attend the International Conflict Resolution Research Institute's summer school in Northern Ireland to study peace building and post conflict reconstruction in divided societies.

McCants is a member of the Association of Conflict Resolution, and a board member of Heartland Mediators Association. *Terrie McCants may be reached at terrie@ksu.edu*

Art Thompson is the Dispute Resolution Coordinator with the Kansas Office of Judicial Administration. This position works with courts, state government, non-profit organizations and where dispute resolution is required by state statute to establish mediation programs and other methods of resolving disputes.

The position also approves mediators and mediator trainers. While employed by the Kansas Bar Association (KBA) he served on two Kansas Supreme Court committees concerning alternative dispute resolution, in 1988 and 1992, and a Kansas Legislature authorized Advisory Council on Dispute Resolution, from 1995 until 1999. He was the public services director at the KBA from 1983 until 1999. I also was the staff to the ADR Section, was the IOLTA director and

helped with the Kansas Bar Foundation.

Thompson received his domestic mediation training from CDR Associates in 1985, his civil mediation training from the Kansas Bar Association in 1994 and juvenile dependency mediation training from Midland Mediation and Settlement Solutions in 2005. He currently mediates employment disputes and volunteers with domestic, juvenile and small claims cases.

Thompson also currently is the staff to the Kansas Supreme Court's Access to Justice Committee which is working on improving services for lower income and self-representing court users. This committee also is working to improve court language interpretation services.

He administers the Access to Justice Fund which provides grants to civil legal services to programs which provide services to low-income people. He is one of the staff assigned to several domestic violence projects and recently facilitated 21 community discussions on how to improve communication regarding domestic violence cases. He previously was the staff to the court's Domestic High Conflict Committee and Interpreter Committee.

Art Thompson may be reached at thompsona@kscourts.org or 785-291-3748.

From Russia to Christian ADR

I am currently the lead pastor of New Life Community Church in Columbia, MO (www.newlifecolumbia.org). I began my college career at the University of Missouri on a swimming scholarship and later graduated with a BA in Bible and Missions from Central Bible College in Springfield, MO. I earned a Master of Divinity degree from the Assembly of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri in 1999. I am currently enrolled in the LLM program in Alternative Dispute Resolution at the MU Law School. For the past 20 years I have worked in various capacities in the local church. For roughly nine years, my wife, Jeni, and I served as missionaries in Kiev, Ukraine. While in Kiev, I had the opportunity to learn the Russian language and culture and participate in countless informal negotiations and mediations.

I was invited to serve as the academic dean of Kiev Bible Institute and as instructor at Evangelical Theological Seminary. I also served as the pastor of International Christian Assembly, a church that served people in multiple languages.

As a pastor, I have helped people with intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup issues related to conflict management for over twenty years. Sooner or later people discover that “winning at all costs” comes with a high price tag.

Over the years I have personally witnessed how conflict, when managed poorly, destroys relationships, teams, departments, or organizations. Nobody wins in a negatively charged atmosphere of conflict - creativity is lost, relationships are broken, and people are damaged. I was beginning to think, “There has to be a better way!”

My interest in mediation and ADR began to escalate with my cross-cultural work as a missionary, pastor, and teacher. As my knowledge of the Russian language grew, so did my understanding that my Ukrainian colleagues did not always see things the way Americans saw things. Functioning as an academic dean in a cross-cultural context forced me into a mediating role on a number of occasions.

My involvement in sports had taught me the win-lose model of conflict management; life was teaching me something different. Most of the time, to win, I had to help someone else win.

This win-win principle wasn't discovered in a book, it was encountered in the hard knocks of life. And the principle of “win-win” seemed to work on multiple levels. It worked in marriage and personal relationships, it worked in teams or departments, and it worked among groups both large and small.

When I focused on helping others thrive, “win”, or find significance, I benefited as well. The words of Jesus, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, began to make sense.

My current interests in mediation include family mediation, collaborative leadership, and conflict management in churches or organizations of all sizes. I enjoy helping people discover new options for management of personal or group conflict.

Tom Ragsdell may be reached at 573.443-LIFE or by e-mailing tom@newlifecolumbia.org.

Far From Expected

Mediation is not a career I had ever thought of pursuing.

I graduated from Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan., in 2007, with a degree in Family Studies and Personal Financial Planning. After that, I took a job with a bank in Kansas City. Unfortunately, with the economy the way it was at the time, the bank closed my branch.

Moving from banking to building management, I found myself not really challenged and not happy with where I was in life. I soon found Baker University's, Baldwin City, Kan., Conflict Management and Dispute Resolution Graduate Program. That is where the thought of mediation as a career, as “what I wanted to do with my life” reared its head.

The program at Baker has been wonderful. I realized I was already using some of the mediation tactics I was learning about in my current job and mediation is a benefit to anyone that is willing to use it.

The program at Baker has introduced me to several people in the field, and gave me a taste of mediation. The teachers in the program deal with conflict management on a daily basis and show us how they use it to their benefit.

I have found several benefits to HMA. I do wish that I could go to more conferences and meet more people in mediation but at this point in time, that has not been able to happen. I find HMA a great resource for meeting people in mediation and learning more about it.

HMA gives me a chance to get out and meet people that are currently in mediation. Hopefully this will be a good stepping stone to when I graduate and start a career in mediation.

Victoria Smith is a new member of Heartland Mediators and may be reached at vls7447@gmail.com