

Mediation Service

Welcome to the latest issue of the RESOLVE:ASL Newsletter which includes details of the ways we have adapted our service within the current health pandemic to allow us to continue to support families and education professionals across Scotland with their relationships and communication.

We can now also share some key points and recommendations from our service evaluation and some useful tools for effective communication.

Breaking from tradition and still communicating



2020 continues to be a challenging and difficult time for us all as we face the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and the restrictions, changes and challenges it places on our daily lives. Addressing conflict and resolving disagreements has become even more important.

In March, as Scotland went into lockdown the Resolve Team were asked to pack up the office and work from home. To begin with we made short term plans, keeping in touch with parents and education teams offering telephone conversations and support to help resolve disagreements. We quickly realised that remote working was

going to be long term and we needed to put in place a system to support our users going forward.

By the end of May we were delighted to be in a position to offer our full mediation and training service online using various video platforms including Zoom, Teams and Skype. We are now hosting all 1:1 meetings and mediation meetings virtually. Moving away from the traditional face to face meetings for mediation has been a huge step for our mediators and users but everyone has embraced this change so well which has allowed us to continue to deliver our service. We are already seeing benefits using virtual mediations; in many cases it has meant we were able to facilitate mediations in shorter time frame and parents have said it has been less stressful being in their own surroundings during the mediation. Our team continues to follow all the mediation processes and procedures and online mediation is still independent, confidential and child centered. We now offer all the technical support and advice to make the virtual experience as positive as possible.



The stresses and strains from the pandemic in the education have been enormous and after months of school closures it was good to see schools re-open in early August. However, this brought many new

challenges, fears and opened previous and new disagreements for parents /carers and education teams returning to the changes necessary to make schools safe for everyone.

Using mediation early in a disagreement is really beneficial and will avoid long drawn out formal processes. Having conversations, being listened to and the opportunity to express concerns in safe facilitated ways is needed more now and can address upset and stresses directly and quickly.



Referral to our service can be made by anyone involved in a disagreement in education - parents, carers, the young person 16 or over, schools or staff in local authority education departments.

To find out more, you can speak to a member of our team on 07955 788967 and hear how we can help resolve disputes through effective communication.

Service evaluation

During 2019 Resolve engaged an independent consultancy "Catch the Light" to carry out a service evaluation. This was finalised early 2020 .



A sample of our service users (parents/carers, local authority partners and education professionals) were asked a range of questions covering all aspects of the mediation

service and we are pleased to share key conclusions and focus for future actions. A full copy of the report can be found on our website or by emailing resolve@childreninscotland.org.uk

The evaluation key results concluded our mediation is:-

- **Built on Trust – neutral helping parties to empathise with each other**
- **Child Centred offering the opportunity for flexibility listening to the child's needs**
- **Builds positive partnerships between families and education professionals**

future focus should be:-

- **promoting early engagement with mediation**
- **raising awareness in the education landscape of mediation benefits and success**
- **ensuring our users understand their long term accountability of agreements and resolutions**

Communication is the key

Good communication is the key to all successful relationships. Maintaining and building mutual trust is vital for parents/carers and education professionals to ensure a child/young person's education journey is not adversely affected by broken relationships and poor communication. Embracing new communication styles often leads to positive outcomes.

Why not try and share our 7 "BE"s



- **BE PREPARED TO LISTEN**
- **BE POSITIVE**
- **BE CALM AND POLITE**
- **BE AWARE OF BODY LANGUAGE**
- **BE CLEAR & CONCISE**
- **BE FACTUAL**
- **BE MINDFUL THAT THE CHILD / YOUNG PERSON NEEDS ARE AT THE CENTRE**

Let us know if you enjoyed reading our newsletter or have any suggestions for future features, for this or to find out more about our services , contact Sandra or Alison on 07955 788967