



April 2020

# MV Mediation Program

## We Can Work it Out!

### Financial Conflict Coaching is Available!

Ken Andrichik, MVMP Board member

Finances are at the foundation of many disputes and conflicts. Individuals coming to the mediation table need a thorough understanding of their financial condition. Gaining that understanding often requires a deep examination of assets and liabilities, a more complete analysis than most people ever have to do. If you need assistance to get a handle on your situation, this article explains how the Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program (MVMP) seeks to build financial knowledge in our community.

A keen knowledge of one's financial condition is crucial. Without it, there is no way someone can truly understand their financial needs and interests as related to a conflict. MVMP's

### MEDIATION MUSINGS

## Still Working From Home

Sara Barnes, Lead Mediator



We are home and doing our best to get through this time intact. Are you managing under the present circumstances?

In March the Mediation program was chugging along in one of our busiest months. Four courses up and running. About a dozen mediation cases moving forward. Some of us were planning to go

financial conflict coaches can help people negotiate more effectively.

For example, mediators are finding that many parties in a divorce or separation matter need help to complete the required Family and Probate Court Financial Statement; a form seeking details about income, expenses, assets, and liabilities. MVMP has experienced volunteers ready to assist either or both parties to gather the necessary information, and more importantly, to understand their financial position. Often in relationships, one party takes primary responsibility for money matters. If that relationship is to be ended or altered, BOTH parties need that knowledge.

The volunteers can assist with explaining things like:

- What are my true assets?
- How liquid (or easily accessible) are those assets?
- What is the total picture of my liabilities?
- What would it mean to change the amount or frequency of payments?

Coaches are NOT advocating for either party. Parties ultimately decide for themselves whether an offer or proposal is in their best interest. However, people make more informed decisions if they have a deeper understanding of their current financial status.

Contact MVMP to seek assistance from a financial conflict coach to prepare for a mediation, during the mediation to understand the ramifications of a proposal, or after a mediation if revisions to an

off island for our statewide spring conference. We left one or another activity one day saying "see you next week!" And then. We didn't.

The new reality--its an overused phrase already. Who would have predicted that we would all know it means that we are staying far away from each other, learning new technology, checking the mirror to see our masked face. The news is grim and scary. We know people who are sick.

In difficult times, new ideas bubble to the surface. Otherwise, we would never have started writing a daily message about conflict resolution. Have you seen *Working From Home* the daily conflict resolution message? If not send us an email and we will add you on to the list.

Today two mediators held a perfectly normal mediation over a video conference platform. They were in different places, and managed to use their mediation tools and to help the disputants to come to an interim agreement.

The State conference happened on Monday. Online it took half the time and no one had to drive to see each other. Staring at ourselves in the video conference box, we found out what each other looks like in their living room, in their comfy chair, who has dogs and some interesting decor.

We are not under the mistaken impression that this situation is a good one. We know there is conflict out there, and we wish we could reach out to help more. And the inequities of the present

agreement become necessary. Many parties may need help in trying to assess how virus-disrupted jobs or income might impact one or both parties!

MVMP is also planning workshops to build financial knowledge generally. The *National Financial Capability Study 2018* found that the financial literacy rate among Americans decreased significantly from a similar study in 2009. We want to assist our community members to build their knowledge.

Watch for our session on “Your Income and Expenses” a presentation using materials from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation’s *Money Smart for Adults* series! Through education and financial coaching, MVMP wants our community to have the tools to effectively resolve conflicts.

[Register for Upcoming Events](#)

moment seem particularly atrocious. We are thinking about each other and sending good thoughts to buoy spirits as best we can.

We were *always* in this together, though we might not have thought about it that way until now. Today, all of us at Martha's Vineyard Mediation are doing what we can to be a helpful part of our Island community. Let us know if there is something we can do to help you.



## MISSION

***Our mission is to encourage and assist all residents of Dukes County—full-time, part-time, and seasonal—to resolve conflicts through mediation and other constructive dispute resolution tools. We do this by providing education, outreach, mediation, conflict coaching and facilitation. Our secondary mission is to relieve congestion in the court system.***



## Parent Mediation Program

Parents, its hard to have the kids home all the time. Are you having trouble handling conflict at home. We can provide mediation or conflict coaching through phone or video conference. We have mediators with child development experience and can consider parent - teen mediation sessions

based upon your circumstances.

If you need help talking with your spouse, we are part of the Statewide Parent Mediation Program (PMP) providing parents--married, unmarried, divorced or separated--with up to 4 hours of free mediation. MVMP Family and Divorce mediators can provide you with mediation sessions to discuss parenting issues custody schedules, financial decisions, communication or to renegotiate existing plans. Please contact the office to schedule an intake call. We are here to help.

[Visit our website](#)

**You can support MVMP with a donation.**  
**Make MVMP your charity when you use Amazon Smile.**

## FOR MEDIATORS AND APPRENTICES

**Mediator Saturdays:**

**We are having a Zoom Mediator Saturday!**  
**April 25 from 10 am - 11.**

**Small Claims Dates:** Suspended due to COVID 19

**District Court Coverage:** Suspended due to COVID 19



## MVMP to Waive Mediation and Conflict Coaching Fees through June 2020

**Nancy Grundman, Program Coordinator**

As we all continue to comply with guidance to stay home until the public health crisis has improved, we would like to let you know what is happening with MVMP. We are continuing to provide our Conflict Coaching and Mediation services by conference call or by video conferencing.

We have also been able to continue with many of our courses, trainings and workshops. We recently finished our Conflict Coaching class and are finishing up our Conflict Resolvers Course geared towards those individuals involved in public service. Both have continued through video conferencing. We will be rescheduling our Intro to Mediation class to the Fall. If you are interested in signing up please email us.

Our Youth Mediators continue to meet through video conferencing to continue their training. Technology has given us the ability to continue

operating even though everyone is in different places.

We, at MVMP, understand how stressful life is presently,

- some are learning new ways of working remotely and a new way to deal with colleagues,
- some are dealing with new financial realities,
- some are dealing with family issues, and
- some have previously unresolved small claims cases.

In solidarity with the Island Community and in order to do our part, **MVMP will waive its fees** for Conflict Coaching and Mediation Services until the end of June. We are committed to continue to help Islanders. As our tag line says, **We Can Work it Out!**

If you would like to make a donation to MVMP please go to [MVmediation.org](http://MVmediation.org) and go to Donate.

## Why I Mediate.

### Mediator Spotlight: Sarah Safford

I chose to be a mediator so that I could develop the communication skills needed to generate more peace all around....starting with my own personal relationships and in community groups that I'm a part of. It's been great working with the Youth Mediation Project to build awareness of mediation and conflict resolution skills in the next generation.

Youth Mediation

# Youth Mediators We will persist!

Sarah Safford,  
Youth Program Coordinator



The Youth Mediation Program: Each One Teach One, is a collaboration between Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program and the Aquinnah Cultural Center. In the face of the global pandemic the Island youth have proven to be a resilient and committed group, eager to learn the valuable life skills of conflict resolution.

We started the second round of training for the Youth Mediation Program at the beginning of March with a diverse group of 12 students from MVRHS and several members of the Wampanoag tribe. Our goal is provide educational experiences for Island youth so that they are

prepared to become peer mediators. The course also incorporates ideas from the Wamapanoag traditions of conflict resolution into the work with young people.

For the first three sessions we met at Alex's Place, the teen center at the YMCA. Then COVID-19 hit and all school and public programs were shut down. We decided to move our training onto video conferencing and reached out to the group by email. While some participants had to drop out and others are still struggling with limited internet and access to computers, a strong group of young people continue to work together to complete their training.

As we are all stuck at home and following social distancing protocols, the youth and adults involved in the project are finding that connecting to others and practicing creative problem solving online is an activity that we enjoy and do well. A few new participants have joined and the whole group will help them to complete the course successfully.

Soon a cadre of trained Youth Mediators will be available to help with conflicts in and out of school. For information on how to schedule a mediation for youth related conflicts please contact our office. We can work it out!



**Thank you for the amazing support of our donors and sponsors  
and to Rockland Trust Foundation, Cape Cod 5 and Cronig's  
Market for their continued support.**

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