



We Can Work It Out!
June 2021



OUR MISSION

To serve our community by providing education, outreach, mediation, conflict coaching, facilitation, and related services to help prevent and resolve conflicts.

OUR VISION

To create an island of competent, capable, and effective conflict resolvers.

[Visit our Website](#)



Mediator Musings: Listen, Learn and Lean In

Sara Barnes, Executive Director

It's not so easy to listen well. To consider the ideas of others who don't match up with our own way of thinking. To take in new information, and consider that the other person has something valuable to say. To stay present and keep an open mind. Some say we are in an era when listening is going out of style. That's not what I'm seeing from my vantage point.

The mediators got together this past week, as part of our ongoing professional development, to collegially work to improve our listening skills. Mediators rely on our ability to listen strongly, to pick up ideas quickly and to be able to accurately reflect back what was said. Working together we practiced a variety of listening strategies.

On May 24th and 27th, fifteen folks from the Brazilian community gathered in two online Listening Conversations. "I was so glad I was on my phone," said one, "because I had to listen." These one-hour sessions convened in order to help our organization gain a better understanding of the conflict landscape for Brazilians who live on Martha's Vineyard. All the participants listened to one another. We made a collaborative chart of all the conflicts reported during the sessions.

Every day in each case, whether in mediation, facilitation, or coaching, our service providers listen carefully. Our Executive Committee met recently to listen to each other recount their experiences and impressions; even though we had all attended the same meeting, we had to listen carefully to one another since each had differing takes and impressions about what had happened. Our beginning efforts toward participating in Re-Entry Mediation involves a practice called Inclusive Listening, a set of practices the Re-Entry mediators will learn and practice. Across our organization there's a massive amount of listening going on. It's what we do.

There's a new book about overcoming the political divide. The author, Peter Coleman, suggests a number of approaches to addressing these challenging issues. Many of his techniques involve deeply listening. And learning from each other—not to necessarily approve each others' perspectives, but to learn in a deeper way about what drives these opinions. Look below in the newsletter to sign up to participate in a book group to discuss Coleman's book, *The Way Out: How to Overcome Toxic Polarization*.

One practice we try to utilize when we listen is to *lean in*. It's a set of body-language actions and also a figurative perspective. When trying to listen well, it works best if we all lean in to each other, open to what is being said, putting aside other distractions, eager to engage with one another and to learn something new. A short article from the Harvard Program on Negotiation suggests this: Ask multiple questions and listen to the answers until you aren't learning anything new. Let's try it out and give each other the powerful gift of listening.

[Listening Skills Article](#)

MV Mediation Annual Meeting

Tuesday June 8

5-6 p.m.

This Zoom meeting is open to the public and we would love to have you join us.

RSVP to info@mvmmediation.org

The agenda includes honoring our retiring board member for over 30 years, Gayle Stiller. We will also review a draft of our annual report, discuss our successes and challenges, and celebrate with our MV Mediation Community members.

The May board meeting focused on updating our policies. An outgrowth of the May meeting will be an ongoing focus on gender bias, gendered stereotyping, and resulting discrimination. For conflict resolvers, uncovering biases is a crucial aspect of our ability to provide quality neutral services to the public. We will add this focus to our 2022 diversity goal.



RESEARCH ON CONFLICTS IN THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY

Our two Listening Conversation sessions had the participation of leaders and influencers with great knowledge on issues that affect the ever-growing Brazilian community on the Island.

We spoke about conflicts within work and family environments, ways to address such issues, and tools for conflict resolution.

This initiative is part of research developed by the University of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC).

Welcome to our Brazilian Community!

We are pleased to be able to provide interpretation and translation services in Portuguese.

Bem-vindo à nossa Comunidade Brasileira!

Nós providenciamos serviços com intérprete ou tradução em Português.



PARENT MEDIATION PROGRAM

FREE mediation is available for parents (up to 4 hours). If you need help talking with your spouse or partner about parenting issues, whether you're married, unmarried, divorced, or separated, we can help. As part of the Statewide Parent Mediation Program (PMP) we provide parents with mediation services to help you address custody schedules, financial decisions, or communication itself, or to renegotiate existing plans.

For more information email info@mvmmediation.org



HOUSING MEDIATION PROGRAM

We are now able to offer FREE mediation services for housing issues. We are part of the State Eviction Diversion Initiative and are providing mediation services for tenants and landlords in Dukes and Bristol counties.

For more information email admin@mvmmediation.org
or call 508-693-2199.

RAFT/ ERAP

The New Federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program

ERAP can help renters with the following costs dating as far back as March 13, 2020:

- Overdue rent (arrears), not to exceed 12 months of arrears
- Up to 3 months of future rent (stipends)
- Utility arrears up to \$1,500 per household
- Moving-related expenses
- First and last months' rent
- Security deposits
- Moving trucks

- Furniture payments (up to \$1,000)

Assistance will be prioritized for households with one or more members who have been unemployed 90 days or more at the time of application, or who have income below 50% of the Area Median Income.

Where to apply:

- Bristol County: [NeighborWorks](#)
- Dukes County: [Housing Assistance Corporation](#)

Please reach out to your neighbors to let them know about the program, too!
For more information call us at 508 693-2199 or send an email to admin@mvmmediation.org

PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS
Conflict Resolution Skills for Families with Older Adults

We are working with a number of multi-generational families to help them to face their conflicts and make advances forward. Our Mediators and Conversation Guides may be able to help your family too.

For more information click on our [flyer](#) or email us at info@mvmmediation.org

Thank you to Martha's Vineyard Bank Foundation for significant financial support for this program!

MEDIATORS' CHECK-IN
Upcoming Events for Mediators
Every Wednesday at 4 p.m.

- **June 2** Listening Skills
- **June 9** Accommodating Parties with Disabling Conditions
- **June 16** Writing Better Agreements
- **June 23** Preparing Standard Mini-Lectures for Use in Mediation
- **June 3** Questions about Brazil

Send an email to info@mvmmediation.org to participate.

TAKE A COURSE WITH MV MEDIATION

Our next class sessions are coming in September and October. Add yourself to the list for the following courses:

- **Conflict Essentials:** Understanding how conflict works, how to analyze a conflict, and how to resolve conflicts in everyday life.
- **CLAMSHELL Conflict Coaching:** This is a protocol for Conflict Coaching that we use here at MV Mediation. Become a conflict coach.
- **Introduction to Mediation:** Learn the basics of mediation to use mediating skills in everyday life or to become a Massachusetts qualified mediator.
- **Workplace Conflict:** Join a 10-session cohort of supervisors and managers to understand how to manage conflict at work.

Send an email to info@mvmmediation.org to participate.

MV Mediation is pleased to be providing ongoing support and facilitation of the All Island Planning Board Group. The group meets twice a month to discuss planning issues across the island.

RE-ENTRY PROGRAM INITIATIVE

MV Mediation is looking forward to our involvement in the Re-Entry Program Initiative. We are one of a dozen nonprofit community mediation centers that are part of a collaborative network under the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC), working with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections and Sheriff's Departments to provide pre- and post-release Re-Entry Mediation.

Since 2018, MOPC and a number of our sister organizations have been collaborating to develop this pilot program in jails and prisons around the state. The basic idea of the program is to provide a safe and confidential space for an inmate and a family member or friend to have important conversations that they need to have in preparation for the inmate's being released back to the community. Alternatively, the program provides mediation for those recently released from incarceration.

MV Mediation has a team that is being trained to become Re-Entry Mediators. These mediators will meet with the inmate and a person of the inmate's choosing from the outside. The idea is to help the two have an open and honest conversation about the transition and to establish a clear plan regarding their near future. They can talk about housing, kids, any plans for working, or whatever else is important to discuss. Conflict can be lingering from before the incarceration and there often is anger, resentment, and shame as a result of family changes during the incarceration as well. This program helps to heal the relationship and can make a huge difference in the success of the inmate upon release. The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism up to 15% among the prisoners served.

For more information call us 508 693-2999 or email info@mvmediation.org

DIVORCE and FAMILY MEDIATION TRAINING

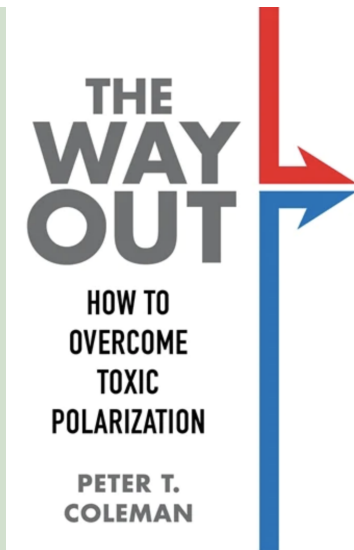
Nancy Grundman, Kiki Homer, and Paula Reidbord participated in the three-day Intensive Divorce and Family Mediation training program. This training qualifies mediators to provide these services in Massachusetts. Nancy is already a certified Divorce Mediator. We welcome Paula and Kiki to MV Mediation's Divorce Mediator Roster.

For more information call us 508 693-2999 or email info@mvmediation.org

TOWN HALL PRESENTATIONS BRISTOL COUNTY

We were honored to be invited by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) to make two Town Hall presentations in Fall River and New Bedford about the mediation process in the context of the housing crisis.

The presentations were made in Spanish and Portuguese in order to address the large diverse local community and were broadcasted via radio and various social media channels.



BOOK GROUP

Join our group as we discuss Peter Coleman's book *The Way Out: How to Overcome Toxic Polarization*. This will be a fun and interesting way to absorb the current research on the toxic polarization that is so prevalent today. There is much to be learned here, including some intriguing strategies and tools for taking action to bridge the divide. Join the group on Zoom; we plan to meet twice a month, but participants will decide the schedule and whether they want to meet in person in the future.

Send an email to info@mvmediation.org to participate.

To see more of our programs and services, visit our website

Visit our website

or follow us on Facebook and Instagram



Donations can be made through the link below, through the MV Mediation website, or by check.
MV Mediation • P.O. Box 761 • Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

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At MVMP our slogan is *We Can Work It Out!* Would you like to borrow this slogan?

Feel free. *You Can Work It Out!* We are here if you need our help.

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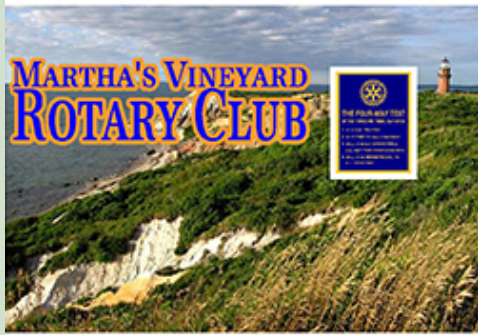
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And to our partners for their continued support:

Office of the Attorney General

Commonwealth of MA Court System

UMass Boston

Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC)

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Martha's Vineyard Mediation Program

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