



This is a regular look at recent news in the world of mediation, focusing in particular on the workplace and throwing in some of my own views for good measure. In this edition I look at a couple of articles showing how the NHS is making good use of workplace mediation. I feature an article from Cosmopolitan, which has definitely not happened before(!), plus articles on some interesting questions such as whether email helps or hinders resolution and whether conflict can be positive.

Marc Reid

NHS Trusts lead the way on workplace mediation



We have all heard stories about the struggles the NHS is facing, so it is great to hear some

positive news coming out of our great national institution. Two recent news items demonstrated that some NHS Trusts are making good use of workplace mediation. This article ([here](#)) describes how one trust, University College London Hospital, is embedding mediation, not as a 'standalone' solution, but as part of a wider culture change. This is so important and is borne out in the other piece which is ACAS research on the approach to conflict resolution at East Lancashire Hospitals. The research ([here](#)) indicates that although they had previously tried a mediation scheme, they are now relaunching with mediation as part of a wider response. This includes a new Early Resolution Policy as well as a focus on developing managerial skills. There are some excellent 'lessons learned' which will be valuable for anyone thinking of introducing mediation into their organisation.

Cosmo advice on managing conflict in the workplace!

Generally I'm not a fan of 'quick fix' articles... they tend to oversimplify and see things as black and white. This article ([here](#)) caught my attention though, not least as it appears in Cosmopolitan magazine, not the typical kind of journal to find advice on dealing with workplace conflict! What I like is the suggestions are all good common sense and there is no attempt to oversimplify with labelling. I particularly like the emphasis on good communication and the risk of misunderstandings. The article also highlights that workplace conflict can even be an opportunity. So all in all a good article with some straightforward sensible suggestions. And perhaps the best aspect is that this appears in a magazine which you wouldn't typically be reading to find workplace conflict advice - thereby helping to spread the word to a wider audience!

Want to share a thought or make an enquiry? We'll be glad to hear from you:

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Can conflict be positive?

In our training sessions we always ask early on what words participants associate with conflict. Almost invariably those words are negative in connotation e.g. 'anger', 'stress', 'fight'. This HR Magazine article ([here](#)) invites us to consider that workplace conflict can be perceived as positive. It can indeed be seen this way. We actually need disagreement at work to move things forward; where would innovation be if we didn't challenge existing ways of thinking? However, having positive conflict is not easy. It demands that we respond to challenge with openness and curiosity rather than defensiveness. Self awareness is key to this as well as management development training to build the necessary skills. Getting everything in the right place to see conflict as positive is definitely a challenge!

Toxic behaviour goes unresolved



This article in the CIPD PM magazine ([here](#)) features survey results which suggest that only 6 percent of toxic employee behaviour is resolved successfully. Another survey cited found two-thirds of employees had experienced workplace conflict. I'm surprised it was this low! The article features advice from various HR and conflict management practitioners and there is a general theme that policy and formal procedures do not help resolve issues. The focus should be on leadership, developing skills, using informal methods where possible and acting early before escalation. And of course, using an external mediator is highly recommended!

We recently updated our website, providing even more great resources, most of which are free, including our ebook '8 Stages of Workplace Conflict'. Take a look at the website at www.mediation4.co.uk

Email - help or hinder resolution?



One of the biggest names in conflict resolution is Ralph Kilmann, best known for being co-author of the Thomas-

Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument. So when he writes an article (and he has written many!) they are invariably worth reading. In this article ([here](#)) Kilmann considers how using email helps or hinders conflict resolution. In my view use of email in this respect has limited benefit, for example clarifying what has already been agreed. I would always emphasise face to face communication rather than relying on the written word where so much can be missed and misinterpreted, giving great potential for conflict. Kilmann makes much the same point and interestingly relates it to the five conflict styles contained in his TKI framework.

Introducing workplace mediation



My most recent blog focused on 14 good practice points for introducing mediation into the workplace. It is based on the points proposed in the ACAS / CIPD guide 'Mediation:

An approach to resolving workplace issues'. Although published over 10 years ago, it remains one of the best guides available for those considering introducing mediation into your organisation. My blog takes each of the 14 points in turn and explores them in a little more depth. Most of the time I agree... but of course not always! I would recommend reading the whole guide but if it's too much, just read my blog [here](#)!

Website: www.mediation4.co.uk