

Community Mediation Maryland

Outreach & Partnership Building

Best Practices

Task Force Members:

Tyler Smith – Chair, Alecia Parker – Co-Chair

Linda Hardman, Leslie Nelson, Penni Doyle

May 2014

Outreach & Partnership Building Best Practices

Outreach and partnership building are both vital functions of any community mediation center (CMC). In fact, virtually every one of the 10-points in the “10-point Community Mediation Model” reflects some aspect of outreach and/or partnership building. Reaching out to connect with individuals, groups and organizations in the community allows a CMC to educate community members, generate awareness of and provide access to mediation and other conflict resolution services. When done effectively, outreach and community education leads to the cultural change that is at the core of the CMC mission. Going further to establish relationships and develop mutually beneficial partnerships with those individuals, groups and organizations can be a significant factor for a CMC’s community presence, growth and sustainability. At its heart, outreach and partnership development are an important way to incorporate mediation into the community and the community into the center.

There are several components to outreach and partnership building. We recognize that, in many ways, partnership building and outreach interconnect. Outreach, in many instances, can lead to opportunities for partnership building and partnership building, in many instances, can lead to further opportunities to conduct outreach. After gathering information in various ways from numerous CMC staff and volunteers from around the state, this best practices document was assembled in a way that breaks the outreach and partnership building down, separately, into three categories from left to right including; overall goals, best practice concepts, and the specific strategies and ideas to achieve them. The document has been designed to not only highlight best practices, but to support CMCs in generating new and creative ways to approach outreach and partnership building, while also upholding consistency and quality assurance.

Best Practices on Partnership Building

Partnership Building Goals	Best Practices	Ideas & Strategies
<p>A. Establish New CMC Partnerships</p>	<p>A1. Identify groups and organizations in the CMC’s community who could benefit from CMC services. (See outreach section on ideas on how to find these groups and organizations)</p>	<p>A1.1 Use volunteers’ associations and networks by keeping them informed with information about where the CMC is trying to build partnerships.</p> <p>A1.2 Think broad about the organizations and groups who might be involved with some of the current cases and community members who are coming to your center. Think about where people in conflict or in need of support with difficult conversation might go when seeking help.</p> <p>A1.3 Consider partnerships that can work with the mediation movement in a multitude of ways, such as referrals, mediation space, trainings, recruitment, donations, fundraising, etc.</p> <p>A1.4 After each mediation, ask participants to complete a form requesting feedback on how to connect with the community, including ideas for organizations for partnerships.</p>
	<p>A2. Establish an initial contact and an in-person meeting(s) with key people in the potential partnership group/organization</p>	<p>A2.1 Confirm who will be the CMCs contact person and identify who needs to be present at the initial meeting(s).</p> <p>A2.2 Establish a date and time that works best for everyone.</p> <p>A2.3 Prepare for the meetings by doing research on the group/organization.</p> <p>A2.4 Discuss the mediation process and other CMC services enough to get them interested and informed. Be specific and use examples that are relevant to the partner and/or the work they do.</p> <p>A2.5 Use the things the group and/or organization members say and questions they ask to identify what’s important to them. Weave their</p>

		values, interest and mission into the explanation of services the CMC can provide.
	A3. Pinpoint/highlight mutual partnership benefits and provide free presentations or trainings to those groups and organizations	<p>A3.1 Offer free presentations to provide information and answer any questions on the CMC’s services or the mediation process.</p> <p>A3.2 If the CMC has the capacity; offer 1-3 hr. free conflict management/resolution trainings for additional members of the potential partnership. If your CMC does not have the ability to provide training (mentioned in 3.2-3.3) to a potential partnership, contact CMM for training support.</p> <p>A3.3 In presentations and trainings use examples and demonstrations that relate to group or organization to create buy-in and interest.</p>
	A4. Assess the capacity of your CMC to determine how you can meet the expectations and needs of new partnerships	<p>A4.1 Review size, strengths, skills, and availability of your current mediator roster.</p> <p>A4.2 Review the CMC’s current staff capacity and resources.</p> <p>A4.3 Identify what advanced trainings or skills volunteers and staff would need for a new partnership.</p> <p>A4.4 Work with CMM to mentor or train staff and volunteers, if necessary.</p>
	A5. Identify and agree upon clear and realistic expectations with the potential partnership	<p>A5.1 Acquire clear information on what the partner would want from the CMC (e.g, mediation case outcome information).</p> <p>A5.2 Give the partner clear information on the CMC’s processes. For example, referrals, intake, scheduling, mediation logistics, etc. Explain the role of confidentiality and what can and can’t be shared.</p>
	A6. Be persistent with potential partnerships	<p>A6.1 Increase awareness and understanding by maintaining regular contact by phone, email and in-person with potential partners.</p> <p>A6.2 Discover events that the potential partner is having and find ways</p>

		the CMC can attend or even participate (see Outreach section below for more on this topic).
	A7. Document contacts made with potential partnerships	A7.1 Use database or other forms of record keeping (i.e. physical folders) to track contacts made with key people from potential partnerships. Follow up regularly with those individuals in order to keep to CMC fresh in their minds.
B. Maintain/Nurture/Grow CMC Partnerships	B1. Identify contact people for each partnership	<p>B1.1 Establish a contact person and back up contact person at the partnership organization/group. Maintain accurate and updated contact information for each those people.</p> <p>B1.2 If possible, obtain a variety of contact information from other individuals at the partnership organization/group.</p> <p>B1.3 Establish a CMC contact person and back-up contact person for each partnership (This may include the same individual for multiple partnerships). It is often recommended that one of these people be the CMC Director or Program Manager to ensure consistency.</p> <p>B1.4 Keep all staff members and volunteers informed about partnerships through staff meetings, newsletters, emails, potlucks, etc.</p>
	B2. Communicate clearly, frequently and consistently with each partnership	<p>B2.1 Maintain communication with the partnership contact person on a consistent and frequent basis. Strong partnerships come from good relationships.</p> <p>B2.2 Hold regular check-in/feedback meetings with partnership organization/group to evaluate the partnership, keep CMC fresh in their minds, highlight successes, and address any concerns. (i.e. has anything changed with processes, approach or personnel)</p> <p>B2.3 Provide a written progress report and other requested documentation to the partnership on a periodic basis.</p> <p>B2.4 Keep partnerships informed about CMC activities through email, phone calls, newsletters, website, social media, etc.</p>

	<p>B3. Deliver good ‘customer service’ and provide quality CMC services</p>	<p>B3.1 Design case management, training and other protocols (based on the type of partnership) to meet the expectations established with each partnership.</p> <p>B3.1 A good quality assurance system and strong mediators is the best way to ensure that partners will be satisfied with the service and continue making referrals.</p> <p>B3.2 In order to meet specific expectations of partnerships, hold orientations and/or in-service trainings for volunteer mediators and staff.</p>
	<p>B4. Seek opportunities to further engage partnerships (Also see B6)</p>	<p>B4.1 Stay aware of your partners’ activities and events and encourage volunteers and staff to attend or participate.</p> <p>B4.2 Invite groups and/or individuals from your partnership’s to attend and participate in CMC events.</p>
	<p>B5. Document the development of each partnership</p>	<p>B5.1 Document expectations and agreements in writing through MOU’s, and/or communication logs.</p> <p>B5.2 Maintain an electronic and/or physical file for each partnership to store any related documentation or communication.</p>
	<p>B6. Work towards building well-rounded, all inclusive partnerships</p>	<p>B6.1 Look for ways to expand existing partnerships to include multiple cross-benefits. Partnerships can generate not just referrals, but mediation sites, training opportunities, outreach events, in-kind donations, fundraising assistance, cash donations, etc. Partners may begin as mediation sites and then as the relationship and trust is built, they may start to make referrals or request training.</p> <p>B6.2 Provide partnerships with CMC resources and information to make referrals, request trainings, provide mediation space, refer potential volunteers and provide financial support.</p>
	<p>B7. Show recognition and appreciation for</p>	<p>B7.1 Show appreciation by sending thank you cards, making personal</p>

	individual partnerships	phone calls, giving awards and recognizing partnerships in outreach or promotional material.
C. Reconnect/Rebuild CMC Partnerships	C1. Identify causes for unsuccessful or fading partnerships	<p>C1.1 Have staff and volunteers meet and discuss changes, strengths and weaknesses in the specific partnership development. (i.e. – CMC capacity/resources, CMC processes, partnership communication, contact people).</p> <p>C1.2 Meet with partners to discuss changes, strengths and weaknesses in the specific partnership.</p> <p>C1.3 After identifying specific areas of concern and understanding what is important around each of them, the CMC, in collaboration with the partnership, can explore options and ideas (running a brainstorm!) for how to address them.</p>
	C2. Follow up with former partner organizations/groups	<p>C2.1 Follow up with current contact people by phone, email or in person to discuss ways to reconnect.</p> <p>C2.2 Set up an in-person meeting with people from the group or organization; revisit CMC services and how they can meet the needs and mission of the group or organization.</p> <p>C2.3 Listen to the concerns of the group or organization.</p> <p>C2.4 Use a survey or other data collection methods to obtain information on the current needs and interest of the partnership.</p>
	C3. Document attempts at partnership building	<p>C3.1 Use database or other form of record keeping (i.e. physical folders) to track relevant communication and meeting information.</p> <p>C3.2 Share any relevant communication and meeting information with CMC staff and volunteers.</p>

Best Practices on Outreach

Outreach Goals	Best Practices	Ideas & Strategies
<p>A. Increase Community Awareness of and Access to the CMC and its Service. Communicate the Idea that Conflict Can be Resolved Collaboratively.</p>	<p>A1. Develop collective strategies and plans for community outreach growth and progress</p>	<p>A1.1 Designate a volunteer or staff member to act as a point person for planning, coordinating, monitoring and expanding CMC community outreach efforts.</p> <p>A1.2 Establish an outreach committee who can focus on planning, coordinating, monitoring and expanding CMC outreach efforts.</p> <p>A1.3 Plan community outreach in a way that creates opportunities to connect with individuals, groups, organizations and areas of the community who reflect the diversity of the community with regard to age, race, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and geographic location.</p> <p>A1.4 Hold frequent meetings to discuss the CMC’s community outreach successes and challenges as well as collaborative ideas to address them.</p> <p>A1.5 Create an inclusive and collaborative approach to community outreach by considering and inviting input from staff, volunteers, board members, community members, partnership members and any other individuals/groups affiliated with the CMC.</p>
	<p>A2. Design and distribute marketing/promotional materials through multiple mediums</p>	<p>A2.1 Design and create physical materials that can be given to people. Some options include brochures, posters, business cards and flyers.</p> <p>A2.2 Design and maintain a website and/or other social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) that delivers CMC information to a widespread audience.</p> <p>A2.3 Craft content in a way that succinctly describes services, provides a description of their benefits and also explains how to access them (phone,</p>

		<p>email, address, website, etc.)</p> <p>A2.4 Collect and maintain a list of community partnerships and organizations that should routinely have CMC information.</p> <p>A2.5 Provide marketing/promotional materials to a variety of CMC partnerships and organizations for display and distribution.</p> <p>A2.6 Provide generic marketing/promotional materials to volunteers, staff, board members and other individuals affiliated with the CMC to disseminate on their own amongst other affiliations or in regular conversation in order to share information about CMC services and the various opportunities to support them.</p>
	<p>A3. Go beyond distributing information to build a concrete CMC community presence and build relationships</p>	<p>A3.1 Identify events in the community or being hosted by partners where CMC outreach opportunities are available. Secure space/spots in order to attend. Consider fairs, festivals, parades, farmer’s markets, tabling at shopping centers, prayer breakfasts, minor league stadiums, etc.</p> <p>A3.2 Keep CMC volunteers, staff, board members etc. aware of upcoming events via email, phone, newsletters, social media, etc. and solicit volunteers/staff to participate in the event.</p> <p>A3.2 Consider the nature of the event and use a creative (and appropriate) strategy such as tabling, presentations or guerilla/flash theater to conduct outreach and appeal to a diverse audience.</p> <p>A3.3 Provide marketing/promotional material and information from section A1 at all outreach events.</p> <p>A3.4 Engage event attendees with information and interactive activities that highlight characteristics of community conflict resolution and</p>

		<p>mediation such as confidential, voluntary, non-judgmental, self-determination, empowerment, conflict styles, active/strategic listening, etc.</p> <p>A3.5 Use a sign-in sheet to capture event attendee’s specific contact information and areas of interest</p> <p>A3.6 Follow up with interested event attendees by email and/or phone in a timely fashion to discuss ways they can become involved with the CMC.</p> <p>A3.7 Keep accurate and updated records of outreach events that include the event name, hosting organization, date, time, staff/volunteer participants and any other useful event specific notes.</p>
	<p>A4. Always consider the outreach audience and tailor content and activities to match</p>	<p>A4.1 Ensure that all outreach marketing/promotional materials are socially representative in both graphics and content.</p> <p>A4.2 If using activities or presentations, modify or develop new ones that can be accessible to different ages, races, genders, ethnicities, income levels, education levels, and geographic locations.</p> <p>A4.3 Use scenarios and situations that are specific, realistic and can be relatable to members of the given outreach audience.</p>
<p>B. Educate the Community on Mediation and Conflict Resolution Processes</p>	<p>B1. Train community members in conflict resolution skills they can use on their own</p>	<p>B1.1 Conduct workshops and trainings on conflict resolution, collaborative problem-solving and other topics.</p> <p>B1.2 Use interactive activities and experientially based learning that targets the audience of a particular presentation. (Section A4 should also be applied to training)</p>

		<p>B1.3 Encourage volunteer mediators to practice transparency with their skills used in mediation and other processes to demonstrate collaborative communication and problem-solving</p>
	<p>B2. Demonstrate the benefits of mediation and other conflict resolution services several accessible ways</p>	<p>B2.1 Present positive stories of change in people’s lives, community situations, and other areas through mediation and/or conflict resolution – in newspaper, on Blogs, on Social media outlets/Facebook, Twitter, in newsletter, and all materials from CMC while maintaining confidentiality.</p> <p>B2.2 Identify past participants who are willing to share their positive experience with mediation and participate in outreach events with the CMC.</p> <p>B2.3 Talk about conflict in a way that helps to shift individual and community perceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use example that highlight conflict as neutral energy that has the ability to bring about change depending on how the energy is used. • Use examples that highlight the benefits of handling conflict productively. • Use examples that highlight what it means to meet people where they are and work on understanding without judgment.
<p>C. Learn and Respond to Community Conflict Resolution Needs</p>	<p>C1. Identify conflict resolution needs and underserved areas of the community</p>	<p>C1.1 Conduct a community conflict resolution needs assessment (formal or informal).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the community and its residents. • Identify relevant stakeholders. Talk to them about what conflict exists in the community. • Review already existing material regarding the community conflict or potential conflict.

	<p>C2. Respond to community needs with conflict resolution services</p>	<p>C2.1 Use knowledge gained from the community needs assessment to identify ways in which the CMC can provide services to the community.</p> <p>C2.2 Consider the capacity of the CMC when designing plans to respond to community conflict resolution needs.</p> <p>C2.3 Contact individuals to offer conflict resolution services in a proactive way, or if a specific incident or an ongoing conflict exists in the community.</p>
<p>D. Expand the CMC through all-inclusive, well-rounded outreach</p>	<p>D1. Conduct outreach with multiple goals in mind</p>	<p>D1.1 When representing the CMC in the community or on their own time, encourage staff, volunteers, board members, etc. to act on opportunities to recruit new volunteers, identify potential new referral partnerships, obtain new mediation sites and generate funding or in-kind donations to support the CMC.</p> <p>D1.2 When conducting outreach (i.e. tabling) at events where other groups and organizations are involved, take advantage of the opportunity to not only provide information but also to gather information from those other groups and organizations that might benefit the CMC and/or build new partnerships.</p>
	<p>D2. Utilize the CMC’s exiting volunteers, referral partners, mediation sites and funders to create new opportunities for outreach</p>	<p>D2.1 Find opportunities for outreach by asking volunteers to identify other individuals, groups, organizations and/or events with which they are affiliated.</p> <p>D2.2 Engage with affiliates of existing referral partners and mediation sites on more than just mediation referrals and space; pay attention to opportunities to educate them on the CMC’s values and services; inform</p>

		<p>them that they too, or anyone they know, can access CMC services.</p> <p>D2.3 Examples of ways in which the CMC can achieve 2.2 include; brown bag lunches, presentations to staff and other affiliates, meetings with organization/group stakeholders, participating in the group/organizations events, listen for examples of conflicts individuals may have going on in their own lives – provide information for access to CMC services.</p> <p>D2.4 Consider outreach opportunities that allow for holistic community education and relationship building. For example, if building a relationship with a homeless shelter, have volunteer mediators serve meals and connect with residents. This allows the CMC to learn more about the shelters’ and residents’ needs and to educate people one on one about mediation. It also builds credibility between the shelter and the CMC.</p>
--	--	---