

# How does **Community Mediation** fit into conversations about community safety and alternatives to policing?

**Mediation** is a voluntary and confidential dispute resolution process that helps people reach agreements, rebuild relationships, and find permanent solutions to their disputes. Mediation lets people speak for themselves and make their own decisions.

**Community Mediation** provides a non-profit, community-led framework for assuring broad access to mediation services throughout the community. Community Mediation Centers offer **mediation at no cost** in [Maryland](#) and [DC](#).

The community mediation movement is rooted in principles of **community justice**, where conflict belongs to the people and communities involved, not to an impersonal state.

**As community members seek alternatives to calling the police, mediation can be used to..**

- Resolve disputes with neighbors and family members without involving courts or police
- Prevent violence by addressing underlying conflicts before escalation
- Support difficult conversations that harness conflict energy among community organizers to help movements for community safety sustain and grow
- Address conflicts among students and families in a way that supports students staying in school
- Make collaborative plans with family and support people about
  - returning to your community after incarceration, drug treatment, or mental health challenges in a way that rebuilds relationships and provides healing and dialogue
  - responding to neighborhood or State violence in a way that supports community cohesion
  - co-parenting in a way that preserves the safety and autonomy of parents, children, and chosen family

**Does mediation work?**

- Mediation has been shown to decrease police and court involvement from before to after mediation, compared to similar cases, even controlling for other factors. (1) (2) (3)
- Mediation has been shown to decrease repeat police calls for service and to decrease the likelihood of returning to criminal court in misdemeanor cases. (1) (2) (3)
- Re-entry mediation, occurring before release from prison, has been shown to decrease the predicted probability of arrest, conviction, and re-incarceration. (4)

**How can I support this work?**

- Use mediation! Using mediation is a way to build peace in your community and to help grow and sustain your local community mediation center
- Refer others to mediation, and encourage community members to call for mediation early and often
- Contact your local community mediation center to make a donation or volunteer

(1) <https://mdmediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Quantitative-Analysis.pdf>

(2) [https://mdmediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Giving\\_Police\\_and\\_Courts\\_a\\_Break.pdf](https://mdmediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Giving_Police_and_Courts_a_Break.pdf)

(3) <https://mdmediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/criminalcourtimpactreport.pdf>

(4) [https://re-entrymediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CMM\\_Recidivism\\_2014\\_11\\_2014\\_Final.pdf](https://re-entrymediation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CMM_Recidivism_2014_11_2014_Final.pdf)