

Mediation of
Juvenile Court Cases
Victim-Offender Reconciliation

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Your case was referred to The Mediation Center by the Juvenile Court in order to develop a "disposition" of the case - - that is, for the petitioner (the victim) and the juvenile (the offender) to reach an agreement about how the offender can repay the victim or restore the loss.

What is mediation? Mediation is a process in which a neutral third party (the mediator) facilitates or helps settlement discussions among the parties. The mediator has no authority to make a decision or impose a settlement on the parties. Although the parties may be ordered to mediation by a judge, any settlement is entirely voluntary. If an agreement is not reached, the parties do not lose their right to return to court.

What is expected of me at a mediation session? The parties are expected to participate. You should be prepared to discuss the facts of the case and what you hope to accomplish in reaching an agreement. Each party will have the opportunity to voice concerns and to speak without interruption. Neither party will be forced to accept an agreement.

TO THE OFFENDER:

As you have admitted, you did something wrong. Someone was hurt by your actions. You will be given the chance to meet with this person, not in the courtroom, but in a private setting.

Each of you will talk about the crime, and you will listen to one another. A specially trained mediator will help with this discussion. The two of you will talk about what was lost or damaged.

Mediation gives you a chance to decide what you can do to repay or restore this loss. You will be helping to make things right again. We believe this is important, and it may also be something you want to do in order to feel better about yourself.

What is agreed to will be put in writing. Both of you will sign this agreement. We will keep in touch with you to make sure you are doing what you have said you would do. We report to the court the progress of your agreement. You will not be released from the court's supervision until this agreement is completed.

TO THE VICTIM:

Victims of crime often feel left out of the criminal justice process. Their feelings of anger, fear and helplessness remain. Their questions are not answered. Restoration of the loss may not occur, and there is no sense of closure.

The Mediation Center invites you, the victim, to be involved in decisions affecting you and your property. No victim is ever required to participate in mediation. The choice is yours.

With the assistance of a trained mediator, you will meet with the offender to discuss the crime, express your feelings, and decide what needs to be done to help restore your loss. It is also an opportunity to get answers to your questions.

Mediation agreements in juvenile cases have a very high rate of fulfillment, and youth who take part in a mediation program have a very low rate of rate of repeating the offense.

The Mediation Center is a non-profit, community-based organization. We are not a state agency. We are not part of the court system or the probation department. If you have any questions about our program, please contact us:



A United Way
of Watauga County
Community Partner

The Mediation Center

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The Mediation Center
 # 1 Public Square, Suite 10
 Columbia, TN 38401

The building is also known as the Courthouse Annex Building, and
 "COURTHOUSE SQUARE" is above the front door.

Our offices are in the basement. You can use the stairs or the elevator.

 We are accessible to everyone.

Phone: 931-840-5583

Call us if you get lost.

