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## EMPOWERING CONVERSATIONS FOR PARENT CARERS – PAMIS TRAINING INITIATIVE

In March 2015 the organisation PAMIS (In Partnership with People with Profound Learning Disabilities and their Carers) began to roll-out a series of training workshops in different locations throughout Scotland, aimed at empowering carers to have more assertive, positive and constructive conversations with the professionals involved in their loved ones care. The Mediation Partnership and Associates were contracted to design and deliver these workshops.

The idea for these workshops grew from a pilot session with PAMIS in Dundee in 2014, at which carers discussed the conflict and challenging situations they were experiencing with local authorities and health services around accessing appropriate support. This session also included input on mediation skills to support carers to manage these situations more confidently, and these were extremely well received.

An extra catalyst driving this initiative was the new Self-Directed Support policy, designed to give carers more say and control over the care packages on offer to their children, requiring them to discuss and negotiate with professionals to achieve the best outcome. These **"children" can be of any age, as many carers** look after their adult children.

Delivering training for carers is a challenge from the outset, as the very nature of their role means they usually have very little time to spare for other activities. Many also have



## EMPOWERING CONVERSATIONS FOR PARENT CARERS – PAMIS TRAINING INITIATIVE

Linda Paterson

extra caring duties looking after young children. However, due to the commitment and dedication of the carers, and to the support from PAMIS, who were able to provide child-care onsite where it was needed, all of the workshops went ahead as scheduled (bar one, which was rescheduled due to illness).

The workshops covered Conflict Resolution Skills and Self-Awareness, along with Mediative Techniques to help carers feel more in control of themselves and the situations they found themselves in. Although we had a specific programme planned, in practice this became very fluid, as it quickly became apparent that an important part of the work was to allow carers to tell their stories and be listened to and supported by each other. The challenging and often harrowing experiences of the carers in all of the workshops, and their resilience in coping with these, was truly humbling.



A number of workshops were also attended by social work or occupational therapy students, most of them on placement with PAMIS. The feedback from all of the students was extremely positive – they felt that working with carers and hearing their stories had given them a far deeper understanding of the issues involved, and the stress carers are under. It also helped them appreciate how passionate carers are about getting the right support for their loved ones. A number of the students remarked they would not otherwise have had the opportunity to “practise” discussing challenging issues with real carers. It would be easy to imagine how professionals may find a passionate and possibly frustrated carer intimidating and difficult to deal with, leading to defensiveness and a negative

experience for all involved. A deeper understanding of the issues will hopefully empower these students to have more constructive conversations with carers in their future professional lives.



As is often the case with people under pressure and up against the system, the most common desire they articulate is that they want to be listened to and their views taken seriously. The carers we worked with were realistic about what was achievable – they knew it was unlikely they would be able to access the ideal package of support for their children in the current climate of cuts and austerity. What they wanted most was to be treated as an equal partner, and recognition from professionals that they are the ones who know most about their child.

Sometimes a build-up of frustration over a long period of time can lead to carers getting stuck in “fight” mode. There was discussion around this, and whether it was useful in getting results. A few carers felt that they had been driven to this, and that it seemed to be the only way they were able to get results, a classic case of “he who shouts the loudest”. However, others who had been through this stage and now adopt a calmer approach recognised that although this may seem to get results in the short term, a positive spirit to enact any decisions made is often absent. On top of this, the amount of professionals not wishing to engage with them, and sometimes actively avoiding them, increases dra-

## EMPOWERING CONVERSATIONS FOR PARENT CARERS – PAMIS TRAINING INITIATIVE

Linda Paterson

matically. Not to mention, it is thoroughly exhausting for all concerned.

Many tips and strategies were discussed and shared in the workshops, both from the trainers experience and also from carers personal experiences of what has worked for them, both in achieving results and managing their stress levels. It was great to see the more experienced carers sharing their extensive knowledge, and all of the carers being so supportive of each other. From the trainers point of view, there were many lessons learned from this experience. It certainly underlined the need to be flexible and responsive to the needs of workshop delegates, as no two workshops turned out to be the same. Once again the importance of good quality active listening was underlined – many of the extremely difficult and tense situations which were described to us would probably never have got to this stage had the carers felt really listened to from the outset.

The feedback from carers has been excellent – examples of quotes from evaluations include: “I will be rethinking my approach”; “I

have strategies to cope now”; “I can restructure what I want to say positively”; “I have practical examples I can use to help me”; and “I have confidence to cope with meetings now”. There was also great therapeutic value for them in meeting with other carers and the mutual support this provided. For the trainers it was a privilege to be able to work with such dedicated and courageous groups of people.

From PAMIS’s point of view, they see it as becoming ever more important that individual carers have a voice and the confidence and skills to use it effectively, given that the way community services are now accessed revolves around important conversations with professionals. As this is unlikely to change, training in mediation skills is becoming invaluable. Currently many families reach crisis point before appropriate services are put in place, so the more carers can be encouraged to engage with training the better. So far, most of the carers signing up to training sessions have been mums, but PAMIS are particularly keen on getting dads involved as well. Watch this space!



### THE MEDIATION PARTNERSHIP *SMR Accredited Mediator Training*



First Course in Scotland to be accredited by the  
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**Dates: Thurs 15th & Fri 16<sup>th</sup>, Thurs 29th & Fri 30th September 2016 + Optional Assessment**

This intensive four day course is suitable for mediators, lawyers, managers, HR personnel and anyone with an interest in gaining or enhancing mediation skills. It will provide delegates with a clear theoretical and practical training course, in line with the Scottish Mediation Network (SMN) *Guidance on Mediator Competency*.

**“Best training event I have ever been to. Excellent guidance. Great fun.”** Delegate from the University of Aberdeen

**“Previous training felt like learning the highway code and having a 'go' in a simulator, whereas with Linda and Aileen it was like getting to drive the car with two very able and encouraging instructors on board to make it a safe and enjoyable experience.”** Lili Hunter, Lili Hunter Consulting Ltd

To book a place, or find out more information, contact Aileen Riddell on 07950 395276 or e-mail [enquiries@mediationpartnership.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mediationpartnership.co.uk) [www.mediationpartnership.co.uk](http://www.mediationpartnership.co.uk)



The University of Strathclyde Law School's Postgraduate programme in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, now entering its sixth year, provides a thorough, practical and exciting introduction to this developing area. Still the only course of its kind in the UK, the programme is rigorous and multi-disciplinary, exposing students to a wide range of approaches as well as being taught by experts from across the UK.

The course combines theoretical and practical elements and has been accredited by the Scottish Mediation Network. Participants will enhance their confidence in dealing with interpersonal and organisational conflict while developing their communication and problem-solving skills. As well as core classes on mediation theory and practice, there are classes on employment mediation, mediation law and policy, arbitration, transitional justice the key business skill of negotiation. Students may also elect classes from the whole range of postgraduate programmes such as Human Rights, Construction Law and International Economic Law.

Students can gain practical experience by volunteering with our [Mediation Clinic](#), which provides a weekly small claims service at Glasgow Sheriff Court. Student mediators work alongside experienced practitioners to develop their mediation skills in a real-world setting.

Start Date: September each year

Mode of Study: Full-Time or Part-Time

Course will be taught by a combination of evening lectures and intensive weekend sessions to maximise flexibility.

Application and further information can be obtained from:

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/courses/law/courses/mediation/>

Contact:

Pauline McKay (Administrator) E: [pauline.mckay@strath.ac.uk](mailto:pauline.mckay@strath.ac.uk)

Charlie Irvine (Course Leader) E: [charlie.irvine@strath.ac.uk](mailto:charlie.irvine@strath.ac.uk)

T: 0141 548 5998





# Cairo Conversations

John Sturrock

I have recently returned from Cairo where, along with former moderator of the Church of Scotland, John Chalmers and another colleague, we have been listening to leaders from the South Sudanese Council of Churches talking about the awful effects of civil war in their country following independence in 2011. The human cost is tragic, the physical consequences destructive and the psychological impact traumatic. We have been exploring a visit to South Sudan later this year to help with reconciliation work there.

What a contrast with two weeks earlier and a two day, 28 hour mediation in the city of London on the topic of a private equity buy-out of a successful start-up business. Or, apparently a contrast.... the human cost in that matter was also great, in broken friendships and loss of trust, the economic losses serious as management time was diverted, from the



needs of reshaping the business to the long-running dispute - and the psychological impact such that some people just wanted to get out if the matter could not be resolved quickly.

And in which one of these matters were these words spoken: "He is speaking - but there is a lot of silence in his heart"?

**It is fascinating to be challenged in one's pre-**sumptions or assumptions. Take the Amman Message, delivered by the Chief Justice of Jordan in 2004. It is an extraordinary statement of tolerance and peace and deserves full reading by all who would comment on Muslim affairs. The Chief Justice emphasises peace, security, neighbourliness, coexistence and respect for others, including those of different faiths and ideas, and the honouring of every human being, without distinction of colour, race or religion. He says that Muslims are called to shun violence and cruelty and to speak with kindness and respect, emphasising compassion and tenderness. The Message rejects extremism and denounces terrorism, which it describes as aberration, despotism and deviation. It places great value on scholarship to help meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Our job as mediators is to help bridge chasms. It is to help bring understanding where people are polarised and perhaps very frightened and where perceptions have been shaped by events often beyond their control. Our job is also to challenge current thinking and the assumptions and prejudices held by many disputants and observers of disputes, including those in our own countries. In its own way, it seems that Jordan has played a similar, mediator, role in the last several years in the Middle East.

Read more in John's blog at <http://www.core-solutions.com/blog/the-middle-east-s-mediator/>



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# From a Distance

Craig Cathcart

We hear more and more about online dispute resolution, but how about online dispute resolution *teaching*?

Last year Queen Margaret University launched its MSc in Dispute Resolution, delivered by distance learning. From the start, we knew that it had to be done well, which meant a number of things: creating bespoke materials suited to online delivery; finding ways to make students feel part of something even when they may never meet; and supporting busy professional learners with competing priorities.

And for the two mediators on the team – Carolyn Hirst and me – there was a particular puzzle. How do you teach in a virtual environment something which we all believe is best learned by doing?

To create the right materials for online viewing, our course leader Chris Gill set us high editorial standards. Keep it short, keep it lively, and back it up. We invested in software allowing us to film ourselves speaking to our slide presentations, then perform simple but effective editing. Our short films were then posted on YouTube, and linked to from our dedicated website. We backed up each film with a published script, and provided direct links through to the essential reading.

Student engagement is encouraged through asynchronous discussion boards. The very first ones asked everyone (tutors too) to post a short bio and some ice-breakers about what brought them on to the programme. From there, a tutor may kick start a **'conversation', and the student can take** some time to compose and post her response at a time that suits her. Other students and the tutor further add to the developing thread. The debates have been friendly, well

informed, and based on careful reading of the literature. The whole thing is online and available for future reference. In effect, the class creates a shared resource for mutual benefit.

**We also host regular online 'drop in' sessions** and mix in tutorials where we expect everyone to log on and contribute at the same time. Technology allows us to hear and see one another, wherever we happen to be at the time.

One year on, we have 20 on the program, and student feedback so far has been encouraging:

*'This course has already developed my understanding of the dispute resolution sector and I am looking forward to continuing to study for a qualification which is very relevant to my career.'*

*'I have learnt to reframe complaints as a problem to be solved by both parties working together.'*

*'The support provided by the teaching staff is really good and you feel like they want you to be successful which spurs you on. There is a lot of reading but the workload is manageable even with a full time job and a four year old to look after.'*

**And our mediators' puzzle? Seeking as ever to 'expand the pie', our solution was to recognise the strengths and limits of what can be done at a distance, and create a counterpart face to face course teaching the practice of mediation.** This will allow our students to meet and bond for real, visit Edinburgh in the summer, and develop their theoretical grounding in mediation into that wonderful practical skill somewhere between art and science.



# Peer Mediation Conference

Roxan Nazifishirayi

## Bringing together peer mediators from across Scotland

In September, SMN will be hosting the first Young Talk conference at Dundee University. The conference is part of the Young Talk project which is a network of peer mediators that has set up over the last 2 years with the help of funding from Young Start. It will offer peer mediators (primary and secondary school pupils) an opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of mediation, and to meet and learn from each other.




mediation community, including the Early Dispute Resolution Group at the University.

The conference programme will be fun and engaging for the young people with highlights including an address by Tam Baillie, Children and **Young People's Commissioner Scotland**, a plenary and workshop by Nick Patel who combines magic with mediation, and some fabulous chaireing from the brilliant Carol Hope. With a range of other interesting activities, it'll be a busy day, and we are all very much looking forward to it!

The conference is taking place at the University of Dundee, which we consider to be an excellent location as we have forged strong local links throughout the course of the Young Talk project. The launch of the project took place in Dundee, along with a lot of the peer mediation training, and we have built up a strong relationship with the local school community as well as the local

Attendance at the conference is limited to the young peer mediators and a select few adults who have worked on the project. We will, however, be reporting back on the learning from what is sure to be a very interesting and insightful day. Keep an eye out for more information in future Collaborate editions!



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**Module 3: Assessment**  
3 - 4 November 2016  
CPD: 20hrs

\* Note that the Summer School is available as free standing three day course. The Summer School is also a prerequisite, as Module 1, for attending Modules 2 and 3.

For details of Core's mediation services and to register for our Summer School, contact Miriam Haboubi at 0131 524 8188 or [Miriam.Haboubi@core-solutions.com](mailto:Miriam.Haboubi@core-solutions.com)



## Network News

### Carol Hope Awarded Honorary Life Membership

The Scottish Mediation Network were delighted to present Carol Hope with Honorary Life Membership at a reception in April. The award made by the Network's patron Ewan Malcolm was given in recognition of Carol's contribution to mediation in Scotland, particularly her work in establishing peer mediation



in Scottish schools, her work in promoting excellence in mediation through work to supports standards of CPD, training accreditation and encouraging the development of reflective practice through supervision and other work.

### Welcome to SMN

Scottish Mediation Network are delighted to welcome five new members since the March edition of Collaborate was published.

Mo Dockrell, John Owen and Malcolm Currie join the Scottish Mediation Register as Practitioners. Susan Gordon joins as an individual member of the Network and Bernica Marine Consultants join as organisation members.

## Resolve conflicts at an early stage

### Mediation Skills

Perth 27th and 28th September 2016 £375 + VAT

This experiential course is endorsed by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) and taught by Rachel Weiss, an experienced workplace mediator on the Scottish Mediation Register.

*"Great mediation skills training. Will take lots away to use within the workplace. Thanks, Rachel and Rowan Consultancy"*  
Noele McClelland, Partner, Thorntons LLP

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01738 562 005



## Board Profile—Andrew Agapiou

What is your day job?

I am a Senior Lecturer at Strathclyde University, Glasgow. My teaching is split between the University's Architecture School and the Law School. I am also an active researcher, with much of my current work at the University spanning the two disciplines. I am just in the process of finishing a book which aims to shed a light on how Court-Connection and Lawyers' perspectives have shaped Court-Connected Construction Mediation Practice in different Common Law jurisdictions. My professional background is in Property and Construction, and when I am not on Campus I also run an active Consultancy Practice, where I help Clients improve their Business Operations. I am just in the process of setting up a Mediation Practice, and been actively involved in a range of disputes, covering the Commercial Field through to Family Matters.

What motivates you to get up on a Monday morning?

The excitement of working and the thought of making this world a better place.

How long have you been a Trustee, and why did you become involved?

I have been a Trustee since September 2015. I decided to become involved as a Trustee to champion and advance public knowledge of mediation and promote public recognition of the Mediation Profession. As someone that comes from the Academic Community, I would like to think I can help the Network engage actively with the research community, to seek research funding and partnerships to generate evidence relating to the use and benefits of Mediation.

Did you have any prior knowledge of or involvement with the Network before?

I joined the Network after completing my initial Mediation training in 2011. In early 2015 I become a Registered Mediation Practitioner.

What have been the highlights of your involvement with the Network?

I recently had an opportunity to deliver some CPD sessions covering Neutrality in Mediation. This was a great opportunity for me to meet fellow practitioners across Scotland, engage and debate contentious and controversial issues with like-minded people, and to reflect on my own practice. I also enjoyed being attending and being involved with the Mediate 2015 conference!

What do you see as the main issues that Board has to address at present?

I think the main issues for the Board are two-fold; firstly, how we position the Network to become the central place for Government officials, policy makers and other social partners to engage with to get insights and updates from the Professional Mediation community; secondly, how we develop and maintain partnerships with all stakeholders and social partners who have a responsibility for policy making in the areas of justice, conflict management and dispute resolution.



## Board Profile cont'd and Network News

If you could change only one thing for mediators, what would it be?

Mediation has now entered the mainstream and is playing an increasingly important role in public policy, justice and business growth. Mediators need to consider and reflect on how their mediation profession is perceived by the users and the purchasers of mediation.

What keeps you busy outside of work?

I am quite a sporty, outdoorsy person and when I am not at the gym; Hill Walking is one of my passions. Last year I walked the West Highland Way along with my partner, Fiona. This year we are planning to complete the Skye Trail in the depths of the Autumn.

### Wilma Bailey

Wilma Bailey passed away on Sunday 8th May after a brave battle against cancer.

Wilma was a great advocate of mediation and for many years led the Edinburgh Sheriff Court Mediation project where small claim and summary cause cases are offered mediation. That the project was **so successful is tribute to Wilma's energy and enthusiasm** in engaging the court staff, sheriffs, mediators and most importantly the parties seeking resolution.

Wilma also served on the Scottish Mediation Network Board underlining her commitment to the wider use of mediation.

Colleagues at the Court and across mediation in Scotland will miss Wilma and warmest sympathy goes to her family.

### Five-Day Mediation Skills Course

**2, 3, 9, 10 & 17 June 2016, Edinburgh**



Designed for people who will be using mediation skills in their work, this course is accredited by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework together with the Scottish Community Mediation Network. The course provides information on key concepts in mediation and the opportunity to discuss and practice basic skills in a safe, relaxed atmosphere. It covers the whole mediation process from first contact with the service to closing a case. The mediator's role is explained and practised using typical scenarios for first visits to explore mediation as an option, preparing clients for joint meetings and handling difficult behaviour at a meeting. The course is assessed based on activities from day three onwards culminating in a full role-play of a mediation meeting on day five.

To book a place or for more information please contact: Robert Lambden at Scottish Community Mediation Centre: e-mail [info@scmc.org.uk](mailto:info@scmc.org.uk) Course Fee is £600 per participant.

### Five-Day Mediation Skills Course



# Workplace Employment Initiative Group

May 2016

Dear SMN colleague

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 8th June at the SMN office in Edinburgh. Our main meeting will start at 2pm with a CPD extra session starting at 12.45pm.

## **WEIG member Marion Brown on "Human Givens" at 2PM**

Marion will introduce 'Human Givens' concepts as they relate to conflict and to the mediation process: facilitating recognition for, and respect of, **shared innate 'human' needs – and using innate 'human' resources to** effectively explore possibilities for workable outcomes (please see [www.hgi.org.uk](http://www.hgi.org.uk)).

The optional extra CPD session at 12.45: self-help sharing session on **What's in my "mediation toolkit/toolbag"? what should be?? Please bring** any examples which you use.

All meetings are open to SMN members and provide an opportunity for mediators involved and/or interested in workplace mediation to come together to network and share experiences.

Please email [admin@scottishmediation.org.uk](mailto:admin@scottishmediation.org.uk) if you are able to attend.

Looking forward to meeting up,

Slainte

Linn

Linn Phipps, Chair, SMN WEIG, 07917 564440