

1. Family Mediation Is Broad, Complex, and should be tailored

Family mediation can cover a wide range of issues:

- Divorce and separation
- Parental responsibility
- Relocation and name changes
- Fertility
- Multi-generational dynamics

Key Insight: Each case is unique. Mediators must be prepared for **emotional, legal, and logistical complexity**, especially when neurodiversity is involved.

2. Neurodiversity Requires Thoughtful Adaptation of the Mediation Process

Case Study:

- All sessions were conducted on Zoom.
- Rose and Nigel have been together for 8 years and married for 4 years.
- They have a young son called Harry.
- Rose and her son Harry are both neurodiverse.
- Nigel may also be neurodivergent, though undiagnosed.
- Their communication styles, energy levels, and emotional responses were shaped by their neurodivergence.

Learning: Mediators must:

- Respect the family's own language around neurodiversity.
 - Be alert to **non-standard behaviours** (e.g., Nigel turning off his camera or discussing personal health) and assess them in context.
 - Adapt the process to suit neurodivergent needs—e.g., allowing camera-off participation (with safeguards), or extending the number of sessions.
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3. Mediation Must Be Led by the Family's "Normal," Not the Mediator's

Sarah learned to:

- Observe how Rose and Nigel interacted with each other, not how they interacted with her and adapt her response accordingly.
- Avoid reacting to behaviours that might seem unusual (e.g., Nigel's constipation comment) if they are part of the couple's normal dynamic.

Key Insight: **Neurodivergent families may communicate differently.** Mediators must suspend judgment and stay attuned to the family's internal norms.

4. Mediators Must Balance Structure with Flexibility

While protocols are important, Sarah learned that:

- Sometimes rules need to bend to maintain engagement and trust.
 - For example, allowing Nigel to turn off his camera helped him stay in the process.
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6. Mediators Need to Be "Wired and Noticing"

Sarah emphasised the importance of:

- Observing subtle cues.
- Understanding when a participant is disengaging or using a tactic.
- Being aware of how neurodivergence might influence behaviour.

With neurodiverse clients, **attention to detail and emotional intelligence** are critical.

7. Consider

Child-Inclusive Mediation

Harry, aged 9, was central to the dispute. Sarah reflected on the value of:

- Asking, “What is it like to be Harry?”
- Including the child’s voice in a safe and appropriate way.

Key Insight: **Child-inclusive mediation** can offer powerful insights and ensure the child’s needs are truly understood.

8. Be Satisfied, But Never Complacent

Even when agreements are reached, mediators must:

- Reflect on what worked and what didn’t.
- Stay open to learning and adapting.

Final Thought: Mediation is a dynamic process. **Every case is a chance to learn**—especially when working with neurodiverse families.