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Mediate 2026 Conference - Relationships Shape Mediation: Mediation Shapes Relationships

We are delighted to announce that Mediate 26 is taking place on Tuesday 24th November 2026. The conference explores the dynamic and reciprocal connection between relationships and mediation, examining how each shapes and transforms the other.

Bringing together mediators, conflict resolution practitioners, legal professionals, academics, organisational leaders, and policymakers, the event will provide a platform for learning, dialogue, and innovation. Through keynote presentations, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and case studies participants will explore the human dimensions of conflict and the powerful role mediation plays in fostering understanding, trust, and constructive engagement.

It's a great chance to meet other mediators, learn from other's best practice and perhaps to make some new relationships yourself.

We're not online this year and will be fully focussed on the discussions in the room.

For further details and to book a place click [here](#).



The Art of Impasse Breaking in Mediation

John Sturrock KC

David Hoffman is a very highly regarded US mediator and an equally authoritative Harvard academic, whose writing about mediation and conflict resolution is always rich and thoughtful. Thus, his book about 'The Art of Impasse-Breaking in Mediation' promises much and it certainly delivers.

practice or looking to add new strategies to their repertoire after years of experience. Hoffman is able to draw on his own years of experience to illustrate his points with pithy stories (his own and those of other mediators) and this adds greatly to the book's utility. I also found the footnotes useful as pointers to further reading and as evidence of Hoffman's deep understanding of the field.



Photo by [Chris](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The underlying theme of the book is achieving fair, efficient, stable and wise solutions. Its aim is to enable mediators, lawyers and other conflict resolvers to fill their toolboxes with techniques for breaking impasses and help people to turn conflict into creative solutions – and to equip them to do the important work of peacemaking more effectively.

The book, written with Hoffman's customary humility and respect for parties in conflict, is easy to read and full of helpful advice. It serves as both reassurance for experienced mediators, who will recognise many of the author's suggestions, and an excellent resource for any mediator, whether starting out in

Some of the most interesting and helpful earlier sections of the book deal with the emotional and psychological aspects of mediation – there is "no more important area for continuing education" – and the author's frequent references to the Internal Family Systems Model emphasise how useful he finds this model in practice, to assist mediators in our understanding of, and compassion for, both parties in conflict and ourselves as mediators. It enables the mediator to handle the ambivalence experienced by many of those in conflict where both anger and pragmatism can be strong forces.

Encouraging parties to listen to their "inner mediator" to discover what they can live with enables "Self-led decisions" to be reached, consistent with mediation's fundamental principles of empowerment and self-determination. I found the sections on Kahneman's Thinking Fast and Slow, Jonathan Haidt's The Righteous Mind and cognitive biases particularly helpful, together with the later discussion of Kahneman's work with Amos Tversky on risk tolerance and risk aversion, in a chapter which also addressed topics such as loss of face and issues of principle.

The Art of Impasse Breaking in Mediation

John Sturrock KC

We often hear mediation described as taking place in the shadow of the law. However, the author underscores his repeated advice not to demonise conflict, courts, judges and the rule of law by preferring the expression “in the light of the law”. That is a nice reframe!

In the chapter on process options, we are reminded that, in the words of a colleague, “Every mediation has a beginning, a middle, and an end, but not always in that order.” How true! As is the admonition that if mediators are working harder than the parties to break an impasse, they are working too hard. In that chapter, topics include the use of humour, food, silence, stories and metaphor. Mediators will recognise the difficulty faced by mediators when lawyers expect them to play the “agent of reality” role. And the sections on transparency and authenticity – who we are as people – remind us of our underlying values and that it is ok to be a little nervous and vulnerable at times as we “show up fully as our true selves” in a mediation. We can be, after all, “a positive model for the people whose disputes we are mediating.”

That the chapter on substantive interventions is the longest in the book underscores the richness of its content, with many techniques shared for use in a wide range of situations. Hoffman describes his style as “eclectic” and recognises that, for some, the suggestions here may seem too directive or evaluative (I was interested in Hoffman’s definitions of facilitative mediation as “facilitated negotiation” and evaluative/directive mediation as “assisted negotiation”). Wisely, he counsels that any potential intervention should be presented “with curiosity” as to its appropriateness for the parties and their conflict and might be framed as

questions to assist the parties to find their own solutions. Most of the described interventions are money-related but there are non-monetary aspects discussed too and the concluding section and story on ‘A Lagniappe’ – something unexpected and gratuitous – is heart-warming.

In the penultimate chapter on techniques to avoid, the author refers to Judge Wayne Brazil’s reminder that a mediator’s “overarching mandate is not to secure a settlement but to proceed with a visible integrity that inspires the respect and confidence of all participants.” We are not stakeholders in settlement but enablers of the making of wise choices by parties. And of course, as Hoffman writes in his concluding chapter, “settlements are, paradoxically,



Photo by [TienDat Nguyen](#) on [Unsplash](#)

more likely to occur the less attached I am to achieving them.”

Overall, this is an exceptional addition to the literature on mediation and a ‘must-buy’ for any mediator (and peacemaker) who wishes to expand their repertoire of skills and techniques.

John Sturrock KC is a mediator and founder of Core Solutions.

'The survival of the world will depend on compassion and a sense of caring.'

Mallory Hybl

Over the past two months, I have had the immense privilege of visiting two very different, but equally important centers for peace in the world: The Hague in the Netherlands and Dharamsala, India. I was in the Hague as a member of the 2026 Youth Peace Summit in my role as Peer Mediation Project Officer for Scottish Mediation and was in Dharamsala as a member of the 2025 Dalai Lama Fellows cohort. In each space, I was also present as a student of peace practices and as an advocate for peer mediation as a peacebuilding tool within Scotland and beyond.

In this piece, I will try and distill the lessons I have come away with and wisdom I had



the chance to listen to, with the caveat that inevitably I will be unable to do it all justice. I will also attempt to explain the role I think mediation can play as a tool for creating more peace in the world.

At the Youth Peace Summit, there were three separate, but interconnected events that were most impactful for me. These were: the opening talk by a brilliant practitioner from Corrymeela Community (a peace and reconciliation organisation in Belfast), a presentation on the root causes of radicalism sweeping across Europe, and a workshop on community mediation practices delivered by friends from the Centre for Good Relations.

Now, these things might all seem fairly disparate, but there are two underlying

threads that connect them all and are vital to peace: relationship and belonging. In different workshops, talks, and presentations these two themes kept weaving their way through the summit. They first showed up in the opening remarks given by Fiona, the practitioner from Corrymeela. She stated that, 'Division grows when relationships are missing.' She then followed this up with the fact that, 'People can be different and fully belong.' When relationships and belonging exist despite differences, peace is experienced.

As a peaceworker in Northern Ireland, these remarks were not trivial niceties, but wise insights learned from experience. The lessons she shared were particularly impactful in the context, as the summit began just days after an attack in Belfast that led to subsequent riots across the UK intentionally meant to create fear, targeting immigrants and members of BaME communities.

When relationships do not exist, violence can ensue. This was seen in the riots and was further evidenced in the presentation on the root causes of rising violent extremism in the UK. Although the presentation posited that this rising extremism comes from a complicated array of factors, one of the drivers of this issue is loneliness and lack of a feeling of belonging, particularly among young men. The presenter noted that the push of exclusion and pull to belong in a space can often lead young men to engage with far-right groups and participate in violence as a way to feel seen and accepted within a community that normalises this behaviour. While the implications of this can be tragic, the underlying need is one for relationship and belonging.

So how do we create better places for relationships and spaces for people to belong? We often think that relationships and belonging are things that simply do or do not exist. However, if the summit taught me anything, it is that if we want peace, relationships and a sense of belonging must be fostered through intentional dedication of spaces and opportunities for people to

'The survival of the world will depend on compassion and a sense of caring.'

Mallory Hybl

connect. This is especially true when people are coming from a myriad of backgrounds and life experiences.

the world will depend on compassion and a sense of caring."

I heard ideas of compassion and care resonate throughout the Youth Peace Conference alongside conversations of belonging and relationship. To create genuine relationships and a sense of true belonging, we have to start from a place of compassion and a sense of care for everyone in our communities. As the Dalai Lama so wisely noted, these are not nice additions to our lives, but vital necessities for the continued survival of the world.

The lessons I am taking away from these experiences are: everyone wants to experience good relationships, everyone wants to belong, and we can cultivate these things through community investment rooted in a sense of compassion and care for the wellbeing of all. With the world feeling increasingly divided, I think it is

Along with investment in community spaces and activities where individuals can get to know their neighbors, one of the greatest tools that can be used to make positive relationships more possible is mediation. As demonstrated in the workshop given by the Centre for Good Relations, a main priority within community mediation is to give people space to get to know one another, to hear each other's needs, and to hopefully come to a place of positive relationship and belonging with one another. As Fiona so aptly stated in her opening speech, 'When relationships are given time to develop, assumptions dissolve.' Mediation and conversations are one avenue through which people can understand one another's needs and relationships can be built, repaired, and sustained. This is part of the reason why I feel so passionately about the peer mediation work we are lucky enough to do in schools. I believe that the earlier we can give young people the space to hear one another and connect- the better the prospects for peace in society will be.

During my time in Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama Fellows and I had the incredible privilege of meeting and having an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. During this time, he gave a brief talk and ended with this powerful message, "The survival of

inherently hopeful that the pathway to peace is relational and that our collective flourishing is deeply mutual. With all this in mind, I am coming away with a renewed conviction in the work we do as we all have our parts to play and mediation is one tool that will help relationships to deepen and peace to exist.



Cyrenians Mediation and Family Support now available through Edinburgh Council's Accredited Pathways Framework

We're excited to share that Cyrenians' Mediation and Whole-Family Support service is now available to spot-purchase through Edinburgh Council's Accredited Pathways and Certified Counselling and Therapies Framework.

For close to 60 years, Cyrenians has worked to tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness, recognising that prevention is key to improved outcomes. Family conflict remains one of the leading causes of youth homelessness, making early efforts to improve family relationships a vital and effective part of keeping young people in safe and healthy home environments.

For social workers, education staff, CAMHS, housing teams and other professionals supporting families experiencing conflict, inclusion on the framework provides a straightforward route to commission an evidence-based, whole-family intervention designed to reduce conflict, strengthen relationships and prevent youth homelessness.

What makes the Cyrenians model unique is its combination of professional family mediation and whole-family support, known affectionately as the Amber Model. While our Scottish Mediation accredited mediators help family members have difficult conversations, understand one another's perspectives and work towards shared agreements, our Family Outreach Workers journey alongside the family to address the wider issues that often fuel conflict. This might include support with education, hobbies and routines, emotional wellbeing, accessing services or navigating everyday challenges. Together, these two approaches create the conditions for lasting transformational change rather than simply resolving immediate disputes.

Mediation and whole-family support are delivered over a minimum 12-week programme. The flexibility of the model allows support to be tailored to each family's needs, recognising that rebuilding trust and improving relationships takes time, and an assets-based person-centred

approach.

Being included on the Accredited Pathways Framework makes it easier than ever for Edinburgh Council and partner agencies to access specialist mediation and whole-family support when families need it most. By intervening early, we can help reduce conflict, improve communication and prevent situations from escalating into family breakdown or youth homelessness.

If you are working with a family where conflict is placing a young person at risk of homelessness in Edinburgh, or you would like to find out more about commissioning the service, we'd be delighted to hear from you.



The poster features a teal background with a white silhouette of a city skyline at the bottom. At the top, the word 'cyrenians' is written in a white, lowercase, rounded font. Below it, 'MEDIATION & FAMILY SUPPORT' is written in large, bold, white capital letters with a pink outline. Underneath that, the text 'HELPING FAMILIES BUILD STRONGER & HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIPS' is written in smaller white capital letters. In the center is a photograph of two women sitting on a couch, looking at something together. Below the photo, the text 'Whole-family mediation and support to reduce conflict, strengthen relationships and prevent youth homelessness. Fast, flexible, and proven to create lasting change.' is written in white. At the bottom, the text 'TACKLING THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF HOMELESSNESS' is written in white capital letters, and below that is the website 'www.cyrenians.scot' in a smaller white font.

TACKLING THE CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

www.cyrenians.scot

The hidden cost of workplace conflict for SMEs

Colin Sturrock

Why unresolved conflict drains finances, damages brand reputation, and threatens organisational stability.

I hear it regularly, workplace conflict is often dismissed as a “people issue,” but the evidence tells a different story. For small and medium-sized organisations, conflict is not uncommon, it is costly, disruptive, and can be increasingly visible to customers.

ACAS 2025 conflict prevalence report reveals that 44% of working-age adults



experienced conflict at work in the past 12 months, the highest level ever recorded in Great Britain. Conflict is even more common in SMEs, where prevalence rises to 46%.

CIPD research reinforces this, consistently highlighting the financial burden of conflict, the impact on wellbeing, and the importance of early, skilled intervention.

The Financial Impact: What conflict really costs SMEs

1. Lost productivity and manager time Conflict drains time and focus.

57% of people experiencing conflict reported stress, anxiety, or depression,

and 49% reported a drop in motivation or commitment. These factors directly reduce productivity. Managers also lose valuable time with 55% spent up to a week dealing with conflict.

For SMEs, where managers often juggle multiple roles, this potential loss of capacity has a disproportionate operational impact.

2. Sickness absence and turnover

Conflict is a major driver of absence. 10% of people experiencing conflict took sickness absence, and 10% resigned as a direct result.

Replacing an employee can cost between six and nine months' salary, once recruitment, onboarding, and lost productivity are factored in.

For SMEs, losing even one experienced employee can destabilise a team or function.

3. Escalation to formal procedures

Formal grievances, disciplinarys, and capability processes are significantly more expensive in time, money, and wellbeing.

Formal processes often require:

- HR or external Mediator time
- Legal advice
- Management hours
- Risk of tribunal escalation

Even when cases do not reach tribunal, the internal costs can be substantial.

The reputational impact: How conflict damages brand image

1. Employer brand and recruitment

We understand that organisational culture and conflict management strongly influence employer reputation.

Unresolved conflict leads to negative reviews, poor word of mouth, and

The hidden cost of workplace conflict for SMEs

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difficulty attracting talent, especially in smaller communities across Scotland.

2. Customer experience and public perception SMEs may be more likely than large organisations to experience conflict with customers or clients.

When internal conflict spills into customer facing behaviour, the brand suffers.

This can lead to:

- Service inconsistency
- Complaints
- Loss of repeat business
- Damage to community reputation

For SMEs, whose brand identity is often built on trust and personal relationships, this impact can be long lasting.

Why does early, skilled intervention matter?

Early intervention into seeking resolution is the most effective approach and prevents escalation, reduces costs, and protects employee wellbeing.

A qualified mediator provides:

- Impartiality and psychological safety

Structured, confidential conversations
Techniques to rebuild trust
Faster, more sustainable resolutions
Reduced reliance on formal procedures

For SMEs, mediation is not a luxury, it is a strategic investment.

With conflict at record levels and SMEs disproportionately affected, now is the time to invest in healthier, more resilient workplace relationships.

Colin Sturrock is the founder of Seton HR Solutions

Seton HR Solutions helps organisations to:

- Resolve conflict early through independent mediation
- Train managers in conflict competence
- Strengthen policies and culture to prevent recurrence
- Reduce the financial and emotional cost of disputes
- Protect employer brand and team cohesion

Introduction to Restorative Practice:

24th September 2026

Curious to learn more about restorative justice and restorative practice? Not sure what the difference is and how it works?

Why not join us on this free one-day workshop. Being held online (Zoom), on Thursday 24th September.

Objectives

- The workshop provides learners with an understanding of:
- The effects of conflict
- How conflict develops
- Formal and informal conflict resolution
- Benefits of either mediation or restorative practice
- The Restorative process
- Restorative skills required of a facilitator
- An outline of the restorative meeting
- Restorative practice applications

To find out more, see: <https://scmc.sacro.org.uk/training-courses/introduction-to-restorative-practice-10/>



Home is where the heart is!

May Millward

Scottish Mediation in the housing sector.

Home is incredibly important to most people so when things go wrong it can be upsetting and emotional and minor issues can easily turn into stressful and time-consuming conflict. For some years now Scottish Mediation has been working with the Safedeposits Charitable Trust to provide support to letting agents, landlords and tenants in the private rented sector.

Letting Agents

In partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland we provide three- hour online workshops for letting agents to support them in dealing with conflict that can arise during a tenancy. This is embedded as Module 5 of the Letting Agents Compliance Programme. After looking at conflict and how it escalates, the workshop moves on to

First Tier Tribunal.

"I thought the workshop was very interesting, well paced and covered a lot of relevant information."

"These are skills I will use on a daily basis with tenants and within the team."

Landlords

We have taken a slightly different approach to landlords as often they are not working in a corporate environment, housing may not be their main occupation and they may be less used to taking time out for training. We have developed a Toolkit for Landlords comprising four one-hour sessions split into two parts over a number of weeks.

PART 1 – CONFLICT AND COMMUNICATION

1: Why Tenant Issues Escalate – Understanding Conflict

2: Communicating with Tenants – Preventing and Reducing Tension



demonstrate how skills and techniques used in mediation can help letting agents to effectively manage relationships with their tenants, and between private landlords and tenants. The session considers how best to manage and resolve conflict with a view to avoiding costly and time-consuming disputes, tenancies ending prematurely, deposit disputes, and cases being referred to the Housing and Property Chamber of the

PART 2 – TIME FOR SOLUTIONS

1: Moving Beyond Standoffs – what Tenants say v what they need

2 : Finding Win-Win Options – Practical Problem Solving with Tenants

The sessions are highly interactive and focus on building confidence and practical tools that participants can apply immediately.

Home is where the heart is!

May Millward

"The content is great, I just want to hear more of it! Whenever I am in a difficult situation I will draw on what we have learnt"



Tenants

Our Neighbour Mediation Project provides a free conflict resolution service for neighbours where at least one party is in the private rented sector. The project can be used for any dispute

between neighbours - for example - noise issues, the use and maintenance of communal and shared areas, overhanging hedges and trees, pet behaviour etc.

Anyone is eligible for the service if:

They live in Scotland

At least one of the parties lives in private rented accommodation

All of the people in the conflict agree to participate in mediation

Whilst we have regular enquiries about this service there is a challenge in encouraging the second neighbour to participate. We have recently reviewed our processes and materials to encourage them to at least speak to Scottish Mediation and to support the first neighbour in making their approach about mediation.

For more information contact:

May@scottishmediation.org.uk

07532 739925

Could You Be Scottish Mediation's New Executive Director?

An unexpected and exciting opportunity has arisen at Scottish Mediation for the key role of Executive Director to lead the organisation. This is a great time to be joining, with mediation playing a more central role in Scottish public life and Scottish Mediation continuing its work supporting excellence in mediation. This unique opportunity is one of the most interesting senior roles in the sector.

Whether in the courts, schools, workplaces and in our communities, mediation has a significant role to play. Scottish Mediation has both led and collaborated with others to drive the uptake of mediation and helping to build a coalition of the willing, is a key part of

the Executive Director's role.

Closing date: 12 noon on Monday 17 August 2026

For further details and to apply click [here](#).

scottish
mediation

Director
Recruitment

Scottish Mediation News

Welcome to Scottish Mediation

Scottish Mediation are delighted to welcome Patrick Black, Tenda Calley, Craig Millard, Adrienne Watson, and Maureen Gunn as Practitioner members.

Robin Black, Helen Turner, Alison Ress, Rochanna Sherward, Emma Callaghan, Robert Olaleken, Janice Reid, Tamara Van Strigthem, Hugh Baillie, Alison Smith, Lorna Clark, Jacqui Dempster, Anna Guerreiro, Karen Marsh, Beth Allan, Jayne Crawford, Nina Graham, Holly Don, Pamela Drysdale, Inglis Lyon, Aideen O'Leary, Mamta Patel, Setarah Stephan, Andrew Van Tiem, Susan Williams join as individual members.

Crawford Roberts join as organisation members.

Whether you are an organisation, a practitioner of mediation or someone interested in finding out more we have a range of memberships available which can be viewed [here](#).

Family Mediation Group

a. Wednesday 9th September, 2pm-4:30pm. Cruse Scotland are delivering an online training session on "Grief When No-One Has Died". The cost of the training session is £50 and the booking link is [here](#).

b. Wednesday 9th December, 2pm-4pm. The topic is to be decided.

Mini Meetings

- Thursday 20th August, 9am-10am.
- Thursday 5th November, 9am-10am.

The mini-meetings are informal support meetings, maybe with a case study or discussing a mediation topic someone brings on the day.

It is open to Scottish Mediation members interested in family mediation.

For all the meetings, if people contact Simon Horne in advance (unless they're already on the distribution list) on simon.horne101@gmail.com, I can send them the Zoom link a few days before the meeting.

Managing Relationships in the Third Sector December 2026

This three-hour online workshop provides a practical opportunity to explore: the common causes of conflict in the third sector and how disputes can escalate effective approaches to managing relationships and addressing complaints constructive ways to resolve disagreements before they become entrenched.

Facilitated by experienced practitioners from Scottish Mediation, the session draws on established mediation techniques and also offers clear insight into how mediation works, when it is most effective, and how it can support healthier organisational relationships.

Who should attend? Anyone working or volunteering in the Third Sector. Attendees can claim 3 hour CPD.

For further information and to book click [here](#)

scottish mediation

Scottish Mediation News

Grief When No-One Has Died

This training will build your confidence and insight into recognising and responding to grief beyond bereavement, supporting you to offer compassionate and validating responses to a wide range of losses.

Grief is not limited to death and can arise from experiences such as relationship changes, health conditions, identity shifts, or other significant life transitions. This training will explore how unrecognised or invalidated grief can impact wellbeing, functioning, and sense of self.

Led by: Cruse Scotland

For more information and to book a place click [here](#).

Workplace Employment Initiative Group

The next meeting of the group will be on Wednesday 21st October at 2pm.

The guest speakers will be Malcolm Currie and Shona Crallan.

They will focus on Process Design and Change. This is in the context of mediations and they will be giving insight on recent experiences.

For more information and to book a place click [here](#).

It is open to Scottish Mediation members interested in family mediation.



Place for Hope Bitesize Sessions

NEW 2 hour online foundation sessions exploring ways of navigating conflict

SUMMER DATES

Understanding Conflict

Wed 22 June 10:00-12:00

When Conflict Escalates

Wed 19 August 10:00-12:00

NOVEMBER DATES

Understanding Conflict

Understanding Conflict in Churches

Knowing Yourself in Conflict

Holding Difficult Conversations

The Decisive Space

When Conflict Escalates

Building a Healthy Church Culture

Book now:

[www.tickettailor.com
/events/placeforhope](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/placeforhope)

www.placeforhope.org.uk
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t: 07884 580 359
Charity No: SC045224

