



COMMUNITY BOARDS

Guidelines & Dispute Resolution Process for Course Participants, Trainers, Volunteers, and Role Play Coaches

The Community Boards **The Basics of Mediation Training (Basics)** is the core training program for individuals who are planning to volunteer their time and skills to provide dispute resolution services on behalf of Community Boards.

Community Boards requires the completion of this training before an individual can be added to the list of active volunteers for potential assignment as a co-panelist/co-mediator for cases. Additionally, some of the individuals who are now taking **Basics** are doing so to learn how to mediate outside the community mediation setting. For example, they may be learning the skills for their job or to become a private mediator.

Please note that this training covers the basic skills and tools needed to mediate. While many participants will have little or no experience with mediation, some may have previous training and/or experience. If you have previous training or experience with mediation, please inform the trainers at the beginning of the training so that they can utilize your knowledge during the course.

One unique aspect of **Basics** is that Community Boards has a long history of including volunteers to play a critical role in presenting sections of the training and serving as coaches for the role play portions of the course. This training model is mutually beneficial to all involved, i.e., course participants, volunteer trainers and role play coaches. It allows for course participants to learn and practice the mediation process and techniques from a diverse and highly experienced group of mediators and receive individualized constructive feedback. It provides volunteer trainers and role play coaches the opportunity to develop their presentation and teaching skills while supporting the Community Boards Training Program. Participants continually note in post-course evaluations that the opportunity to have so many “voices” in the room with such diverse experience is one of their favorite aspects of the training.

GOALS

Community Boards has set the following goals for lead trainers, volunteer trainers, role play coaches and course participants:

- To present a professional, high quality learning experience
- To provide a safe learning environment that encourages participants to take risks
- To be sensitive to each participant’s needs and individual learning styles and pace

Community Boards has set the following goals for all involved in **Basics**, including course participants, lead trainers, volunteer trainers and role play coaches:

- To promote mutual respect and support
- To promote appreciation for differences and the willingness to learn from others

At the beginning of each **Basics** course, the lead trainer(s) will review these goals with course participants. In addition, group agreements or guidelines for the training that support these goals will be presented and course participants will be asked to follow the guidelines. Examples include group agreements regarding cell phones and other devices, confidentiality of stories shared during training exercises, “step up/step back,” the option for a course participant to pass if called on by a trainer during the course, and use of a “parking lot/bike rack” to track discussion items that are off the current agenda topic and will be revisited at another time. Course participants may suggest their own additional guidelines.

Since some participants may not be mediating in the community mediation setting after completing the **Basics** course, Community Boards asks its trainers and coaches to be mindful of this in their presentations and coaching remarks. For example, keeping remarks general to the field of mediation instead of specific to mediating at Community Boards, or including information how an aspect of the mediation process may be different in a Community Mediation setting as compared to other settings.

ABSENCES

Basics is a 40-hour intensive training which takes place over the course of 4 days and includes lecture, discussions, group exercises, homework, and role play sessions. The training has been carefully structured so that every section builds upon the next. **Basics** is also very hands-on, and the role play or practice sessions are one of the most effective ways participants learn and reinforce the material. Much time and energy has been spent to fully involve each participant in the training. As such, it is crucial that participants attend the entire 40 hours of the training.

Notwithstanding the above, Community Boards, in consultation with the lead trainer(s), reserves the right to review any requests to miss class time on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the following:

- Participants may not miss more than 4 hours of the training.
- Participants must inform the Community Boards ADR Programs Director as soon as possible of requests for absences before the start of the training.
- Participants must inform the lead trainer(s) as soon as possible of last minute request for absences that arise after the training has begun.
- It will be the participant’s responsibility to learn and internalize any material that is missed.
- Classroom time cannot be used to help participants review material that was already covered
- Additional homework and/or activities may be assigned to make up for missed time.
- Participants may be required to observe at least one mediation at Community Boards after the **Basics** training in order to receive their certificate of completion. The ADR Programs Director will discuss how to do this on the final day of the training or shortly thereafter.
- Participants should consider transferring their registration to the next **Basics** session, as missing too much class time will cause both disruptions for that participant’s learning and in the cohesiveness of the group as a whole.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Consistent with its core values, Community Boards has set the following as its dispute resolution process for the The Basics of Mediation Training:

- It is recognized that there is potential for a conflict to arise between individuals involved in the course, including course participants, volunteer trainers and role play coaches.
- If a conflict occurs, Community Boards encourages the person with an issue or concern to speak directly to the other person involved as soon as possible.
- If the person with an issue or concern is not comfortable doing this, they should speak to a lead trainer about the situation as soon as possible. The lead trainer will suggest options for next steps, which may include actions such as a facilitated conversation between those involved, talking with the other person individually, or involving the Community Boards ADR Programs Director.
- If the person with an issue or concern is not comfortable speaking to a lead trainer, they should contact the Community Boards ADR Programs Director as soon as practical. The ADR Programs Director will decide appropriate next steps and actions.

VOLUNTEER TRAINER AND ROLE PLAY COACH QUALIFICATIONS

Subject to the discretion of Community Boards and the lead trainer(s), Volunteer Trainers and Role Play Coaches for **Basics** are expected to have met the following requirements:

- Completed **Basics** or a comparable course
- Served as a co-mediator on a panel for at least 10 Community Boards cases or served as a sole mediator for other organizations or in other professional settings

VOLUNTEER TRAINER AND ROLE PLAY COACH RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure that Community Boards has their current contact information
- Respond promptly to course planning emails and calls from Community Boards staff and the lead trainer(s) for **Basics** course
- Promote a positive group dynamic among course participants and support the course goals as outlined above
- Behave in a professional and respectful manner at all times when working with course participants, Community Boards staff, the lead trainer(s), and other volunteers. This includes appropriate presentation skills and language as well as a sensitivity to and avoidance of language and/or actions that could be perceived as inappropriate
- Follow all Community Boards guidelines, including those that are for specific components of the course, such as coaching instructions for role play groups
- Community Boards has the right to remove individuals from its volunteer trainer and role play coach list(s) if these guidelines are not followed
- Arrive on time for their agreed upon coaching and/or training shift. That said, it is highly recommended that coaches plan to attend the classroom presentation prior to their coaching session. This provides coaches with the opportunity to refresh themselves on the material that the course participants will have just learned. By doing this, the coaches can better tie their coaching feedback to the new material.