

Mediating Online

Tips and Tricks



Set Expectations

Create a document that educates and informs parties about mediating online. This information doesn't need to be exclusively about **online** mediation, but can give the parties information about the mediation process as well. Give it to the parties repeatedly, as the information will be important to review.



Confidentiality and Privacy

Much like an in-person mediation, an online mediation is only as secure as the people involved. Discuss confidentiality and privacy with parties and reach an understanding on those topics. Be sure to discuss topics unique to online mediation including:



No third parties, unless agreed to



Use secure Wi-Fi



No eavesdropping or recording



Have a Back Up

Plan ahead, and have protocols in place in case of tech failure and communicate them to parties. Keep in mind that your parties may be unfamiliar with using technology this way, and may panic if something doesn't work as expected.



Know Your Tools

Practice on others first before you try and mediate with your parties and clients. Can you effectively caucus using your chosen platform? Do you have a "waiting room" where parties can wait before the mediation?



Learn Together

In an online mediation, you have very little control over the parties' environment, and non-verbal communication can be exaggerated or difficult to interpret. You will want to let the parties know this upfront, so the limitations of the medium don't become stumbling blocks. Be transparent about your comfort and knowledge - if this is new to you, let the parties know. Let the parties know you're learning and ask them to be generous with you and each other while everyone figures things out.

Special thanks to Susan Guthrie for developing these tips. Find out more about Susan by visiting www.learnmediateonline.com.

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