

Preparing for Mediation

Five Steps to Help You Prepare for a Productive Mediation

Mediation provides an opportunity for people who are in conflict to come together, be heard, understand one another, and work toward a mutually acceptable resolution.

The purpose of this preparation process is to help you come to mediation ready to communicate honestly, listen carefully, and consider solutions that prioritize **love, respect, and fairness for everyone involved**.

Before your mediation, please take time to work through these five steps.

1. List Each Issue as Specifically as Possible

Begin by identifying every issue that you believe needs to be resolved. Be as specific as possible. Breaking a conflict into specific issues makes it easier to discuss each issue separately and identify possible solutions.

Issues

Issue 1:

Issue 2:

Issue 3:

Issue 4:

Add additional issues as necessary.

2. Search Your Heart and Give Your Honest Opinion About Each Issue

For each issue, take some time to honestly consider what you believe and why you believe it.

Ask yourself:

- What do I believe should happen?
- Why do I feel this way?
- What is important to me about this issue?
- What concerns or fears do I have?
- What do I believe would be fair?
- Is there anything about my own actions or decisions that I should acknowledge?
- Am I willing to consider that my perspective may not be the only reasonable perspective?

Be honest with yourself.

The purpose is not to prepare an argument against the other person. It is to understand **your own heart, concerns, interests, and perspective** so that you can communicate them clearly during mediation.

Issue: _____

What I honestly believe should happen:

Why I feel this way:

Answer these questions about each issue.

3. Seek to Understand the Other Person's Point of View

Before mediation, consider the situation from the other person's perspective.

Ask yourself:

- What do I think the other person wants?
- Why might this issue be important to them?
- What concerns might they have?
- What experiences may have influenced their position?
- What might they believe is fair?
- Is there anything about their position that I can understand, even if I disagree with it?

The goal is to come to mediation prepared not only to explain your own position, but also to listen and genuinely try to understand the other person's heart and concerns.

Issue: _____

What I believe the other person wants:

Why I think they feel this way:

How can I show respect for their feelings:

Answer the same questions for each issue.

4. Gather the Necessary Documentation

Before mediation, gather any documentation necessary to discuss and resolve each issue.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- Bank statements
- Pay stubs
- Tax returns
- Credit card statements
- Loan information
- Mortgage statements
- Retirement account statements
- Property valuations or appraisals
- Vehicle values
- Bills and other debts
- Insurance information
- Parenting schedules
- School or childcare information
- Contracts
- Receipts
- Court orders
- Previous agreements
- Other documents relevant to the dispute

If an issue involves finances, make sure you have the financial information necessary to understand the situation and evaluate potential solutions.

You do not need to gather documents simply to prove that you are right. Gather information that will help **everyone understand the facts and make informed decisions.**

5. Consider as Many Possible Solutions as You Can

Finally, consider possible solutions for each issue.

Try not to come to mediation with only one answer.

Instead, brainstorm several possibilities.

Ask yourself:

- What would be my preferred solution?
- What other solutions might work?
- Is there a compromise that could address both parties' concerns?
- What could I offer in exchange for something that is important to me?
- Are there creative solutions we have not considered?
- Avoid any solution that is abusive, unhealthy, unfair or unreasonable.
- What solution would allow everyone involved to move forward with dignity and respect?

As you consider possible solutions, prioritize **love and respect for everyone involved**.

Issue: _____

Possible Solution #1:

Possible Solution #2:

Possible Solution #3:

Do this for each issue.

What to Expect During Mediation

The mediation process is designed to give **everyone an equal opportunity to participate**.

Each person will have an opportunity to:

- Speak without being interrupted.
- Share their heart and explain their perspective.
- Explain why they feel the way they do.
- Ask questions.
- Listen to the other person's perspective and seek to understand.
- Respond to what the other person has said.
- Propose possible solutions.
- Consider and respond to proposals from the other party.

No Interruptions

The mediator will not allow either side to interrupt the other person while they are speaking.

Each person will have an opportunity to finish speaking before the other person responds.

This is important because people are more likely to have a productive conversation when they know they will be heard.

The Mediator Is Neutral

The mediator will remain **completely neutral**.

The mediator will not take sides, decide who is right or wrong, or advocate for either party.

The mediator's role is to help the parties communicate effectively, understand the issues, explore possible solutions, and work toward a fair resolution.

The mediator will promote respectful communication and help the parties focus on resolving the issues rather than attacking one another.

The Goal Is Resolution

Mediation is not about winning an argument.

It is an opportunity to work together to find solutions that address the issues in dispute and allow everyone involved to move forward.

You may not get everything you want.

The goal is to determine whether there are solutions that both parties can accept.

What Happens After an Agreement?

If the parties reach agreements during mediation, the mediator will document the agreements.

After the mediation is completed, the mediator will prepare the written agreement and provide it to the parties by email.

The written agreement will reflect the agreements reached during the mediation.

Prepare Your Heart

Before mediation, take time to reflect on what you hope to accomplish.

Come prepared to:

Speak honestly.

Listen carefully.

Ask questions.

Seek to understand the other.

Explore creative solutions.

Treat the other person with dignity and respect.

The five steps are simple:

1. Identify the issues. 2. Search your heart. 3. Seek to understand the other.

4. Gather the facts. 5. Consider fair solutions with love and respect.

Coming prepared in this way can help transform a difficult conflict into a productive conversation and create the possibility of a peaceful resolution.