

Organization Background

1. Community Mediation Concepts is a nonprofit organization.
2. Do not represent the County, the sheriff or anyone other than our nonprofit.
3. Providing mediation and conflict resolution for over seventeen years.
4. Built this specific community-officer complaint mediation program on the “Denver Model”, which has been successfully providing complaint mediations since 2005

Community-Officer Complaint Mediations / Facilitated Conversations

1. Provides an opportunity to;
 - a. Listen and understand
 - b. Explain your perspective of the event
 - c. Discuss the specifics of the incident in an honest and respectful environment
 - d. Communicate with each other, community member & officer, in a non-confrontational and safe manner
2. Provides an alternative
 - a. To the traditional complaint process
 - i. Denver moved the satisfaction rate for officers and community members from in the teens to the high 80th percentile in one year and have kept the satisfaction rate in the high 80's and low 90's since 2005
 - b. A confidential alternative – what takes place is confidential and protected by a state statute
 - c. A voluntary alternative – the community member and officer each choose to participate in good faith
3. Provides for learning for each of the following;
 - a. Understanding of how each person may have done something differently
 - i. Community member wasn't fully aware of the implications of their actions
 - ii. Officer may not have realized how they were communicating, or what they were conveying in their approach
 - b. Gives a “face” to the community member & officer
 - i. Sometimes, they both live in the same neighborhood. Their kids go to the same school, or play soccer. They will see each other again.
 - ii. However, more often than not, they won't see each other again – but this event may define how the complainant thinks about the police department for years to come and what they say to their friends.
 - iii. Giving “face” to both the officer and the complainant, strengthens the concept of community policing.
 - c. Giving feedback about how to avoid a similar situation in the future
 - i. Often these mediations are an educational opportunity for the complainant, to better understand police policy and procedures.
 - d. Restores confidence in police services
 - e. Understanding of community member perspective (I'm not a bad person, it was a bad day for me)
 - f. Understanding of officer perspective (especially with young kids)

4. Provides for dismissal of complaint
 - a. When the officer and community member mediate, the complaint is considered resolved. There is no written agreement, no requirement for the officer other than “good faith” participation.
 - b. “Good Faith Participation”
 - i. Willing to listen and make an attempt to understand
 - ii. Willing to be honest and respectful
 - iii. Willing to be engaged and communicate

So, how does it work?

1. A complaint comes in and your commanding officer thinks, “This might be a good case for mediation.”
 - a. Involves miscommunication, misunderstood perceptions, an opportunity to hear and understand each other resulting in satisfaction
2. CMC will;
 - a. Contact the community member, explain mediation and get their consent.
 - b. Contact the officer, explain mediation and get their consent.
 - c. Schedule a time and location that is reasonably convenient for both the community member and officer. If possible the officer will mediate on shift, if not the officer will receive comp time.
3. Mediation:
 - a. Only professional and specifically trained mediators will mediate community member-police cases.
 - b. Both the officer and the community member will be given a chance to explain, without interruption, their perception of the incident.
 - c. The mediator will facilitate the conversation so that both parties engage talking and listening – making every effort to remain engaged and productive in the conversation
 - d. Mediations generally last about an hour.
 - e. What takes place in mediation is confidential and both parties will sign a confidentiality agreement before beginning.
 - f. There is no written agreement or summary that comes out of the mediation.
 - g. Both parties will be asked to complete an eight question summary.
4. The case is considered resolved and the mediator will notify CMC who sends a form letter to the designated person at Sheriff department Police Department saying the parties met and were successful.

Mediation is an opportunity

1. An opportunity to listen and to be understood
2. An opportunity to communicate in a safe and confidential environment
3. An opportunity to resolve the complaint in a constructive, timely and positive manner

I hope you’ll choose to take advantage of this opportunity