

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an essential part of peer mediation. Peer mediators must understand the rules of confidentiality and agree to abide by them. The rules are not complicated. Confidentiality -- not telling friends or others what has been said in mediation -- must be observed. The rules of confidentiality *require* mediators to tell a teacher, counselor or administrator if someone threatens to harm another person or him-/herself, reveals a situation of abuse, or reveals a violation of law.

Someone in your school needs to be designated as the person to whom mediators go when they must tell about such an occurrence. The mediation coordinator is generally the logical person to designate. A backup person should also be designated in case the main person is not available. Mediators must be told whom to talk to if they need to report threats of harm, an abusive situation or a violation of the law.

Discuss this mini role play with the mediation students. They may have some ideas about other ways to handle questions from friends about what happened in mediation. Peer mediators may find that they need support from other peer mediators in refusing to violate confidentiality. Their friends may put pressure on them to reveal what happened during a mediation. Practice, including role playing, can make this situation easier for mediators to handle.

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