

## What is Mediation?

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Mediation involves the intervention of a third party into a negotiation process. The mediator is neutral and does not have decision-making authority regarding the possible settlement of the dispute. The goal of mediation is to assist the parties involved in a conflict to reach a resolution that ideally meets the interests of both parties to the greatest extent possible. The mediator helps to manage the negotiation process by:

- Identifying, clarifying, and exploring the issues and each party's underlying interests around those issues
- Managing the expression of strong emotions in a way that is productive and not destructive
- Equalizing, to the greatest extent possible, any power imbalances between the parties
- Identifying joint interests and agreements in principle
- Assisting the parties in exploring and evaluating possible settlement options
- Helping to "reality-test" possible settlement options against procedural, psychological, and substantive interests, as well as against alternatives to a mediated settlement
- Developing and implementing a final agreement

