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Mediating Conflict in the School: Training Conflict Managers

Conflict has always been a part of schools, but teachers today often spend as much time refereeing disagreements between students as they do teaching. Schools urgently need ways to handle conflict between students that will not disrupt education. Both students and educators benefit when good conflict transformation happens: students resolve their own disagreements and teachers focus on teaching.

In many schools around the country, Conflict Manager Programs have transformed school atmospheres and the quality of education. Conflict Manager Programs use selected students to mediate conflict between other students, decrease the need for disciplinary action, and enhance the self-esteem of students by giving them new confidence and skills.

This workshop follows another LMPC offering, *Mediating Conflict in the School: An Introductory Faculty In-Service Workshop*. The earlier workshop provides basic training for all faculty in addressing conflict, and introduces the Conflict Manager Program. The second workshop moves into the next level of training specifically for those teachers who will train the student conflict managers.

The outline for an all-day workshop would be:

- 8:30-9:45- **The Role of the Conflict Manager**
 - The Conflict Manager Process**
- 9:45-10:00- Break
- 10:00-11:30- **The Role of Effective Communication**
 - Listening Skills**
 - Nonverbal Communication**
 - “I” Messages**
- 11:30-12:30- Lunch
- 12:30-2:00- **Facilitating Good Resolutions**
 - Addressing Special Situations/Using the Report Form**
- 2:00-2:15- Break
- 2:15-3:30- **Planning Implementation of Student Training**

The workshop involves a combination of lectures, personal exercises, role-plays, audio-visuals and large and small group discussion. During the breaks participants will also have an opportunity to survey curricular resources and other literature on the subject. The training can also be presented in a series of several sessions.

The facilitator for such a program would be either Richard Blackburn, LMPC Executive Director, Tim Kiser, LMPC Assistant Director, or Bob Williamson, who serves with LMPC in an Adjunct Faculty role. In addition to their broad knowledge of the scholarly literature in the area of classroom conflict, their training and experience as mediators makes them uniquely qualified to lead conflict transformation workshops.

Schools interested in exploring the possibility of hosting a workshop, can contact the peace center at the above address or phone number.