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Rural Law Center of New York, Inc.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a structured opportunity for two or more persons to privately resolve a dispute with the help of a trained Mediator. When people talk about their situations and come up with a solution agreeable to all parties, they tend to live with their decisions and are happier with the outcome. Especially in cases where there must be a continuing relationship (such as child custody and visitation), parties usually get along better after mediation than after a court decision.

Mediation is NOT...

Mediation is not an attempt to decide who is to blame and it's not an attempt to get everyone to agree to one truth. Often people remember facts differently. It is not necessary to determine what exactly happened in the past to make the mediation process worthwhile. Mediation will focus on the present and the future so that the parties will not remain stuck in the past. A mediation program is not an enforcement agency and will not attempt to make parties live up to their agreement. This is the responsibility of the parties, themselves. This self-determination is a core principle of mediation and acknowledges that people will be empowered when able to make their own decisions.

