

# An 'Open Mediation Protocol' for Enspiral

Proposed by Billy Matheson - Winter 2016

The idea here is for a simple protocol that anyone can enact at anytime. The thought being that in a distributed system a commonly understood heuristic may be more useful than a centralised policy or a specific role. The 'open' part of this is just the idea is that it can be used by anyone and hopefully they will share back their changes and suggestions for how it can be improved or used in different ways.

## Open Mediation

Anyone Enspiral Contributor can initiate a mediation process within the Enspiral network at anytime for any reason. They might be one of the parties involved in, or affected by a particular situation, or they may be a third party/bystander, and be indirectly affected or just concerned about what might be happening (or not happening).

1. To initiate an open mediation process all you need to do is reach out someone who you trust (like a Member steward) and ask them to mediate on your behalf. This way it's a personal request from you to someone you know, not a general request or 'someone should'.
2. If that person accepts your request (they might want to check in with their own steward before taking on the mediation for example) then they are then responsible for the mediation process and you become their 'client'.
3. Once your mediator has committed to the process and understands your concerns they then contact the other person/party/actors involved, and invite them to participate in the mediation process.
4. If the other person/party/parties are up for it, they need to reach out to find a mediator (personal steward) who they trust and ask that person to mediate on their behalf.
5. The two nominated mediators (who have consented to their roles, considered the context, and agreed to work together) then design a process that they both think will add value to the situation.

## Please Note

There could be a default format of say, 3 mediation sessions and a retrospective co-facilitated by the two mediators. Session 1 could simply be a 'listen and loop' type session, or simply consist of a written exchange via the mediators.

6. Once the process has been agreed by the mediators they then invite their 'clients' to join them in that process. 'Clients' can suggest changes or opt out at this point if they feel the suggested process is unsafe, or unlikely to meet their needs.
7. The agreed mediation process then takes place. These are co-facilitated by the two mediators working as a team. More sessions can happen if all parties agree it's useful.
8. The two mediators then meet to do the retrospective of the mediation process. They could invite the two parties to "fishbowl" or observe that conversation if they agreed that could be useful.
9. The two mediators then work together to create a summary document that they both agree to share with both parties. I think this process should be free of any findings or agreements.
10. The two parties are invited to make any commitments they want to each other based on the process.

**Please Note**

I think it's important to respect the right of anyone involved in this kind of process to take time out, suspend, or leave the process for good, at any time and for any reason.