



**CUISR:**

Community – University Institute for Social Research

*Evaluation of Respectful  
Conflict Resolution and  
Peer Mediation Program*

**by Marg Gauley**



*Building Healthy Sustainable Communities*

## **Community-University Institute for Social Research**

CUISR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUISR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUISR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project's primary purpose is to provide data for schools and their surrounding communities to become more peaceful by empowering teachers, students, parents, and community leaders to constructively address conflict and violence in their families, schools, and communities through integrated, sustainable, and comprehensive respectful conflict resolution skills programs. To do so, Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS) provides respectful conflict resolution training and program development to elementary schools in Saskatoon and area. The program offers at least six sessions of age-appropriate and culturally inclusive awareness and skill development programming in every classroom. Teachers observe or participate in the sessions so as to develop these skills for the future. If the school chooses to have a peer mediation program then a SCMS staff person provides two days of training to selected students who will become peer mediators. At least one teacher or teacher's aide per school is given an opportunity to attend SCMS' forty-hour Mediation Level One Training. Those participants are then eligible to be a teacher coordinator for the program in their school. Parents and community leaders are invited to volunteer to support the training where appropriate. Practicum students and SCMS volunteers also provide support for the program even as they are learning the skills. This current evaluation's goal is to understand how well this program has been received and what is needed to sustain it. The results indicate that while peer mediation has been well-received, much more work needs to be done.

## INTRODUCTION

Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs have evolved over the past forty years. They were initiated in the United States and now exist worldwide. While their beginnings have stemmed from different sources, the main focus is to resolve conflict. Many factors need to be in place to operate a successful peer mediation program. There needs to be a buy-in (i.e. active support) from a school's administration and teaching staff. Students need to be chosen carefully to become peer mediators, with consideration of the type of student and the school environment. Both staff and students require initial training for this type of program and an on-going evaluation needs to occur. Peer mediation has been viewed as a valid deterrent to the criminal justice system because potential problem situations are dealt with before they reach a more formal process. Most studies of peer mediation programs have concluded favourable results as long as appropriate time and energy is devoted to the process. Lack of continuity, support, and funding appear to be the biggest obstacles to success. Feedback for this report was obtained through interviews with school administrators and focus groups conducted with parents and students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Johnson and Johnson (1996), a program that taught students to mediate conflicts, dating from the 1960s, was the first peer mediation program. In 1972, the New York City-based Children's Creative Response to Conflict (CCR) "taught all students that the power of non-violence lies in justice, caring and personal integrity" (Johnson and Johnson, 1996: 460). Further peer mediation programs were initiated in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York City by the early 1980s. Canada's first peer mediation program was initiated in 1987 at Ottawa's Woodroffe High School. Schrupf, Crawford, and Bodine (1997) asserted that "peer mediation programs have emerged as one of the most widely used types of conflict resolution in schools" (47).

Johnson and Johnson (1996) indicated that conflict resolution and peer mediation have evolved from four different sources. The first stemmed from research in the field of conflict and how to mediate it. The second source came from advocates of non-violence, notably Quakers. A third group interested in conflict resolution were anti-nuclear activists, who set up a program in 1985 called Resolving Conflict Creatively (Johnson and Johnson, 1996: 2). The last group to seriously explore conflict resolution were members of the legal profession.

Deutsch (1993) described what he called four key components for programs like conflict resolution and peer mediation. He discussed cooperative learning, conflict resolution training, constructive use of controversy, and the creation of dispute resolution centres in schools. (Deutsch, 1993: 2) In cooperative learning, students "must perceive that it is to their advantage if other students learn well" (Deutsch, 1993:1). This type

of learning involves face-to-face interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and time for processing what they have learned. Conflict resolution training allows students to handle conflicts constructively. Using constructive controversy “can stimulate and structure constructive controversy in the classroom that will promote academic learning and the development of conflict resolution skills” (Deutsch, 1993: 11). Mediation programs have been established in schools to deal with different conflicts, and Deutsch suggested that these programs have been beneficial to students.

Johnson and Johnson (1995) described three different approaches or methods for conflict resolution and peer mediation programs in schools. The first is a total student body approach where everyone is trained to manage conflict. The second approach (or “cadre” approach) emphasizes training a small number of students to become peer mediators as part of their curriculum. Opatow (1991) represented a third way of describing conflict resolution and peer mediation in schools. He divided these programs into three different areas: a skill-oriented approach, an academic approach, and a structural change approach.

In his study of school-based conflict management, Pendharkar (1995) stated that “students need to know how to manage and resolve conflicts if they are to become responsible members of schools and society” (4). Traditional models of discipline dictate that adults manage student behaviour. These practices, however, “thwart development of student responsibility, leadership, independence and interdependence” (Dreyfuss, 1990: 22).

Close and Lechman (1997) examined how teaching students conflict resolution skills “empowers them to resolve their own disputes without adult intervention, which results in effective decision-making, a valuable life skill” (1). These authors believed that students must be included in planning and implementing conflict resolution programs. Close and Lechman referred to the Winning Against Violent Environments (WAVE) conflict resolution program, which began in Ohio in 1983 and trained students to become trainers themselves in conflict resolution. While this program initially encountered skeptics, overall it has been very successful. The authors suggested that this success has been based on the stringent training requirements and support of committed adults who assist in the training process (Close and Lechman, 1997).

Cohen (1995) suggested that there are many benefits to a successful mediation session, such as choosing to resolve the conflict, feeling comfortable in the process, fostering trust and respect, openly exchanging information, and, most importantly, understanding that implementation of a resolution is more likely if it is created by those involved (30-31). Cohen identified the strengths that students bring to a peer mediation process: “They understand their peers, make the process age appropriate, serve to empower their peers, command the respect of their peers and normalize the conflict resolution process” (44-5).

Haft and Weiss (1998) identified other reasons, such as reducing school violence, freeing up teachers to teach more and discipline less, and increasing student morale. They also suggested that the positive effects of peer mediation might go beyond the school and enhance positive community relations.

Schrumpf, Crawford, and Bodine (1997) asserted that “peer mediation programs have emerged as one of the most widely used types of conflict resolution in schools” (47). They created a six-step process for peer mediation, while Johnson and Johnson (1996) created a five-step process.

Some criticism of peer mediation has argued that peers cannot effectively handle some conflicts and that lack of training in peer mediation and/or development of adequate group process skills can impede the process. A study conducted by Emerson (1990) stated that many student mediators were “not properly trained, viewed as policemen and were frequently disliked by other students” (485). Webster (1993) suggested that conflict resolution and peer mediation programs have not proven to work, intrude on academic teaching time, and are not cost effective.

Schrumpf et al (1997) addressed the role of diversity and how training must include “an awareness of cultural differences that affect values and communication styles” (41). Day-Vines and Day-Hairston (1996) examined the value of diversity in recruitment selection and training of peer mediators, and concluded that while numerous benefits of peer mediation have been cited, such as overall promotion of a safer school climate, little attention has been focused on “integrating diversity as a program objective” (392). They indicated a variety of groups for whom recruitment needs to be addressed: at-risk students, socially inhibited students, and students with disabilities. They defined at-risk students as those who are in jeopardy of quitting school before graduation. This might occur for a number of reasons, such as family problems or deviant behaviour, either within the school environment and/or society. Day-Vines and Day-Hairston believed that many at-risk students have leadership skills but require positive re-channelling. Peer mediation can put socially inhibited students in contact with other students, “bringing them out of their shell” (397). They suggested that including students with disabilities would allow these students a greater sense of connection to other students.

Bettman and Moore (1994) looked at conflict resolution and social justice in schools, and suggested that without first looking at the environment implementing conflict resolution programs may cause more harm than good. They pointed out that people frequently use the terms “conflict resolution” and “peer mediation” interchangeably, even though each one refers to different program formats (Bettman and Moore, 1994: 15). Conflict resolution focuses on a number of components, including “conflict management, violence prevention, communication skills, cultural diversity, negotiation and mediation” (Bettman and Moore, 1994: 16). They focused on the importance of conflict resolution in the school environment and the broader skills needed to be implemented first to establish a safe environment for students.

Bickmore (1999) suggested that violence prevention generally involves “narrowly focused training in social skills and anger management” (Bickmore, 1999). She indicated that blaming and excluding perpetrators of violence might backfire by reinforcing mutual distrust instead of offering non-violent alternatives. Conflict must be presented as a learning opportunity. Bickmore indicated that many schools do this by teaching students how to debate. She suggested that considerable planning is required and that “winning should not be the goal. Students will need to learn how to actively listen, respect opposing points of view and learn how to communicate in a persuasive manner in order to be successful” (Bickmore, 1997).

Johnson, Johnson, and Dudley (1992) conducted a study that examined how training students in peer mediation reduced the number of conflicts referred to the teacher. Before conducting this study, they noted that little research had been done on conflict training programs’ impact on the management of the conflict among students. They wanted to determine the need for a peer mediation program and its impact on the management of conflicts among students. They found that conflict training did reduce the number of student conflicts referred to teachers and principals. (Johnson et al, 1992: 98) Another study conducted by Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Ward, and Magnuson (1995) found again that training had a significant impact on both the strategies that students used and the resulting resolutions. They also found that the negotiation and training procedures were transferred from school to the home (Johnson et al, 1995: 835).

Lane, McWhirter, and Jefferies (1992) examined peer mediation for elementary and middle school children. They called peer mediation “a mode of student conflict management.” (Lane et al, 1992: 1). They examined different aspects of peer mediation, including theoretical assumptions and the benefits and implications of this process. One of the main theoretical assumptions, proposed by Jason and Rhodes (1989), was that “peers serve as potential role models, demonstrate pro-social behaviours, create and reinforce norms that certain behaviours are deviant rather than acceptable, and promote alternatives to those activities” (203). What benefits occur? According to Lane et al (1992), student behaviour improves, with at-risk students developing more pro-social behaviours. In a study conducted by Araki, Takeshita and Kadamoto (1989), it was found that peer mediation increased empowerment and volunteerism amongst the student population. Like the study conducted by Johnson et al (1992), they found the positive effects of peer mediation carried over to resolving conflicts in the home.

Maresca (1996) wrote about how peer mediation can be viewed as an alternative to the criminal justice system. She looked at a program implemented at Emerson Collegiate Institute in North York, where the object was to train students to become peer mediators to resolve processes that might otherwise be subject to criminal charges. Certain offences were identified as needing to be resolved. Mediation had to be timely “to make an almost immediate connection between the incident and the resolution” (Maresca, 1996: 3). Students who became mediators received thirty hours of instruction, including

emphasis on a number of different areas such as identifying cultural differences, information on the criminal justice system, and time to practise these newly learned skills (Maresca, 1996: 4). Once again, as earlier articles have indicated, these newly acquired skills allowed participants to not only better manage conflict in their schools but also in their families. Other major benefits for these young people were personal growth and increased self-esteem. Only a small number of cases that could have led to charges under the Young Offenders Act were investigated, but mediation was successful in all cases. Maresca indicated that “the extent to which this peer mediation model can address current juvenile justice problems remains to be seen” (Maresca, 1996: 5).

Sandy (2001) examined conflict resolution education in schools and suggested that social emotional learning needs to be incorporated into conflict resolution. She indicated that low academic performance is linked to a lack of social emotional competence. (Sandy, 2001: 239). Core social emotional skills were defined as “self-identity, self-efficacy, self-control, appreciation of diversity and diverse values, empathy, perspective taking, cooperation, communication, creativity, problem-solving and evaluation” (Jensen, 1998, cited by Sandy, 2001: 239). These skills must be practiced everywhere—at school, at home, and in the community—if they are to be retained. Sandy indicated that a best practice model of conflict resolution should be incorporated into the curriculum, not as a stand-alone course. One of the main obstacles to having this outside the curriculum is that teachers are already over-worked and therefore have less motivation to take on extra training.

Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Laginski, and O’Coin (1996) studied the effectiveness of a conflict resolution and peer mediation program in a suburban Canadian secondary school. They took forty-two grade nine English students and randomly assigned them to two different groups. One group spent ten hours studying a literature unit with integrated conflict resolution training and the other group spent ten hours studying a literature unit lacking that integration. They found significant differences between these two groups, notably that the conflict resolution training group experienced greater positive benefits in terms of “academic learning, knowledge and retention of the conflict resolution procedure in a conflict situation and attitudes toward conflict” (Stevahn et al, 1996: 21).

Thompson (1996) examined the effectiveness of a peer mediation program in a middle school in Georgia. This school had experienced many disciplinary problems and, as a result, decided to form a committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents to alleviate these problems. They opted for a peer mediation program, seeking to: promote a positive school climate and student empowerment and responsibility; increase student self-esteem; promote school safety; learn effective communication skills; and reduce disciplinary referrals to administration (Thompson, 1996: 1). Both at-risk youth and student leaders were sought as mediators. As has been pointed out in previous articles, however, popular student leaders do not always mix with or relate well to at-risk students. Students were canvassed, and it was found that gossiping about friends

(which could escalate into fights) caused the most problems. A number of students were chosen and trained as mediators. Hearing cases the same day that they were submitted for mediation proved to be the most effective strategy. Thompson indicated that many positive benefits resulted from this program, including a drastic decrease in suspensions and improved school morale.

Haft and Weiss (1998) stated that while there is increasing research on peer mediation, little has been explored in terms of specific guidelines for schools planning to implement a peer mediation program. They cited barriers such as budgetary constraints that limit program implementation and evaluation. They examined a number of different peer mediation models currently used in different parts of the United States to “search for common elements of successful programs” (Haft and Weiss, 1998: 222). They found that the program models they examined had more similarities than differences. All the different programs’ objectives focused on both empowering students and teaching them life skills. Two of the biggest problems that they found were a lack of continuity and a lack of support. Transience in schools was another obstacle identified. They found that the same type of mediator appeared across all programs, one who held trust and respect for the students. In all programs, they found that not only was mediation successful, but it improved the student’s behaviour. “Support at the classroom and administration levels is one element universally identified” (Haft and Weiss, 1998: 230). Some disparities were found to be related to program funding, from implementation to evaluation. They concluded that for a peer mediation program to thrive, it must operate on two levels. First, the process of program implementation must be in place, and second, the program must be evaluated for performance and results. These authors suggested that certain elements must be present for a peer mediation program to succeed. They identified “continuity, buy-in, administrative support and cheerleaders, not necessarily in that order, all of them interconnected” (Haft and Weiss, 1998: 250).

This review of the literature on peer mediation in schools points to many different realities. First, peer mediation seems to benefit students in the areas of building self-esteem, empowerment, and teaching new life skills. It teaches students to handle conflicts constructively. Different approaches to peer mediation have been discussed, such as a total student approach, a cadre or small group approach, a skill-oriented approach, an academic approach, and a structural change approach. Some authors believe that students should be involved in planning and implementing peer mediation programs. Others feel that students should even be involved in the training process. Setting a positive and safe school environment and addressing issues of social and emotional learning need to be incorporated. The selection of a mediator is also very important. Student diversity is equally crucial. Peer mediation is regarded as an alternative to the criminal justice system in certain circumstances, with different authors describing various benefits of peer mediation, such as reducing school violence, freeing up teachers to teach more and discipline less, and increasing student morale. Peer mediation further empowers students

to command respect from their peers. However, criticism of peer mediation revolves around the lack of proper training, budgetary concerns, a failure to acknowledge cultural differences, poor organization, and a lack of buy-in and administrative support. Attention needs to be paid to these areas of concern for peer mediation to be effective.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Appendix A** presents the questions asked of administrators, parents, and students. The focus of the evaluation was to examine the respectful conflict resolution and peer mediation program being conducted in both Saskatoon's public and Catholic elementary schools. Did this training support schools and their surrounding communities to become more peaceful by further empowering teachers, students, parents and community leaders to constructively and respectfully address conflict by developing integrated, sustainable, and comprehensive respectful conflict resolution skills programs?

## METHOD

A total of seven schools were visited for this study. Seven administrators, six parents, and twenty-nine students participated. Interviews were conducted with school administrators and focus groups were conducted with parents and students (recorded on audiotape in all cases). All participants signed consent forms (see **Appendix B**). Questions were asked about how, from the perspective of the administrators, parents, and youth, the mediation program had affected their schools, what worked and what did not, and what changes, if any, were needed.

## RESULTS

The administrators were asked three questions. The first asked how the respectful conflict resolution and peer mediation program had affected their school. Administrator answers ranged from hardly any effect at all to greatly affecting their schools. Other comments included: younger students in the playground finding more support; more people available for support and help; building a safe school; fitting well with the anti-bullying program; skill development for mediators; allowing mediators to become leaders; and connecting older students with younger students. One administrator indicated that peer mediation had deterred considerable negative behaviour.

The second question asked administrators whether they had experienced any difficulties with the program, and, if so, to identify those problems. The main concerns expressed included: keeping up momentum; financial restraints; time restrictions; getting students to accept responsibility; and designating a coordinator to be involved with students in the classroom.

The third question asked what changes, if any, administrators would like to see if the program continued. The following changes were suggested: involve several teachers in managing the program at each school; increase the financial commitment to the program, especially in terms of providing incentives for the students; offer the training in French at the French school; closer supervision for mediators; and more support from staff members who send their students to be peer mediators. A comment was made that if the staff is not fully supportive of the program, it will not run effectively and probably not last.

Parents were asked eight questions. The first question asked whether they had other children participating in the program. None responded that they had other children in the program. When asked about the benefits that they saw from their child's participation in the program, answers ranged from none to seeing the program as being beneficial at both school and at home. Other benefits were learning new communication skills and building higher levels of confidence. The third question asked parents to highlight their child's growth and development. One parent felt that the program had affected his daughter's level of maturity, while another stated that his son had become very interested and motivated by what he had learned from the peer mediation training. One parent indicated that she felt that peer mediation had had a negative effect on her son. Another said that her son seemed to have more confidence and can communicate problems in a more positive way. The fourth question asked parents how they believed this peer mediation experience would affect their child's life. Again, answers varied. One parent felt that it would affect his daughter's life experiences in a manner where she could learn and contribute in a meaningful way. Another felt that it could be detrimental overall because she did not feel her son received the support he deserved when he was a peer mediator. Learning respect was an issue expressed by another parent. Another mentioned learning strong communication skills and gaining leadership experience.

The fifth question asked parents about the differences observed between their child/youth, who participated in the peer mediation program, and those who did not. The main responses included: developing more understanding and compassion; helping their siblings who did not participate; and better communication skills and more confidence. The sixth question asked parents about any changes that they would like to see to this program. One parent indicated that he was unaware of the program's existence until he was contacted to participate in the interviews. Other responses included a desire for more training and support for their child/youth. The seventh question asked participants to identify the program's strengths. Once again, one parent did not previously know that the program existed. Other responses included: providing role models for other students; the actual training process; and the process of learning how to solve problems. The last question asked parents what impact this program had had on their families. The responses included: the program had had a positive impact; it had made them feel very proud of their child/youth; it had encouraged a positive attitude at a time when pre-teens are going through many changes; and it enhanced better communication skills.

Focus groups conducted with twenty-nine students involved seven questions. The first question asked how the program helped that particular student. Responses varied from using the training as a reference on a job application to helping younger children solve their problems, getting to know younger children better, learning to solve problems, and gaining confidence. Other responses mentioned that the program worked better for the earlier grades, older students viewed mediators as nerds, and it helped to sort out problems with family and friends.

The second question asked whether they had noticed a difference in their relationship with other students. Most answered no, but one student stated that there was some teasing for being peer mediators, while another felt that other students looked up to them more, and another felt that there is less fighting.

Students were then asked whether participants had noticed a difference in their marks. Out of seven schools, students in only two schools felt that their involvement in the peer mediation program had positively affected their grades.

The fourth question asked students whether they had noticed any difference in their family relationships. While most students did not notice any difference, a few stated that they now handled situations more positively, and two indicated that their parents expressed pride in their attempt to peacefully resolve their differences with siblings.

Students were further asked about any possible changes they would make to the program. Some felt that more youth should be involved as peer mediators, while others suggested that mediators needed more training and meetings. A more positive view of peer mediators' role also needed to be instilled in the school environment. Many students felt that they needed to wear something distinctive, like a coloured vest or t-shirt, so that the rest of the students could acknowledge them and know what they were doing. Female students in one school also indicated that more male mediators were needed.

The sixth question asked students how peer mediation had affected their school. Feedback was varied, with comments indicating that peer mediation had solved minor problems, such as helping lonely younger students who tend to hang out with peer mediators during recess. A number of comments further indicated that peer mediation had decreased bullying in those schools. Some students felt that the program did not receive adequate support and needed to be publicized more amongst the student body. Many also felt that the program had allowed them to get to know a lot of the younger students. As well, most students felt that this program seemed to target and assist mostly younger, not older, students.

The last question asked students whether they had experienced difficulties in administering the peer mediation program, and, if so, to identify them. Responses to this question ranged from having trouble dealing with younger students because they

would not listen to having to deal with a lack of respect from older students. Some felt that they needed more training at the outset, as well as ongoing training. Feedback from one group of students indicated that the peer mediation program was not made known to the rest of the school. Finally, most students did not feel that they received enough recognition for their participation in this program.

## **DISCUSSION**

This project was conducted to evaluate the respectful conflict resolution and peer mediation program in Saskatoon elementary schools. While it was initially thought that more schools would participate in this examination, the lengthy time that it took to obtain ethics approval and further approvals from school boards made this unfeasible.

Feedback from the school administrators was positive in that they felt the peer mediation program had deterred negative behaviour. However, they had struggled with maintaining the program (i.e. finding proper time, limited teacher support, supervision requirements, and inadequate financial backing to serve as incentives for students).

Only six parents, representing seven schools, were interviewed. All but one parent was extremely supportive of the program and felt that it had assisted their child/youth in terms of developing leadership and problem solving skills, better communication skills, and confidence. They also expressed pride in their child/youth. Only one parent felt that her child/youth did not benefit because he was teased by other students about his participation.

Students made up the largest group (twenty-nine in total) interviewed for this project. One major theme that emerged from student interviews was that peer mediation helps younger students solve social problems. Being a peer mediator allowed these students to get to know the younger students, learn how to problem-solve, and gain confidence. However, they also felt that they needed more training and supervision. They felt that the program needed to be better advertised in their schools and to be acknowledged through an article of clothing that made them stand out. They also felt that they did not receive enough recognition from teachers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. More training needs to be provided for this program, especially ongoing training.
2. More than one supervising teacher is needed for this program.
3. The program needs to be better advertised within the school and to parents.
4. More incentives are needed for peer mediators.
5. Peer mediators require more hands-on support from teachers.
6. Older students need to be more involved in the program.
7. The program requires greater funding.
8. More time needs to be made available to this program.
9. Training should be available in French at Saskatoon's French school.

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## **Appendix A. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Youth Consent Form.**

Dear Youth,

My name is Marg Gauley and I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently conducting an evaluation of the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program" provided in schools in Saskatoon by Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS).

The primary purpose of this project is to evaluate how effectively the program is achieving its primary goal of contributing to more peaceful families, schools and communities.

The benefit for communities is to become more peaceful by further allowing teachers, students, parents and community leaders to address conflict and violence in their families, schools, and communities and by respectful conflict resolution skills programs in schools and communities.

The sample for this study consists of youth who have participated in the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program", parents of the youth that have participated in the program and school administrators responsible for running the program.

We invite you to participate in a focus group, which will be conducted at your school, to provide us with feedback on how this program benefited you. This focus group will consist of the researcher (Marg Gauley), you, and nine other students that also have participated in this program. The discussion in the focus group will be made private by the researcher but she cannot guarantee that other members of the group will keep this information private. Please respect this and do not discuss what is said outside of the group. You need to be aware that others may not respect your privacy. Your participation in this evaluative process is voluntary; you can choose to withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any data gathered from you will be destroyed.

Your identity will be kept confidential. Data will be stored for a period of five years in a locked office at the Sociology Department and on Computer files that require password entry, and compiled so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

You can have access to the summary of the results of this study at SCMS. If you have any questions about the study, Marg Gauley would be happy to explain the evaluation in more detail; if you have questions about participants rights please contact the ethics office.

I will be giving you a copy of this form to keep for yourself and by signing this, you agree to participate and understand that the Ethics Committee of the University of Saskatchewan has approved the research on ethical grounds by the University of Sas-

katchewan Behavioral Board on \_\_\_\_\_. There are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

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**Appendix B. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Administrator's Consent Form.**

Dear Administrator:

My name is Marg Gauley and I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently conducting an evaluation of the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program" provided in schools in Saskatoon by Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS).

The primary purpose of this project is to evaluate how effectively the program is achieving its primary goal of contributing to more peaceful families, schools and communities.

The benefit for communities is to become more peaceful by further empowering teachers, students, parents and community leaders to constructively and respectfully address conflict and violence in their families, schools, and communities and by developing integrated, sustainable and comprehensive respectful conflict resolution skills programs in schools and communities.

The sample for this study consists of youth who have participated in the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program", parents of the youth that have participated in the program and school administrators responsible for running the program.

I would like you to participate in a focus group, which will be conducted at your school, to provide us with feedback on how this program benefited you. The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, in be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality. Your participation in this evaluative process is voluntary; you can choose to withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any data gathered from you will be destroyed.

Your identity will be kept confidential. Data will be stored for a period of five years in a locked office at the Sociology Department and on Computer files that require password entry, and compiled so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

You can have access to the summary of the results of this study at SCMS. If you have any questions, I would be happy to explain the evaluation in more detail. .

I will be giving you a copy of this form to keep for yourself and by signing this, you agree to participate and understand that the Ethics Committee of the University of Saskatchewan has approved the research on ethical grounds by the University of Sas-

katchewan Behavioral Board on \_\_\_\_\_. There are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

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### **Appendix C. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Parental Consent Form.**

Dear Parent,

My name is Marg Gauley and I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently conducting an evaluation of the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program" provided in schools in Saskatoon by Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS).

The primary purpose of this project is to evaluate how effectively the program is achieving its primary goal of contributing to more peaceful families, schools and communities.

The benefit for communities is to become more peaceful by further empowering teachers, students, parents and community leaders to constructively and respectfully address conflict and violence in their families, schools, and communities and by developing integrated, sustainable and comprehensive respectful conflict resolution skills programs in schools and communities.

The sample for this study consists of youth who have participated in the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program", parents of the youth that have participated in the program and school administrators responsible for running the program.

I would like you to participate in a focus group, which will be conducted at your school, to provide us with feedback on how this program benefited you. . The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, in be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality. Your participation in this evaluative process is voluntary; you can choose to withdraw at any time. If you choose to withdraw, any data gathered from you will be destroyed.

Your identity will be kept confidential. Data will be stored for a period of five years in a locked office at the Sociology Department and on Computer files that require password entry, and compiled so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

You can have access to the summary of the results of this study at SCMS. If you have any questions, I would be happy to explain the evaluation in more detail. .

I will be giving you a copy of this form to keep for yourself and by signing this, you agree to participate and understand that the Ethics Committee of the University of Saskatchewan has approved the research on ethical grounds by the University of Sas-

katchewan Behavioral Board on \_\_\_\_\_. There are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you.

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**Appendix D. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Parental Consent Form To Allow Youth to Participate in the Focus Group.**

Dear Parent,

My name is Marg Gauley and I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. I am currently conducting an evaluation of the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program" provided in schools in Saskatoon by Saskatoon Community Mediation Services (SCMS).

The primary purpose of this project is to evaluate how effectively the program is achieving its primary goal of contributing to more peaceful families, schools and communities.

The benefit for communities is to become more peaceful by further empowering teachers, students, parents and community leaders to constructively and respectfully address conflict and violence in their families, schools, and communities and by developing integrated, sustainable and comprehensive respectful conflict resolution skills programs in schools and communities.

The sample for this study consists of youth who have participated in the "Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program", parents of the youth that have participated in the program and school administrators responsible for running the program.

I would like your son/daughter to participate in a focus group, which will be conducted at his/her school, to provide us with feedback on how this program benefited him/her. The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. The researcher will ask the participants to respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, however parents should be aware that other participants may not respect your child's confidentiality. His/her participation in this evaluative process is voluntary; he/she can choose to withdraw at any time. If he/she chooses to withdraw, any data gathered from he/she will be destroyed.

His/her identity will be kept confidential. Data will be stored for a period of five years in a locked office at the Sociology Department and on Computer files that require password entry, and compiled so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

You can have access to the summary of the results of this study at SCMS. If you have any questions, I would be happy to explain the evaluation in more detail.

I will be giving you a copy of this form to keep for yourself and by signing this, you agree to allow your child to participate in this project and understand that the Ethics Committee of the University of Saskatchewan has approved the research on ethical

grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioral Board on \_\_\_\_\_.  
There are no known risks involved in participating in this study.

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the above parental consent form and agree  
to allow my child/youth to participate in this project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent or guardian/caregiver)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Thank you.

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**Appendix E. Transcript Release.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Marg Gauley. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Marg Gauley to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

---

Participant

Date

---

Researcher

Date

**Appendix F. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Focus Group with Parents/Guardians.**

Introduction: This taped conversation is designed to give you the opportunity to comment on the Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program that your child/youth participated in, in their school. Specifically, we are interested in your understanding of the factors that relate to the impact that this program had on your child/youth. Anonymity is an important consideration in the use of your comments, and although this conversation is audio-recorded, your name will not be reported in the summaries of results.

1. Do you have other children? Did they participate in this program?
2. What benefits do you see from your child/youth participating in this program?
3. What were some of the highlights with respect to the growth and development of your child?
4. How do you believe your child/youth's experience will affect his/her experience in their life?
5. What differences do you see between your child/youth that did participate and your child/youth who did not?
6. What changes, if any, would you like to see in this program?
7. What are the strengths of this program?
8. What impact has this program had on your family?

**Appendix G. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Focus Group with Youth.**

Introduction: This taped conversation is designed to give you the opportunity to comment on the Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in your school. Specifically, we are interested in your evaluation of this program. Anonymity is an important consideration in the use of your comments, and although this conversation is audio-recorded, your name will not be reported in the summaries of the results.

1. How has this program helped you?
2. Have you noticed a difference in your relationship with other students?
3. Have you noticed a difference in your marks?
4. Have you noticed any difference in your relationship with your family?
5. What changes, if any, would you make to this program?
6. How has this program affected your school?
7. Have you experienced any difficulties in the administration of this program? If so, could you please elaborate on what these difficulties are?

**Appendix H. Evaluation of Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in Schools. Interviews with Administrators.**

Introduction: This taped interview is designed to give you the opportunity to comment on the Respectful Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program in your school. Specifically, we are interested in your feedback about this program. Anonymity is an important consideration in the use of your comments, and although this conversation is audio-recorded, your name will not be reported in the summaries of results.

1. How has this program affected your school?
2. Have you experienced any difficulties in the administration of this program? If so, would you elaborate on what these difficulties are?
3. If this program continues in your school, what changes would you like to see?

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