



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MEDIATION

"Fostering a culture of peace among ethnic and religious groups"

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U.S. 501 (c) (3) tax exempt public charity, nonprofit and non-governmental organization in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

MEDIATION ACADEMY

Specialized Mediation Training The Mediation of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts

Mediation Project

Mediation Case Study (Sample case developed by Nance L. Schick, Esq., 2017)

Proposed Case Study: The HNC

What Happened? Historical Background of the Conflict

The HNC conflict is an organizational conflict that occurred in a large corporation when a New Supervisor was transferred from the Maintenance Department to the Fulfillment Department. The New Supervisor was a minority woman in her late 40s who had been working at the corporation for many years in the Maintenance Department. She had no experience in the Fulfillment Department and replaced a well-liked supervisor who had been promoted. She introduced herself by saying she knew how much her new team liked the former supervisor, but she was the “Head Nigger in Charge, or HNC, now.” Her team of lower-level supervisors was comprised of three white (“majority”) women and one minority male. All of them were in their early to mid-20s, college students. All of them, including the New Supervisor, were also graduates of the

corporation's management training, which included substantial training on discrimination, harassment, diversity, and inclusion.

Lower-Level Supervisor was shocked by the HNC announcement, but she did not report it. Instead, she and her peers gossiped about the New Supervisor. Later, Lower-Level Supervisor was disciplined when she complained to upper management that the New Supervisor "was ignorant of" the Fulfillment Department's processes and needed to be trained on them.

Each Other's Stories – How Each Person Understands the Situation and Why

New Supervisor's Story – She is a racist.

Position: The Low-Level Supervisor is insubordinate and must be fired.

Interests:

Safety / Security: I want to know that I have a team that will back me up and get the job done. I've worked hard to get to this position. I've endured racism and sexism on top of the usual hardships. I need to see great loyalty from my subordinates.

Physiological Needs: I am supporting myself and my adult children from my salary. I've sacrificed sleep, marriage, and other relationships. I'm not giving up anything else.

Belongingness / We / Team Spirit: By not respecting me unequivocally, she is undermining my authority. She is also lobbying the others against me.

Self-Esteem / Respect: She's been here for four years. She doesn't know what I've been through to get where I am. I've dealt with enough people questioning and marginalizing me. I'll be damned if I let her do it. I know her type, and I'm not having it. I am not

ignorant. People like her have been calling my people ignorant for decades. That racist piece of garbage needs to be fired.

Business Growth / Profit / Self-Actualization: I might be new to this unit, but I know how to run an operation. That's why I was transferred here and many times before I got here.

Lower-Level Supervisor's Story – *I was grammatically and factually correct.*

Position: I only stated the truth. She is the racist.

Interests:

Safety / Security: I feel like I will always be on trial because I am white. She is punishing me for the actions of people I didn't know and have no known relationship to.

Physiological Needs: I am supporting myself, and helping my nephew and my mother with my income from this job. I might not have the time in that she has, but I love this corporation, and I am committed to its success. My unit has the highest efficiency and attendance records. I know the area. I want us to continue to be successful, and I want her to stop treating me like I'm the enemy because I'm not black.

Belongingness / We / Team Spirit: I have been in this department for four years. I started on the line, like everyone else. My unit functions as a team, and I cover others' areas when they are out. I can get people to work together, and I did it by caring about them, not by declaring myself Queen. She knows better. She has been through the management and discrimination training. None of it is acceptable.

Self-Esteem / Respect: She went off on my use of the word ignorant, which, in this context, means "lacking knowledge, information, or awareness about something in particular". She is new. She lacks some knowledge, information, and awareness—as we

all did when we were new. I did not call her ignorant generally. I assume she was very good at her job in the other department.

Business Growth / Profit / Self-Actualization: I work hard for her because I care about the corporation and about doing a good job. She doesn't care about that. She doesn't care that my unit is exceeding the minimum acceptable requirements in all areas, and that I am doing all of this while I'm caring for my mom, attending college full-time, and co-parenting my nephew.