



INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR ETHNO-RELIGIOUS MEDIATION

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

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MEDIATION ACADEMY

Specialized Mediation Training The Mediation of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts

Mediation Project

Mediation Case Study (Sample case developed by Faten Gharib, 2017)

Proposed Case Study: The Late Student

What Happened? Historical Background to the Conflict

This conflict occurred at a local, reputable science and tech high school that is located very close to the inner city. In addition to the excellent instructors and academics, the school's great standing is heavily due to its diverse student body and the administration's mission to celebrate and respect the cultures and religions of the students. Jamal is a senior, honor roll student who is popular amongst his classmates and liked by his instructors. From the many student organizations and clubs the school has established, Jamal is a member of both the Black Student Union and the Muslim Student Association. As a means of respecting Islamic adherence, the school principal has permitted his Muslim students to have a short Friday service at the end of their lunch time before the afternoon classes begin, with Jamal leading the service. The principal further instructed school teachers not to penalize these students should they arrive to class a few minutes late on Friday, while students should also do what they can to get to their classes on time.

John is a relatively new teacher at the school, trying to fulfill his duties and continue to make the school great for what it's known for. Since it has only been a few weeks, John is not acquainted with the various student groups and the flexibility the principal has provided in certain situations. Jamal is a student in John's class, and for the first weeks since John started to teach, Jamal would come into class five minutes late on Fridays. John started to comment about Jamal's tardiness and how it is not of school policy to come in late. Assuming John is aware of the Friday service Jamal is allowed to lead and participate in, Jamal would simply apologize and take his seat. One Friday, after several more incidents, John eventually says to Jamal in front of the class that it is "young radical thugs from the inner city like Jamal that the school should worry about for its reputation." John also threatened to fail Jamal if he came in late one more time even though he has maintained a solid A through all his work and participation.

Each Other's Stories – how each person understands the situation and why

John- He is disrespectful.

Position:

Jamal is a radical thug that needs to be taught rules and respect. He can't just come into class whenever he feels like it and use religion as an excuse.

Interests:

Safety/Security: I was hired here to maintain and build the school's reputation. I cannot allow a low-life kid to affect my performance as an instructor and the ratings this school has taken so many years to build.

Physiological Needs: I am new to this school and can't be walked on by a youth from the street preaching Islamic radicalism every Friday. I can't look weak in front of other teachers, the

principal, or the students.

Belongingness/ Team Spirit: This school is well known because of great instructors and achieving students who are working together. Making exceptions to preach religion isn't the school's mission.

Self-Esteem/Respect: It is disrespectful to me as an instructor for a student to habitually come in late. I have taught at many schools, I have never had to deal with such nonsense.

Self-Actualization: I know I am a good instructor, that is why I was hired to work here. I may be a bit tough when I feel like I need to be, but that is necessary at times.

Jamal- He is an Islamophobic racist.

Position:

John doesn't get that I was given approval to lead Friday services. This is just a part of my religion that I want to adhere to.

Interests:

Safety/Security: I can't fail a class when my grades are stellar. It is part of the school's mission to celebrate students' ethnicities and religions, and I was given the principal's approval to partake in the Friday service.

Physiological Needs: I can't keep getting marginalized as a result of what is portrayed in the media, about Blacks or Muslims. I have worked so hard since I was young to always make good grades, so that how I excelled could speak for me like my character, instead of being judged or labeled.

Belongingness/Team Spirit: I have been at this school for four years; I am on my way to college. This school's atmosphere is what I know and love; we can't start to have hatred and separation due to differences, lack of understanding, and racism.

Self-Esteem/Respect: Being Muslim and Black are large parts of my identity, both of which I love. It is a sign of *ignorance* to assume that I am a "thug" because I am black and that the school is close to the inner city, or that I am radical simply because I adhere to the Muslim faith.

Self-Actualization: My good character and grades are part of what collectively makes this school as great as it is. I certainly try to be on time to every class, and I can't control if someone comes to speak to me after the service. I am a part of this school and should still feel respected for the positive things I show.