

Fulcrum Dispute Resolution Clinic

September Newsletter

"Welcome to September! It is hard to believe, but Fall is in the air. Please note that off site hours at the Interchange may change soon. We want all of our parents and children to enjoy the remaining warmer days and daylight hours while they last."



AI and Mediation; Boon, Boondoggle, or Creative Assistance

Over the past few months, the Fulcrum mediation staff, along with members of Resolution Washington, have spent a great deal of time reviewing AI services and their application to the mediation process. In studies, humans have outperformed AI in mediation services. AI can handle 70% of repetitive, data-heavy, and routine tasks. The continuum of services across the country shows that there are mediation firms using AI for mediation research before mediations begin, all the way to actual AI mediators conducting mediations for businesses. This story attempts to put into perspective where AI and the use of AI in mediation are at the moment.

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Specific Applications

Mediation firms and mediators across the country appear to be in agreement that there are four specific applications of AI in mediation; administrative support, information analysis, legal research and prediction, and scenario

simulation and foresight. The most dynamic of those applications involves simulation and foresight. In specific types of mediation AI can analyze historical conflict data, socio-political dynamics and cultural nuances to simulate outcomes and support strategic decision making. Those mediations are usually performed on a large scale with numerous parties and with outcomes that have significant impacts.

Benefits

Specific benefits in mediation through the use of AI are much easier to identify when the application is provided through a knowledgeable and profession mediation firm. It is apparent that AI will accelerate document review, research and administrative tasks, allowing the mediator to focus on negotiation and conflict resolution. Additionally, AI can immediately analyze large data sets or be available almost immediately. There may be the opportunity for more accessibility for parties who may face other barriers in mediation.

Limitations

There are a myriad of reasons defining the limitations of AI and the mediation process. However, there are two that are

consistently highlighted by professionals; there is an emotional intelligence gap as AI cannot perceive tone, body language, or emotion cues of the parties, and AI must respect confidentiality, neutrality, and ethical standards. Reliance on AI could compromise fairness or violate legal obligations as defined by organizational standards.

Best Practices

In short, there are two key components to the use of AI in mediation; realize that AI is to be used as a complement to mediation and not a replacement, and mediators must review all AI outputs critically to ensure accuracy, fairness, and ethical compliance.

Fulcrum Approach

In simple terms, AI is viewed as a tool to enhance mediation by improving efficiency, analyzing data, and supporting the making of decisions. However, a human appears to always be required for the remaining work and to check the accuracy of AI. The Fulcrum mediation cadre recognizes that AI offers significant potential. However, the human mediator remains essential for managing emotions, ensuring fairness, and guiding the interest based transformative process.

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Policy Update

The Fulcrum organization is pleased to announce that its policy review committee has almost finished a complete update to all policies providing direction to the mediation cadre, the Interchange staff, and those working in the Sexual Exploitation Prevention Program. The project was undertaken earlier this year through direction of the Fulcrum Board of Directors. Many of the updated policies were originally completed more than a decade ago. It is hoped that the rewritten items will carry the organization through the rest of this decade.

Exploitation of Children

With the continued emphasis on children of all ages spending hours on social media and gaming apps, the Sexual Exploitation Prevention Department has been busy getting ready for the new academic year. Director, Jaclyn Coyle, has been contacted by numerous school and organizations asking for presentations. Jaclyn has already scheduled community presentations in the month of December, 2026. Readers can find much of the Fulcrum Sexual Exploitation on the OSPI website which provides training materials to teachers for grades six through 12 in the State of Washington.

Saturday Mediation

The Fulcrum Dispute Resolution Clinic Mediation Cadre has received a number of requests for Saturday and early evening mediation sessions between Individuals in conflict. Cadre members are pleased to make themselves available to parties who may have work or family schedules that only allow for the potential of a Saturday or evening time period. Scheduling should be completed through the Intake Specialist at 509-838-2799.

Interest Based Mediation

Interest based mediation is designed to foster conflict resolution settlements based on the underlying interests of the parties. Rights based mediation focuses on legal rights associated with grievances. Interest based focuses on the substantive, psychological, and procedural interests. The Fulcrum organization has practiced interest based mediation for three decades with an overall settlement rate of 95% while handling over 9000 cases.

Sliding Scale Still Available

Clients of the Fulcrum Institute Dispute Resolution Clinic requiring mediation services are reminded that a sliding fee scale does exist for mediation service for those in need of economic assistance. While the normal cost of \$100.00 an hour for both parties in mediation is applied to those who make more than \$30,000.00 a year, those who make less than that may pay as little as \$35.00 per hour based on the existing scale. All questions concerning fees should be addressed to Lauren before the mediation date.



Resolution Washington Expands

The organization working to assist coordination between the 21 existing dispute resolution centers in Washington State has officially expanded. This month, the organizations Board of Directors, through its Director, approved the hire of a new accountant to oversee organizational payroll and financial distribution of Department of Commerce funding. The organization currently has five individuals working with the centers around the State of Washington. The organization provides oversight to statistics provided to the State of Washington detailing the operation of the 22 individual centers.

Web Site Changes

Website developer and information processor Mark Holman has completed his most recent update of the Fulcrum website. New material details all of the upcoming course offerings at Fulcrum, information on specific programs, and the ability to leave messages for all Fulcrum staff members. Materials may be found, through your efforts, by going to www.fulcrumdispute.com



Subpoena Policy

Parents are reminded that if they need court records to be provided to the other parent and the court, the subpoena policy mandates that all records requests will be completed with 10 business days. Some records requests can be handled in a shorter period of time, but it is imperative that parents needing records know the time frame involved. There is copying cost for all records provided to the court and to the parents.

Employment Mediation

Fulcrum mediators continue to serve the State of Washington Personnel Review Board through a mediation contract handling employment mediations for the Board before employees are assigned a due process hearing. Fulcrum has had the contract for the past two years, and it was recently extended. Employers in the Spokane area are reminded that if you have an employee with a personnel issue, mediation may be the best place to resolve the issue before it goes to court. Fulcrum has over 30 years of experience handling employment issue mediations.



Happy September Everyone. By the time you read this, most of the children we serve will be back in school. I hope you have a great year, learn lot of new and exciting things and enjoy the classroom experience. By the way, don't forget there are lots of new art supplies at the Interchange. Everyone at Fulcrum wants you to have a wonderful experience when you are in our facility.

We Are Sorry

During the past month, the Fulcrum Interchange has lost two families who were denied visits due to policy enforcement. In both cases the nonresidential parent decided that he/she would rather find another provider of supervised visitations due to the enforcement of Fulcrum safety policies. In both cases, non-enforcement would have put the child in an unsafe situation and Fulcrum was required to step in due to requirements of the court and specific rules of operation. Fulcrum takes the safety of you and your children very seriously.

Assistance Grant Review

Fulcrum Interchange just completed its annual review by the State of Washington concerning its Access and Visitation Grant which provides assistance to those individuals

who need financial help to pay for their visitations.

The State spent one full day at the facility reviewing costs for the year, dollars allocated to the assistance program, and payments made to help those in need. The Interchange passed with flying colors. The organization has had the grant assistance program for more than a decade. It is hoped that next year, the grant dollars provided will increase in total allocation to assist more parents who require funds.

Game Room Busy

Parents and their children are finding the addition of the game room within the Interchange to be a valuable asset. The Game Room is a much larger room in the Interchange. It comes equipped with a number of game devises, more toys, more room, and generally allows for children and their parents to have more exercise-oriented activities. Please check with your supervisors to see if the room is open.



Plan Ahead for Halloween

Just a reminder! In next months newsletter we will release the details for our annual Halloween costume contest. There will be prizes for different age groups and even the staff will be allowed to dress in costume. Halloween falls on a Saturday. Costumes will be allowed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.



Skating (Ice or Roller)

Recently, the Interchange Director has received a couple of requests to go roller skating in Riverfront Park. In an effort to accomodate that type of request, the Interchange staff has hired a person who can skate. Our staff person is looking forward to being able to skate with you and your children. If you would like to request such an offsite, be sure to let the Interchange know a couple of days before your parenting time.

A Child Not Attending

Please note that if your child does not attend a schedule parenting time session when the one has been scheduled, the Interchange staff may have to complete a court report as to the nonattendance. Illness and other health related matters are not reported, but a child's refusal to attend, or if he/she just doesn't want to, will always be reported.

★ Haven Award ★

This month's Haven Award goes to staff member, Claire. She brings a unique set of skills to her position as a supervisor of parent/child visits. Claire has been with us for over a year working both Saturdays and Sundays. She enjoys the weekend as it does not interfere with her employment within the Spokane School District. When you see Claire, please smile and say "Thanks for being you."

THE FULCRUM INSTITUTE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CLINIC:

Phone Number: (509) 838-2799
Website: www.fulcrumdispute.org
Questions: Call us today



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