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Mediation: everybody knows what it is?

A common language does not necessarily infer a common meaning or understanding. The definition of mediation, as provided by NADRAC, provides for a common language. The common meaning of the mediation process is an entirely different issue.

A review of the literature notes: facilitative mediation, transformative mediation, narrative mediation, evaluative mediation, to name but a few.

If as the NADRAC definition implies mediation is a process to assist the parties resolve their dispute, does it really matter whether the practitioner uses a very structured approach or a more informal conversational style?

It is a truism that no two disputes are the same: similarly no two parties are the same. If one party is very process focused and the other party more conversational, is the mediator doing one party a disservice and behaving ethically by adopting one particular style in preference to another? Is the mediator exhibiting bias and creating a potential power imbalance by not being flexible in their approach to each client?

If mediation is a service provided to consumers, albeit court ordered mediations may stretch the boundaries of voluntariness, do practitioners who rigidly adhere to a particular style overlooked the customer focus aspect of their service? Does the consumer appreciate the subtle differences between evaluative, facilitative, narrative or transformative? What is important: style or context?

Include suggested theme. Research/education