

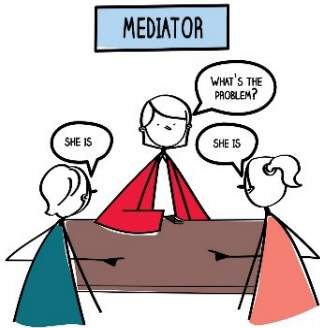


Mediate Ohio

WINTER

2019

2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE STILL HAS SEATING AVAILABLE



It's not too late to sign up for OMA's annual conference! Dr. Joe Shannon, a local expert with a national reputation will present on *Understanding Character Flaws: Navigating Challenging Relationships*. It's true, we mediators have had lots of workshops on this or similar topics, but no one presents like Dr. Shannon. A scholar and a practitioner with great wit and experience, he will tailor his address to working with DR clients who have significant personality disorders or who are just simply difficult.

We all get these types of clients, and the fact is that, given the work we do, we are more likely to get these types of people because they simply are toxic: oppositional, combative, angry, chronic victims, controlling, submissive, egotistical, etc. They can defeat your best efforts to effect a resolution for whatever brought them to the table. You can be moving along in what you feel is a great mediation, about ready to summarize for a closing, when one party says, "What about the...?" You look up, search your memory board, squint your eyes, look away, and say, "I don't remember your bringing up that topic. Could you tell me more?" And, then, the whole thing falls apart. And, it feels almost like a practical joke! You get the sense that the client was just waiting to throw a wrench into the process, knowing the other party would go off the deep end, and a stalemate would be reached with the first party feeling triumphant. The deal breaker was like a joker in a deck of cards, buried at the very bottom of the pile, then played at the last hand to win the game.

After the mediation, you sit there debriefing to yourself, wondering what you could have done or said to change the trajectory of the discussion. Could you have said or done anything? How would you have done it differently? Do others have insights into situations such as this from which you could benefit?

In hosting Dr. Shannon's presentation, the OMA Board determined that we could all benefit from his presentation because he is an expert in dealing with difficult people. One of his presentations "Reasoning with Unreasonable People" begs the question, is it possible at all to reason with unreasonable people? First, understanding the character flaw or personality disorder is a place to begin. (Continued on p.3)

KNOW YOUR BOARD

President :: Nathan Witkin ndwitkin@gmail.com
Vice President :: Teresa Cusma teresa.cusma@colemanservices.org
Secretary :: Linda Norris linda.mediator@gmail.com
Treasurer :: Suzanne Barker barkesu@aol.com
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James Petas :: James.petas@gmcourt.org
Charlotte Parsons :: charlotte@listenmediation.com
Desiree Lyonette :: desireelyonette@aol.com

NEW GROUP TO CREDENTIAL MEDIATORS

For those who believe in the need for mediator credentialing, a new organization Ohio Mediator Credentialing Organization (OMCO) is being formed to help mediators establish additional credibility with the public by verifying their training, education, and experience as competent, reliable, and competent professionals. A roll-out of OMCO will be done at the Annual Conference on March 1, 2019. Come and learn the details, get an application for credentialing and join the movement.

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Hats Off for OMA Member Vice-President Teresa Cusma

One clear truth that has emerged through conducting these “Hats Off” features is that OMA has some truly remarkable members. Remarkable in that they are not only leaders and pioneers in the Dispute Resolution movement but dedicated professionals who have had tremendous impact on the progress of our movement through their ability to effect change and accomplish great things with very little personal fanfare or self-promotion. Such is the case with Teresa Cusma, OMA Vice-President and Director of Coleman Mediation and Conflict Management Services, a nonprofit group she directs in Canton, Ohio.

Like many of us, Teresa began as a volunteer. Prior to her initiation into the world of ADR, she received a B.S. in Social Work from the University of Dayton, and a Master’s in Higher Education Administration from Kent State University. Then, in 1994, she attended an ADR training at the Dayton Mediation Center where she got hooked and signed on as a volunteer for four years before re-locating to Canton, Ohio, with her husband and three children. Despite being uprooted, she dug in and spent the next year and a half establishing the Community Mediation Center of Stark County. Through extensive networking, incredible resourcefulness, and a true gift for perseverance and commitment, she engaged other community groups and agencies such as prosecutors and the police department to develop referrals and contacts who

sent her mediation cases. Unfortunately, in 2008 her agency lost three major funders, but due to her network of business contacts, Coleman Professional Services invited her to join them. Now, she has an Advanced Mediator Practitioner Status from ACR, is certified under the Ohio Supreme Court’s Rule 16, and teaches, trains, mentors, and runs a viable nonprofit mediation center.

As an innovator, Teresa has forged various community conflict management services including training, truancy mediation, school peer mediation, and civil and domestic relations mediation. To help keep everyone paid and the lights on, she has also become a crack grant writer and is quite adept at forming working relationships with other organizations to accomplish specific results. As an Adjunct Faculty member, she teaches “Introduction to Conflict Management” at Kent State University; “Mediation Training, Facilitation, and Coaching for the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution; “Advance Attendance Me-

diation,” to Ohio schools through the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution; and “Conflict Management Skills Workshops. Clients include an employee assistance program, hospitals, courts, school districts, Habitat

for Humanity, area county and municipal government agencies, and Mental Health and Recovery Services Boards. As though that weren’t enough,

she has served on various community and nonprofit boards for various programs including “Community Initiative to Reduce Violence Committee.”

She is also that rare bird among us, an entrepreneur, who manages a \$130,595.00 annual budget, supervising a staff of full-time and volunteer mediators and interns, applying for and coordinating grants, and developing a menu of DR services for Stark County and other counties in Ohio. In all, the buck stops with her at CMCMS, and she well understands the hard-scrabble position of directing a com-

munity mediation center on an ever-shifting budget and “the kindness of strangers.” Running a non-profit is fraught with ups and downs, but Teresa jumped in the deep end and swam to shore.

Her commitment to the profession of mediation is expressed through volunteering to be on the board of OMA, her hard work on the OMA Credentialing Committee, serving on the Supreme Court’s Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution’s subcommittee for school attendance, membership in several DR organizations, and the training and mentoring that she does.

When asked about what keeps her going and what is she appreciative of, she easily responded, “changes in people.” For her, mediation is about the outcome and feeling that in mediation people can connect with each other in ways not possible in a courtroom. Her agency handled over 800 truancy cases in 2018, and she feels that through the mediations that were held, families were helped to overcome obstacles to school success. Ohio House Bill 410 has done a lot to promote the use of mediation for school attendance, and the Tool Kit that was developed is something she’s proud to have been a part of. For Teresa, being able to help identify resources for these families and to help put in place measures to improve school attendance is tremendously rewarding.



What We Get From Conferences

Is it just enough to pay your membership fee so you can claim membership to OMA? Do you appreciate that there is power in participating and engaging in meetings and our annual conference by being connected to others who are active in your profession? Think about it. What other benefits come from attending the conference? Here are some major ones:

Educational opportunities. No matter how experienced you are at mediation you can always learn something new. It's easy to become isolated, develop tunnel vision, fall into a rut. Mixing it up at a meeting helps promote exposure to new points of view, new ideas and trends that can impact your practice of DR.

Networking with peers. Con-

ferences provide a great opportunity to network. Collaboration is the way to approach networking. Most people can help each other uncover ideas and spark inspiration when they get to know each other on a personal level. The value in meetings comes from the human-to-human connections that occur.



When two or more people begin to discuss topics on a deeper and personal level, the success of the event to those involved becomes irreplaceable. It is the people that bring added value to your time at a conference. Networking helps identify employment opportunities, re-

sources, and ideas for building your own practice. Bring your business cards and leave with other people's cards.

Finding Inspiration. Did you ever return from a conference and repeat to others what you learned and heard? Mediation and working with difficult people can be draining no matter how much you love it. Meeting colleagues, sharing ideas and experience, learning new ideas, and getting insights can be sort of like getting religion or new lease on your work. We get energy from being with like-minded folks.

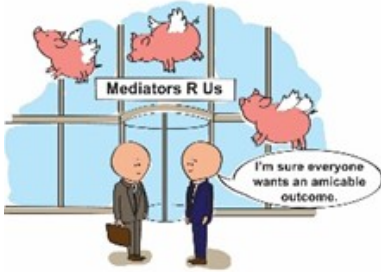
Sharpen the Saw. Stephen Covey lists this as his 7th habit of highly effective people. It is the notion that sometimes you have to take a break from your "work" to

sharpen your skills. A dull axe won't cut a tree nearly as effectively as a sharp one. You invest in yourself when you take time out to learn and share with others.

Continuing Education Credits. And, finally. Earn those CEU's and CLE's your need for your licenses or professional credentialing.

Strengthen Your Organization. Member engagement is critical to the viability of OMA. To be engaged, members need to keep up with what OMA is doing and what he hope to do. Bring your ideas, raise your hand to volunteer, listen to different points of view, and feel like you belong to a great organization that is working to promote your chosen professional field.

Continued from P. 1



Dr. Shannon will lead us through the identification/understanding phase and move us to the tips and guidelines for working productively with challenging people. Regardless of whether we work in civil, domestic, probate, workplace ADR or parenting coordinating, we can always learn from signal light ahead offered by a notable professional such as Dr. Shannon.

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Teresa recalled a comment a police officer made to her about the civil mediations that were done, working with neighborhood disputes when he said to her, "Every case I've sent to you, I have not had to go back there." That was huge for her.

As an active OMA member, she is concerned about membership building and the need to engage more members in helping to achieve OMA goals. She feels OMA provides unique opportunities to meet dedicated people in the profession, to take advantage of face-to-face interactions for sharing professional issues, concerns, and experiences and for learning. It's through the connection with each other that we learn the most, and OMA provides networking opportunities she would otherwise not have access to.

She says it's sometimes hard to keep the flame burning and it's the contact with others that helps keep the practice of mediation meaningful and energizing. "We learn from each other and need each other as sounding boards." Her advice to others in the profession is "Don't give up." And, she certainly is a role model in that regard. She's never given up. And for that, we can all be grateful.

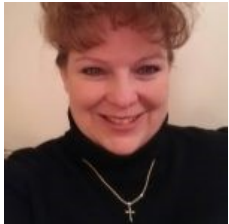
OMA is a professional organization of mediators and Alternative Dispute Resolution practitioners throughout Ohio, dedicated to giving a collective voice to the diverse business and professional needs of its individual members. Founded in 1989, OMA provides leadership, training, professional development, networking opportunities, business advertising, a mediator registry, advocacy, and information for its members. Through regular meetings, conferences, newsletters, email blasts, committee activity, regular blogs, and reciprocity with other organizations, OMA is constantly working to increase the use of ADR in both the public and private sectors. As an information clearing house, OMA provides information about employment and training opportunities as well as links to other ADR organizations and activities.



UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER FLAWS: NAVIGATING CHALLENGING RELATIONSHIPS

Dr. Joe Shannon—March 1, 2019—Registration opens at 8:00 a.m.

Continuing education credits available— 2400 Olentangy River Rd.



Welcome Our New Board Member

Desiree Lyonette, Esq. has joined the OMA Board and brings with her a wide range of DR experience. We hope you attend the Annual Conference and take a minute to introduce yourself to her and welcome her aboard.

She is enthusiastic about her new role and has already offered some great new ideas for moving OMA forward.

She is on the faculty of Belmont College, has served in a wide variety of capacities including that of a GAL, Arbitrator, Mediator, Advisor, Professor, Advocate, Program Developer, Special Counsel, and Poll Worker.

She is heavily involved in her work as an Advisor for a Criminal Justice Club for students at Belmont College. She has worked professionally in Ohio and West Virginia. Also, she is a Contract Arbitrator for the Better Business Bureau, and, of course, a court-approved Contract Mediator.

She brings with her that spirit of volunteerism so many of our members demonstrate. Her community involvement, sense of civic responsibility, and enthusiasm for innovation are great qualities for a Board member.

With a rich background such as hers, she is sure to bring her own unique perspective to her OMA work, and the Board is truly excited to be working with her.

AGAIN, DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

Supporting OMA is critical to its success. When you attend the Annual Conference, you also can participate in the Member's Meeting conducted over lunch. It is a good time to talk to and share with others your ideas about the future of OMA. Your voice matters!

And, for this year's Conference, it is anticipated that Dr. Joe Shannon's presentation will be both enlightening and entertaining. His experiences dealing with and researching difficult people and people with personality disorders, in addition to the mentally ill are profound; and his ability to share anecdotal information along with expert research is quite amazing.

Also, we've focused our emphasis on dealing with difficult clients in mediation, but we all know we deal with difficult people all the time, especially in the public sector. Whether it's a family member, a supervisor, a client, or a friend, there are people who test our patience and tax our communication skills everywhere we turn.

The challenge is not just dealing with them, but dealing with our own feelings about them. The more we understand them, the more effective we are at establishing a productive perspective and coping with our feelings, managing our reactions, and helping them find a resolution to whatever is driving their conflict.

