

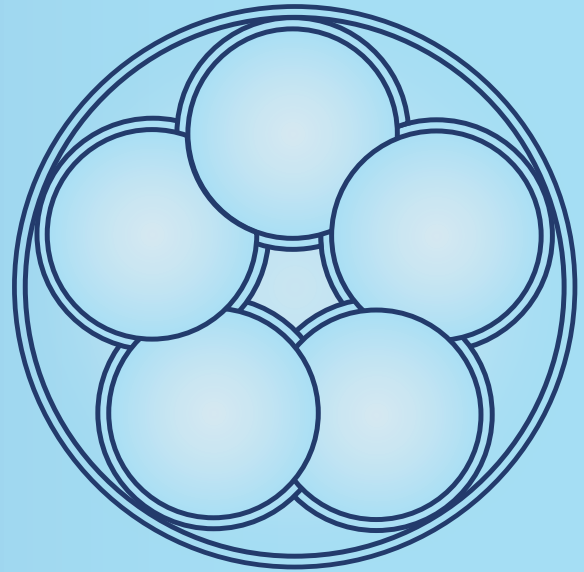
Mid-Shore Pro Bono

Community Conferencing

COMMUNITY CONFERENCING services are available through Mid-Shore Pro Bono by calling our Community Conferencing Project Coordinator at the number below.

In addition, The local State's Attorney's Offices, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, the County Police Departments and the Public School Systems all make direct referrals to Mid-Shore Pro Bono for Community Conferencing.

This project is supported by a grant from the Department of Family Administration at the Administrative Office of the Courts.



**COMMUNITY CONFERENCING
PROJECT COORDINATOR
410-200-5027**

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**Alternative
Dispute Resolution
through
Community
Conferencing**

**SERVING KENT, QUEEN ANNE'S, TALBOT,
CAROLINE AND DORCHESTER COUNTIES**

COMMUNITY CONFERENCING

HOW DOES IT WORK?

During a Community Conference, a trained Community Conference facilitator brings together everyone involved in and affected by an incident of harm. The participants:

- *Hear what happened;*
- *Say how they have been affected; and*
- *Create an agreement to resolve the situation and stop it from happening again.*

All parties—both victims and offenders—have an opportunity to speak and listen, face to face, in a safe, neutral setting.

WHY DOES IT WORK?

- *People can resolve situations on their own when given the opportunity.*
- *Solutions stick when those affected take part in creating them.*
- *Violence can be prevented when people have a safe space to address problems and create solutions.*

REACHING AGREEMENT

During the Community Conference, victims and offenders work on reaching an agreement that everyone can accept.

If an agreement is reached, then the case is closed. If an agreement is not completed, then the case is returned to the referral source to be processed in the usual manner.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

FOR VICTIMS:

- *Victims are a part of deciding what needs to happen to repair damage done.*
- *It provides a safe place for victims to tell the offenders how their lives have been affected by offender behavior.*
- *Family members and supportive friends take part in the process.*
- *It is more likely repayment or restitution will be received.*

FOR OFFENDERS:

- *Offenders have the opportunity to tell their story.*
- *Offenders participate in creating the solution.*
- *Young offenders and their families have access to community-based services and needed support.*

FOR COMMUNITIES:

- *Community Conferencing increases accountability. People learn how their actions affect others, with impersonal behavior translated into personal terms.*
- *Offenders are less likely to repeat the behavior, decreasing recidivism.*
- *It prevents violence and increases personal connections in communities, neighborhoods and schools.*