

Quabbin Mediation



November 2020

Greetings! We here at Quabbin Mediation are writing in hopes that this end of 2020 finds you safe and well!

So far, it's been the most extraordinarily bizarre and remarkable year in memory, what with the pandemic shutting down the whole planet, a teetering economy shedding jobs and frontline workers forced to take huge risks, kindness and courage amid death and illness, families homeless and hungry with winter coming on, elections, fierce resistance to injustice.

Through it all, Quabbin Mediation has continued to do what we've always done: cultivate in our communities the capability to courageously address disconnection and insecurity, troubles that lead to fear, hostility, inequity and conflict.

In Community and Court Mediation, Training Active Bystanders (TAB), and Veterans Mediation (VM), all of our programs, we teach people to teach others. We plunged into cyberspace in March, adapting all our curricula to be interactive and engaging this new world.

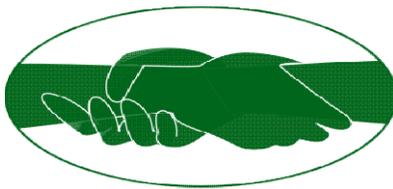
All of our work involves human connection. We have devoted time and energy to ensure that connection endures and broadens into the future. To our astonishment, cyberspace widens our reach, regionally with mediation, nationally with VM, and globally with TAB.



Mediation is a formal process to assist communication among conflicting parties by a mediator who does not have the power to mandate agreements or outcomes. Mediators do not take sides or make judgments. Adhering to the principle of self-determination ensures the parties reach their own solutions. The process is confidential and voluntary.

The pandemic's economic shutdown and stay at home directives have intensified conflicts which we mediate for mostly low to moderate income people. We de-escalate and resolve conflicts which include housing, access to food, transportation, health care, family and neighbor issues, and employment.

Mediation services stalled in March, but by May we had a hybrid means of effective communication by telephone, email, and via zoom for mediating court and community cases. We trained five experienced mediators to use this process, and continued to provide mediation services for small claims, family and other cases. Our Court Coordinator attends Court sessions on Zoom and we've also had referrals by word of mouth, courts and our website. We did a successful large-scale mediation project involving 20 staff people and will conduct a series of whole-staff Conflict Resolution trainings there.



Training Active Bystanders

Training Active Bystanders (TAB) helps participants to analyze situations when they are bystanders and evaluate consequences to taking action. Participants work together to gain competencies to create action plans in the moment of need or later instead of remaining passive and being complicit. It does *not* mean aggression against the harm doer.

TAB addresses multitudes of community needs: anti-violence, anti-bullying, restorative justice, substance abuse prevention, and interrupting harm around race, sex, gender identity (and all the other ways clever humans find to turn people into the "other"). The need for TAB continues to rise. The FBI reported that 2019 showed a steep, continuing increase in attacks motivated by bias, in particular, against Black people, Hispanics, Jews, transgender people and Asian-Americans.

The 2.5-hour TAB workshop is adapted for training synchronously in cyberspace. TAB is implemented in community settings, schools, businesses, public agencies, houses of worship, etc. It is a means of community self-regulation and a way to transform a community to a norm in which harm doing is not acceptable.

C-19 forced cancellation of all TAB workshops. So this spring, with our TAB Hub partners in Canada (www.mcco.ca) and the UK (www.IndependentAdvocay.org), we created a very user-friendly online version of the workshop. Demand has increased, so we are happy to have 30 TAB trainers onboard! TAB Coordinator Beryl Domingo, with UK TAB trainer Andrea Randall, co-taught the first-ever Intercontinental TAB workshop in Sept. for people in England, Wales, MI, MA and PA. Then two full days of workshops reached 80 global participants from Australia, India, Indonesia, N. and S. America and Europe!

In schools since 2007, we have trained 2,000 students to teach the curriculum to 20,000 of their peers. This year, the students who have experience in teaching face-to-face have transitioned seamlessly to teaching virtually.

A New York Times journalist interviewed Beryl about active bystandership, published 10/29/20.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/29/smarter-living/how-to-be-an-active-bystander-when-you-see-casual-racism.html>.



Veterans Mediation (VM), created by Quabbin Mediation in 2007, provides free mediation training by veterans, for veterans (including Guard, Reserves, active military, and family members). Veterans who serve veterans in their work for state, federal and non-profit agencies are trained and certified as professional mediators. They then mediate many thousands of situations annually, resolving problems of homelessness, joblessness, broken families, health and mental health issues.

Professional Mediation Training is five days. It is presented online synchronously by our outstanding VM trainers who are committed to mediation and teaching fellow veterans the skills that can enhance their work with veterans. Mediation Skills Trainings include three 2-hour modules presented synchronously online, and focus on Active Listening, Creating an Environment of Trust, Understanding Conflict, and Finding Common Ground. A day-long Skills Training for National Jewish War Veterans is taking VM nationwide for the first time.

Quabbin Mediation Board of Directors and Personnel

Quabbin Mediation is a state-certified women directed non-profit, founded in 1995 with the mission of weaving the language and process of creative and innovative conflict resolution into the fabric of the community.

Board of Directors: Deborah Letit Habib, Ed.D., Chair; Heather Bialecki-Canning, Treasurer; Trudy Berkovitz, MSW, Clerk; Kirby Lecy, MA Dept. of Rural Health.

Personnel: Sharon Tracy, Executive Director; Susan Wallace, Training Director; Bob Sekula, Mediation Director; Candice Sironaitis, Business Manager; Jim Meehan, Veterans Mediation Program Manager; Beryl Domingo, Training Active Bystander (TAB) Coordinator; Angela Petrizzo, Court Coordinator; Lilly Fellows, TAB Consultant; Katelyn Coleman, TAB Intern. Trainers for TAB and VM and Mediators are a competent, dedicated circle of over 200!

Funding And Finances

Quabbin Mediation started the 2020 year on a financial upswing but when the unforeseen Covid 19 struck in March 2020, much of our state and foundation funding was put on hold as financial resources had to be redirected to immediate C-19 community survival concerns. We have bought time and some financial relief with these contributors so we can build for the future: Community Foundation of W. MA, MA Bar Association; MA Executive Office of the Trial Court; Town of Orange, Workers Credit Union. We earn modest fees for services. Like many, we are holding on by the skin of our teeth.

This is Quabbin Mediation's 25th anniversary. Please pitch in.

\$500 trains a veteran as a mediator, \$200 trains a veteran in mediation skills or trains a community member or a student to be a TAB trainer, \$100 provides a mediation session, \$20 provides the TAB workshop to a student or community member. Donations are tax deductible.

Send a check to Quabbin Mediation, 13 South Main St., Orange, MA 01364. Or donate here through PayPal.

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If you have moved away from our circle of mediators or trainers, we welcome you to rejoin us. Contact us at: info@quabbinmediation.org, info@Veteransmediation.org, or info@TrainingActiveBystanders.org.