The Mediator’s Role: Does and Doesn’t

Annex 34 · Module 1: Introduction to Mediation

A mediator guides the conversation, but does not decide the outcome. They manage the process, not “the truth”. A peer mediator is not a judge, a teacher, or a rescuer.

DOES	DOES NOT
Sets rules: one person speaks at a time, respect, breaks.	Does not decide who is right.
Makes sure each person gets time to speak.	Does not force people to agree.
Summarizes what was said and checks understanding.	Does not speak for one side.
Keeps the discussion on the main topics.	Does not use the process to give advice or punishment.
Guides people toward options and a clear agreement.	Does not take sides.
Asks clear and respectful questions.	Does not impose solutions.
Helps the parties explain their feelings and needs.	Does not decide guilt.

Why it works this way

This is one of the pillars of mediation ethics: the parties make free choices about the outcome. A good peer mediator also watches for limits. If the conflict feels unsafe, too intense, or unfair, adult support is needed.

Key takeaway: Mediators manage the conversation, not the decision. The peer mediator supports the process, not one side.

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