

TAP's Dispute Resolution Services: "Building Peaceful Communities" - A Hidden Gem

By Josh Hoch, MWI

Dispute Resolution Services, a membership benefit of TAP*, is comprised of Mediation, Facilitation, Consultation, and the workshop, "Building Peaceful Communities." While many sites are familiar with dispute resolution, the workshop Building Peaceful Communities is often overlooked. I consider it the "Hidden Gem" of the benefit.

To help sites deal with conflict, the "Building Peaceful Communities" workshop provides dispute resolution skills to residents and/or staff, and explains services available to TAP member sites.

Everyone deals with conflict differently, and disputes can often escalate and are often never resolved. The "Building Peaceful Communities" workshop provides tools to approach and resolve conflict effectively. The workshop allows participants the opportunity to practice conflict resolution skills through interaction with other residents and staff. The workshop also provides the participants with a common language for dealing with disputes.

Feedback from recent workshops include:

When residents and staff learn dispute resolution skills together, it often results in a combined effort to address and resolve conflict before it escalates. Many participants incorporate these skills into resolving new conflicts, while others will still take advantage of the mediation TAP benefit. For a sample activity that we often do with residents during a workshop, try this:

Grab a pen and a piece of paper. Write down the first 5 words that come to mind when you hear the word "conflict". Review your list. Chances are at least four if not all five words on your list have a negative meaning. Our experiences have shown that when people view and embrace conflict as an opportunity, positive outcomes come from conflict. When prompted participants often start to use words such as change, opportunity, resolution, understanding, new beginning, and improved relationships when thinking about conflict.

To learn more or to schedule a workshop at your site, please contact Josh Hoch at 800-348-4888 x23.

* TAP Membership is available to developments overseen by MassHousing, visit www.masshousing.com/TAP.



"I learned how to listen better to residents in conflict."

"I recommend more people participate in this great program."

"The role plays helped me to understand and practice new skills."

"I found this workshop informative and I definitely have some ideas to take home with me."

"I learned a tool for listening called the listening triangle."