Debrief of the Workshop: “Social Justice Mediation Training” Presented at RIT by Facilitators from the Social Justice Mediation Institute, University of Massachusetts at Amherst from June 8-12, 2015

This five-day training is designed to train a cadre of participants (n = 24) in mediation and conflict resolution from a social justice perspective. Workshop participants are trained to mediate while applying a social justice lens to their own techniques. During this workshop, participants explore how mediation can routinely replicate inequalities despite our intentions to the contrary. Trainees gain strategies to address these challenges while still facilitating a process with self-determination about the outcome for the disputing parties.

Training participants explore the relationship between social justice and the development and resolution of conflicts in mediation through lecturettes, interactive activities, analyses of (actual) videotaped mediation sessions, and a series of role-plays and simulations.

Why a Social Justice Approach to Mediation:

This Social Justice Mediation model was developed in response to the growing body of scholarship revealing that commonly used mediation models and practices do not serve all disputing parties equally. Despite the demonstrated success of mediation (for many), research has also shown that it routinely reproduces privilege both structurally within institutions and interpersonally between disputing parties. This training undertakes a critical examination of how and why this occurs in mediation and introduces principles and new strategies that account for privilege and work to counter its discriminatory impact. The training is open to both previously trained mediators and those without any mediation training.

Goals:

- Examination of the patterns and reasons behind the privilege and exclusion that mainstream conflict intervention processes can produce
- Exposure to story gathering and agreement building theory and strategies based in a social justice perspective
- Mediation role-play practice: learning to apply a social justice lens to mediation to promote equality and empowerment for all in the mediation process and to foster the development of effective and mutually acceptable agreements

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Social Justice Mediation Training Facilitators:

Leah Wing, Ed.D., lwing@legal.umass.edu

Leah is a member of the Legal Studies Program faculty at the U. of MA/Amherst where her research and teaching applies critical race legal theory to mediation and reconciliation in colonized and postcolonial societies. Leah is also the Co-Director of the National Center for Technology and Dispute Resolution. Since 1985, she has been a mediator and trainer for over 100 educational institutions, government agencies, and non-profits. She served on the Association of Conflict Resolution board of directors (2002-6) and is on the editorial boards of Conflict Resolution Quarterly and The International Journal of Online Dispute Resolution. As founding director of the Social Justice Mediation Institute, she has offered over 150 trainings in social justice mediation over the past 21 years, training over 3000 people in this approach to conflict intervention. Leah is a member of Healing Through Remembering (Belfast).

Deepika-Marya, Ph.D.

Deepika, Associate Professor of Postcolonial Theory and Literature, has been teaching in higher education in the United States for the past decade and a half. A dispute resolution trainer since 1997, Deepika introduced critical theory to the field of mediation and integrates conflict resolution theory with multicultural approaches to conflict. As a lead trainer with the Social Justice Mediation Institute she has trained at dozens of public and private educational institutions and organizations across the U.S. and provided consultation services for the development and implementation of mediation programs. To date, Deepika and the Social Justice Mediation Institute have assisted more than 20 colleges, universities, high schools, and non-profits to create and implement mediation programs based on the social justice mediation model.