



## **ICMTA Witnessing & Mediation Service V1.1**

NB. Please refer to the **ICMTA Witnessing & Mediation Service - Boundaries of Service V1.1** to see if you are eligible for this service

### **Outline of document**

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### **Introduction**

In the case of conflict between an ICMTA member and another teacher or student the ICMTA may be of help. We request that you first attempt to resolve the situation directly by accessing your own networks & resources. We appreciate that language and cultural differences often mean that issues are best dealt with locally if at all possible.

If the issue is still not resolved, you can reach out to the ICMTA by submitting the **ICMTA Witnessing & Mediation Service APPLICATION FORM** available on the ICMTA website and email to the ICMTA administrator at [admin@icmta.org](mailto:admin@icmta.org) Please see *Steps to follow*, below.

### **What is conflict?**

Conflict is challenging for most of us. Often conflict has been badly modelled in our families and we fear the consequences. At the same time, we tend to hold on tightly to the 'justified rightness' of our own perspective and feel offended / insulted by the other. Clearly it is tricky when both parties in a conflict are doing this!

Conflict, just like our dance practice, holds a great creative potential for us to learn to include a fuller and more compassionate view point. Most conflicts are presented as having just two

sides, a pro and a con. However, there is always a third perspective from which the truth of each competing point of view can be appreciated.

Most conflicts involve a degree of reactivity and both parties being entrenched in their own view / perspective on the issue. For both, there are often unspoken needs and fears underneath the presenting perspective. It can help enormously to hear each other more fully and to practice including each-others perspectives, needs and vulnerabilities in the same way as we intend to do on the dance-floor.

### **Steps to follow**

1. Make reasonable attempts to resolve the situation directly by accessing your own networks & resources
2. ICMTA WITNESSING
3. ICMTA MEDIATION

NB. Witnessing is not available for an issue involving a student, but it is an essential first step in any issue between teachers or organisations.

#### **1. First step - Accessing your own networks & resources**

As your first step, here are some things we suggest you try:

- a. speak directly to the person involved to try to find solutions, possibly using one of these resources ([link here to resources doc](#))
- b. seek support from friends, peers, other teachers, your school or the school of the teacher involved
- c. for teachers, we suggest that it's appropriate to seek supervision/mentoring

If none of these suggestions are successful, the ICMTA may be of help with either witnessing and/or referral to mediation.

## 2. ICMTA WITNESSING

Upon receipt of the application form, this support is available.

### How can Witnessing support a conflict?

***‘Deep witnessing and listening can relieve suffering in ourselves and another’ -***

Thich Nhat Hanh

Having a Witness as a third person in a conflict can enable the emergence of a third, more inclusive perspective, allowing reactivity to soften and supporting a way through the two conflicting perspectives that embraces both people’s needs. Research into conflict management carried out by the ICMTA Ethics working group in 2015/2016, indicated that participants would have appreciated having a neutral third party during their conflicts, and that this may have prevented the conflict from escalating.

Witnessing offers a level of support that often allows creative solutions to a conflict to emerge. This hopefully brings a good enough resolution and avoids the more expensive option of involving a professional mediator.

The Witness will be a peer and ICMTA member who acts as an objective support. This process is intended to support both parties to heal the space between them, as much as is possible.

An ICMTA Witness will support a conflict by:

- Maintaining a space of listening, curiosity, spaciousness and ease around the conflict.
- Encouraging the two parties to talk through their differences respectfully such that each expands beyond their own reactive position, allowing shared interests and commonality to emerge beyond difference.
- Holding a space that naturally invites self-reflection, courage and the willingness to be vulnerable.
- Holding an understanding of the transformative power of conflict to deepen our understanding of ourselves, each other and our communities.

The procedure for witnessing:

1. Please complete the **ICMTA Witnessing & Mediation Service APPLICATION FORM** available on the ICMTA website and email to the ICMTA administrator at [admin@icmta.org](mailto:admin@icmta.org)
2. Upon receipt of your application form, the administrator will send you 2-3 names & contact details of volunteer witnesses from within ICMTA.
3. It is up to you to contact a witness and set up a meeting time either in person, or by phone, Skype etc.

## 3. ICMTA MEDIATION

If mediation is needed, the ICMTA may be of help by providing a list of mediators for in-depth support to resolve the issue. This is a paid service, and all costs will be paid by those involved with the issue.

### **What is mediation?**

Mediation is a dynamic, structured, interactive process where a neutral third party assists disputing parties in resolving conflict through the use of specialized communication and negotiation techniques. All participants in mediation are encouraged to actively participate in the process.

The procedure for mediation:

1. Please email the ICMTA administrator at [admin@icmta.org](mailto:admin@icmta.org) to request a list of mediators.
2. The administrator will then send you a list of qualified mediators and/or organisations that offer mediation.
3. It is up to you to contact a mediator and set up a meeting time either in person, or by phone, Skype etc.