

This issue includes a diverse set of articles covering topics from dialogue to conflict coaching, and though accidental, there are some interesting common themes across the articles: two deal with conflict management processes in Indonesia, two deal with conflict resolution education, and two deal with presenting new models of conflict analysis to be used in a variety of conflict contexts.

The lead article is a compelling description of dialogue and peace-building in Maluku, Indonesia. Carmen Lowry and Stephen Littlejohn's contribution continues to provide models for dialogue practitioners working in prolonged conflict situations. In this case, a five-day dialogue session was used to address community reconciliation and restoration among religious leaders. In the process, the participants created a common narrative for recovery and reconciliation that meant being able to explore differences and common ground by identifying common religious values, developing a common way of thinking and talking about significant differences, and expressing a shared sense of urgency in transcending the conflict and rebuilding the community.

While Lowry and Littlejohn's focus was intervention, the article by Brett Noel, Ann Torfin Shoemake, and Claudia L. Hale explains a prevention project in conflict resolution education in Indonesia. These authors explain how they worked collaboratively with Indonesian educators and conflict specialists to design conflict education training workshops. Their experiences are explained against the backdrop of the ethnic and religious conflicts in Indonesia that were also articulated in the Lowry and Littlejohn article. The projects described by Noel and her colleagues, funded by the U.S. Department of State, involved both conflict education workshops and conflict research projects. One of the most interesting aspects of their work is the synergy between these elements that can stand as a model for scholar-practitioners in domestic and international applications.

Conflict resolution education in a California school is the subject of the article by Christina Cassinerio and Pamela S. Lane-Garon. This research article describes the outcomes of a mentor-learning approach to conflict resolution education in which university students mentor and train middle school students in peer mediation and conflict education. The research confirms the expectations that these programs can benefit schools in terms of increasing perceived positive school climate, especially among mediators. A very interesting finding was that students in this school experienced an increase in perceived positive conflict interactions with parents. While not conclusive, the data point to the possibility that the CRE programs are transferred from school to home contexts.

Home contexts also serve as the backdrop for a study on the DOVE instrument, used to assess the risk of domestic violence, and its utility for couples in divorce mediation. Desmond Ellis, Noreen Stuckless, and Lori Wight report on research involving a sequential, random sample of 147 male and female partners prior to their participation in divorce mediation. The research examined linkages between pre-separation (conjugal) and post-separation violence against female ex-partners. It also identified Safety plan interventions aimed at preventing violence and abuse against female partners during and following participation in divorce mediation. DOVE was used to accomplish both screening and assessment of safety plans.

William D. Kimsey, Sallye S. Trobaugh, Bruce C. McKinney, Emily R. Hoole, Amy D. Thelk, and Susan L. Davis present their seven-phase model of conflict rooted in constructionist theory and intended for application in organizational conflicts. Their model begins with the assumption that all organizations and organizational members operate with a worldview that they want respected and protected. This protection comes in the form of invoking frames of irony when the worldview is challenged. Attempts to protect the worldview may also involve spirals of silence in which members are dissuaded from challenging the view or the proponents of the view. The authors explain their model with its application to a church conflict.

Our next article, by John M. Winslade, argues that we should adopt a social constructionist orientation to the practice of mediation and that a narrative orientation to mediation is specifically designed to highlight discursive positioning (explained from a Foucaultian orientation) and intervention from this perspective. For students of narrative mediation, this article is a reminder of basic tenets. For all readers, the explication in this article of discursive positions as a means of appreciating and revealing power in mediation should prove worthwhile.

One of the most common complaints in our field, which depends so heavily on mediation as an intervention process, is, “What can be done when both or all parties do not want to mediate?” The final article in this issue offers an answer to that question. Ross Brinkert introduces his model of conflict coaching and explains how it can be used to help one party who is experiencing conflict. This article provides a definition and model of conflict coaching. The utility of conflict coaching is explored in reference to executive coaching as well as in more conventional conflict resolution practices.

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