

## Methodology for Online Mediation Training Course

LSM has been delivering online courses to both international and domestic delegates during the Covid pandemic.

Despite our initial reservations about the potential shortcomings of this mode of delivery, our fears were unfounded and feedback was exceptional.

The UK Civil Mediation Council (CMC) also had some concerns about the potential for a lower standard of course and as a consequence it required the individual role play assessments to be recorded for quality checking. No issues have arisen to give rise to any real concerns about the quality of the training.

Regular breaks are factored into the programme to allow delegates to get up from their desks and away from their screens.

Paperwork that is usually handed out during face to face courses is sent to delegates the night before each day of the course. This includes private scripts for the role players in each of the 18 role plays.

LSM delivers the theory elements of the course in the same way as for face to face courses. Slides are shared through the video conferencing with one tutor delivering the teaching which involves interactive questions with the delegates who all have video on.

A second tutor is present to host the video conference facility in order to manage chats and hand raises. The chat function is used if there are any technical or sound issues or for individual questions. The hand raise function is used during the open Q & A sessions after each teaching element. Where a powerful question has been asked via the chat function, the second tutor will share the question with the group for discussion. Thus, the usual interactive nature of LSM's course is maintained.

The practical role plays are allocated overnight on each day of the course, with private scripts being sent to delegates via email.

During the practical role plays, video conferencing breakout rooms are used for each small group of 5 or 6 delegates. A tutor remains in the breakout room with each group in order to provide the coaching. The tutor will switch off their video and sound. When the tutor wishes to intervene for coaching purposes, they will switch on their video and microphone, which is a signal to the role players to pause for the coaching to take place. A further coaching and debriefing session takes place at the end of the exercise. This is a group debrief so all delegates learn from the process.

During the non-assessed role plays, delegates all stay in one room, but cameras and microphones are turned off by participants not involved in the private sessions. Staying "in the room" allows them to learn more about the dynamics of the mediation and to see more of the skills demonstrated. They are not permitted to "use" any information they hear from the wings of the private session.

During the assessed role plays, the allocations and distribution of scripts are done in the same way as the non-assessed role plays. There will be several video conferences with their own breakout rooms and the tutor moves the participants between the rooms so that he mediator can focus on demonstration of their skills. For private sessions, those not working with the mediator are placed in a separate breakout room such that they cannot hear or see what is going on in the caucus session.

The assessors use the same assessment sheets as the face to face course. These are photographed and shared for benchmarking purposes when the assessors meet during the breaks and overnight to discuss each delegate's performance. The assessment sheets and notes are scanned and returned to the administrative office of LSM.

Individual debriefs with personal feedback are given at the end of the week in breakout rooms and certificates sent to those passing the course.

Feedback forms are completed by all delegates and these are carefully scrutinised to ensure that any matters arising during the training and assessment can be addressed for subsequent courses.