

# Many Forms of Mediation Beyond One-on-One

2026, AI with Mary Rowe assists

The ombuds who does many mediations and many forms of mediation might wish to keep track of each kind of service provided, perhaps on checklists.

## 1. Multi-Party and Group Mediation

- **Two-party, multi-person mediation**
  - Example: “Team A vs. Team B,” “Union reps vs. management.”
  - Structure: Each “side” has several participants; mediator manages speaking turns, caucuses with each side as a group.
- **Multi-party mediation (3+ distinct parties)**
  - Example: three departments in conflict over resources; several co-founders; multiple neighbors.
  - Structure: More complex agenda-setting, sometimes sub-group caucuses, sometimes phased participation.
- **Team or unit mediation**
  - Example: a whole team with internal tensions, cliques, or leadership conflict.
  - Structure: Often a series of individual intakes + one or more group sessions, sometimes combined with team-development work.

## 2. Hierarchical/Cross-Level Mediation

- **Manager–team mediation**
  - Example: a supervisor and the whole team; a senior doctor and residents.
  - Structure: Careful power-balancing; sometimes pre-work with the leader; sometimes co-mediators.
- **Cross-level multi-party mediation**
  - Example: frontline staff, middle managers, and senior leaders together around a recurring conflict.
  - Structure: Staged meetings (separate level meetings first, then mixed sessions) to manage power and voice.

## 3. Shuttle and Indirect Mediation

- **Shuttle mediation (no joint session)**
  - Mediator moves between parties in separate rooms (or separate calls/Zooms).
  - Used when direct contact is too volatile, risky, or not desired.
- **Telephone/email /online shuttle**
  - Mediator relays proposals and reframes between parties who never meet live.
  - Common in legal, small-claims, cross-border or scheduling-difficult contexts.

## 4. Online and Hybrid Mediation

- **Synchronous online mediation**
  - All parties + mediator in a video platform, with breakout rooms for caucus.
  - Can be 2-party, multi-party, or group.
- **Asynchronous/platform-based mediation**
  - Structured exchanges over time via secure platforms or email, guided by a mediator.
  - Often used for low-value or high-volume disputes (e-commerce, neighbor disputes, etc.).
- **Hybrid mediation**
  - Some participants in-person, others remote.
  - Requires deliberate tech and process design to avoid disadvantaging remote participants.

## 5. Restorative and Circle-Based Processes

- **Restorative conferences**
  - Those harmed, those responsible (where appropriate), and key stakeholders (family, colleagues, managers) in a structured dialogue.
  - Focus: impact, accountability, and how to repair/move forward, more than “splitting the difference.”
- **Restorative/dialogue circles**
  - Larger groups (often 8–20+) in a circle, using rounds and speaking pieces.
  - Used after incidents that affect a whole community, team, or class; focus on understanding and healing.

## 6. Large-Group and Multi-Stakeholder Mediation

- **Facilitated community dialogues**
  - Example: town-gown conflicts, neighborhood-developer disputes, public policy issues.
  - Often multi-session, combining information-sharing, small-group work, and plenary negotiation.
- **Consensus-building processes**
  - Structured, multi-stakeholder processes (unions, management, NGOs, government, community groups).
  - Mediation principles applied over months, sometimes years.

## 7. Specialized Contexts (Beyond “one-to-one”)

- **Family/group mediations**
  - Extended families, siblings in inheritance disputes, adult children and parents over care decisions; work groups about space allocations.
- **Organizational “post-incident” mediations**
  - Groups affected by a major complaint, investigation, or scandal or merger; aim to (re)build working relationships and norms.
- **Inter-organizational mediation**
  - Between two or more organizations (vendors, joint venture partners, departments of government, agencies)

**Note: AI may display incomplete, inaccurate or offensive information.**

**Note: This article draft is part of a Resource Repository designed to support identifying—and helping to quantify—the value of an Organizational Ombuds (OO). This Resource Repository is a work in progress.** It is open to improvements, additions, deletions, critique, revision and random commentary. If any page in the repository is helpful, or needs revision, please let us know. Please contact Mary Rowe or other co-authors, if you can help to improve these pages or have another page to offer.