

## What Happens Next?

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After you have had a chance to read this brochure, a trained volunteer mediator will contact you to answer any questions you have. He or she will also set up a meeting where you can talk about what happens in a victim-offender mediation. Then you can decide if victim-offender mediation is right for you.

If you have any questions in the meantime you may contact the Center for Dispute Resolution at (417) 836-8831 or CDR@MissouriState.edu.

## What is the Center for Dispute Resolution?

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The Center for Dispute Resolution is housed in the Department of Communication at Missouri State University. It is an independent organization that supports a variety of programs that relate to conflict, such as this juvenile victim-offender mediation program. It also provides trainings, offers workshops, and supports research in the field of dispute resolution.

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State of Missouri  
Family Court,  
31st Judicial Circuit  
Juvenile Division

# Juvenile Victim-Offender Mediation

*“Working Together to  
Make Things Right”*

A Service Provided By



**The Center for  
Dispute Resolution**  
at Missouri State University

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## What is Victim-Offender Mediation?

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Victim-offender mediation is a face-to-face meeting between someone who committed a crime and the person he or she harmed. A trained volunteer mediator is present and helps guide the meeting. This mediator has received special training and helps everyone feel comfortable and safe talking together.

### ***At the Meeting***

In the meeting the offender and the victim talk to each other about what happened and how it has affected them. They may also discuss restitution, which is what the person who committed the crime can do to repair the harm he or she caused.

### ***Restitution Agreement***

If the offender and the victim agree on a restitution plan (for example, paying the victim back for damage done, community service, etc.), the mediator will write up that agreement and give a copy of it to the Juvenile Office. It then becomes the official restitution agreement for the person who committed the crime.

## Why Choose Victim-Offender Mediation?

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Many people choose to take part in victim-offender mediation because it offers unique benefits compared to the traditional court system.

### ***Benefits for Offenders***

- Tell your story and be heard.
- Take responsibility for your actions.
- Have the opportunity to make amends for what you did wrong, instead of just being punished for it.
- Help choose your restitution plan instead of letting the Court tell you what to do.

### ***Benefits for Victims***

- Have the chance to explain how the crime impacted your life and express your thoughts and feelings about the incident.
- Get answers to your questions about the offense that only the offender can provide.
- Allow the offender to see you as a real person.
- Be directly involved in how the offender is held accountable for his or her crime.

## Common Questions About Victim-Offender Mediation

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### ***Do I have to participate?***

Victim-offender mediation is voluntary, meaning you get to choose if you want to participate. However, the majority of people who participate are glad they did.

### ***I'm nervous about meeting the victim/offender...***

It's natural to be nervous, and the mediator will help prepare you for the mediation in advance. And, most people who participate in mediation say they feel much better after meeting with and talking to the other person involved.

### ***Where will the mediation be held?***

If everyone agrees to participate, the mediation will be held in a neutral location, such as in a private room at a library, at a time that works for everyone.

### ***Why does the Court support this victim-offender mediation program?***

There are a lot of reasons, but in general we know that programs like this tend to reduce repeat crimes, save taxpayers money, and increase victims' satisfaction with the criminal justice process.