



PENNSYLVANIA
COUNCIL OF MEDIATORS

38th Conference – 2026

April 24th and 25th, 2026

Hilton Harrisburg

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12.5 CLEs/CEUs
available for the
entire
conference,
including up to
3.5 Ethics CLEs

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Bronze Sponsor: Association for Conflict Resolution – Greater Philadelphia Chapter: Networking and education for practitioners in any form of conflict resolution in SE Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Southern NJ. <https://acrphilly.org>

Bronze Sponsor: Bardsley Dispute Resolution – Clymer Bardsley, Esq.: Providing professional mediation and conflict resolution services for families, schools, and workplaces navigating complex disputes. Including divorce and custody mediation, school-based and special education conflict resolution, workplace mediation, and conflict coaching. Helping individuals and organizations address conflict with clarity, fairness, and a focus on durable, practical agreements. <https://bardseydisputeresolution.com>.

Bronze Sponsor: Peaceful Growth Therapy – Arlene Rosen, LMFT, CSAT - Working with families dealing with trauma, divorce, and separation issues and helping couples navigate strategies for maintaining positive relationships post-divorce, such as attending their children's weddings together. She also addresses parenting, co-parenting, domestic violence, depression, anxiety, sexually compulsive behavior, betrayal trauma, ADHD, and various life cycle challenges using an integrative, solution-focused approach. <https://peacefulgrowththerpay.com>

Bronze Sponsor: Jordan Financial Consulting and Coaching - Started by Sherry Jordan, a leader in the business valuation and accounting community, JFCC is built on almost 25 years of experience in the public accounting field, beginning with income tax and bookkeeping services and evolving to its present, niche and boutique focus - business & personal financial coaching, business valuation, financial litigation support, and alternative dispute resolution. JFCC is dedicated to your success, coaching you to balance during difficult financial transitions, while maintaining privacy and respect through the process. <https://www.jordan-financial.com>

[Additional Sponsorship Opportunities Still Available. If you wish to sponsor the 2026 Conference, please reach out to Amanda Allis at \[info@pamediation.org\]\(mailto:info@pamediation.org\).](#)

PA Attorney CLE (including Ethics) and Social Worker CE Credits Available

PCM is an accredited provider of continuing educational credits to attorneys through The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board.

NASW-PA Chapter is a co-sponsor of these workshops. Up to 12.5 CE's will be awarded for completion of this course. NASW has been designated as a pre-approved provider of professional continuing education for social workers (Section 47.36), Marriage and Family Therapist (Section 48.36) and Professional Counselors (Section 49.36) by the PA State Board of Social Workers, Marriage & Family Therapists and Professional Counselors.

PRE-CONFERENCE TRAINING

FRIDAY, APRIL 24th

8:00 - 8:30 am Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 4:00 pm Pre-Conference Training (Continental Breakfast & Lunch Included)

“Out of Court: Uncovering the Restorative Power of Mediation”

Brenda Waugh, Esq.



Brenda Waugh is a lawyer and mediator practicing in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and West Virginia. She has been actively engaged in her private practice as a lawyer and mediator since 2000, participating in resolving countless legal disputes through litigation and alternative dispute resolution. Before entering private practice in 2000, Brenda served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, counsel to the West Virginia Senate Judiciary Committee, and as a clerk to the West Virginia Supreme Court's committee developing procedural rules for Family Court. She currently restricts her practice to mediation and restorative facilitation and select legal representation in cases suitable for ADR resolution. She mediates in Virginia and

West Virginia, including court-ordered mediations.

Brenda is the author of *“Becoming a Restorative Lawyer: How to Transform Your Legal Practice for Self, Client, and Community Growth,”* with a foreword and photographs by Howard Zehr. Her additional published work includes several law review articles; most recently focused on restorative justice.

Brenda has facilitated workshops throughout the United States and Canada, approaching each session with a collaborative spirit, ensuring she not only shares her insights but also creates space for collective growth through participant contributions.

In this training Brenda will explore why some mediations feel effortless while others grind to a halt, even when the facts are similar. Also, what makes one settlement stick while another unravels within weeks? Further, what impact does the conventional litigation model of dispute resolution have on mediation?

More than we might recognize! Even experienced mediators can unconsciously carry familiar patterns into their practice. The structure of conventional mediation: opening statements, separate caucuses, formal turns, and settlement-focused agendas, often mirrors adversarial processes in subtle ways. These aren't mistakes; they're simply inherited frameworks that may need recognition, exploration, and modification.

In this highly interactive and energizing training, Brenda will guide participants in uncovering structural patterns that may limit the restorative potential of mediation. She will start by identifying what's already working in practice, locating those moments where parties truly connect and creative solutions emerge, and build from there.

Through hands-on exercises, small group discussions, role-plays, and real case examples, participants will:

- Discover how adversarial habits, whether from legal training or broader culture, subtly shape the way issues are framed and conversations structured.
- Identify specific moments in mediation where old patterns emerge (and what to do instead).
- Explore restorative alternatives that foster creativity, deeper problem-solving, and genuine collaboration; and
- Strengthen party voice and participation to create solutions that are meaningful, sustainable, and restorative.

This training isn't about abandoning what works. Restorative practice-based approaches are strategic tools that can shorten impasses, increase buy-in, and create agreements that last, whether a mediator engages in evaluative, facilitative, or transformative models. The focus is on small, practical shifts that fit within existing structures, including court-mandated settings.

Exercises and discussions in this workshop are designed as learning labs where participants can experiment and assess what works best for their own practice. Reflective components focus on professional processes and underlying assumptions about mediation. This is a collaborative exploration (not a lecture) where participants can expect the unexpected and leave with practical tools and fresh insights.

NETWORKING RECEPTION, DINNER AND MVP AWARD

FRIDAY, APRIL 24th

- 5:30 - 6:30 pm Networking Reception with beverages and hors d'oeuvres
- 6:30 - 7:30 pm Dinner
- 7:30 - 8:30 pm 2026 **"Most Valuable Peacemaker (MVP) Award"**: Maribeth Blessing, Esq.



PCM is pleased to honor Maribeth Blessing, Esq. as our 2026 Most Valuable Peacemaker. At Blessing Law & Mediation in Rockledge, Pennsylvania, Maribeth concentrates her practice primarily in challenging, high-conflict and settlement-oriented family law matters, but her practice also extends to simple Will and Estate documents. Maribeth is an accomplished arbitrator, mediator, parent coordinator and collaborative family lawyer with over three decades of legal experience. She also provides alternative dispute resolution services, including offering unbundled legal services, with the goal of settling out of court the majority of the family law cases she handles. Along with the other members of her firm, Maribeth serves clients in Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, Philadelphia and Delaware counties.

A former educator and hearing officer, Maribeth received her Juris Doctor cum laude in 1991 from Widener University School of Law. Admitted to practice in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, she is also admitted to practice before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the Supreme Court of the United States. As a measure of her professional reputation, Maribeth has been elected by her peers to become a

Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, and she has been honored many times for her achievements, receiving Strathmore's "Who's Who Professional of the Year" award in dispute resolution in 2007, and the 2011-2012 "Woman of the Year" award from the National Association of Professional Women. Maribeth has been nominated and chosen as a Pennsylvania "Super Lawyer" for over 11 years. Her accomplishments can be found on her curriculum vitae on her website, www.mbfamilylaw.com.

Dedicated to remaining current on developments in her field, Maribeth has received extensive training in continuing legal education, arbitration and parent coordination from multiple organizations, including the Amicable Divorce Network, National Center for Mediation Education, the American Bar Association the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals. She is a trainer/presenter in the fields of mediation, collaborative family law, and continuing legal education for the Montgomery and Pennsylvania Bar Associations, and Collaborative Professional organizations. She has held numerous positions in several professional organizations, including past president and current counselor of The Doris Jonas Freed American Inn of Court, past president of the Collaborative Family Law Affiliates, and she has been a founding and continuing member of the Montgomery County Mediation Advisory Panel since 1999. Maribeth is an advanced practitioner with the Association for Conflict Resolution, a member of the Amicable Divorce Network, and serves as a Parent Coordinator in Montgomery, Bucks and Chester Counties. She also participated as a child advocate for the Montgomery Child Advocacy Project since its inception, was a volunteer for the Friends of the Court program of the Montgomery County Family Court and also has contributed and worked with the pro bono Legal Aid program for over thirty years.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

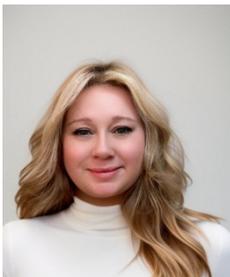
SATURDAY, APRIL 25th

8:00 – 8:45 am Continental Breakfast

8:45 – 9:45 am Plenary Session

"Rolling with Resistance: How Mediators Turn Pushback into Breakthroughs"

Dr. Deborah Gilman, Ph.D.



Every mediator knows the moment: a client digs in, shuts down, explodes, or derails the conversation—and suddenly we're working twice as hard with half the results. Resistance feels personal, disruptive, and unproductive... but what if it's actually the single most valuable signal in the room? In this high-impact plenary, Dr. Deborah Gilman flips the script on client resistance. Through a blend of psychology, practical skill-building, and live demonstration, she reveals how resistance isn't defiance—it's information. It's a nervous system trying to protect itself. When mediators know how to roll with, rather than against, that energy, everything changes.

Participants will learn how to quickly identify the real source of pushback, avoid the "righting reflex" that escalates defensiveness, and use targeted reflection techniques that help clients move themselves toward insight and cooperation. Using the science of readiness to change, Dr. Gilman shows mediators how to stop "fixing" and start facilitating transformative dialogue—even with the most entrenched parties.

Attendees will walk away with practical tools to use immediately, a deeper understanding of what resistance communicates, and the confidence to turn stuck moments into catalytic turning points. This session isn't about managing conflict—it's about mastering the art of human motivation.

If you want to reduce impasse, increase client engagement, and leave the room with fewer battle scars, this is the plenary you don't want to miss.

Dr. Deborah Gilman, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist, mediator, collaboratively-trained mental health professional, and nationally recognized speaker specializing in high-conflict dynamics, human motivation, and change under pressure. She is known for translating complex psychological science into practical, immediately usable tools for professionals who work in the most emotionally charged disputes.

With two decades of experience working at the intersection of psychology, mediation, and legal systems, Dr. Gilman helps mediators understand what's *really* happening when parties dig in, shut down, escalate, or appear "impossible."

Dr. Gilman regularly trains mediators, attorneys, judges, and collaborative professionals across the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Europe on topics including resistance, readiness to change, trauma-informed facilitation, and turning impasse into progress. Her teaching style blends sharp clinical insight, relatable examples, and live demonstration, offering both depth and practicality without jargon.

In addition to her speaking and training work, Dr. Gilman maintains a private practice focused on complex family systems and is the author of multiple books and professional resources on communication, conflict, and post-separation dynamics. She serves in leadership and training roles within interdisciplinary professional organizations, such as the IACP Board of Directors, and is widely regarded for her ability to bridge mental health science with real-world practice.

WORKSHOPS

10:00 – 11:30 am Morning Session

A1 "Connecting with Clients & Optimizing Settlements in Family Mediation"

Lynn MacBeth, Attorney (Retired), Licensed Professional Counselor, Mediator, Mediation Trainer



This workshop explores time-honored techniques for addressing barriers to settlement in family mediation, focusing mostly on custody disputes, with an emphasis on overcoming barriers to effective mediation such as getting stuck in the past, poor co-parenting skills, parenting blind spots that impair children's functioning, and faulty communication. The workshop also examines ways a mediator can gain trust by connecting with clients using authenticity, and, where possible, transparency, while also maintaining professionalism and working within the standards of conduct. Although the workshop uses examples from family disputes, it is intended to sharpen mediator skills in other substantive areas such as employment and business disputes.

(1.0 Sub. 0.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

A2 “Unlock the Power of Silence”

Maribeth Blessing – Owner Blessing Law & Mediation – Mediator, Arbitrator, Parent Coordinator, Collaborative Lawyer, Certified Amicable Divorce Lawyer



Are you tempted to fill the void when there is a moment of silence during your mediation? If so, you may be overlooking the potential power of that moment. Come and learn how silence can be a powerful tool for you in your practice, especially when you can choose to relax and value the purpose for letting the silence do the talking.

(1.5 Sub. CLE/CEs)

A3 “The Use of Mediation to Resolve Conflicts and Protect Pennsylvanians’ Rights”

Mila Pilz, Alana Burman, and Christopher Young- PA Human Relations Commission



A panel of professional mediators from the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission's Division on Mediation will discuss the importance of mediation in resolving education, employment, housing, commercial property, and public accommodation disputes. PHRC is responsible for upholding the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and administers the Commonwealth's EEOC contracts which also utilize mediation. Attendees will come away with a better understanding of the purpose and application of mediation in practice as well as the confidential and ethical considerations needed when working with *pro se* and attorney represented clients in civil rights cases.

(1.5 Sub. CLE/CEs)

11:30 am -12:30 pm Lunch (Included in Registration Fee)

12:45 - 2:15 pm Afternoon Sessions

B1 “Understanding Your Responsibilities Under the Model Standards”

Nancy Glidden, Esq. Glidden ADR LLC



In 2005, the “Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators” (“Model Standards”) was adopted by the American Bar Association, (“ABA”), the American Arbitration Association (“AAA”), the Association for Conflict Resolution (“ACR”), and the Pennsylvania Counsel of Mediators. More recently in 2025, the Model Standards were adopted by the Pennsylvania Bar Association (“PBA”), and the PBA has recommended that all County Bar Associations in Pennsylvania also adopt the Model Standards. This

program is designed to acquaint all mediation practitioners with the content of Model Standards. The content of the Model Standards will be explored through a series of interactive exercises and facilitated discussion. The goal is for attendees to leave the workshop well-versed in the content of the Model Standards, more equipped to recognize issues to which the Model Standards apply, and how to meet ethical obligations by incorporating the Model Standards in their mediation practice.

(1.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

B2 “This Is Your Brain In Conflict”

Jennifer Swann, MS, PhD.



The brain is powerful... We cannot live without it literally and figuratively. In stressful situations, our nervous system can work against us. Fear not! We can take control with a few simple actions. Join me to learn how your brain is organized, how it operates, and how to manage its functioning in stressful/conflict situations.

(1 Sub. 0.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

B3 “When it Takes a Village: How divorce mediators, financial advisors, mortgage professionals, therapists, and other “divorce-adjacent” professionals can team up to provide an efficient and effective divorce mediation process.”

Josh Kershenbaum, Alison Pettine Wyshock, Michael Schrieber, Arlene Rosen and Jean Biesecker



Come learn from the successes, failures, challenges, triumphs, and experiences of a diverse team of professionals who have collaborated on dozens of divorce and custody mediations. This panel discussion brings together two attorney-mediators, a financial advisor, a divorce lending/mortgage professional and a therapist who regularly team-up to serve divorcing couples in ways that none of them could do alone. We will

discuss what we have learned about onboarding new families, building a professional team, maintaining confidentiality and neutrality, collecting and sharing files, scheduling meetings, defining our “lanes,” and meeting the needs of the parties and team. Expand what is possible for your practice and for the families you serve!

(1.0 Sub. 0.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

2:15 – 2:30 pm Break

2:30 – 4:00 pm Afternoon Session

C1 “Uncomfortable but Necessary: Bias Awareness for Mediators”

Dr. Deborah Gilman and Ebony Dendy, Esq.



Mediators strive for neutrality—but neutrality without awareness can quietly reinforce inequity. In this interactive workshop, participants will experience how quickly assumptions form and how they shape empathy, language, and outcomes. Through real-time case exercises and candid dialogue, bias is surfaced without blame. Expect discomfort, insight, and practical tools you’ll use immediately.

(1.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

C2 “AI and Mediation: Practical Tools, Ethical Boundaries, and Best Practices”

Judy Weintraub, Mediator and Arbitrator, Weintraub Legal Services and Accord LLC



Discover how mediators can harness the power of AI to support their practice—whether drafting summaries, organizing information, or preparing for sessions—while staying grounded in ethical standards and party-centered values. This session will introduce several ways mediators can benefit from AI as well as how to use it well, such as tips on AI prompting techniques that enhance clarity, creativity, and efficiency. Participants will also explore essential precautions around choosing an AI platform and ethical issues such as confidentiality and bias. Learn how to use AI thoughtfully—not to replace your judgment, but to sharpen it.

(1.5 Ethics CLE/CEs)

C3 “Mediating the Employment Law Case – Soup to Nuts Strategies for Success”

Andrew Horowitz, Esq., Partner – Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP



Most employment discrimination cases are mediated, and the goal of this workshop is to have participants leave understanding “which way is up” when it comes to serving as a mediator in these cases. The workshop will cover the legal and practical issues that are likely to come up in mediating and settling an employment case, and explore advanced skills that can be used to break impasse and facilitate a resolution. The presenter has the unique experience of mediating many employment cases as well as representing both employees and employers. We will discuss the common dynamics in both rooms and strategies that are and aren’t effective.

(1.5 Sub. CLE/CEs)

Conference Site and Room Accommodations

Hilton Harrisburg

One North 2nd Street (GPS-friendly address is 200 Market Street)

Telephone: 717-233-6000

To book a reservation by midnight on April 1st, use the link below

<https://group.hilton.com/5ov2q6>

or

call 717-233-6000 select option #1, then use code 90G

A limited number of rooms are reserved for conference attendees at \$169 plus tax per night.
Reservations must be made before April 1st to receive the special rate.

Parking - \$15 overnight Self-Parking, Valet \$26, and Day Parking (only up to 10 hours) \$7; if it is over 10 hours best to park in valet for day parking.

By Train: Walk five blocks (7 minutes) south on Market Street to the hotel.

Conference Questions - Contact Amanda Allis at info@pamediation.org or by phone at 412-335-3499

See the next page for registration form.

REGISTRATION FORM PCM CONFERENCE 2026

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ Email _____

SPECIAL COMBINATION PACKAGE: PRE-CONFERENCE & CONFERENCE

PCM Member \$395 _____; after April 1st \$425 _____
Non-Member \$440 _____; after April 1st: \$470 _____
Volunteer or Student \$285 _____; after April 1st: \$320 _____

PRE-CONFERENCE ONLY: Friday, April 24

Pre-Conference training with continental breakfast and lunch

PCM Member \$210 _____; after April 1st: \$230 _____
Non-Member \$230 _____; after April 1st: \$250 _____
Volunteer or Student \$170 _____; after April 1st: \$190 _____

CONFERENCE ONLY: Friday Evening, April 24, and Saturday, April 25

Friday MVP program, Saturday plenary, workshops, continental breakfast and lunch

PCM Member \$235 _____; after April 1st: \$255 _____
Non-Member \$255 _____; after April 1st: \$275 _____
Volunteer or Student \$175 _____; after April 1st: \$200 _____

Complimentary Friday Wine & Cheese Networking Reception & Program

DINNER BUFFET: Friday Evening, April 24 \$60 _____

PA CLEs Pre-Conference: 6 CLEs \$30 _____ Conference: 6.5 CLEs \$32.50 _____

Social Work CE's NASW member \$20 _____ Non-member \$30 _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Please indicate your preference for Saturday Workshops

Morning Session

Afternoon Session #1

Afternoon Session #2

1st Choice A1 ___ A2 ___ A3 ___ 1st Choice B1 ___ B2 ___ B3 ___ 1st Choice C1 ___ C2 ___ C3 ___
2nd Choice A1 ___ A2 ___ A3 ___ 2nd Choice B1 ___ B2 ___ B3 ___ 2nd Choice C1 ___ C2 ___ C3 ___

Join PCM now and register at the Member rate: Includes a listing in the "Find A Mediator" section of the PCM web site (www.pamediation.org)

Individual/Organizational membership, add \$70 _____ Volunteer membership, add \$35 _____

A 25% cancellation fee will be assessed between April 5th and April 16th. Any cancellation after April 17th is non-refundable. Please note, all payments made via PayPal/Credit Card are assessed a 3% fee for processing. If a refund is requested, those fees will not be refunded.

Payment Options

- Check: Send this form and your check made out to "PCM" to: **PCM, P.O. Box 23, Oakmont, PA 15139**
- PayPal/Credit Card: Register on the PCM website - <https://www.pamediation.org/>