

# *CanMediate International*

*From Discord to Dialogue - Solutions That WORK!!*

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39 Deerpark Ct, Kanata, Ontario K2M 2R1  
Tel: 613-599-8177 Fax: 613-592-1154

Email: [rsirman@canmediate.com](mailto:rsirman@canmediate.com)  
Website: [www.canmediate.com](http://www.canmediate.com)

## **“Tales From The Bar Stool”™**

### **Keynote or Breakout Session**

**Presenter:** Ruth Sirman, CanMediate International

### **Summary:**

A key element of conflict and what causes it to escalate are the stories that we tell ourselves (and others) when we find ourselves in a conflict or a difficult situation. However our stories are rarely objective, balanced or factual – rather we create these stories as a way of making sense of the situation and justifying our perception. The stories we tell are also a factor in how others see the situation, the rumour mill, the number of people who get drawn in to the situation and how quickly the situation escalates.

The 2011 CRHA CROP Survey conducted in Quebec indicates that 79% of workers experienced conflict often or occasionally in the last year and that the way it is handled has a major influence on whether conflicts adversely affect performance, productivity and atmosphere. According to this survey, “32% of employees indicated that they had witnessed conflicts when management took action to resolve them versus 68% in cases where it took no action whatsoever”.

Irrespective of what role we play in the business or organization, we need to understand the dynamics of ‘the story’, the assumptions that it is based on and its impact on difficult situations and conflict. This understanding can help those working to address the situation to put the stories in perspective, bring a level of objectivity to tough situations in order to defuse and de-escalate conflicts when they occur.

This workshop is an excerpt from the acclaimed Power to Resolve Program’s™ second module entitled “I’m OK, It’s Everyone Else Who Needs Help™... Participants will have an opportunity to explore one of the key traps that drives virtually every conflict situation in any context. The ability to understand the behind the scenes dynamics can make the difference between success and resolution or failure and escalation of a conflict. You will learn what it takes to get either yourself or someone else safely down of the barstool as getting stuck there can cause stress, anxiety and tension for all involved.

### **Presentation style and format**

This session will be hands-on interactive a combination of theory and practical tools delivered through mini lectures, facilitated discussions, individual and group exercises, case studies and analysis.

**Duration:** This workshop can be done as either a 2, 3 or 4 hour session. The longer the session the more practical experience participants will get in exploring this complex topic.

Depending on the length of the session, participants will have the opportunity to explore the topic using a variety of individual reflection, small and large group discussions, case study analysis and storytelling and Q&A session. In the longer sessions there will also be a facilitated group simulation that will help to integrate the material and provide additional understanding and strategies.

### **Resources/equipment required**

This presentation requires:

- 2 flip charts
- LCD / Power Point projector
- Laptop (may be supplied by the presenter)
- Lapel microphone for large rooms / larger groups where amplification is needed

### **Target audience**

This session will be beneficial to anyone who works in an organization where they interact with others including executives, colleagues, subordinates, managers and clients. It can be customized for specific audiences (senior management, employees etc).

### **Return on Investment:**

This session is intended to give participants an increased understanding of how conflict can escalate and create negativity in the organization. They will also leave with:

- Practical tools for understanding and de-escalating conflict situations at work, at home and in life
- Strategies to:
  - o help those involved disentangle fiction from fact
  - o recognize when our own story may become part of the dynamics and how minimize the risks of that happening
  - o maintain an empathetic impartiality while acknowledging the power of the stories for the individuals involved
  - o help those involved explore how to resolve the situation

### **To see Ruth in action:**

Youtube channel: [www.youtube.com/canmediate](http://www.youtube.com/canmediate)

References and C.V available on request or for more information: [www.canmediate.com](http://www.canmediate.com)

### **Short Bio:**

Working as a mediator, trainer and speaker since 1992, **Ruth Sirman** is a veteran in the world of Alternative Dispute Resolution. She has been called a talented mediator, a high content speaker, an amazing trainer, a 'tell-it-like-it-is realist, a stand up comedian with a message and a few others things as well... But no matter what you call her, know that her objective in life is to help people learn to manage the tough situations they create – and live to tell about it!

### **Longer Bio:**

Working as a mediator, consultant, trainer and speaker since 1992, Ruth Sirman is a veteran in the world of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Organizational Development. Her specialty is large complex, multi-party interventions - often succeeding where others have failed. Her understanding of organizations and of human behaviour, her quick wit and humour based “down home” practicality have made her a much sought after professional speaker - nationally and internationally

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She is an Accredited Mediator with the Workplace Mediation Association, a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and the International Federation of Professional Speakers and has a Master's Certificate in Mediation from The Leonard Institute.

***For more information:*** [www.canmediate.com](http://www.canmediate.com)