

## Tips for Coaches

The coach plays a vital role in the program and has the most contact with the schools participating in SCRAM. It is important that you work toward developing a good relationship with the school and provide quality professional services. The program reputation within the school community is a direct result of the interaction and services you provide.

The WADRA - SCRAM sub-committee has taken measures to ensure you have strong support throughout the year and provides a mentor for the coaches. The mentor for coaches in 2010, Gillian Eattell, will contact you shortly to answer any questions about the program or about your role. Gillian is a retired teacher and an experienced SCRAM Coach. She is familiar with the school environment and working with youth. Please contact the Gillian to debrief experiences, for coaching ideas, tips, strategies and support.

The Committee is always keen to receive feedback from coaches and will take all comments into account in future planning and delivery of the program. The SCRAM Coordinator, Julia Carr, will provide information regarding each round. She is responsible for collecting and collating the scores from adjudicators after each round and will forward these to the teacher.

The committee holds a Professional Development and Training workshop in February and again in June/July (between rounds two and three). Attending these workshops will increase your understanding of SCRAM, and offer advanced mediation training. Attendance also attracts CPD points toward the NMAS.

## Getting Started

Firstly, a brief overview of the school environment for you to consider:

- Teachers do not sit at a desk with access to email and telephone all day. They are in a classroom engaged in teaching. The best times to contact teachers are generally between 8.00am – 8.30am, and between 3.00pm – 3.30pm or by email.
- Schools work to a 50 minute timetable. When planning sessions, remember that students will be moving from the last class and may arrive a little after the scheduled start time.
- The teacher must coordinate multiple diaries and take into consideration normal lesson plans and student commitments. After hours lessons must also have parental approval. Please contact the school and provide your availability to assist them to identify a workable coaching timetable.

- Encourage the school to book adjudications in advance as most adjudicators have very busy diaries with appointments and commitments well into the future. Early booking will enable the school more flexibility with scheduling the adjudicators. It is not compulsory for coaches to attend adjudications, it is encouraged. The date will be chosen based on the teacher, student and adjudicators availability.
- Many schools do not have DVD and other electronic equipment permanently available in the classroom. If you intend to use the SCRAM training DVD or other electronic media please discuss this with the teacher to ensure they book the equipment and have it available in the room for the session.
- It is important that you approach coaching in the same manner as you would a potential mediation client and ensure you have sound knowledge about the students and the purpose for which the school has adopted the program.
- Please consider the range of students and the potential of working with a select group or 'whole of class - large group'. The students selected may be identified as "student leaders or students "At Risk". Consider what these differences will mean to your approach to coaching and the likely outcomes.

### **How to Coach**

There is no set rule or procedure dictating how you coach. Coaching for SCRAM is designed to enable YOU to enhance your own knowledge and skills of mediation and it contributes to CPD points toward the NMAS.

The program is developed as a progressive learning experience. The expected learning journey has been broken down into rounds to assist you to focus your coaching sessions appropriately for the stage of the competition and to have realistic expectations of the students.

**Round One** is a practice round. It is unscored and serves to build the students' confidence and interest to learn about mediation. The adjudicators are working with the adjudication sheets available from the website and will be marking all stages and skills. Encourage the students to use this to guide their preparations. It is expected that the students will be able to give the opening statements and to set the agenda. They should have sufficient knowledge of the process to 'bluff their way through it".

**Round Two** - The role players should be able to act in accordance with the character they are playing. They should show a good understanding of positional discussion and the transition to

interests/needs based negotiations. The mediators should be able to control the process showing a good grasp of the top triangle, and an understanding of the lower triangle.

**Round Three** - The role-players should be able to develop good empathy for the emotions of their character and display a range of behaviours associated with disputing parties to give the mediators an opportunity to display their micro skills. The mediators should be able to control the whole process and be developing appropriate mediation micro skills.

**Round Four** - The students should have a good grasp of the dynamics of conflict and be able to perform a convincing role-play giving the mediators many opportunities to display the full range of their skills and intervention strategies. The mediators should display good knowledge and management of the process in accordance with the principles while employing a range of mediation skills.

#### **Some Tips from experienced coaches and adjudicators**

**Round One** Don't expect miracles!!! You have probably had the student for one or two 50 minute lessons and they may never have heard of mediation or SCRAM. You will spend a fair bit of time working on the principles, whole process and the opening statements and building a relationship with the students. Don't stress. The adjudicators understand the circumstances and are very experienced in giving the students the right feedback to prepare them for round two.

**Rounds Two - Four** Debrief the previous adjudication experience. Ask the students what they thought, felt and were unsure about. This will guide you in what they want or need to learn. Work with the adjudicator's feedback it is a good guide to plan your coaching sessions.

#### **Coaching Materials**

- The SCRAM Model Student & Coach Handbook describes the mediation model that is used in SCRAM. It is important that this model is taught. It has been specially developed for the age group and to be consistent with other Australian states for the purposes of a National Competition.
- Please familiarise yourself with the rules of the competition. See the SCRAM Program and Competition Rules on the web site.
- The scenario is available on the web site. It is good to work with the students to analyse the dispute, identify the issues, discuss the parties' emotions and how each of the people would be feeling and reacting in the situation. This assists the students to develop empathy, an understanding of dispute dynamics, and how to build their characters for effective role-playing. The discussion about potential behaviour that a

party might display provides a good opportunity to teach mediator intervention strategies.

- Please also refer to the Adjudicator's Assessment Handbook to familiarise yourself with the assessment process. The adjudication and score sheets are an effective instrument that shows the students what they need to do to gain marks. Use them!
- The WADRA – SCRAM committee provide a DVD with three mediations and a detailed commentary. Use this to show the students what to do. It is also a very useful coaching option in the later rounds. If time allows, one option is to get the students to adjudicate one of the role-plays using the adjudication sheets. *Remember to book the DVD player in advance.*
- Due to the time constraints of the school and limited coaching sessions, there are not a lot of opportunities for practice. We encourage you to work with the scenario that is provided for each round, for all coaching sessions for that round. This ensures that the students are familiar with the details.

Good luck. Embrace the experience and enjoy the process. You will be amazed at how quickly youth can grasp the process and principles and provide a good mediation performance. Have a sense of humour and patience and you will find it a very rewarding opportunity.