

Guidance for Role-Players

To ensure flexibility and accessibility all of our role plays are conducted by Video Mediation using a tool called Zoom. To prepare please [download a free version of Zoom](#) if you have not already been using it. You don't need a paid version of Zoom to participate in role plays but downloading the app makes it easier for you to join role plays.

You can access the Role Play Scheduler link for your course on the Course Menu on the left-hand side of your course.

The course you are on will indicate your requirements for the number of role plays you must do. You can do more if you want.

Quick Links

[Mi Study 247](#) (our learning management system)

[Mi Webinars and Events](#)

What happens in Role Plays?

The aim of the role-play is to give the mediator an environment in which they can practice and demonstrate their skills in mediation.

The role of the role-player is to provide a scenario that is believable and allows the mediator to develop and demonstrate all their skills.

How to book in for and prepare for role plays

1. Navigate to the role play scheduler using the link provided in your course.
2. Write your name in a time slot that works for you. Make a note of the time in your calendar or diary along with the Zoom number for the mentor.
3. Locate the role play scenario and read it prior to the scheduled role play.
4. At the allocated time get yourself some water or a hot drink ready for your two-hour commitment, open your Zoom app and put in the meeting number for the mentor.

When booking a role play as a mediator or as a role player, please be aware that this is putting in place a commitment to participate.

The mentor will put aside their time to mentor the role play and the two other participants will also put aside the time to participate. If you drop out at the last minute, then you are affecting 3 other people who have committed their time, AND you have not left enough time to find a replacement. When this happens, most role plays will be cancelled.

How to avoid causing problems

- 1 Do not put your name in the role play scheduler unless you are committed to attending.
- 2 If you cannot make it, then advise your mentor and other role players 'As Soon As Possible' so that the slot can be freed to allow another participant to take your place.
- 3 **Do not simply remove your name from the scheduler and hope that no one will notice. This is very disruptive and unfair to other students who were relying on you.**

Email the mentor and other students using the course inbox telling them you will not be able to participate, the date and time that the role play was scheduled.

Role Play Scenarios

The role play scenarios are in the files area of each course.

If you see the name of a scenario in the scheduler but can't see the scenario email the role play mentor as soon as you are able to so that they can ensure that you have the scenario prior to the session.

Role-Player Etiquette

IMPORTANT: Read the role-play before logging into Zoom, so you know your scenario and we are not wasting time waiting for students to find and read scenario.

DO remember you are in mediation because you have a dispute. Add some disagreement, try to interrupt and react to things your client doesn't agree with at the beginning to give the mediator the opportunity to enforce their ground rules for respectful behaviour.

Do be willing to discuss the issues. Raise the issues during your opening statements but don't fully disclose your situation. Be willing to discuss the issues more deeply during the exploration phase from your point of view and private session as you feel is appropriate. Embellish for realism but don't add major new facts or deliberate red herrings to the scenario you've been given.

Do be willing to generate options. If the mediator is encouraging you to come up with options, make sure you do. Remember that you are in mediation to try and resolve the issues. Act that way! If an opportunity to come up with a workable solution doesn't arrive before the private session try to work with the mediator during the session. After the private sessions think about the consequences of not reaching any agreement and if possible come up with something to allow the mediator to practice documenting agreements.

Do realise that role plays don't have to end in a full agreement for the mediator to be competent. That doesn't mean that you should be avoidant or stonewall or the aggressive client from hell. If you are behaving in a way that in the real world the mediator would stop the mediation you are not being a good role player! If possible, give them something to write down

even if it is an interim agreement but don't hand the mediator a completely unrealistic resolution so that they feel like they have helped resolve the issue if they haven't.

Do add a moderate level of emotion. That does not mean have a meltdown or make it impossible for the mediation to continue!

Don't do this!

Don't add surprising new facts. This will distort the role play scenario and throw out your other role player who has to adjust to the changes you've made. Sometimes people do this to make themselves not look bad. It is better for your learning to experience what it is like for someone caught out with questionable behaviour than to change the scenario to make yourself look blameless.

Don't bog things down. We don't have to go into the detail that we would in the real world. A role play is a simulation not a re-enactment. We are limited to 90 minutes for the role-play. This 90-minute time limit will be enforced, regardless of where the mediator is up to in the mediation. Keep to the agenda items only and accept that not all items will be fully explored in many cases.

Don't forget that if people didn't speak English you should have an interpreter. While some role plays may indicate lower levels of financial or English literacy the parties have been screened and can mediate without an interpreter. Do ask the mediator to explain jargon or complex language but don't allow language or communication issues to be a distraction and disruption to the flow of the mediation.

Don't dig your heels in and refuse to budge. All parties in our role plays should have an interest in reaching a resolution of the conflict and all scenarios are resolvable if the mediator facilitates the process adequately. Deciding that you are not going to give in or compromise on anything isn't appropriate as a role player as that is a power move not related to the actual scenario.

Don't agree to anything and everything. If you do that your role player will have nothing to work with and a very unrealistic scenario wasting everyone's time. There are points in all scenario that need assistance to resolve so don't change the scenario to the extent that the mediator has nothing to do.

Remember

These are role-plays, not real life. It is not about winning or losing. It is about providing a believable role-play so that the mediator can practice, build, and demonstrate their skills and be assessed.

Risk screening has already occurred (unless you are doing a pre-mediation role play) so do not behave in an extreme way.

It is beneficial for you to be a role player as you will gain personal experience of the mediation or FDR process and be able to see and feel what is effective or causes negative outcomes. You will also gain new insights while participating in the feedback at the end.

You will never win an Oscar for your role-playing efforts so please keep your focus on helping your mediator by being a good role player.

The Assessment Tools

The tools used to provide feedback and assessment are available in your course.

- **NMAS Course** - there is one role play repeated multiple times with different scenarios. You will find the assessment tool attached to the role play tasks and also in the files area.
- **Family Dispute Resolution** - there are role plays for pre-mediation, high conflict pre-mediation, parenting FDR, Property FDR, Child Inclusive FDR, Video Shuttle and safety planning role plays. You will find the assessment tool attached to the role play tasks and also in the files area.

Time Required to Complete the Course

Our courses are self-paced online, and we allow you plenty of time to complete the course. The usual time setter is how many role plays you do each week.

Here is an example from the NMAS Course. The theory component of our FDR Courses is greater.

# Role Plays each week	Time to finish the course	Overall time expectation
2 role plays a week	6 weeks to finish	You can finish quicker if you can fit in more role plays
1 role play a week	12 weeks to finish	This is a good medium pathway
1 role play a fortnight	6 months to finish	Not ideal learning. We recommend weekly role plays as a minimum.

Less than once a fortnight. This is really too far apart. Once a month would take 10 months to complete a 40-hour course.

You have up to 12 months to finish the NMAS course but doing a role play every month or so is unlikely to result in you becoming competent. Remember mediation is a skills and skills need practice and feedback to develop. Talk to our team if you are having problems with time and we can put your course on hold for a month or two.

If you don't believe you will be able to do one role play a fortnight get in touch with Director of Applied Learning Ken Speakman to ask about a temporary suspension for a period of time or other strategies to help you get back on track.

Where to get help

If you have a question that isn't urgent, such as a question about an assessment task or you notice an issue in a page such as a broken link or spelling error please **use the course inbox to send an email to Joanne**.

If you include the Page Name (should be at the top of the page) that will help us find the issue or identify which task you are stuck on. If there is a link to a document that has broken check in the files area for the document name. It may have been updated and we missed the link.

If you have an urgent question - for example you're in the middle of a task and you want to get it finished, you are having trouble getting into or preparing for a role play or any other time sensitive issue call 1300 781 533 to talk to one of the team or

- Cynthia Brooking 0421 28 98 54
- Ken Speakman 0404 072 330
- Joanne Law 0401 293 500