

FACT SHEET

Support Person

CAN I HAVE ONE?

It depends on what your policies and procedures state. Generally, you can have a support person where the intervention is disciplinary in nature. Mediations are not disciplinary. Mediation is an informal opportunity for you to demonstrate to your employer that you are able to negotiate 'low level' conflict with the support of a trained facilitator.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SUPPORT PERSON?

A support person is there to support the emotional wellbeing of the person that is participating in the mediation.

WHO CAN BE A SUPPORT PERSON?

The person is usually a friend, counsellor or advocate. In our experience, the best support people are those who are independent and have your best interests at heart. Although family can come, they often find it difficult not to intervene.

Q. Can I ask someone from the Workplace to be my support person?

A. Generally no, because:

- The person may influence how the parties communicate (one person having a manager as a support person may impact the managers relationship with the other participant)
- It may give a perception of bias, ie the manager supports one of the participants but not the other
- It may compromise the capacity of the employer to manage the parties post intervention
- It may contaminate the broader team and the intervention
- It may impact the support person's relationship with both parties

Q. What will happen if my support person interrupts?

A. Support people can ask process questions and seek clarification. However, if your support person is unable to refrain from being combative, disruptive or interrupting we may request for that person to leave. As an alternative your support person can sit in another room, or be available via phone and if you need to speak to them, we can take a break.

Q. Is the support person process confidential?

A. Your support people are bound by the same principles as the participants.

