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*Introduction to our speaker, provided by:*

***Tim Frenzel***

*Program Director, Continuing Ed  
tfrenzel@jccc.edu*

*Speakers:*

***Dawn Kuhlman, Anna deDufour, Karlee M. Naylor***

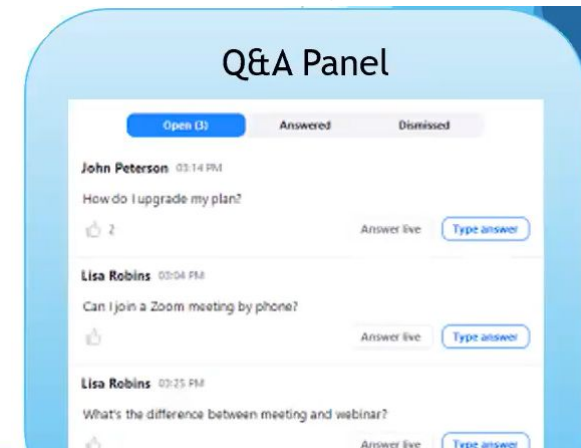


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# Notes About This Webinar:

## *Post questions during the presentation using the Q&A Panel*

- Press on the thumbs up to vote on a question
- Questions must be sent through the Q&A Panel to be seen (please don't use chat)
- Most popular questions will be answered during this webinar



# About us

**Dawn E. Kuhlman, MA, Executive Director**

*M.A.R.C.H. Mediation (Mediation Achieving Results for Children)*

**Anna deDufour, MPP, Former Research Associate**

*The Justice in Government Project at American University*

**Karlee M. Naylor, MPP, Graduate Fellow**

*The Justice in Government Project at American University*

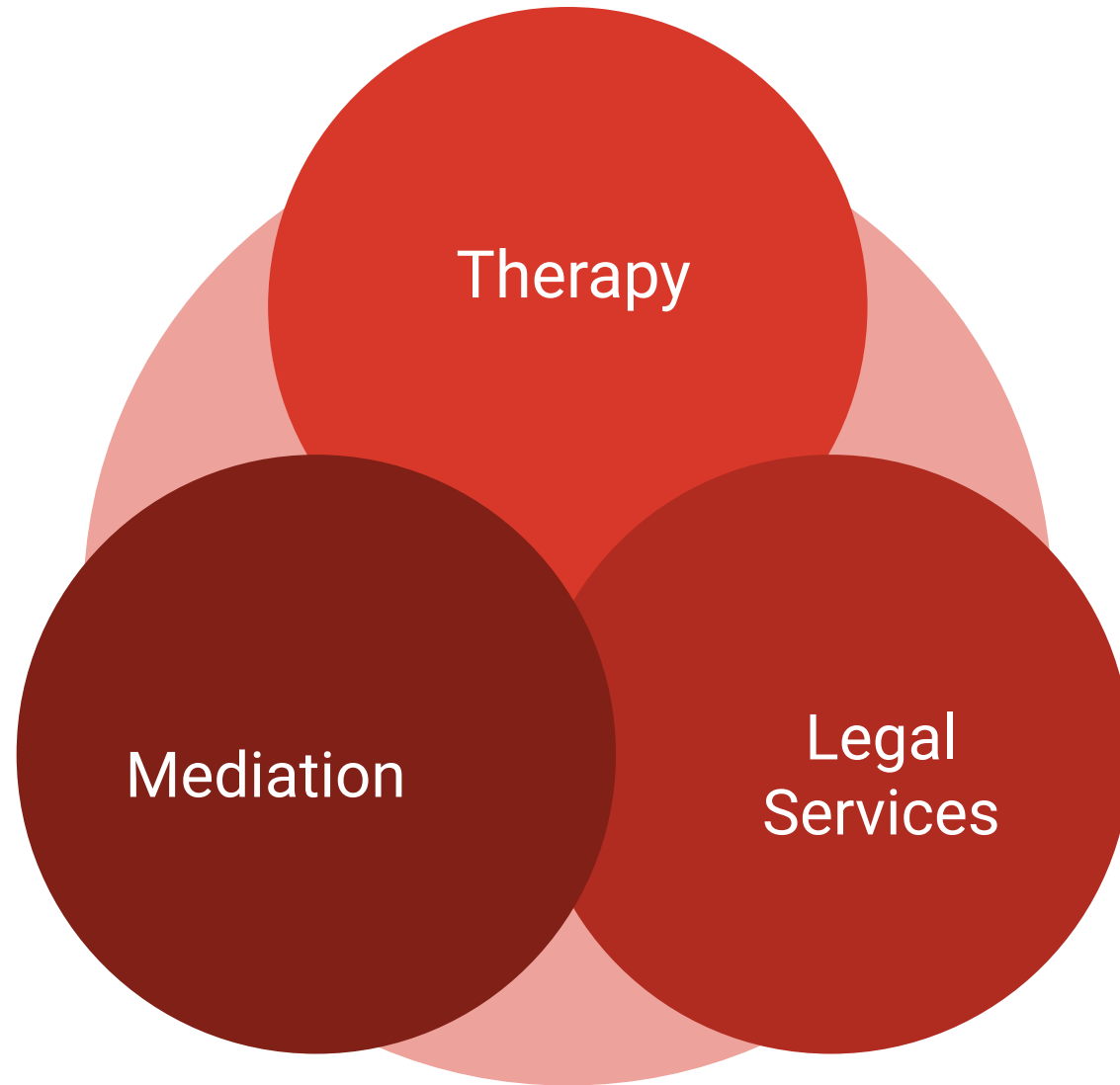


# Presentation Roadmap

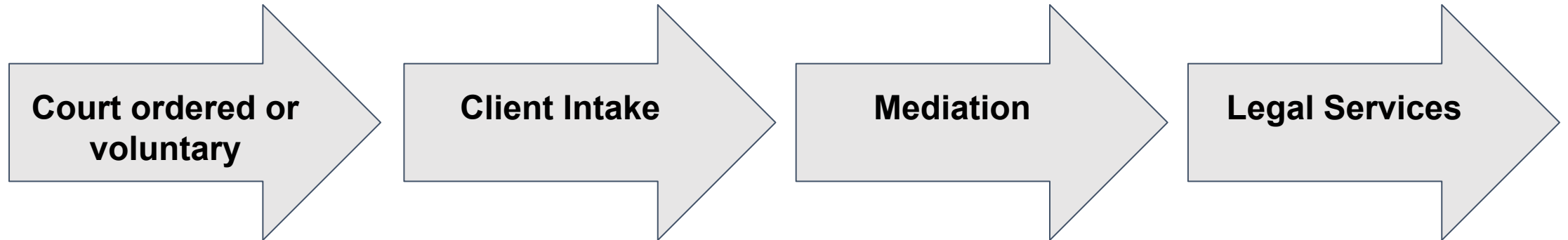
1. **Define mediation** and its role in the parenting court system
2. **Explain M.A.R.C.H. Mediation's adoption, promotion, and use of technology** during COVID-19
3. **Describe the 4-month study** we conducted to evaluate virtual mediation
4. **Start a conversation** around the benefits, challenges, and opportunities related to technology in conflict resolution



# Mediation



# Case Process



# M.A.R.C.H. Mediation

## *Mediation Achieving Results for Children*

[www.marchmediation.org](http://www.marchmediation.org) - One Stop Shop for All Things Mediation - Service, Trainings, Research

- 1997 – pilot project → 1999 – Officially created and designated as a 501c3 - 22 years old!
- **Funding:** Federal Access and Visitation grant: “Mediation Services for Title IV-D Clients” (\$189,000)\*
  - State of MO - 10% match of Federal funds
- **Scope of Services:** 4 hours of mediation and limited scope legal services at no cost to families with an active MO IV-D case
- Over 300 cases closed this fiscal year thus far



\*MARCH is sponsored by the MO Dept of Social Services, Family Support Division – US Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement



**March 2020  
BOOM!!**



# Research overview and purpose

## Who

American University  
research team  
*Observers, not experts*

## What

Case study of M.A.R.C.H.  
services and outcomes  
during Covid-19

## When/Where

15 district circuits, MO  
August-December 2020



## Why

- Access to justice lens
- “Best” communication mode?
- Maximizing accessibility, safety, and satisfaction

## How

- Surveys, administrative data, and interviews
  - Parties (parents), mediators, administrators, stakeholders



# Key numbers

**Data  
collection**

August - December  
2020

**32**

mediation cases

**65**

mediator and  
party surveys

**Most populous  
counties and  
cities highly  
represented**

**66%** white

**33%** Black/  
African American

**Relatively equal  
age distribution**



# Data sources

**M.A.R.C.H.  
Intake  
form**

**Parent  
surveys**

**Mediator  
surveys**

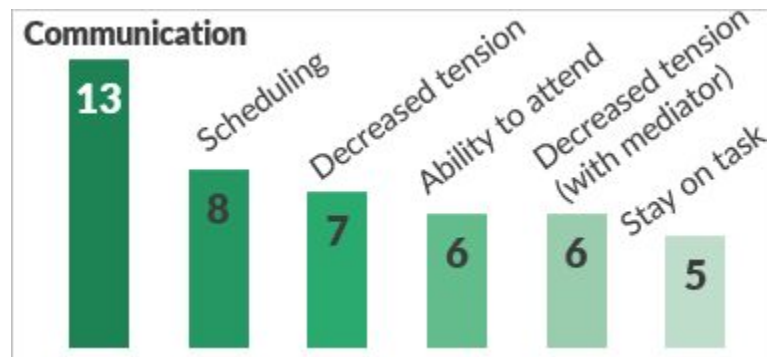
**Parent and  
mediator  
interviews**

**Stakeholder  
interviews**

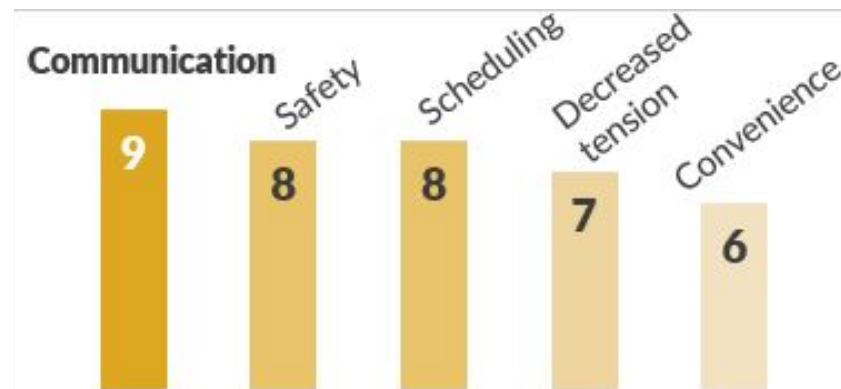


# Reported benefits

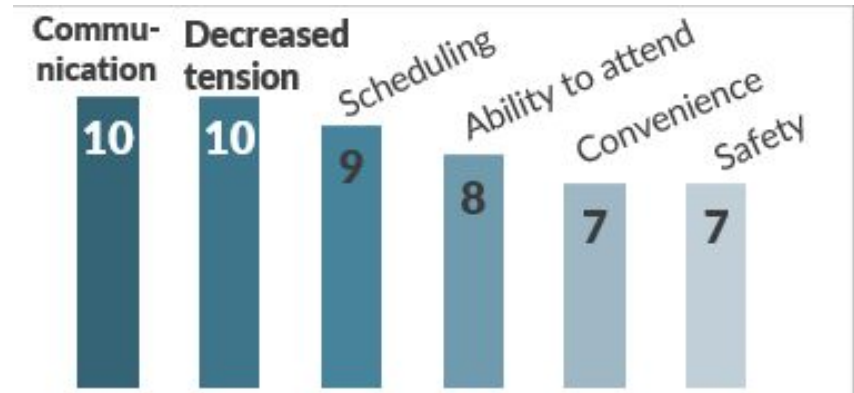
## In-person



## Phone

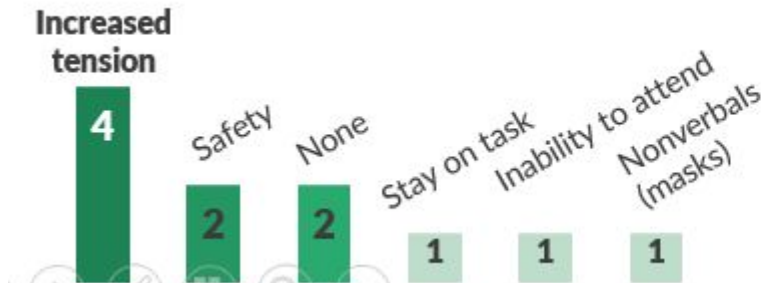


## Virtual

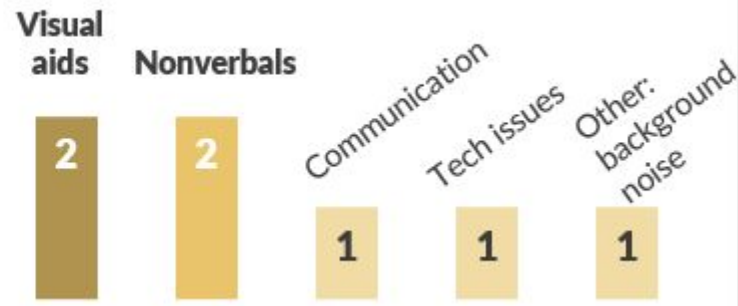


# Reported challenges

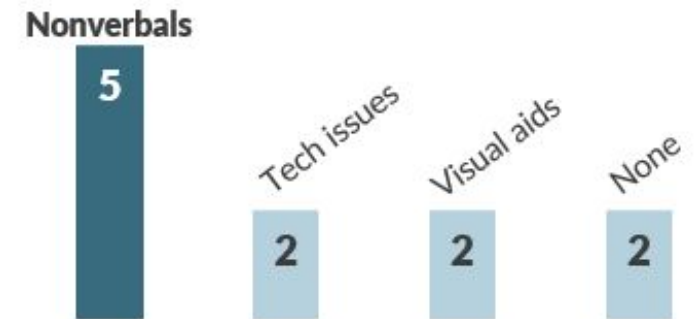
## In-person



## Phone



## Virtual



# Other findings - all communication types

**+1.5 pts**

Ability to  
resolve  
conflict\*

**Equal**

levels of  
satisfaction

**73%**

of mediators  
“very likely” to  
use virtual  
communication  
in the future



\*Out of 5-point likert scale

# Key takeaways from survey & intake data

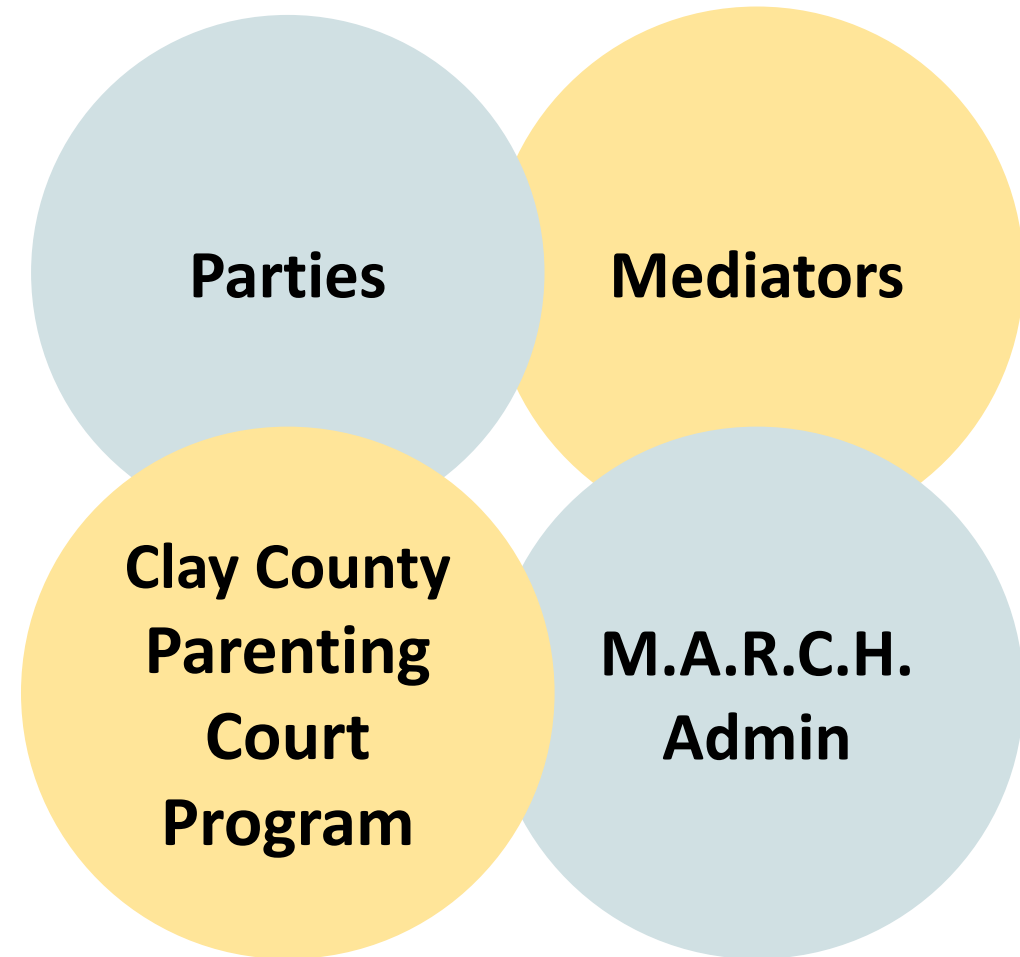
- Ease of communication reported as a benefit for all formats
- Each format offers a way to ease or improve communication
- Improved individual case outcomes > generalized findings





# Interview findings

**16**  
phone interviews



## Adapting to Covid-19

**“We all fell backward into COVID, and we are all trying to keep our practice moving and sustain, if at all possible, our services.”**



## Safety (physical, health, and emotional)

“For some people, [virtual mediation] feels intimate and like they can really have a conversation. It may be because **they feel safer or more relaxed in their home environment.**”



## Accessibility



“[V]irtual mediation is a helpful tool because [parents] can still access mediation without exhausting all the resources it takes to come to an office...**Many barriers are eliminated with virtual mediation.**”



## Accessibility

**“I don’t have access to  
internet at home,  
so that would have  
prevented me from doing  
mediation online.”**

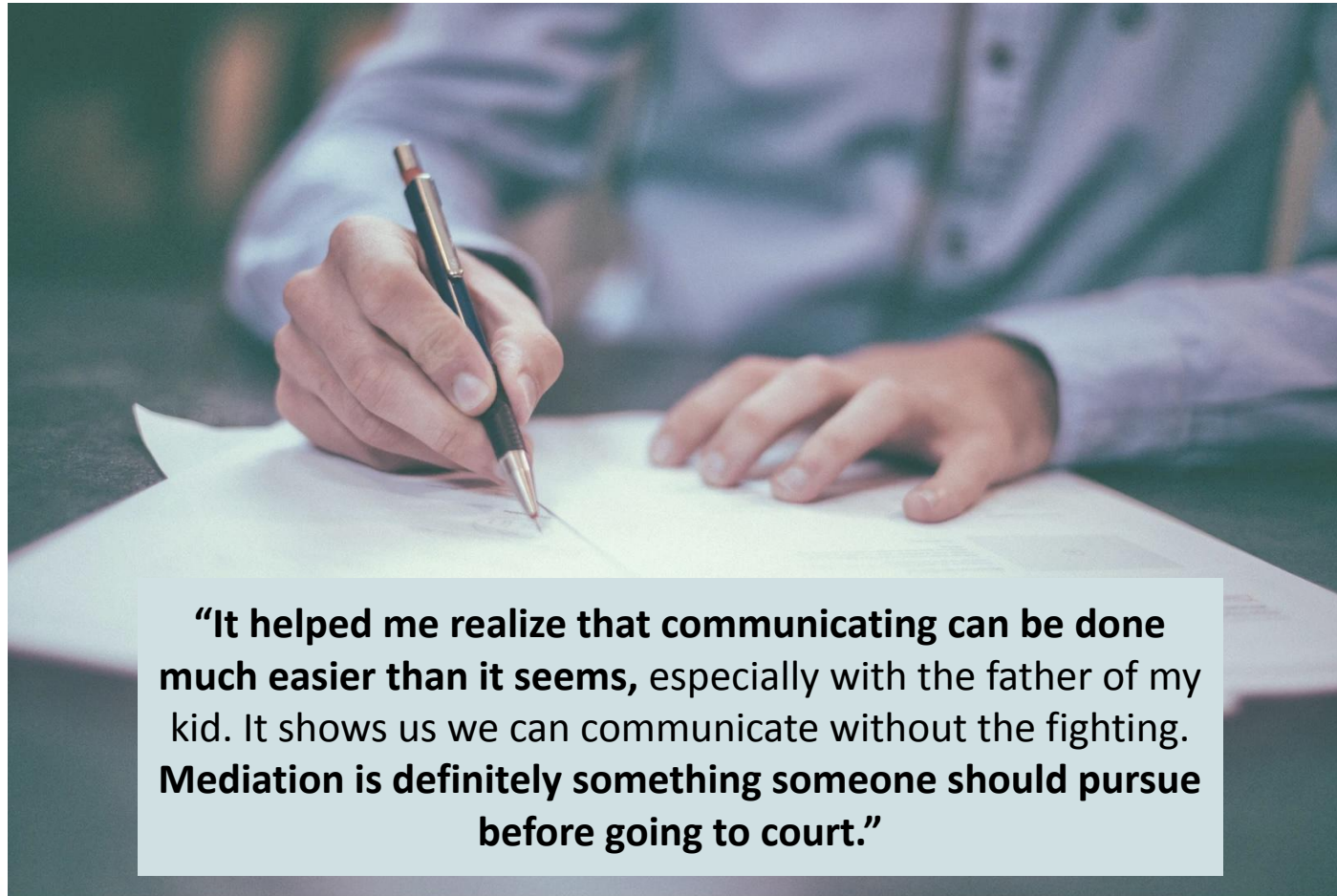


## Ease of Conversation





## Benefits of Mediation

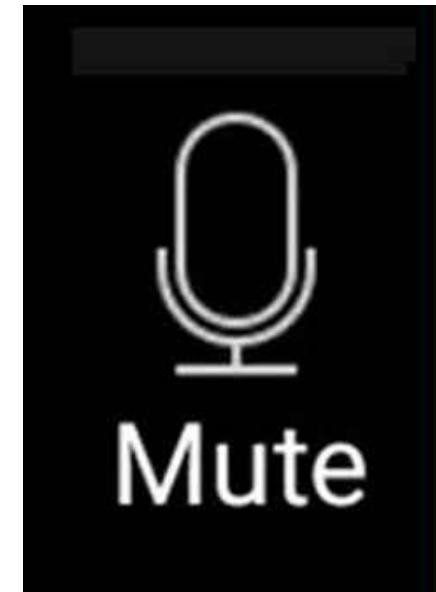


**“It helped me realize that communicating can be done much easier than it seems, especially with the father of my kid. It shows us we can communicate without the fighting. Mediation is definitely something someone should pursue before going to court.”**



## The Learning Curve

Interview  
Findings





# Limitations

- “Illusion of choice” during COVID-19
- Small, convenience sample size not representative
  - Little racial and ethnic diversity
  - Few/no non-traditional families
  - Few non-custodial parents
- Representation especially limited in interviews (eg. no fathers)
- Variance between cases



# What's next?

- **Continue to provide all three mediation modes**
  - Create intake assessment to help parties determine best mode of mediation
- Assess perceptions of **safety**
- Self-regulation **techniques**
  - Pre-mediation coaching
- Establish **digital ground rules** and **best practices**
- Continue to **assess effectiveness** post pandemic
- Continue to **collaborate** with courts and service providers



# Find the study

## Full working paper

<https://tinyurl.com/MARCHstudy2021>

## 2-page case study

<https://tinyurl.com/MARCHcasestudy2021>



# Contact Us

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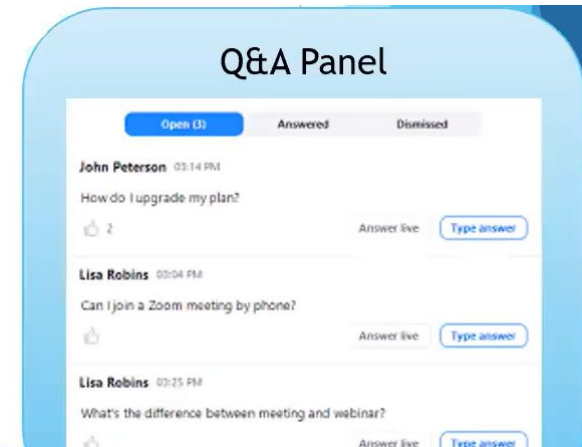
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thank you!

Join us Tuesday, May 25 at 10 a.m. for our newest EDTalk:

“Where is Emotion Built and How to Manage it Without Losing Your Mind”

*Speaker: Sally King*

