

## **“Opening Sessions”**

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### 1) Why Have Opening Sessions?

Exchange of information

“Humanize” the process

A time to set the tone for the mediation

A time to set an agenda

Reach agreements on simple issues and questions

Open lines of communication

### 2) Why Do Attorneys/Mediators Resist Opening Sessions?

Fear of polarizing the parties

Fear of setting the wrong tone

Everyone know everything; What’s the point?

### 3) What Mediators Can Do to Hold Productive Opening Sessions

Set expectations in advance of the opening session

Control the agenda for the opening session

Create a common focus

Direct communication as needed

### 4) Open Discussion