

## **TAM Talks: Interactive Learning Discussions**

Danette Ross Watson, TAM Outreach Committee Chair

Covid-19 has raised a great deal of challenges for all of us personally and professionally. However, it has also provided opportunities for alternative ways to stay connected to friends, family and colleagues. When the TAM Board first discussed how to reach out to our community of mediators during our March board meeting, Zoom was the first consideration. Many of us heard that the school programs and local agencies were already utilizing this platform, so we decided, why not give it a try? The Outreach Committee accepted the task of creating some guidelines and policy for the TAM Board approval, they are as follows:

Members must register to gain access to the TAM Talk;

To participate, members must consent to being recorded;

Recording to be available on the Members Only section of the TAM website;

By registering, members consent to the usage of their name and/or image on TAM print or online materials;

TAM Talks and access to participation is limited to current TAM Members (with the exception of May 2020);

All DRC Directors will be given access to all TAM Talks. Their access to the TAM Talk may be shared with one staff member or volunteer if the DRC Director is not available.

Our first TAM Talk was a “Happy Hour” held on April 16, 2020, to discuss online mediation and share our collective experiences. Our president-elect, Mark Sims was our first host with me working at his side as the co-host. Mark and I shared some resources and others were encouraged to share in the “Zoom Chat.” We had a lively discussion with approximately 25 members in attendance. It was then we all acknowledged that we might be on to something that was both helpful and entertaining during our stay-at-home declarations.

I volunteered to host the second TAM Talk: “Ethics in a Virtual World” on May 14, 2020, and Mark acted as my co-host, to share and discuss some of the challenges and security issues faced with remote mediating and meetings using the Zoom services. Members and non-members were invited to attend. They shared their mishaps with the Zoom site as well as client interaction. Again, resources were shared by the hosts and we had more than 75 attendees!

Our June TAM Talk: “TAM Restorative Community Circle” was held on June 18, 2020, hosted by Kim Sullivan, TAM President and I was the co-host. In light of the current events like the death of George Floyd, Covid-19, and other political and societal conflicts, Kim graciously

agreed to change her topic and presentation to give us all an opportunity to tell our own personal stories related to surrounding events and build community with other TAM members. She was able to create a safe space for open and honest discussion with the nearly 55 participants with diverse views. In addition, after requests from members following the 2020 conference, she also provided an overview of how to facilitate Tier 1 restorative processes for those members interested in expanding their conflict resolution process options within their practice.

Our most recent TAM Talk: “Mediating Domestic Violence Cases: Overcoming Pitfalls” took place on July 16 at 4:00pm. Fran Brochstein, TAM Membership Chair shared her experience, and knowledge of the challenges she has had and overcome in-person and now online.

As a reminder, most of the TAM Talks are recorded and available on the Members only portion of the TAM website. You will also find the resources shared during the TAM Talks there as well.

We appreciate your presence and support of the TAM Talks. We welcome your thoughts and ideas for future TAM Talks and how you believe we may better use this forum.

Our next TAM talk will take place on August 27 at 4:00pm. TAM newsletter editor Maggie Shahrestani will interview Natalie Armstrong-Motin, a mediation marketing expert, on How to Market Your Mediation Practice. Natalie will share generally about business development, discuss growing your business during Covid-19, and take questions from those in attendance.