

**Headquarters U.S. Air Force**

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**The First Sgt & the Dispute Resolution Process**

**Mr. Paul Firman**  
Chief, DR Education & Training

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**Overview**



- Facilitation & Negotiations (The AF Model)
- Using the Air Force model (Stages)
- Mistakes



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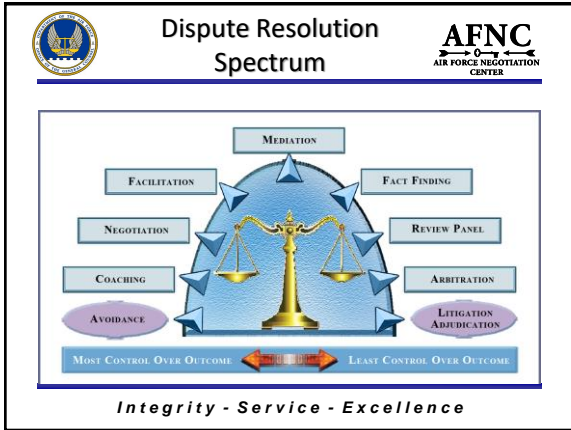
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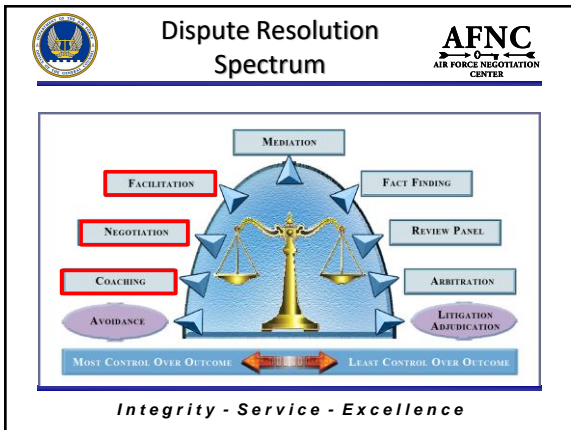
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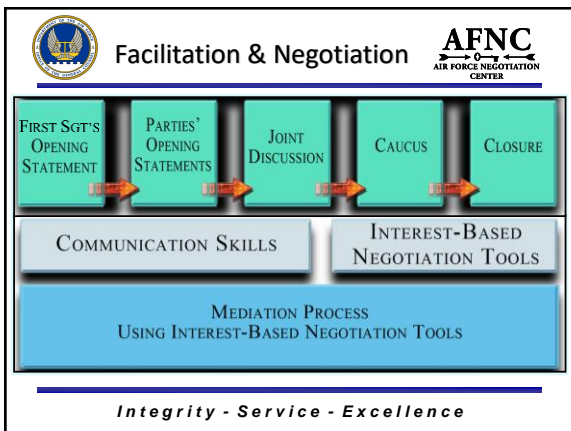
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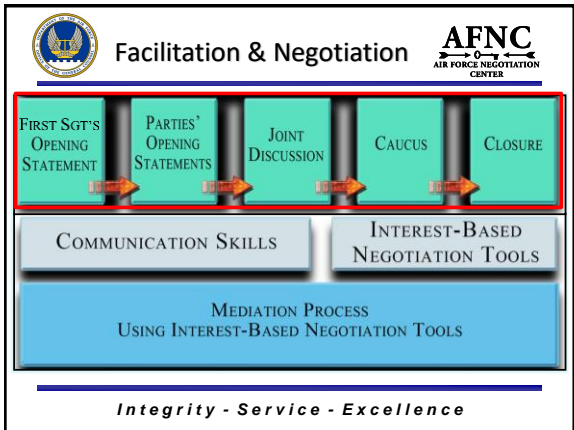
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**Facilitation & Negotiation** **AFNC**  
AIR FORCE NEGOTIATION CENTER

- An interest-based negotiation approach (IBN)
- Exchange information & ideas
- Mutually-beneficial solutions
- Options for mutual gain!
- A facilitator uses interest-based problem solving to:
  - help the parties identify positions, but understand / focus on interests!

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**Facilitation & Negotiation** **AFNC**  
AIR FORCE NEGOTIATION CENTER

- Your Role?

**Drilling down to underlying interests / issues**

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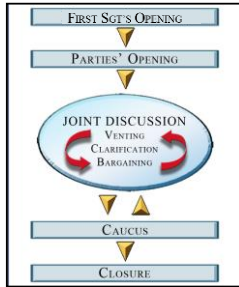
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## Using the Air Force Model



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## Opening?



- How much pre-information?
- Setting up the room
  - Table
  - Who sits where
- Greeting the parties



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## Your Opening Statement...



- Why should you do an opening statement?



# IMPORTANT

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## Your Opening Statement



- Your first formal contact with the parties
  - Sets the tone
  - Builds trust and credibility
  - Ensure parties understand:
    - The process
    - Your role
    - Ground rules

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## Your Opening Statement



### OPENING STATEMENT

- \_\_\_ Thank both parties for being here!
- \_\_\_ Silence all electronic devices
- \_\_\_ Have you set aside sufficient time? (How much time?)
- \_\_\_ Self-Determination: Today I am NOT here to impose a decision!
- \_\_\_ I will attempt to maintain neutrality with regard to who is right/wrong
- \_\_\_ Your Role? Facilitate Discussion, their role (open communication)
- \_\_\_ Today, (You are empowered!)
- I will help guide the process / Assist with communication

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## Parties' Opening Statements



- Why do we want the parties to do an opening statement?



**IMPORTANT**

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## Parties' Opening Statements **AFNC**

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- Length of Opening Statement
- "Uninterrupted"
- Questions?



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## Parties' Opening Statements **AFNC**

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- Start to identify the issues:
  - Active listening begins here!
  - Listen to the positions, past events, but consider how to uncover interests / issues
  - What questions could you ask? How can the parties begin to move forward?
  - Parties begin to listen to each other (With your help)
  - Active listening begins here!!

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## Transition to Joint Discussion **AFNC**

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- Summarize
- Share some of what you heard
- Ask follow-up questions?



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## Joint Discussion



- Ask clarifying questions
- Find out what's going on below the surface
  - Focus on interests, not only positions
- Use active listening skills
- Take appropriate notes



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## Joint Discussion



- You are a buffer
- Encourage questions and discussion between parties
- Suspend/control judgement
- Gauge parties ability to interact
- Active Asking!
- Consider when to Caucus  
(Private Session)



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## Private Meeting



- An optional meeting between the facilitator and one party
- Arrange a separate waiting area for other party
- If you have a private meeting with one party, why have a private meeting with the other?

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## Private Meeting



- When should you have a private meeting?
  - At impasse
  - Facilitator is losing control
  - Party needs to cool-off and re-focus
  - At the request of one or both parties
  - Facilitator needs to interact with a party in private
- It's a tool, not a routine step...

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## Private Meeting



- Why would privacy be needed?
  - Party may be reluctant to share information
  - Facilitator may need to "Reality Test"
  - Generate ideas by asking "what if" questions
  - Coach the parties. Encourage productive listening
  - Summarize. Parties feel like they've been heard. They can correct / add information
  - Close by asking: "Anything you don't want me to share?"

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## Facilitation



Mistakes:

- Not remaining Neutral!! (Perception is everything!)
- Attempting to advocate a solution/solve the problem
- Drawing incorrect assumptions/conclusions (Example)
- Allowing the parties to "always" speak to you?
- Lack of patience
- Uncomfortable with emotions (Reacting)
- Squashing communication

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## Conflicts of Interest



- What is your primary conflict of interest?
- Don't take sides or push your resolution outcomes
  - Brainstorming/reality check
- Bias management



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## Final Test



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“I can win an argument on any topic, against any opponent. People know this, and steer clear of me at parties. Often, as a sign of their great respect, they don't even invite me.”

*Dave Barry*

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 **AF Compendium** 

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 **Review** 

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- Facilitation & Negotiations (The AF Model)
- Using the Air Force model (Stages)
- Mistakes



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 **Negotiation & Dispute Resolution** 

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