

The MII Annual Conference 2026



The Mediators' Institute of Ireland

FROM CONFLICT TO CONNECTION: A Collaborative Vision for Mediation in Ireland



Crowne Plaza Hotel, Northwood, Santry, Dublin 9 on
Friday 9th October and Saturday 10th October 2026

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President's Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Mediators' Institute of Ireland Annual Conference 2026, held here at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Dublin. This year's theme, "From Conflict to Connection: A Collaborative Vision for Mediation in Ireland," invites us to explore how mediation continues to evolve across sectors and how our collective practice can strengthen connection in an increasingly complex world.

Over the next two days, we will hear from internationally respected speakers whose work has shaped mediation thinking and practice across the globe.

We are honoured to have Minister Jim O'Callaghan opening the conference, and delighted to welcome Ken Cloke, Joan Goldsmith, Giuseppe de Palo, Liam Moggan, Justice Sara Phelan SC and all those who are contributing to conference, each bringing perspectives that will enrich our conversations and deepen our understanding of mediation's role in society.

Whether you are joining us for the first time or have been part of the Institute for many years, I hope you find connection, inspiration, and practical tools to bring back into your work. Our strength as a community lies in the diversity of experience and insight each of you brings.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant and evolving mediation community.

Warm regards,

Andrea O'Neill

President, Mediators' Institute of Ireland



Day 1: Friday 9th October

09.30am Registration, Tea/Coffee and Networking

10.00am (Optional) New Mediators' Welcome.

Have you been an MII member or mediator for 2 years or less? Connect with us before the conference starts and we'll connect you with each other and with more experienced mediators (including keynote speakers, the world-renowned **Ken Cloke** and **Joan Goldsmith**) AND we'll provide you with information on how to get more out of this conference and your MII membership.

10.30am Introduction and Housekeeping:

Co-Chairs, **Linda Devlin** and **Scott Alexander**, set out how to ensure you get the best return on your investment of time at the conference.

10.35am President's Address:

Our President **Andrea O'Neill** reviews our past year and introduces several developments that will impact on MII members and others.

10.45am Ministerial Address:

Jim O'Callaghan TD, Minister for Justice in Ireland, explains why he considers mediation a vital and integral part of legal systems in Ireland.

11.00am Mediating Globally and Leading Locally Parts 1 & 2

Joan Goldsmith and **Ken Cloke** present two linked and interactive sessions discussing two micro and macro themes of essential importance to mediators and mediation. Regardless of your own field of expertise, these challenging, insightful sessions from two or the world's leading mediation practitioners and educationalists will contain huge learning for you - and the presenters themselves. Not to be missed.

Part 1: Mediating Globally: The Politics of Mediation v the Mediation of Politics, led by **Ken Cloke**.

NOTE: All conference delegates will receive a digipack of relevant articles and slides for these sessions.

11.45am Tea/Coffee and Networking

12.15pm Part 2: Leading Locally:

The Mediator as a Leader v The Leader as a Mediator, led by **Joan Goldsmith**.

1.00pm Q&A: Joan Goldsmith and Ken Cloke answer your remaining questions

1.15pm Lunch and Networking

2.30pm Welcome Back and Wake Up the Room with award-winning athlete, community coach, and UC Fit founder, **John Byrne** known for his leadership in building strength, confidence, and wellbeing.

2.45pm 'Stick to yer knitting' – Can coaches and mediators learn from each other?

Liam Moggan is an internationally recognised coach, educator, leadership and performance development expert. His work highlights the importance of trust, connection and creating the conditions for people to thrive. He's also one of the country's best communicators. Known for his wisdom and humour, Liam continues to inspire audiences with insights on leadership, learning and lifelong performance. This is a highly engaging presentation and includes a Q&A session.

3.45pm Comfort Break

4.00pm Towards a Research-Informed Future of Mediation with Dr. Brendan Schütte

"Mediation a Moral Reconstruction: Internal Reframing in Workplace Conflict"
Exploring how people in workplace mediation shift their perceptions of themselves and others during conflict, using qualitative data from real mediation cases.

4.15pm Mediation and Judicial Developments:

High Court Judge, **Justice Sara Phelan SC**, sets out legal developments that highlight the growing importance of mediation in Ireland. **Includes Q&A**

5.00pm 40 years of Family Mediation Services (FMS):

Fiona McAuslan, Director of FMS at the Legal Aid Board, sets out the importance of mediation to FMS in Ireland and how the symbiotic relationship between mediators and FMS has helped countless families on this island over the last 40 years.

5.15pm Close

Evening Activities

6.00pm Drinks Reception and Networking.

7.00pm Awards: Generosity of Spirit Award and the Lifetime Achievement in Mediation Award, sponsored by **Twenty One Twenty Nine** MII Short Story Competition 2026, sponsored by **Brendan Schutte** and **Twenty One Twenty Nine**.



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Twenty Nine**

7.30pm Close

Day 2: Saturday 10th October

- 09.30am** **Welcome Back – Scott Alexander and Linda Devlin**
round-up key points from yesterday and highlight what to expect today.
- 09.35am** **A message from our Charity Partner, Friends of the Elderly Deborah Costello**
- 09.45am** **Wake Up The Room with Caroline Kelly, Mindfulness Practitioner**
- 10.00am** **Live Role Play: AI and Mediation.**
Giuseppe De Palo, International Mediator, Arbitrator, and Neutral Evaluator brings to life a role play with some help from the audience and artificial intelligence.

PANEL MEMBERS



David Bloch

Greenberg Traurig, Co-author of “Minds vs. Machines”



Joe Tirado

International Arbitrator and JAMS Neutral



Marcelle Gribbin

Accredited Mediator with a legal background



Niamh Fitzpatrick

MII Deputy President



Caroline Kelly

Mediator and Mindfulness Practitioner

11.15am Tea/Coffee/Networking

- 11.40am Working with Cognitive Dissonance in Mediation:**
World renowned, but Kerry based, **Gerry O’Sullivan** asks, “What happens when a party’s actions no longer fit how they see themselves or what they believe?” Cognitive dissonance creates an uncomfortable tension that people may be reluctant to acknowledge - particularly when admitting it could make them feel exposed, defensive, or “in trouble”. Learn how an understanding of cognitive dissonance theory can help mediators work skilfully with this tension and support a party to move forward.

12:10pm Master Workshop with Ken Cloke and Joan Goldsmith – Facilitating Dialogue

This is learning in action - a rare opportunity to witness and practise the craft of dialogue facilitation with one of the world’s leading voices in conflict resolution. In this immersive master workshop, renowned mediator Ken Cloke and Joan Goldsmith will guide participants through a live, facilitated dialogue session. Rather than learning about dialogue, the room will learn through dialogue - experiencing the process from the inside out. Ken will lead the group in a real-time conversation, demonstrating how skilled facilitation can transform tension, deepen understanding, and open pathways to connection. As participants engage, observe, and reflect, they will gain practical insight into how to facilitate dialogue themselves: the structure, the stance, the subtle moves, and the courage required to hold space for authentic exchange.

1.40pm President’s Closing Address

2.00pm End of Conference

We are delighted to introduce Positive2Work Skillnet as the AI Workshop Sponsor for our Annual Conference 2026.

Positive2Work Skillnet supports organisations across Ireland to build healthier, more positive workplaces through practical, subsidised training and professional development. Their programmes help employees, managers and business owners strengthen resilience, develop capability and enhance workplace performance - ensuring people have the skills and confidence to respond well when challenges arise.

Their sponsorship of this year’s AI Workshop reflects a shared commitment to preparing professionals for the evolving world of work, where strong communication, critical thinking and relationship building remain essential alongside emerging technologies.

Website: <https://www.positive2work.ie>



We are honoured to introduce our Charity Partner for our Annual Conference 2026: Friends of the Elderly Ireland.

Friends of the Elderly Ireland is a volunteer driven charity dedicated to reducing loneliness and social isolation among older people. Since 1980, they have provided companionship, connection and community through home visits, friendly phone calls, social clubs, day trips and special events. Their work ensures older adults feel valued, supported and part of a vibrant community, with volunteers playing a central role in creating meaningful relationships and improving wellbeing.

Website: <https://friendsoftheelderly.ie>



Other Points to Note:

Mentimeter:

We will be using Mentimeter for collaboration and interaction during the conference. If you wish to participate, go to the Menti website at: www.menti.com

Raffle:

Watch out for our raffle ticket sellers who will be circulating during the breaks. We have some great prizes and the funds raised will be donated to our Charity Partner, **Friends of the Elderly Ireland**.

Help us to improve

The Conference Committee would really appreciate your feedback on the MII Annual Conference 2026. Please help us to plan the best possible event next year by completing the online survey which will be circulated at the event.

We are available to you over the course of the conference so please come and talk to us at the Registration desk if you have any questions.

Conference Team:

Andrea O’Neill (President), **Linda Devlin** (Conference Organiser), **Scott Alexander**, **Louise Hyland**, **Marcelle Gribbin**, **Lydia Oshioameh**, **Alison Martin**, **Darragh Kennedy**, **Jill Robinson** and **Kasia Protz** (MII Office)

Meet Our Speakers



Ken Cloke

World renowned mediator, author and global leader in conflict resolution and dialogue.



Joan Goldsmith

Distinguished mediator, leadership expert and educator with decades of experience in organisational change and conflict resolution.



Dr Liam Moggan

Internationally recognised coach, educator, leadership and performance development expert.



Giuseppe De Palo

Globally recognised mediator, arbitrator and JAMS neutral, shaping international practice in conflict resolution and negotiation



Jim O'Callaghan TD

Minister of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration



Dr. Brendan Schütte

Highly experienced workplace mediator, trainer and researcher



Justice Sara Phelan SC

High Court judge, mediator and former Chair of the Bar of Ireland



Fiona A. McAuslan

Director of Family Mediation Services at the Legal Aid Board



Gerry O'Sullivan

Founder of O'Sullivan Solutions, mediator, trainer and author.



Deborah Costello

Friends of the Elderly



John Byrne

Award winning athlete, community coach and UC Fit Founder



Caroline Kelly

Accredited mediator and Mindfulness Practitioner