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*The Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution Newsletter  
State of Hawaii, Judiciary*



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## *Keeping An Open Mind*



Parties are challenged to keep an open mind during alternative dispute resolution and move from considering only their own position to truly listening to the other's concerns and perspectives. The easiest way to have an open mind during any ADR session is to have an open mind in life. A few tools can help to keep an open mind in daily life:

- Keep learning. Try to master a new skill. Learning a new structure and new rules requires a "beginner's mind," concentration, looking at things differently, making mistakes, and growth. The learning process compels us to accept that we don't know everything and challenges us to break out of familiar routines.
- Balance your senses. View artwork, attend readings and open-mic nights for music and slam poetry, try a cooking class or a workshop in weaving or pottery, or visit the arboretum. Notice which sense responds first, allow one sense to dominate the experience, shut off one sense to see how the others function differently.
- Seek out opposing points of view. Read articles that represent a different opinion or listen to a talk show hosted by someone with whom you don't agree. Learning about opposing views helps us to sharpen our own position by understanding alternative perspectives.

These skills help to train an open mind to begin an ADR meeting:

- Listen to the other person's position without thinking of your response to it. You may hear new details that could cause you to interpret things differently.
- Gather all information. Avoid making an immediate decision, raise questions to learn and ask for explanation when you don't understand something.
- Find common ground. Identify values, concerns and beliefs that you share and work from that foundation to resolve opposing positions.

An open mind helps us see things a little differently from usual. We don't need to accept the other's point of view. We just need to be flexible enough to try to understand it.

### **CADR news:**

The position of Director, Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADR) is currently on recruitment. For more information, please visit

[www.courts.state.hi.us/general\\_information/jobs/exempt\\_positions.html](http://www.courts.state.hi.us/general_information/jobs/exempt_positions.html).

CADR forums were suspended in 2013 due to building maintenance. We look forward to presenting forums in 2014. Announcements of upcoming forums will be sent by e-mail.