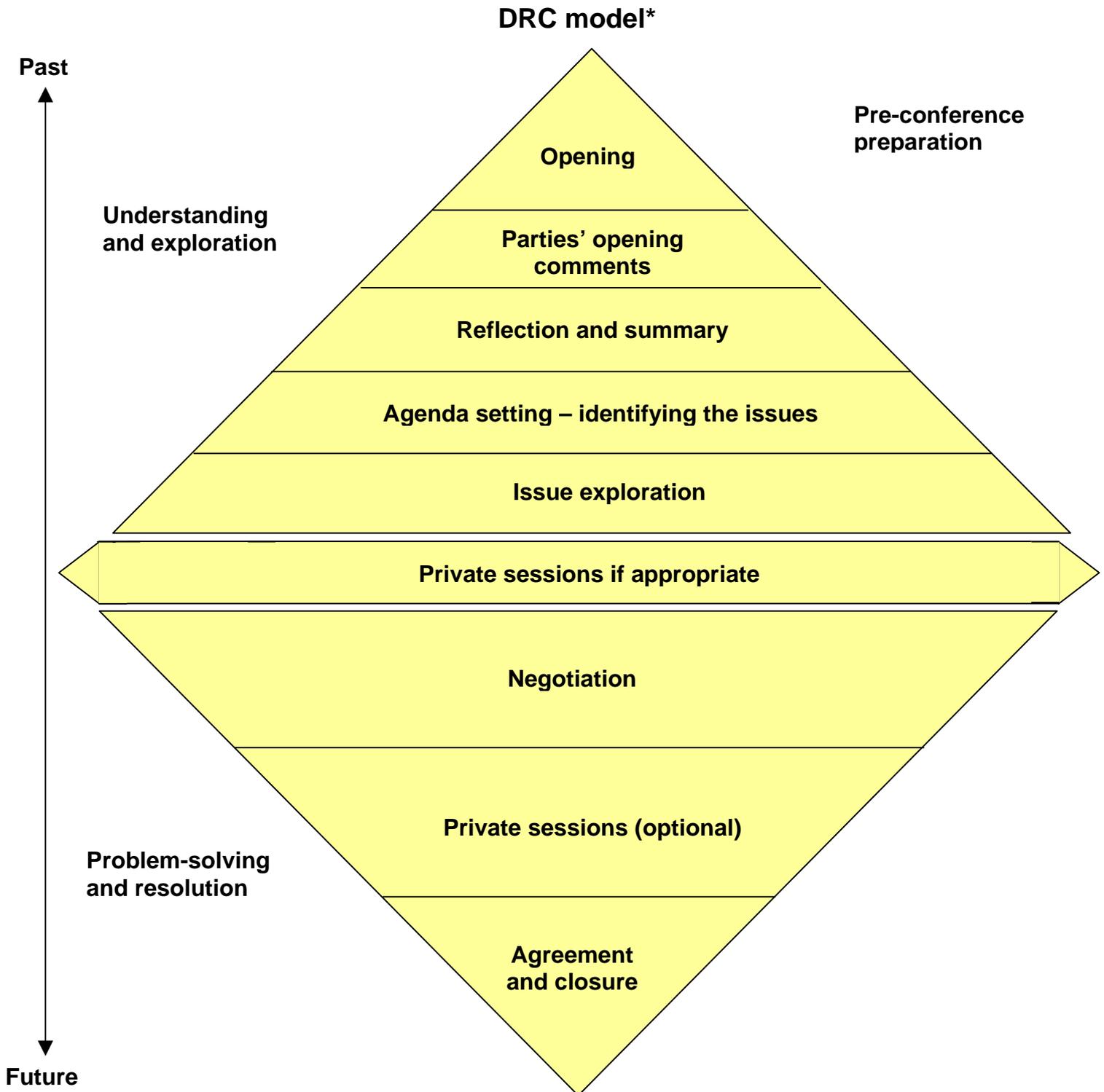


# GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONFERENCE (DRC)



\*Based on the LEADR Model of Mediation

### **Pre-conference preparation**

- Read through material filed in matter to date
- Children's Registrar to contact parties (or their legal representative) one week prior
- Establish attendance at DRC
- Consider any issues affecting how the DRC will be conducted

### **Opening – by Children's Registrar**

- Introductions
- Purpose of the DRC
- Central consideration of the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child
- Process of the DRC
- Roles of
  - Children's Registrar
  - parties
  - legal representatives
- Differences between the DRC and a Court hearing
- Confidentiality
- Guidelines for the conduct of the DRC

### **Parties' opening comments**

- Children's Registrar to summarise his/her understanding of the application
- Each party to express their views on the current situation and their goal at the DRC
- Encourage parties to speak for themselves

### **Reflection and summary**

- After all the parties have spoken:
  - Summarise the main interests and concerns of the parties
  - Identify the key issues in dispute, and those not in dispute

### **Agenda setting – identifying the issues**

- Develop a written agenda that is both neutral and mutual

### **Issue exploration**

- Work through each of the issues identified in the agenda
- Ask open questions that provide parties with the opportunity to fully explore each issue
- Facilitate exploration of positions, interests, feelings and opinions

### **Private sessions**

- Consider needs of each party
- Confirm confidentiality
- Discuss whether all issues have been covered
- Consider options
- Reality testing

### **Negotiation**

- Discuss the options that have been considered so far
- Generate more options as needed
- Reality testing

### **Private sessions (optional)**

- Hold additional private sessions if necessary

### **Agreement and closure**

- Clarify the agreement(s) reached
- Discuss relevant elements of implementation
- Ensure acceptance by parties
- Where agreement reached, commence directions
- Where no agreement reached, identify issues in agreement and those still in dispute