

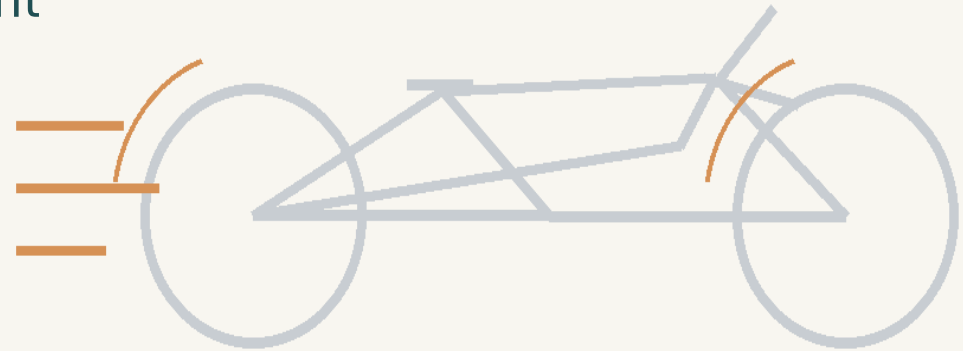
Dedicated Neutrality in Motion

Practising ADR When Change Is the Only Constant

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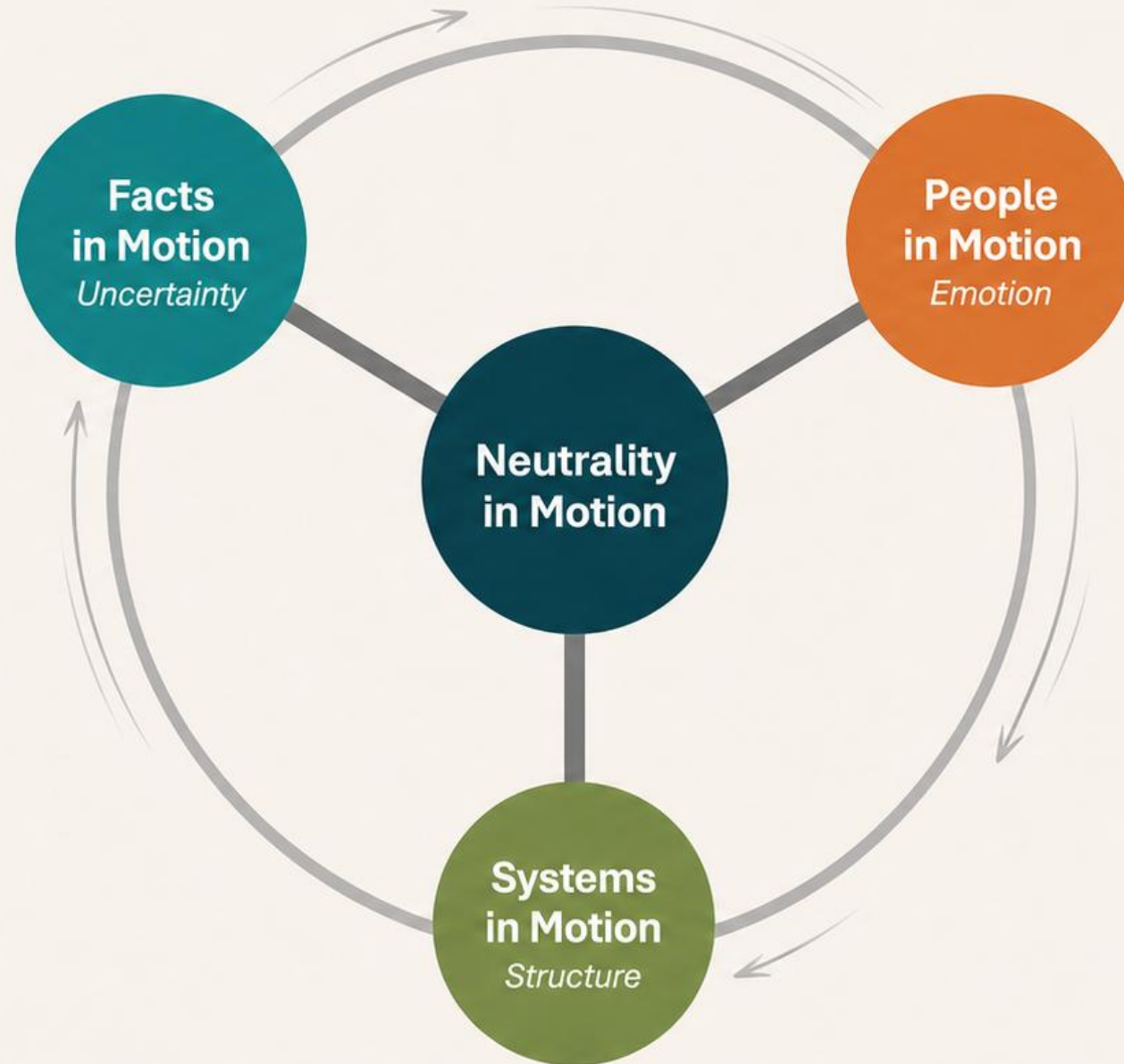
What do I mean by "Dedicated Neutral"?

- Neutrality is not a static state
- It is an ideal we strive toward
- It requires an allegiance to a fair process

I am not an advocate for any one participant.

I am an advocate for the process

Three spokes of neutrality in motion



Spoke 1: Facts in Motion

What happens when information evolves and certainty is in short supply

- Information evolves
- Scope often expands
- The real issue is often deeper than the stated issue
- Clients want certainty
- A fair process may be hard to reconcile with artificial certainty

Neutrality = honest navigation of uncertainty in real time

Reflection point

Consider with your table:

**Think of a matter that became
more complex than it first appeared**

What changed and what did you do about it?

2-minute reflection | Optional brief report-back

Spoke 1 in Practice

Treat the client relationship as part of the work

Trust and rapport matter when complexity emerges.

Signal early that matters may evolve

Avoid surprise when the picture changes.

Resist unrealistic timelines and budgets

Be practical before the process goes off track.

Stay grounded in the process

Do not predict outcomes too early.

Be an advocate for the process

Spoke 2: People in Motion

What happens when emotional dynamics become part of the work

- Conflict work is emotional work
- Fear, grief, anger, shame, compassion all enter the room
- Our own internal responses become part of the work
- Our own histories and nervous systems may also be activated

Neutrality requires self-awareness, regulation, and grounded judgment

Anecdote 1: Residential School Hearing

Neutrality when fear and trauma responses are in the room

- Trauma in the room
- Trauma responses in the room
- Fear in the room
- A process adaptation was needed
- Neutrality was not detachment
- It was a grounded judgment call under pressure

If fear or anger dominate the room, a fair process becomes harder to maintain

Anecdote 2: Parole Board Hearing

Neutrality when compassion pulls hard in one direction

- Victim's mother present
- Deep grief in the room
- Evidence and the law supported release
- The right decision was emotionally difficult

Neutrality is not about making everyone feel okay about the outcome

It is about recognizing and standing behind the right course of action within your mandate

Reflection point

Consider with your table:

**Which would you have found
harder to manage?**

fear or compassion?

2-minute reflection | Optional brief report-back

Spoke 3: Systems in Motion

Neutrality looks different in different conflict management systems

Workplace Investigation

Policy-driven | Context-specific

Residential Schools Tribunal

Unique | Purpose-built

Parole Board

Structured | Statutory

Mediation

Adaptive | Flexible

**Neutrality looks different in different containers.
Your professional judgment holds it together.**

Closing

A dedication to neutrality is not detachment from reality

- You are not above the fray
- You are part of the dynamic in the room
- You are not standing still while everything around you changes
- You are changing too

A dedication to neutrality is active and deliberate

- It is grounded in your professional judgment
- It is a continuing commitment to fairness and process integrity

Stay in motion, without losing your centre