

Role-Play #9 The Fence

General Information

A community mediation service has been engaged to facilitate a mediation between two long-time neighbours in dispute about how to replace an old fence. The neighbours, Armando and Lyle, cannot agree on what type of new fence to put up, how to split costs, who or when the work will be done or even where the fence should go. The situation may escalate into a property boundary dispute. Currently neither neighbour has produced a surveyor's certificate and they each seem reluctant to incur the cost of hiring a surveyor. Their attempts to talk about the fence resulted in a shouting match and now all communication has broken down. Neither party feels hopeful about mediation.

Armando's Additional Information

You do not see the fence as a pressing issue. You are mostly insulted by Lyle's attitude. He acts as if his family is so superior now after 20 years of raising kids next door to each other. Your families used to be close until your son Hernando and Lyle's daughter Olivia fell deeply in love with each other for a time, until the girl broke your son's heart cruelly. All the barbeques and visiting ended in an awkward silence. Now one year later you still cannot look at that family the same way. Just when you thought that you had achieved a comfortable level of distance from your neighbour, they show up on your doorstep wanting to talk about building a stupid new fence.

If you must deal with the fence, you can afford to pay for half the cost of replacement cost this spring, as long as you go with something similar. You do not want to spend a lot of time, energy or money on this. You don't have a survey and feel no real need to get one. You challenged the property's boundary during a heated exchange with Lyle as a way of stalling the project and now it has become an issue you don't feel you can back away from. In truth, you think the fence's current location is fair.