

# Non-violent Communication and Stakeholder dialogue

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## Introduction

*Note for instructors: This session requires about 100-120 minutes. It is best done once you have already completed modules 1 and 3.*

**Briefly introduce the subject - What is a dialogue?** A dialogue is a written or oral exchange between at least two people. In contrast to a monologue, there are replies to the addresses. A dialogue has an objective. Some just have an unconscious objective and in others there is an explicit aim to reach by the end of the dialogue. In a constructive dialogue it is important to remember that people listen and respond to each other in order to reach an explicit aim positively (5 min).

## Communication and Conflict

**Collect a few examples of conflict situations from the daily lives of the participants:** Do this as a big group together to start off, writing the conflicts up on the board or a large flipchart paper (think about the needed number of situations for a later role play - double roles are possible). Ask participants to brainstorm all the possible conflictual situations they can think of or that they have had in their life in general (10 min).

**Discuss the Do's and Don'ts for communicating better:** find out what participants think is effective and positive communication (for example, active listening, not interrupting, stating facts instead of blaming, etc.) - especially with respect to previously collected conflictual situations.

You can also check out these references below, one is a link for an introduction and suggestions on why/how to listen better: <http://www.compassionatelistening.org/>, and the following link is for a document that has a more complete list of steps for compassionate listening on p. 87: [http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=wsj\\_theses](http://scholarworks.gsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=wsj_theses).

For one technique of active listening you can try “compassionate listening” within a talking circle. Here are some tips for active or compassionate listening within a talking circle as something to incorporate into the process of non-violent communication:

## Talking circle Guidelines

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**Integrity** - Honoring agreed upon commitments

**Responsibility** - Taking ownership of own judgments

**Communication** - Speaking with a healing intention

**Listening** - To connect with our common humanity

**Courage** - Willing to resolve interpersonal issues

**Respect** - Seeing that we are all in the process together

**Compassionate Listening Tip Sheet** - (basic introduction to what compassionate listening is)

Stay Present

Allow Silence

Don't try to fix it

Use inquiry or reflective listening

Witness your judgments

Be gentle with yourself and the other person

Listen with your heart

Use your intuition

(15 min).

## **Non-violent communication**

**Take a look** at Marshall Rosenberg's model of non-violent communication (provide a copy for all participants or use a whiteboard/projector)

[http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf\\_files/4part\\_nvc\\_process.pdf](http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf_files/4part_nvc_process.pdf) and  
[http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf\\_files/feelings\\_needs.pdf](http://www.nonviolentcommunication.com/pdf_files/feelings_needs.pdf) (15 min).

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**Summarize** what these handouts are about, namely that they contain ways to identify feelings and separate them from needs, as well as useful phrases the youth can use to communicate their feelings and needs objectively, without blame or judgment, so that eventually the chance for a positive resolution to their concerns has a higher probability of being achieved. Ask your participants what they have learnt from this approach about dealing with conflicts.

## **Practice non-violent communication**

*Background:* You can try out non-violent communication in a role-play or forum theatre format. The latter is more spontaneous/improvisational, perhaps a bit more dynamic and fun for your participants. You can use some of the phrases in Rosenberg's Model of Nonviolent Communication to help you think about what you want to say.

- For tips on having effective role play exercises, including giving feedback for further development, see: <http://www.businessballs.com/roleplayinggames.htm>
- For more information and instruction on forum theatre, see: <http://beautifultrouble.org/tactic/forum-theater/> and for more detail see p. 137 of this document here: [http://www.wri-irg.org/system/files/Handbook\\_for\\_Nonviolent\\_Campaigns.pdf](http://www.wri-irg.org/system/files/Handbook_for_Nonviolent_Campaigns.pdf)

Model the task first, then explain the task if there are questions. The small role play should be spontaneous, with as little preparation as possible – in the spirit of improv (e.g. model a typical argument that might happen between siblings, or a fight between friends).

*Example of how to do it:*

Facilitators should make up and demonstrate an example of violent communication (30 sec) and an example of non-violent communication (30 sec.) for the same situation.

Form groups of three or four.

Use the situations from the list collected at the beginning and distribute the topics to the groups. Give them a chance to do a spontaneous role play or forum theatre performance. They can choose which one they want to do.

See two or three groups who volunteer to do their role play or forum theatre skit in front of everyone, or choose groups if there are no volunteers. Discuss and give feedback to the groups (10-15 min).

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## **Homework for session 2: What (institutional) players and stakeholders have a say in water quality matters with a view to your river and lake?**

Ask participants to find which institutions/people have a say in terms of the Water Framework Directive's implementation and water protection at your river and lake (e.g. farmers, other landowners, regional agriculture authority, local water authority, industry, town council etc).

The homework is preparatory for the next session – participants will be assigned a particular role based on the stakeholders they are most likely to meet and discuss water quality issues with. Therefore assign research responsibilities to your participants, so that different groups can research on stakeholders:

- What is the position (concerning specific measures for improving water quality) of my role?
- What are the instruments my role has on hand to improve water quality?
- What are our needs as far as water quality and freshwater protection are concerned? What can we as a group ask regarding our needs concerning water quality?

Optional: You can also hand out some basic reading material for example roles, for example very briefly describing each role. This step might be best done by the group coordinator or leader as previous preparation. It is also recommended at this point, to give out handouts for identifying and separating feelings from needs, as well as helpful phrases for non-violent communication (links given above) - if this has not been done already.