

# Introduction

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We are excited that you are reading these words right now. Throughout the three years that the three of us have devoted to conceiving, creating, organizing, and producing this *NVC Toolkit for Facilitators* the vision of your presence in this moment has inspired our focus. We are excited because we trust that you who read these words share our profound yearning for a more compassionate world — a world of connection where everyone has a place at the table and where all our needs matter. We are doubly excited because we suspect that like ourselves, you have experienced the power of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) to create that world, both internally within yourself and externally in your community, whether local or global. We especially rejoice that you intend — or are considering the intention — to share your empowering understanding of NVC with others. It is our earnest hope that your intention is realized with joy, clarity, and confidence. We offer you the *NVC Toolkit* with the wish that it may enhance your efforts to effectively engage your community in the practice of NVC. May it contribute to your happiness and the happiness of those with whom you share your compassion, your understanding, and your delight in NVC.

## What Does the *NVC Toolkit* Consist Of?

The *Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Toolkit for Facilitators* consists of three parts: a hard-copy **Exercise Manual**, a collection of Online **Learning Aids**, and a set of Online **Instructional Videos Clips**.

1. The hard-copy **Exercise Manual** presents 74 exercises arranged under 18 key concepts for the development of NVC skills and consciousness.
  - **Handouts** are used in many activities. The contents of these *Handouts* are included in the *Exercise Manual*, but templates for copy-ready reproduction may be downloaded from the NVC Toolkit web site at **www.nvctoolkit.org**, and clicking on “Electronic Downloads.”
2. **Learning Aids** enhance the activities included in the *Exercise Manual* and can be accessed on the NVC Toolkit web site at **www.nvctoolkit.org** by clicking on “Electronic Downloads.” There are two kinds of *Learning Aids*:
  - **General Learning Aids** are used in a number of Toolkit activities and support general NVC practice in all situations.
  - **Specific Learning Aids** are used only for a specific Toolkit activity.

3. **Instructional Video Clips** are to be viewed on the NVC *Toolkit* web site at [www.nvctoolkit.org](http://www.nvctoolkit.org), by clicking on “Video Clips.” The clips include:
- A 30-minute video clip illustrating how a practice session might be facilitated in consonance with NVC principles. This video clip enacts a group inside a men’s prison practicing a Toolkit activity.
  - Twenty short videos clips each demonstrating an interactive Toolkit activity that may be challenging for the reader to grasp through written description alone.

For detailed information on the NVC Toolkit web site and its contents, please refer to the section of this manual entitled, “Accessing the Online Toolkit Materials.”

### **Who is a “Facilitator”?**

The NVC *Toolkit* is designed for individuals who wish to share NVC in group settings. Because of the authors’ longtime commitment to support effective NVC practice in prison, this resource is particularly helpful for facilitators working with prisoners or returnees (people returning from prison to the community). All NVC *Toolkit* exercises, however, have been adapted for use in any environment.

We use the term “facilitator” to refer to someone with at least a basic understanding of NVC concepts and consciousness who is actively engaging others in group practice. Whether you are a prison chaplain, PTA member, team leader, churchgoer, peace activist, soup kitchen volunteer, or simply one of a group of friends, the NVC *Toolkit* can support you in designing meaningful ways to learn, share, and practice the basic principles of NVC.

The NVC *Toolkit* does not address issues of group dynamics or how to develop and nurture a practice group. We assume that facilitators have an established rapport with the groups in which they are introducing toolkit activities.

### **How is the NVC Toolkit Structured?**

The NVC *Toolkit* is organized into 18 sections, covering each of 18 key NVC concepts. Each section contains:

- A short description of the concept
- At least one **Awareness Exercise** — Awareness Exercises use guided

silence and imagery to open us experientially to the concept being introduced.

- Two or more **Activities** — Activities engage us in practicing and applying the concept. They may call for hands-on, interactive, multi-sensory participation as well as solitary reflection.
- Brief facilitator tips

## How are the Exercises Presented?

Each activity contains a statement of purpose and a brief description. It specifies materials needed, group size, suggested time, space, and literacy level required for participants to engage in the activity. The procedure for each activity is presented in detail and offers facilitators step-by-step guidance on how to introduce the exercise and give clear instructions. Debrief Questions for the group and Suggestions for Practice in Daily Life are included at the end of many activities.

The instructions for guiding the awareness exercises consist of itemized statements that may be read verbatim.

Toolkit exercises may be introduced in any order, depending on the learning needs of the group and the facilitator's preference. Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (2nd edition) is cited as a resource in the *NVC Toolkit*. At the end of an exercise, reference is made to specific chapters which relate to the particular key concept being addressed. (Cross references of exercises to chapters in Marshall's book are provided at the back of the *Exercise Manual*.)

- **Numbering of Exercises**

Each exercise is numbered according to its Key Concept and position in the section. For example, 10.2 refers to the second exercise under Key Concept 10 ("Honesty").

- **Explanation of Icons**

Icons are used in headings to specify the following:



**= This activity uses Handouts.**

There are two kinds of *Handouts*: Group Handouts and Individual Handouts. When a handout consists of scenario for practice, there will be one version for prison use and another for the general community. The contents of all handouts are included in the *Exercise Manual* as part of the exercise.

However, to make clean copies of any handout, please use the electronic downloads available on the *NVC Toolkit* web site.



**= This activity requires Learning Aids.**

There are two kinds of Learning Aids: **General Learning Aids**, which are used across many activities, and **Specific Learning Aids**, which pertain only to a specific activity. All templates for additional materials and instructions for their production are available as electronic downloads on the *NVC Toolkit* web site.



**= This activity is demonstrated in the Instructional Video Clips on the *NVC Toolkit* web site.**

- **Use of Italicized Text**

Italicized text accompanied by a gray bar in the left margin appears in all the Awareness Exercises and many of the Activities. The italics indicate that these words may be spoken verbatim by facilitators when addressing participants. We included italicized text in response to feedback that it is often helpful to hear exactly how instructions might be worded.

### **Suggestions for Using the *NVC Toolkit***

1. Before introducing an exercise to a group, review it closely. Visualize the entire procedure and then do each step, following the instructions you will be giving to the group. Check to see if the exercise is included in the Instructional Video Clips. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with any Handout or Learning Aid that accompanies the activity.
2. We encourage flexibility and creativity in your use of the *NVC Toolkit*, especially when you have had experience with an exercise. For example, although a general estimate of “time needed” is given for each activity, please use your own discretion by monitoring participation in the room. Do participants appear engaged in learning? How is the energy in the room? Note, however, that we *strongly discourage* using flexibility as an opportunity for a discussion. A core intention of the *NVC Toolkit* is to engage participants in *practicing*, rather than *talking about*, NVC.

3. It is very important to us that the *NVC Toolkit* not be used to develop technical skill and fluency divorced from NVC consciousness. We see the NVC model as training wheels that support our skill in nurturing compassionate relationships. Like any powerful tool, NVC mechanics can be used with the intent to hurt, manipulate, or belittle others. We would be chagrined to see the *NVC Toolkit* used without commitment to compassion — of valuing the needs of another as much as our own. With this in mind, we make the following suggestions to facilitators sharing exercises from the toolkit:

- **Invite pauses and silence in between activities.** Create space for everyone to reconnect with themselves and their intention for attending the group. Bring in frequent reminders of why you and others are engaging in this practice.
- **As a facilitator, practice vulnerability.** Acknowledge your feelings and needs, especially when you think your needs for competence, effectiveness, or contribution are not being met in your role as facilitator. Be aware of your own triggers and how they might impact the way you are facilitating the group.
- **Honor the needs of both parties in all interactions.** A symbolic gesture that affirms this intention is to spread your hands, visualizing the needs of each party resting in one palm. Try this whenever you notice that your own needs or those of another have been absent in a dialogue. As you lead the exercises, remember to stay open to hearing the needs of the participants.
- **Cultivate shared experiences of gratitude in the group.** Practice articulating NVC appreciation at each session, recognizing especially the common gifts and resources that support us all.

## **Request for Feedback**

Our intention in creating the *NVC Toolkit* is to support facilitators in sharing NVC with confidence, joy, clarity and effectiveness. We are eager to receive ongoing feedback to know how your needs have or have not been met through the toolkit.

In reviewing feedback, it helps us to have the following information about you and about how you are using the *NVC Toolkit*:

- Name
- Email address

- NVC experience or background
- Size of group and context in which you are sharing Toolkit exercises (e.g. 5-person NVC practice group, 60-person church gathering)
- Group's geographical location (city, country) and language

We appreciate specific references to an exercise or page as well as general comments that help us understand what worked and didn't work for you. We ask for permission to incorporate your feedback for future editions.

**ADDRESS FEEDBACK TO:**

**Email: [info@nvctoolkit.org](mailto:info@nvctoolkit.org)**

*Please specify if you want a response back from us.*