



# Can We Talk?

Strategies for Navigating Conflict and Getting What You Want at Work

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# Objectives

- Learn the basics of effective communication
- Differentiate between thoughts, feelings, and needs
- Learn conflict resolution
- Make clear, actionable requests
- Increase capacity for empathy towards self & others
- Improve your ability to give and receive feedback



# Outline

Nonviolent Communication Basics 10:05am-11:05am

*break* 11:05am-11:15am

NVC Process & Conflict Resolution 11:15am-12:00pm

*break* 12:00pm-12:10pm

Giving & Receiving Feedback 12:10pm-12:35pm

Q&A 12:35pm-1:00pm

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- Clinical psychologist
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# Nonviolent Communication

- Needs
- Connection
- Practice
- Attitude



# Why bring NVC to the workplace?

- Makes collaboration towards a shared goal easier
- Cultivating connection increases collaboration towards shared goals
- Decreases win/lose thinking, competition, and alienation
- Increases understanding and trust to promote collaboration
- Resolve differences quickly



# Communication 101

- "I" statements
- Feelings vs. thoughts
- Active listening & mirroring

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# Active Listening

- Let's practice this skill in pairs.
- Decide who will be the speaker and receiver.
- The speaker talks for 60 seconds. Be clear and concise.
- When finished, the receiver mirrors what they heard and confirms accuracy. Start with, "I heard you say..." and end with, "Did I get that right?"
- Once the speaker believes they were accurately heard, switch roles.





# Empathy Practice

Self-empathy

*Connect to your needs & feelings*

Empathy

*Guess others' needs & feelings*

Antidote to burnout

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# Guess the Need & Feeling

- Use the following videos and vignettes to the guess the needs and feelings of each participant.
- Refer to the Needs & Feelings Inventory for help.
- [The Office](#)
- [Seinfeld](#)

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Mia comes into your office to discuss the project you are both working on. She says, "You know, we have this big meeting coming up and I'm concerned about being prepared for it." You respond, "Yes, I know I have let some things slip but I've been really overwhelmed between this project and the other things on my plate. I've already put in so much extra time, and partly the holdup is because of Hanna not getting the numbers to me on time."

*What might Mia's needs and feelings be?*

*What would your needs and feelings be in this situation?*

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After another team meeting in which it seems to you that Hank has dominated the discussion, you return to your office feeling grumpy. Your thoughts run something like, "Hank is such a pain. He's always taking over everything and pretending to be the boss, like he knows something we don't. He's so domineering and competitive."

*What might Hank's needs and feelings be?*

*What would your needs and feelings be in this situation?*

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# Feelings & Needs Card Game

1. One person is the Storyteller and the others are Listeners. The youngest person goes first.
2. The Storyteller holds the Feelings cards and the Listeners split up the Needs cards.
3. The Storyteller tells a real or fictional story about a recent conflict event in her life.
4. After telling the story, she selects two Feelings cards that reflect how she felt during the event.
5. Listeners take turns guessing which Needs relate to the Feelings cards, putting down one Need card next to the Feeling card and asking "Were your feeling (name the feeling on the card) because of your need for...?" The Storyteller does not respond yet.
6. Once all the Listeners have taken their turn the Storyteller chooses the Needs cards that relate to how she was feeling.
7. The Storyteller position rotates to the left until everyone has told a story.

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# NVC Process

Listen first. Give your opponents a chance to talk. Let them finish. Do not resist, defend or debate. This only raises barriers. Try to build bridges of understanding.

-Dale Carnegie



# Components

## Observations

- Clear, concrete
- Free of judgment, evaluation

## Feelings

- Universal
- Physical sensations

## Needs

- Sustain, enrich life
- Universal, transcends culture

## Requests

- Specific action
- Positive language

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# Training Wheels

When I see/hear/remember/imagine \_\_\_\_\_,

I feel \_\_\_\_\_,

Because I need/prefer/want/like \_\_\_\_\_.

Right now, would you be willing to tell me...

what you heard me say?

if you are willing to say or do the following?



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# Conflict Resolution

Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives.

-Dorothy Thompson



# Choices in Conflict

## Judgy Jackal

- Blame, defensiveness, criticism
- Voice of anger, shame, depression, guilt

*“It’s your/my fault”*

*“I/You should \_\_\_\_.”*

*“I am/You are \_\_\_\_.”*

## Generous Giraffe

- Connecting to needs/feelings
- Voice of empathy & self-empathy

*“I’m feeling \_\_\_\_ because I need/value \_\_\_\_.”*

*“Are you feeling \_\_\_\_ because you need/value \_\_\_\_?”*



# Addressing Conflicts with Your Boss

- Aim for a solution that works for you, your boss, your team, and the organization.
- When you have a disagreement with your boss, express it in a manner that ties it to your best understanding of their goal. Propose another solution that you believe will work for them.



# Addressing Conflict with Your Boss

- Attend to the quality of your relationship with your boss. Create trust and alliance. Don't focus only on the specific problem you want to solve.
- Become an ally. See your boss in their full humanity. Name and aim for the shared purpose. Focus on offering support rather than challenging.

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# Reflect

Take this time to reflect on your boss. Who are they as a person? What is their managing style? What are your shared goals?

What would it take to become their ally? What would you need to learn about them? What needs can they meet for you?



# Managing Conflict with Customers

- Acknowledge the customer's feelings and needs.
- Clarify the customer's goal if agreeing on a solution is challenging.
- Cultivate trust with the customer by demonstrating empathy and practicing active listening.
- Apologize for mistakes or misunderstandings.

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# Role-Play: Conflict with Customer

Consider a recent conflict with a customer. Perhaps you had to deliver some bad news or maybe they were dissatisfied. Use the skills you've learned in this workshop to role-play the conflict with a colleague. Practice active listening, mirroring, self-empathy, and empathy towards the customer. See if you can offer a solution that benefits you, them, and the organization.



# Giving & Receiving Feedback

- Safety, security
- Judgment, blame
- Evaluations need to include
  - Observations
  - Needs
  - Requests



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# Mock Evaluations

When working to a firm but realistic deadline, Jay sometimes fails to complete the task because he's unprepared to work extra hours; or he completes the task, but with some serious flaws. Communicates reasonably well, but not someone you would choose to present a case effectively or to get across detailed instructions. Jay generally seems to listen to others and take their views into consideration. Always contributes vigorously to the efforts of the team, whether as a leader or a team member. Sympathetically helps others to address their weaknesses. However, Jay becomes resentful when others criticize. He does not learn from criticism and carries on behaving exactly as before.

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Maria is capable of planning and sequencing her own work, but does not yet do so consistently. When work is planned, she usually works systematically towards objectives. Timid in relationships and new situations – or aggressively over-confident. Makes decisions rapidly and well when dealing with small or personal matters, but still has to gain the confidence to make major decisions. Most of the decisions made turn out to be effective.

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# Thank you!

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Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation online.