What is NVC?

Nonviolent Communication, also called ‘Compassionate Communication’ or ‘Collaborative Communication’, has been described as a language of compassion and a tool for positive social change. It is taught as a process of interpersonal communication designed to improve compassionate connection to others. The following pages can be used as a guide to understand both what you can do to avoid situations of conflict arising and what to do should conflict arise.



Marshall Rosenberg explains that “NVC is based on a fundamental principle: underlying all human actions are needs that people are seeking to meet, and understanding and acknowledging these needs can create a shared basis for connection, cooperation, and more globally – peace.” These universal human needs are never in conflict; rather, conflict arises when the strategies for meeting those needs clash. The goal of NVC is not to get what we want, but to make a human connection that will result in everyone getting their needs met. “Understanding each other at the level of our needs creates such connection because, at this deeper human level, the similarities between us outweigh the differences, giving rise to greater compassion. When we focus on needs, without interpreting or conveying criticism, blame, or demands, our deeper creativity flourishes, and solutions arise that were previously blocked from our awareness. At this depth, conflicts and

misunderstandings can be resolved with greater ease."

Learning NVC is a process similar to learning a new language or skill: step-by-step learning coupled with ample time for practice leads to growing mastery. While it takes time to develop fluency, any knowledge of a new language makes it more likely that communication can take place.

The language of NVC includes two parts: **honestly expressing ourselves** to others, and **empathically hearing others**. Both are expressed through four components, which this guide will explore: **observations, feelings, needs, and requests**.
