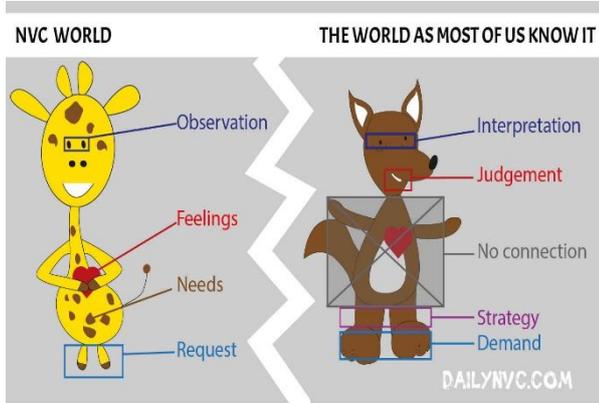


A module
on
**NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS IN
HARYANA**



National Centre for School Leadership



विद्यालय नेतृत्व अकादमी

राज्य शैक्षिक अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण परिषद्, हरियाणा

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NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS IN HARYANA

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INTRODUCTION

Non-violent communication is a *'language of compassion rather than dominance'* has a significant impact on both individual and societal level. It guides us to reframe how we express ourselves, how we hear others and resolves conflicts by focusing our consciousness on what we are observing, feeling, needing and requesting. It is a tool that leads us towards a quality of connection among people where everyone's needs are valued and get met through compassionate way. According to Marshall Rosenberg 'Judgment & violence are tragic expressions of unmet needs. In every moment, each of us is trying to meet our needs in the best way i.e. NVC'

As in our schools there are some challenges as the people come from diverse environment i.e. they have different socio-economic and cultural background, behavioral challenges, uneducated parents, extra work assigned to staff due to lack of resources which results in mental stress and anger. Sometimes over-dominant behavior of a person creates an environment of stress and fear. All these factors result in violent communication i.e. insulting, criticizing, labeling, punishment or seeing someone as "wrong." This type of behavior leads to disagreement, disrespect, misunderstanding, guilt, depression etc among staff and students.

Violent communication forced us to think about following questions:

- How it effect the personal relationship between you and others?
- What is the effect on your well-being by acting violently?
- Is controlling others using violent communication effective?
- Is it worth for you?
- What will a person do if the punishment or reward is not there?

Author thinks that this type of behavior is not beneficial for anyone because the words we use shape our thinking and frame the attitude of others towards ourselves. Using language that involves blame, judgment, criticism, avoiding responsibility, demands and verbal attack is disempowering to us as it degrades the quality of connection that could be available between ourselves and others. Therefore, Non-violent communication is needed for everyone.

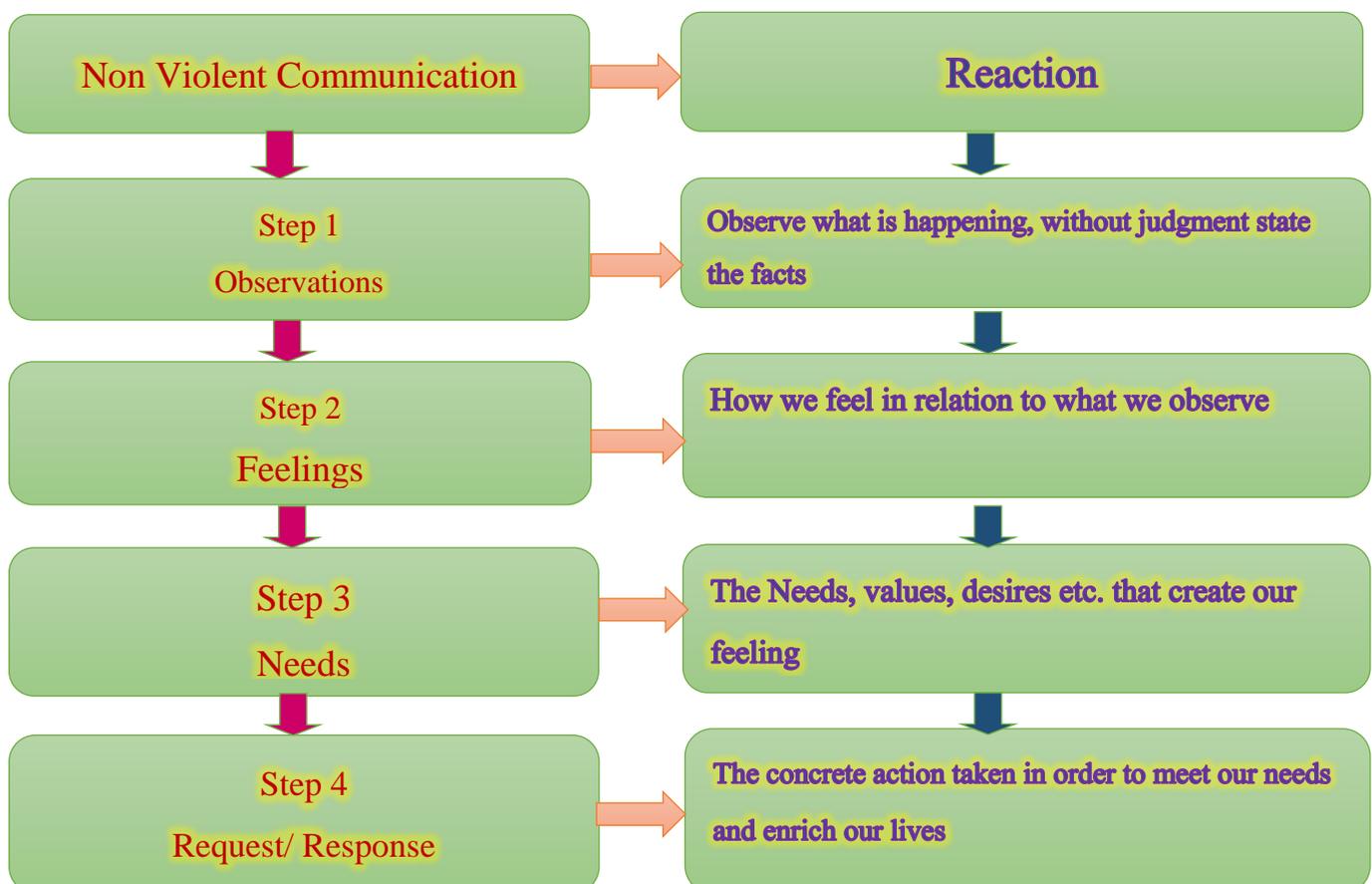
OBJECTIVES

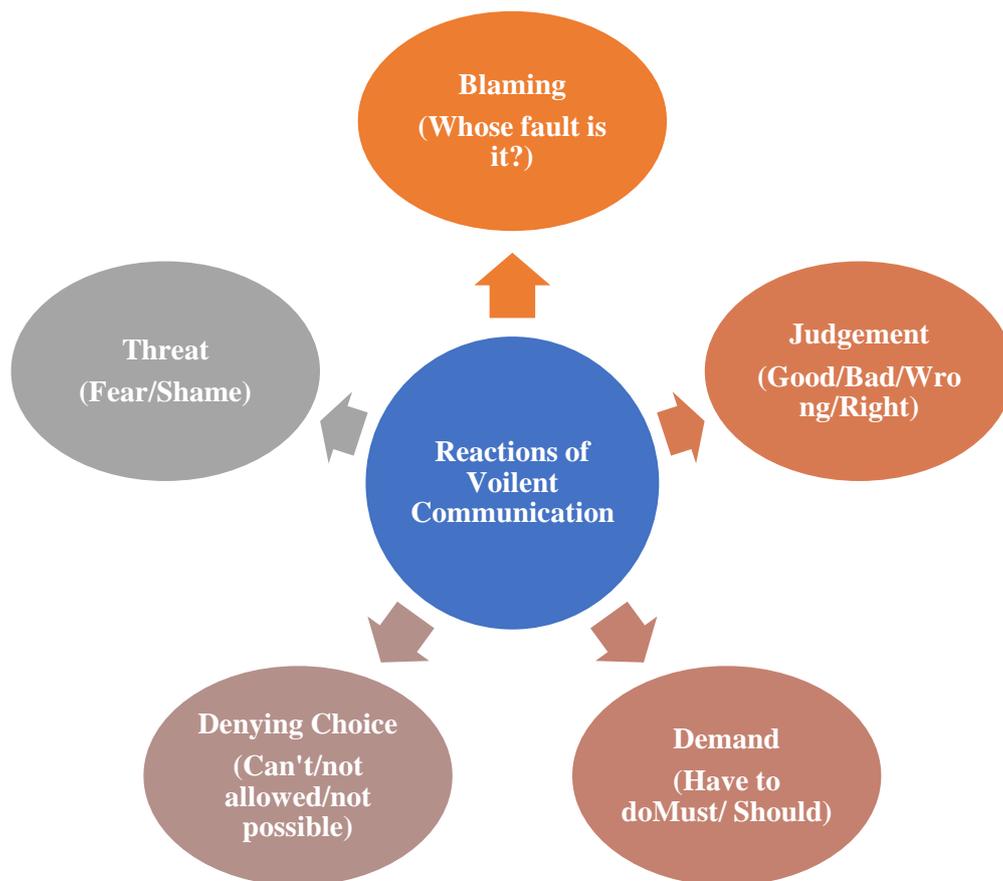
Through this module school leader, staff and students would be able to

- build cohesive school and classroom environment.
- strengthen Personal empowerment.
- connect with ourselves & others
- improving the quality of personal and professional relationships for enhancing the outputs/handling difficult situations without blaming others.
- resolve differences by epithetical listening & honest expressions.
- to hear own deeper needs & the needs of others.
- to make person more attentive.
- to develop critical and creative thinking among students so that they can deal with reality.

NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Non-violent Communication (NVC) is a communication approach based on the principle of non-violence where empathy and honesty is being realised before starting any communication. NVC has potential to enhance empathy, interpersonal communication skills as well as foster less judgmental perceptions and reactions among school leader. Non-violent communication is a tool which helps





practitioners in reframing how they express themselves, how to hear others and resolve conflicts by focusing on what they are observing, feeling, needing and requesting. The idea of NVC is propounded by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg. He coined the phrase after being inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Ahimsa. Ahimsa is more than absence of violence, it is intense love. NVC provides an easy way to grasp effective method to get the root of violence, pain and conflict peacefully. By examining the unmet needs behind what we do or say, NVC help to reduce hostility, heal pain and strengthen professional and personal relationship.

In the present scenario the leaders are not only the administrator but instead act as facilitator of learning to nurture the hidden talent of staff and students and to prepare them for different situations of life. For making the school environment more cohesive to learning and teaching, strong and positive relationships between school leader and teachers, school leader and community, teacher and student etc are essential. NVC increases the emotional awareness in school as well as in the classroom and encourages the active participation of every member of school and other volunteers. **NVC is the way to enhance connection and understanding by**

- Vulnerably express our own feelings and needs
- Empathically listen to the feelings and needs of the other

STEPS OF NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

NVC is a communication framework that helps to connect with themselves and others through empathy and communication by using following steps:

- **Observation:** NVC presents the simple facts we have observed without judgment. It is essential that we state the facts as we see them, clearly and honestly. If we add evaluation to the observation, the message might not be received by the other person. This opens the possibility for the exchange of ideas that leads to understanding.
- **Feelings:** This requires a change in perspective of how others' words and actions affect our feelings. Our feelings are highly dependent on our life experiences and how well we know each other.
- **Needs:** NVC makes connection between feelings and unmet needs in the individual. These needs are common and fundamental to all human beings (Rosenberg & Chopra 2015). The outer expressions of feeling such as anger and frustration are seen as indicator of needs, such as love and acceptance that are unfulfilled.
- **Request/Response:** It enables the person to respond compassionately. Request/Response in NVC should be positive and concrete. This means it should be what we expect from others,

Situations:

Parents use nagging i.e. repeating something that has already been said and solved and lecturing i.e. giving more information that is needed without stopping to listen to children opinions and ideas.

1. Criticize children thought, ideas and feelings.
2. Sometimes parents mentioning on the past problems again and again.
3. Using threats

Role of School Leader & Staff

- (i) Provide a healthy environment to such student so that he/se can discuss the problem with staff.
- (ii) Staff can do counseling of such parents & students by taking the help of SMC members by adopting NVC skills

How NVC help to resolve such situation:

- (i) NVC skills help to improve family relationships. When parents connect with their child and treat them respectfully as a human being, the children and parents also gain a level of trust that can last for life time. When parents and children hear each other with empathy the emotional charge of difficult conversation lowered. They become closer emotionally. Trust in their relations increases. This helps the children to share their feelings frankly, sincerely and truthfully with their parents.
- (ii) It helps children and parents in mutual goal setting for career path and future life and helps them to save their child from different problem they are facing.

rather than what we don't want.

MORE ASPECTS OF NVC

- **Listening:** NVC is about listening to understand rather than just respond.
- **There are no winner and loser:** In compassionate communication, we do not try to win. Instead we are trying to understand. We approach every conversation with open mind and do not assume that we already know. It is not about deciding who is 'right' or who is 'wrong'. We try to increase empathy and understanding and find the solutions together.
- **Positive Body Language:** Communication goes for deeper than what we say. NVC encourages us to consider our body language. We try to be careful about how we physically react to others.
- Ability to express ourselves and know about listener's feelings.
- Always use positive and concrete action language what we really want.
- Express appreciation when listener meets our expected behaviour.

Comparison between Typical Schools and Life Enriching (NVC Based) School

Typical Schools	NVC based schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students' works for external rewards or to avoid punishment.• Comprised of "Power over" feelings where teachers know what is the best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn because they want to.• Teachers and students are partners.

NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION HELPS TO RESOLVE INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS

NVC based communication helps students to connect with their intrinsic motivations for learning rather the extrinsic motivators like reward or punishment. When staff and students are expected to perform certain behaviour influenced by NVC then one has to think about following questions:

- (i) What specifically do I want the teachers and students to do?
- (ii) What do I want their reasons to be for doing so?

By asking these two questions we quickly encounter the limitations of motivating staff and students that they should have to do and we can engage the students in a conversation about the deeper needs. As a result our communication strategies for the school become much more raising the human beings

who can think for themselves and how can serve others based on clarity of motivation. NVC helps in reducing conflicts, developing more understanding, collaboration, trust and positive relationship. Conflicts even of long duration can be resolved if we just keep the flow of compassionate communication. Stop criticizing and analyzing each other but instead in everyone's needs and realize the inter dependence that we all have, is the base of any relationship which help all of us to work as a team. NVC gives students, parents, teachers and all staff the tools and skills f to navigate within ourselves to transform blame and judgment – where neither our own needs nor those of the other persons are likely to be met-into a mutual awareness of human needs and to get mutually beneficial solutions.

1. Interpersonal relationship between students:

By implementing NVC, student's attitude can be improved and hence help to build healthy and coherent atmosphere in the school.

2. Interpersonal relationship between school leader and staff:

NVC helps in reducing conflicts, developing more understanding, collaboration, trust and positive relationship. Conflicts even of long duration can be resolved if we just keep the flow of

Situation:

Bullying problem is observed in some schools. Some children get teased by sibling or friends at some point. It is not harmful when done in friendly, playful & mutual way. But when teasing becomes hurtful & unkind then it crosses the line into bullying & needs to stop.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological ways. It can range from hitting, name-calling threats.

Role of School Leader

- Learn about the issue from staff and parents.
- Meet with bullied and bully students and listen to them carefully by keeping the conversation to a minimum level on your part. Observe the problem by open mind and honesty. **(observation)**
- To create safe and secure environments of mutual trust where every person feels comfortable and utilize own energy in positive direction. It is important to validate their feelings, emotional anger or action which is the way to solve the problem. **(Need)**
- Parents, teachers and students are to be the part of solution. Try to know the problem of bully student (family problem, Need extra attention etc) and find the solution with the help of parents and teachers. Engage the students in positive behavior and teach them the skills so that they know how to intervene when bullying occurs. Adjust the bullied student in school environment so that he/she do not feel isolated. **(expected behavior)**

How can we make anti-bullying school environment:

- Dedicate the assembly time to teach kindness and empathy.
- Encourage student to participate in activities that boost social emotional learning.
- Appreciate the identity of such students as well as others.

compassionate communication. Stop criticizing and analyzing each other but instead in everyone's needs and realize the inter dependence that we all have, is the base of any relationship which help all of us to work as a team.

3. **Interpersonal relationship among students and teachers:**

Children are more likely to grow up and should connect constructively with teachers, rather than avoiding them out of fear of being understood or being dealt with harshly. Teachers have important role in students learning in class room. When strong teacher student relationships are formed it can have very positive impact on learning and student behavior.

How NVC helps in classroom

Classroom is the place where the academic as well as personal growth of the students takes place. Teacher can implement NVC as follows:

- Observe the behavior as well as IQ of the student (**observation**). Feel the situation (**Feeling**). Find the needs of students (**Need**). Use empathy, interpersonal communication skills and foster less judgmental perceptions and reactions (**Request/Response**).
- Teacher acts as facilitator which know the topics and area of discussion and students are encouraged to be self- directed in their learning journey. Guidance and feedback provided by teachers.
- Explore shared ideas like discipline specific current events are a great way to start a conversation and focus on the strengths of similarities and differences.
- NVC helps in framing positive interpersonal relationship with students which helps in making the classroom environment more cohesive to learning and teaching.
- A **Quality Learning Circle (QLC)** model can be made in which teachers share the experiences of NVC in a collegial and experimental way. By using this approach, sharing responsibility in direction and decision making, encourage empowerment of the teachers and helps in professional learning of the teachers.

**Words can be
WALL!
or
WINDOWS!**

4. **Improve communication skills between parents and children:**

One important aspect of NVC is compassionate communication between students and their parents. Children in young age face lots of problem in their daily life are at home or school or

somewhere else. Some parent also use negative forms of communication and violent ways while dealing with their children.

Problems/Challenges:

- (i) Some children become emotionally unstable.
- (ii) They become easy victim of child abuse, other crime against children.
- (iii) It is also a major reason in increase of suicidal tendencies and drop outs.
- (iv) Children stop listening or become more defensive or resentful.
- (v) Children stop sharing their problems with their parents.

5. Interpersonal relationship among staff members:

Many confrontations/conflicts arise between staff regarding work allocation, fulfilment of

Situation:

Consider a situation that we are short of one teacher of one of the subject suppose English. When we look rest of the staff, you find two teachers of other subjects have good knowledge of English. If we straight forward order them to teach English, they will refuse and avoid. But if we use NVC method we may find out what they observe, and feel about teaching English.

Steps & Responses:

- Call both the teachers.
- Observe their bond (**observation**)
- Appreciate their knowledge of English (**feeling**)
- Express the need of the situation for the betterment of students. Motivate them that we all have to work in a team to fulfill the needs and expectations of students and parents. Know about the needs of the teachers. (**needs**)
- Discuss the action plan to meet the goal by sharing the work load between them. Show empathy and appreciate for doing good work for the benefit of students. (**expected**)

Goals, behavior problems, late coming, and disciplinary problem. What the above conflicts have in common. They all stem from breakdown in communication. We all work with people who come from different background. We all have to work on as a team. NVC helps in reducing conflict developing more understanding, trust and build positive relationship.

6. Interpersonal relationship among parents and teachers

The frequent problem is that parents and teachers often focus on what to do before connecting and identifying the underlying needs. NVC leads to solutions which satisfy

everybody's needs. One important aspect of NVC in education is communication between teachers and parents.

Steps and responses:

- Student's behavior at home and school have to be observed for better understanding of students needs. Teachers and parents both want best for students. For better understanding teachers should start talking to parents about clearly defined facts about students that both can agree on (**observation**)
- Effective communication to convey their emotional state (**feelings**)

SCHOOL LEADER SHOULD DO

- Make your team feel confident in their abilities. Motivate all the team members and display emotional intelligence skills such as empathy and listening. Encourage your team to provide a cohesive environment with the students of their respective classes.
- Set an example for your team by time management, making and following a schedule and being as productive as possible.
- Give constructive feedback to improve team performance.
- Give value and respect to the team members. Accept ideas and plans for the progress of institution and students.
- Setting expectations and boundaries. Providing clear goals and directions and keeping staff in the loop are all part of creating and leading effective teams. Encourage the teachers to do so in their classes.
- Capable of making an enacting successful decisions when problem arise and finding problems of complex situations by analyzing problem, deep thinking and feelings, communicate with the team members and by counselling wherever possible.

- Identify the need of parents and teachers for the students (**need**)
- Use empathy to understand the underlying reasons for each other prospective and behaviors. They should try to be aware of the mutual needs and desires. Both co-create the strategies that will satisfy them.
- Compassionate communication between teachers and parents helps strong interpersonal relations between them which help them to identify to set the common goal and actions required from both the sides to achieve the goal (**Request/Response**)

7. Interpersonal relationship between School leader and Community members

For the successful functioning of schools especially of rural area, participation of community is of great importance. Community members who can participate in school works can be the members of SMC, gram panchayat, retired teachers, parents, school alumni and volunteers.

Steps and responses

- **Observation:** Observe the requirements for the benefit of school and students which can be sorted out by community participation.
- **Feelings:** Effective participation of local communities helps in solving many problems in the school, imparting quality education, all round growth of students and development of society.
- **Need:** Identify the needs of school and community.
- **Request/Response**
 - (a) School leader has to make a committee of trained and dedicated staff who can interact with community members and also maintain a record of well-placed alumni.
 - (b) School leader has to make good relations with community members by
 - (i) Organizing SMC meetings, Parent teacher meetings and meetings with community

Example: I have noticed you have not handed in your part of work assigned (**observation**). Since the deadline is next week, this makes me frustrated. It may be due to work load or not knowledge about the work (**feeling**). The work has to be completed in time (**Need**). Would you be willing to let me know if there is anything you need from me to help you to finish the task in time? (**Expected communication behavior**)

members. Treat them as important occasion.

(ii) Inviting community members in cultural and other events in the school.

(iii) Inviting them to deliver motivational lectures from successful people and school alumni's in the field of their domain knowledge and experience and tips for making successful carrier, ideal community behavior and responsible for community and country.

(c) Appreciate the community members for their effort made for the benefit of school and students.

8. Interpersonal relationship between school leader and higher authorities

Communication of school head with seniors i.e. education officers and other authorities are very important. He/she is mainly responsible to follow instructions from higher officers, implementation of these instructions, reporting school performance and also reporting problems faced at school level and communicating and convincing them wherever help is

required. Following problem may arise for school leader while dealing with higher authorities:

- (i) No clarity of communication reached from higher authorities due to avoidance.

Due to fear, conflict or confusion, people do not ask and clarify questions or express concerns and objections.

Steps to be followed:

- (i) Follow instructions carefully and judiciously. **(observation)**
- (ii) Active communication either in terms of school performance and other activities for respect. **(feeling)**
- (iii) During conversation listen very carefully and patiently. **(needs)**
- (iv) Always appreciate your superior for listening you well and thank them for all help provided. While speaking on your achievement always thank seniors for support and guidance provided by them. When anyone go to meet seniors for any problem always convey possible solutions also the help you want from them. **(Request/Response)**

Conclusion: Communication is one of the fundamental building blocks of life. If we want to live with respect and peace in society we need to learn to communicate effectively with the people surrounding us. Such behaviour makes leaders' personality influential and affective. When we communicate with others in such a way that irrational conflicts and misunderstandings arise then we end our conversation in disregard so the need of non-violent communication arises. As all the human being have capacity of compassionate and empathy. NVC helps us to connect with each other and ourselves which allows our natural compassion to flourish. It engenders a mutual desire to give from the heart by deep listening, thinking empathetically and giving respect to each other. By implementing NVC we can make the environment of our schools more cohesive.

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