Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
Tips & Tools

“We can make life miserable or wonderful for ourselves and others depending upon how we think and communicate.”
- Marshall Rosenberg, PhD, founder and director of educational services for the Center for Nonviolent Communication

Purpose:
The purpose of NVC is to care for everyone’s needs equally and to find peaceful ways of getting our needs met. It works on the obvious (but often difficult) idea that we’re more likely to get our needs met when we have mutual understanding and respect with those around us.

NVC Model:
NVC (also called Compassionate Communication) involves honest expression and empathetic listening. There are four areas of focus:

- **Observation** – the concrete actions we are *observing* that are affecting our well-being
- **Feelings** – how we are *feeling* in relation to what we are observing
- **Needs** – the *needs*, values, desires, wants, preferences that are creating our feelings
- **Request** – the concrete, positive, doable actions we *request* in order to enrich our lives.

Transforming Anger:
Anger is often times part of the equation when interacting with others, either our own or that of the other person. Transforming anger is a key to nonviolent communication success and can be achieved by following the following sequence of steps:

- **S**top – stop your anger from escalating. Sit down, take a deep breath, relax.
- **T**hink – think about what’s making you angry and how you’re going to react.
- **O**bjectify – focus on realistic expectations of based on past experience, rationalize.
- **P**lan – plan your response, including feelings and specific actions.

Empathetic Listening:
Empathetic listening can be difficult to put into practice. Robert Gonzales of the Living Compassion Organizations offers the follows tips:

- Don’t give advice or try to fix it by saying “I think you should…” or “If I were you…”
- Don’t correct the story by saying “But you were the one who…”
- Don’t tell your story by saying “That reminds me of the time…”
- Don’t one-up the other person by saying “That’s nothing, listen to this!”

Suggestions for putting NVC into practice:

- When asking someone to do something, check first to see if you are making a request or a demand.
- Instead of saying what you DON’T want someone to do, say what you DO want the person to do.
- Before agreeing or disagreeing with anyone’s opinions, try to tune in to what the person is feeling and needing.
- Instead of saying “no,” say what need of yours is preventing you from saying “yes.”
- If you are feeling upset, think about what need of yours is not being met and what could be done to meet it, instead of thinking about what’s wrong with others or yourself.
- Instead of praising someone who did something you like, express your gratitude by telling the person what need of yours that action met.

Helpful Resources:
Website: Center for Nonviolent Communication; [http://www.cnvc.org/](http://www.cnvc.org/)