

FOUR FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

OBSERVATIONS

Observations are what we see or hear that we identify as the stimulus to our reactions. Our aim is to describe what we are reacting to concretely, specifically, and neutrally. Avoid judgments, evaluations, interpretations, mind reading, and generalizations.

Example:

"I noticed you left dinner 30 minutes early last night."

NOT *"You were rude to me last night."* Or, *"You always leave dinner early."*

I noticed _____.

FEELINGS

Feelings represent our emotional experience and physical sensations associated with our needs that have been met or that remain unmet. Our aim is to identify, name, and connect with those feelings. Avoid thoughts disguised as feelings (I feel like.../I feel that...) and victim verbs (thoughts about what we think someone is doing to us, such as betrayed, abandoned, ignored, not taken seriously, etc.).

"I feel lonely."

NOT *"I feel like you don't love me."* Or, *"I feel not taken care of."*

"I feel / I am _____."

NEEDS

Needs refer to what is most alive in us: our core values and deepest human longings. Our aim is to understand, name, connect with, and express our needs. Avoid including a specific person, location, action, time, or object (PLATO); these are more likely to be strategies to get our needs met.

"I need love and connection."

NOT *"I need you to come to my birthday party next weekend."*

"I need / What is important to me is _____."

REQUESTS

We make requests to assess how likely we are to get cooperation for particular strategies we have in mind for meeting our needs. Our aim is to identify and express a specific action that we believe will serve this purpose, and then check with others involved about their willingness to participate. Avoid demands and negative requests.

"Would you tell me how you feel about this?" (connection request)

"Would you be willing to arrive 15 minutes early to our meeting?" (solution request)

NOT *"I would like you to always arrive on time."* (demand)

"Would you be willing to _____?"

VARIATIONS OF THE FOUR FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

SELF-EXPRESSION

When I see/hear...,
I feel...
Because I need...
So would you be willing to...?

EMPATHY (when other person is present)

Are you feeling...?
Because you need...?
(And would you like...?)

EMPATHY (when other person is NOT present)

They might be feeling...
Because they might need...

SELF-EMPATHY

What am I thinking about this situation?
What do I see/hear/remember/imagine?
How am I feeling?
What do I need at the moment?
What action I want to take to meet my need?

DEPERSONALIZING TEMPLATE: empathy + self-empathy

Think of a time you didn't get along with someone/took something personally.

What happened?

How did you feel?
What did you need?

How do you think they felt?
Seeing behavior as a strategy to get a need met, what do you think they needed?