



# Creating Connection to Resolve Conflicts

## NVC Chapter 11: Conflict Resolution and Mediation

To resolve conflicts using NVC, we need to train ourselves to hear people expressing needs regardless of how they do the expressing.

In Chapter 11, Marshall Rosenberg writes, "If you really want to be of assistance to others, the first thing to learn is to translate *any* message into an expression of a need." During today's session, we will use simple role-plays to practice these skills.

### Breakout 1: Practice Identifying Needs

- **Setup:** 8 minutes with 2 people per group.
- **Intention:** Listen for needs when they're hard to identify.
- **Instructions:**
  - Each person chooses a sentence to read to your partner. Read with feeling and notice what needs might be behind it. You can choose a sentence below or add your own.
  - Listener tries to imagine a situation in which you might be tempted to say something like that. What are you feeling? What needs are you trying to meet?
  - Listener offers needs guesses to the speaker until you identify a need. Bonus points if the speaker feels the curiosity and care of your desire to understand them.

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| 1. What's wrong with you?!                                 | 15. Do whatever you want. I don't care.                          |
| 2. You're so mean!   | 16. Will you please get off of your phone, already!              |
| 3. Who cares what I say, anyway?                           | 17. Did you even think about what you're saying?                 |
| 4. I've never heard anything so stupid in my life.         | 18. All you care about is how you look in front of your friends. |
| 5. You always get your way.                                | 19. We need to go to therapy.                                    |
| 6. Shut up!  | 20. I shouldn't be here. I don't even know why I came.           |
| 7. That's never going to work.                             | 21. Duh. Obviously.  |
| 8. All you care about is your _____.                       | 22. You're not thinking about this right.                        |
| 9. You didn't even call me. I was waiting for three hours. | 23. That's a stupid question                                     |
| 10. You always think you know everything, don't you!?      | 24. _____  |
| 11. Get in the car right now or I will spank you!          | 25. _____  |
| 12. I'm not going to answer that.                          | 26. _____  |
| 13. How could you say something like that?!                |  |
| 14. You got it all wrong.                                  |  |

**Group Harvest:** What did you notice about this experience? Did you like saying things with feelings or did you enjoy guessing? How did it feel to be either the speaker or the guesser?



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### Breakout 2: Role-play

- **Set-up:** 45 minutes. 3-4 people per group.
- **Intention:** Practice being around conflict and listening for needs--deep-dive.
- **Instructions:** Two people (Person A and Person B) will role-play a brief scenario. Remaining members of the group will act as mediators, writing down jackals as they listen to the conflict play out.

**Step 1:** Choose who will role-play and who will facilitate the mediation. Actors can pick which scenario to work with.

#### Married Couple Scenario:

Julie sat down on the toilet in the middle of the night and almost fell in because the toilet seat was up. She has been married to Rob for 40 years and she has asked him so many times to always put the seat down. She doesn't understand why he can't do this simple thing. As she gets older it's harder and harder to get up and down off of the toilet. She can't believe how rude and inconsiderate he is. Rob thinks that he always puts the seat down. He even started peeing sitting down so he wouldn't forget. He doesn't understand why Julie is screaming at him in the middle of the night. She always wants to blame him for something. He is tired of being the scapegoat when things are going wrong for her.

#### Parenting Scenario:

Rebecca and Aaron's son Ben has been diagnosed with ADD. Rebecca wants to follow the doctor's recommendation to have their son take medication (Ritalin) twice a day on school days. Aaron sees western medicine as toxic for the body. He thinks their son is fine and doesn't want his son on medication. Rebecca wants to follow the advice of the doctors she trusts. Aaron views Rebecca as rigid and narrow-minded. Rebecca views Aaron as out of touch and irresponsible.

#### Neighbor Scenario:

Doris's 15-year-old dog, Lolly often gets into her neighbor Mark's garbage. Three days ago when Mark came home on his lunch hour, he saw Lolly loose in the park nearby, and there was garbage all over his driveway and the street by his house. He was late getting back to work because he had to clean it up, and his boss docked his pay. Now he won't be able to take his kid to the show he promised her last week. Mark is pissed. He's sick of cleaning up after Lolly and thinks Doris should keep her dog penned up.

Doris is beside herself. Lolly went missing on garbage day and she is desperate to find her. Lolly is deaf. She needs medication for a kidney problem and is on a special diet. Last time Mark was so angry, Doris almost called the cops. Doris is afraid that Mark might have gotten rid of Lolly out of spite because he is so angry about the garbage situation.





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### Step 4. Behind the Scenes: Self-Reflection

Take 2 minutes to pause and reflect on anything that came up for you during the role-play about the people, the situation, or yourself in your role. (Examples might be: “This is fun! I love acting!” Or “This is hard. I’m so bad at ad-libbing!” or “I can’t write fast enough. I hate hearing people argue. These people are being childish. I can empathize with person A, but there’s no way I can relate to person B,” etc.)

#### Self-Reflection Jackal Statements

#### Needs Guesses:

### Step 5: Need Guesses-Solo

Individually, take five minutes to look over the jackal statements from any boxes you have filled out. For each jackal sentence, write down a needs guess. It’s ok to skip around. If you are a role-player, you can also write down needs guesses for yourself and the other player.

### Step 6: Needs Guesses-Small Group

Take the remaining time to:

- Compare notes.
- Find out which of your needs guesses resonate for the role-players.
- Go through any remaining jackal statements and try to name a need that resonates for each one.
- Notice how it feels when you (or your character’s) needs are guessed correctly.