

Handout: The Four Steps of Nonviolent Communication

Nonviolent communication (NVC) provides a simple framework for communicating with clarity and empathy. NVC consists of four steps that help partners ensure that conversations become opportunities for connection rather than conflict.

Component	Description
1. Observations	Focus on what actually happened—without assumptions or judgments. This prevents defensiveness.
	Instead of: “You never listen to me.”
	Try: “Earlier, when I was sharing about my day, I saw you were scrolling on your phone.”
2. Feelings	Express how the situation made you feel—without blaming the other person.
	Instead of: “You’re so annoying.”
	Try: “I felt a little hurt and overlooked when I didn’t hear a response after sharing something important.”
3. Needs	Identify the unmet need behind your feelings—what is missing in this interaction?
	Instead of: “You’re always on your phone.”
	Try: “I want to feel like we’re connecting when we spend time together.”
4. Requests	Make a clear, respectful request to address your needs—without demands.
	Instead of: “Get off your phone.”
	Try: “Could we set aside some time each evening to catch up, just the two of us, without any screens?”