



THE COLLABORATIVE TREE or FLOWER

INDIVIDUAL - COMMUNITY. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION.

The collaborative flower or tree is a method for attentive and precise listening. The person learns to differentiate from where s-he communicates: from facts? From thoughts and beliefs? From his/her own needs? Is it a request, or a demand, that we are throwing, or placing, into the relationship? This information helps to understand part of the dynamics of tensions and conflicts in which people and groups often get entangled.

Walking and sharing with the group the paths of their own tensions facilitates a more compassionate understanding of conflicts, isolation, and misunderstandings.

NVC (NonViolent Communication) provides a clear framework, which each participant can embrace for the development of his/her communication path.



Aims and Objectives



Time

An approach to interpersonal and group conflicts from honest and compassionate communication. (NVC).
To understand the experience of other people's during moments of tensions and conflicts, honouring diversity.
To improve the integration of the NVC stages, so that to improve communication skills.

Around 1,5 to 2 hours depending on the amount of participants and what topics the group wants to explore.



Materials Preparation



Target audience

Cards written with different colors on which the NVC steps are written in big letters:

Groups and trainers

Stage 1: OBSERVE

Stage 2: THINK

Stage 3: FEEL

Stage 4: NEED

Stage 5: REQUEST -> Strategy

Place them on the ground in several layers, creating either a flower with several layers (5 or more) or two lines creating a tree trunk (see photos).

Bells or similar instruments to make sounds.



Number of Participants

Minimum 6 – maximum 20.



Duration	Activity
15'	INTRODUCTION
60'	DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXERCISE
20'	CLOSING ROUND

INTRODUCTION

FRAMING- 15 MINUTES

Presentation of the facilitation and the people. The facilitation introduces the communication issue in the clips frame, as part of the Community and Individual layer. The facilitation gives a brief presentation of the NVC steps, bringing concrete examples; frames the situation to deal with: tension, problem, conflict; describes how the process will be, how long it will take, defines the role of facilitation during the exercise

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INSTRUCTION 1: DEVELOPMENT

Once the facilitator invites to start the exercise, a person comes to the centre and begins to "walk" through the petal (flower) or the trunk (tree). The participants enter the tree or the flower one by one, or two by two,

The group in a circle pays attention to what happens in the center, in silence. When other people want to go to the centre, they ask the facilitator, who might ask them to wait a moment, or may welcome them.

Once there is more than one participant, each one talks about what she/he observes, thinks, feels or needs, leaving time and paying attention to the other participants who are in the centre.

INSTRUCTION 2: THE PROCESS

The facilitator frames the present situation as objectively as possible. Every extra word that is used in a conflict can increase tension and reactions. It is important to clearly describe the stages of NVC:

- Stage 1: OBSERVE: This is what the person sees, or hears, it is the level of facts.
- Stage 2: THINK: what I think, what I believe ... judging and blaming.
- Stage 3: FEEL: the feelings that have been activated by the facts, or by the interpretation of the situation.
- Stage 4: NEED: what needs are behind the feelings?
- Stage 5: REQUEST: what requests can I make for the situation to improve, for it to be clarified, or not repeated: this can be specified in the process, as a final step.



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INSTRUCTION 3: PARTICIPANTS

Each participant shares his / her experience following the stages of non-violent communication: when I observe ..., I think or believe and I feel what I need is

It may happen that two participants want to dialogue or argue with each other, and are reacting to what one or the other says. In this case, the facilitation asks to go very slowly: it slows down the way in which participants are expressing themselves; he/she asks participants to go slow. The facilitator accompanies the participants by walking first next to one and then next to the other, helping them to refine the message they want to communicate and helping them to identify from which step they are communicating it. When such a situation occurs, no more participants are allowed to join; where the facilitation supports mutual requests, reformulating if necessary. It is not necessary to reach an agreement in this space, sometimes it happens and it is welcome, but it is not the objective of the dynamics.

TIP FOR PARTICIPANTS:

Participants who decide to go to the center start at stage one, talking about what they have observed, moving through the different steps trying to identify where she/he is, accepting the proposals of the facilitation when she/he rings the bell and is invited to move to another step. And they share their experience in the situation of tension or conflict, identifying the different aspects, deepening internally while sharing with the rest of the group. One person starts, others can join as long as there are free lines, several people can participate at the same time (depend on facilitator); each one communicates from where they are in turn, respecting the voice of whoever is speaking.

TIP FOR FACILITATORS:

The person who facilitates accompanies (physically) those who come out to the center, paying attention to how the person is communicating, from the space in which they are located. If the facilitator identifies that one of the participants is speaking from a different space, she/he rings a bell and accompanies the person to place herself in the corresponding space.

Example: "I feel that this situation is unacceptable" from the "feel" space, the facilitation rings the bell and goes to the "I think" space, unacceptable is a judgment, not a feeling. Thus each time (identifying these imbalances) being able to go and return through the different spaces as many times as necessary. .

INSTRUCTION 4: CLOSING ROUND - 20 MINUTES

The process is closed when no one wants to go to the center, also taking into account the time previously assigned.

The time is opened to share how the experience has been lived, taking care that those people who have not participated in the flower, or the tree, can share their experience.

TIP FOR FACILITATORS:

Much attention, especially in the closing round, to re-entering the content of the conflict, is something that occurs frequently: people who do not go to the center (but not only), and when there is no time, they return to bring the conflict to the center. Reformulate quickly and frame appreciating the process that has been lived.

The closing round is to share the experience, not to return to the elements of conflict. If you have this very clearly in mind, you can intervene in the situation.

TIP: HOW TO CHOOSE TREE OR FLOWER

If the situation in the conflict is very polarized, choose the tree, so that both positions can be heard. The polarities may arise from the beginning, or two voices from the same position may go through the tree at the beginning. Let this flow and trust the process. If the present conflict has different (more than two) parts and voices, choose the flower. This will allow you to hear the diversity of what is in the group. Limit the number of participants who can walk through the flower petals if the conflict situation is very active, depending on your experience as a facilitator, to be able to accompany several participants.

This method is developed by some teams that work with Marshall B. Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication, also from the field of Gestalt and Process Work



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