

Non-violent communication

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Introduction

This factsheet introduces Non-violent Communication (NVC), which fosters empathy, clarity, and mutual respect. By focusing on observations, feelings, needs, and requests, NVC helps create a more authentic, inclusive, and collaborative workplace.

This factsheet sets the ground to explore practical strategies and approaches to enhance understanding and connection in diverse work environments, stressing the importance of how statements and situations are perceived.

Relevance of non-violent communication in the context of HRW



In hybrid and remote work settings, clear and empathetic communication is essential to foster inclusion and collaboration. Without in-person cues, messages can be misinterpreted, leading to misunderstandings, frustration, or exclusion. Non-violent Communication (NVC) provides a structured approach to expressing needs and listening actively, reducing conflict and strengthening connections.

NVC helps team members communicate with clarity and respect, even in written or asynchronous interactions. It promotes psychological safety, ensuring everyone feels heard and valued, regardless of location.

Using NVC in remote work settings supports inclusive decision-making, reduces miscommunication in diverse teams, and enhances cooperation across cultures and time zones. It enables employees to navigate sensitive topics constructively, fostering trust and a sense of belonging. By integrating NVC principles, organisations can create more inclusive, empathetic, and effective hybrid workplaces.

Moreover, adopting NVC can improve leadership and team dynamics by encouraging a culture of open dialogue and constructive feedback. Leaders who practice NVC can better support their teams, address concerns proactively, and create a work environment where individuals feel empowered and safe to express themselves authentically. This ultimately leads to higher engagement, stronger collaboration, and a more resilient remote workforce.



Implementing NVC in hybrid and remote work settings

Here are key strategies to create a more inclusive work environment through the strategic use of Non-violent Communication:

☑ Use Inclusive language

Be mindful of language that may unintentionally exclude or stereotype. For example, instead of saying, "That idea is crazy", try "That idea is unexpected; let's explore it further".

☑ Practice active listening

When colleagues express concerns about bias or exclusion, listen without interrupting or dismissing their experience. Acknowledge what you hear and ask them to explain themselves further or to suggest possible solutions: "I hear that you felt overlooked in the meeting. What would help you feel more included?"

☑ Encourage equal participation

Remote settings can amplify power imbalances. Rotate speaking opportunities in meetings, use structured turn-taking, or leverage chat functions to ensure all voices are heard.

☑ Clarify intentions and impact

Misinterpretations can easily arise in text-based communication. If feedback seems harsh, ask for clarification rather than assuming negative intent: "Could you help me understand what you meant by that comment?" Likewise, before sending a message, reread it to ensure it conveys respect and inclusion.

☑ Foster a culture of empathy, valuing feelings and emotions

Encourage team members to express needs and emotions without fear of judgment. For instance, use the "I feel" statement and invite others to express their feelings. Focus on how messages are received: instead of saying, "You never respond on time," try, "When I don't receive a response, I feel uncertain about the next steps. Can we set clearer expectations?"

☑ Address microaggressions proactively

If someone uses exclusionary language, respond with curiosity rather than accusation: "I noticed that comment might be interpreted as exclusionary. Can we reframe it to be more inclusive?"

Conclusion

Non-violent Communication (NVC) offers a structured approach to expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions, and listening with empathy, helping to bridge gaps caused by physical distance. By fostering constructive dialogue and mutual understanding, NVC supports a work culture where collaboration thrives, differences are valued, and everyone feels respected, heard, and safe to express themselves authentically.



References

- The Secret to Non-Violent Communication in the Workplace:
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- Nonviolent Communication (NVC) in the Workplace
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