

How to Find or Create Local NVC Support

Learning and integrating the NVC process into your daily life can be challenging. For many, the biggest learning challenge is that existing social structures, organizations, and habits are firmly grounded, though most do not serve life. In fact, learning NVC is often equated with learning a whole new language. A local learning community (whether made of one person or 100), can provide essential mutual support, allowing you to feel safe to make mistakes, celebrate your growth, and learn by modeling NVC to others in your community.

NVC communities, supporters and trainers are located throughout the world. Creating a local community is often as simple as finding others in your area who share your values around NVC. However, a community can also be developed to host local practice groups and workshops, or to work toward integrating NVC into specific areas. This document provides tips and general guidance of where to start to find or develop a local NVC community.

TIP #1: DETERMINE IF AN NVC COMMUNITY ALREADY EXISTS IN YOUR AREA.

- Visit the CNVC website (at www.cnvc.org) to find a list of CNVC Certified Trainers, Local Supporters (individuals who are working to learn and share NVC), and NVC Teams/Organizations listed by country and/or state.
- If a local organization or team exists in your area, visit their website, or contact them by email or phone to find out what support exists. Many teams coordinate local practice groups, which are a great way to learn NVC over time in a safe, consistent environment. Some teams also provide additional support to mentor you in hosting your practice group. If your local team has a core volunteer team or a board of directors, consider getting involved. Learning NVC within an NVC organization can provide exceptional modeling and practice support — use NVC while making a contribution!
- Contact trainers in your area to identify upcoming trainings and consider attending. Attending trainings is a great way to network, meet other people at the same learning level as you, and start a conversation about supporting each other. Workshops are also a great way to learn about area practice groups that are in operation. Many trainers themselves also offer practice groups.

If a local community is not established in a way that meets your needs for learning and practice . . .

TIP #2: CLARIFY YOUR NEEDS. BRAINSTORM STRATEGIES TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

- Brainstorm and clarify your hopes/needs for support. Brainstorm what type(s) of NVC activities and/or community structure would meet your needs.
- Identify people in your area that have been exposed to or are familiar with NVC. Invite them to engage in a conversation (in person, by email, etc) about how you could meet mutual needs for support and learning together. Work together to brainstorm specific strategies for learning, practice and creating a local supportive community.

TIP #3: CONSIDER THESE IDEAS FOR GETTING OR CREATING SUPPORT:

- **PRACTICE PARTNER:** Sometimes all you need is one person who will provide ongoing support to your learning needs. Find one person who can be your practice partner. This could be your spouse, a friend, a colleague or a trainer you trust. Establish a mistake-free zone with your partner, to ensure that all interactions are an opportunity for practice.
- **DISCUSSION COURSE/GROUP:** One great way to introduce more people to NVC in a non-threatening way, is to host a discussion course. Invite 4-10 people to join you to read through Marshall's introductory book chapter by chapter, and to use Lucy Leu's Companion Workbook to lead discussions

and activities during your meeting time. Since the Companion Workbook partners Marshall's book chapter by chapter, you can use one meeting/class per chapter, or focus only on those chapters you enjoyed most. The group can meet once per week, once every other week, or whatever works with your schedules.

- **VIDEO SHARING:** Similar to a discussion course, a video sharing is a simple, non-threatening method for introducing others to the concepts of Nonviolent Communication. If available, borrow a video from a nearby team or trainer. Invite others to watch the video with you and start a conversation about what the ideas stirred in you. Sometimes viewing the video is a great way to start a learning community — many walk away motivated to learn more and will share your need for a consistent, supportive learning community.
- **PRACTICE GROUP:** Practices groups are also a wonderful way to create a small learning community. Practice groups vary in format and size, but overall provide a structure and the safety of a consistent group of people. For more ideas and support on starting a practice group see [Tips on Starting a Practice Group](#), included in the Team Development Toolkit.
- **EMPATHY CIRCLE:** Consider creating an informal empathy circle — this could be a handful of people who are learning or practicing NVC who would be willing to provide you empathy when requested. Empathy circles offer a great outlet for you to receive needed empathy (to support you in entering a conversation with more connection to the NVC process). In addition, it allows you to practice providing empathy to others in your circle.

TIP #4: INTRODUCE PEOPLE YOU KNOW TO NVC.

There are many ways to introduce people to NVC in a way that might inspire them to learn and practice with you. Below are some suggestions, the effectiveness of which depends on the relationship you have with that person and needs they have at the time you approach them.

- **PRACTICE WITH PEOPLE YOU KNOW:** Tell them you are eager to practice a different way of communicating, and ask for their support and patience while you somewhat awkwardly try to listen empathetically and express yourself honestly. Get feedback afterwards from them (another chance to practice empathy!). Your intention towards connection alone might inspire them to ask you more about it.
- **DISTRIBUTE LEARNING MATERIALS TO OTHERS:** Share with colleagues, friends and others you know that you are excited by the difference learning NVC has made in your life. Ask if they would be interested in learning more. Considering their needs for learning, and the time they have to commit, distribute learning materials such as an article written about NVC, an NVC book or booklet, or loan them a video. **FOR MORE IDEAS** or tips on sharing NVC with like-minded organizations, visit the [SHARE NVC](#) page of the Puddledancer Press website, and click on [BOOK/BOOKLET GIVEAWAY PROGRAM](#).
- **INVITE OTHERS TO JOIN A DISCUSSION GROUP OR VIDEO SHARING:** A discussion course doesn't have to exclude people who've never heard of NVC. Consider using your learning group to introduce others to NVC for the first time. Ask people if they'd be interested in learning more, and suggest some formats (including previous bullets).
- **ARRANGE A SMALL NVC INTRODUCTION WORKSHOP:** Contact a certified CNVC trainer and/or local NVC supporter that is close in proximity to your area. Negotiate/arrange for them to come do an introductory workshop in your area or identify what area workshops are coming up. Consider asking others you know to attend the workshop with you. For more information on promoting a workshop, see the Promotion Toolkit.

TIP #5: INTRODUCE PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW TO NVC.

- Identify organizations and groups that have goals most directly related to the principles of NVC. Some examples are organizations that focus on issues of peace and justice, violence prevention, conflict resolution/mediation, social services (homeless shelters, drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs, etc.), religious institutions, and education programs that focus on meeting student s needs.
- Identify a contact person in the organization(s) that supports employee professional development / continuing education, team-building, or staff morale (NOTE: this may be an unofficial task that an individual does rather than part of someone s job or volunteer description).
- Share your values around NVC, and brainstorm with that person ways to invite people from their community to get involved in learning and practicing.
- FOR MORE IDEAS or tips on sharing NVC with like-minded organizations, visit the SHARE NVC page of the Puddledancer Press website, and click on BOOK/BOOKLET GIVEAWAY PROGRAM.

TIP #6: FORM A LOCAL NVC TEAM OR COMMUNITY.

- If the steps above do not meet your need for community or connection to the extent that you enjoy, you may consider taking steps to form a local NVC team or formal community. A wealth of additional resources are available in the Team Development Toolkit to help you facilitate this process. Consider reviewing all resources first before diving in.
- A formalized team has its advantages and challenges. Obvious advantages are the availability of ongoing structures and support that help you and others respond to changing needs for learning and connection from others in your community. Once established, a formal team structure supports equitable distribution of workload, contributing greatly to a life-serving volunteer experience for those involved.

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF LOCAL NVC TEAMS:

- **EVENT COORDINATION TEAM:** Some teams form primarily to support hosting/coordinating an NVC workshop, event or conference. An Event Coordination Team functions best when established well in advance of your workshop dates to allow ample time for connection, bonding, and planning. For more information about forming an Event Coordination Team, see *Developing a Life-Serving Event Coordination Team* in the Event Coordination Toolkit OR the Team Development Toolkit.
- **PROMOTION TEAM:** Some teams form primarily to promote NVC locally — using a variety of grassroots and media relations strategies. A Promotion Team often works as part of a larger team. For instance, Promotion Team members may work in collaboration with the Event Planning Team to promote attendance to the event(s). For more information about forming a Promotion Team, see *Forming a Life-Serving Promotion Team* in the Promotion Toolkit OR the Team Development Toolkit.
- **ONGOING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM OR ORGANIZATION:** Some teams provide a wide array of support and resources to the community. Typically these teams are more formalized and structured in a way that clearly divides workload into specific roles and sets of responsibilities. The function of such a team is only limited to your creativity. For instance, at any given time your team could focus on coordinating local practice group information, provide one workshop per year, or provide a variety of resources including a lending library, practice group mentoring, ongoing workshops, leadership/coordination on NVC teams/task forces, or others. Use the other resources in the Team Development Toolkit to establish your mission, goals/objectives, roles/responsibilities, etc.