

Negotiating with resistance (the “no” message in the spirit of NVC)

Workshop objectives

After completing the workshop, the participant:
recognizes what, in NVC, constitutes a “no” message, criticism, and aggression;

- knows the negotiation framework in the spirit of NVC and its key elements;
- can apply active listening with elements of empathy;
- understands the importance of recognizing and naming needs in the process of listening and self-expression;
- knows the self-expression model in the spirit of NVC and can apply it in practice;
- has experienced the process of negotiating with refusal in practice, including both listening and speaking;
- gains greater clarity in communicating oneself and one’s needs in difficult situations.

Target group

The workshop is intended for:
adults who are working or studying and want to improve their communication skills;

- people who already have initial experience with NVC (know the basic assumptions);
- people working in teams, collaboration-based environments, or in situations burdened by crises and high stress; including people affected by the consequences of war or migration, for whom NVC tools can be particularly supportive in building a sense of safety and empathetic communication;
- everyone who wants to better understand themselves and others and build relationships based on empathy, clarity, and authenticity.

The workshop does not require prior preparation – curiosity and willingness to experience are sufficient.



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Connection with NVC and well-being

The workshop is fully based on the approach of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) by Marshall Rosenberg.

Participants learn to recognize emotions and needs, formulate requests, and conduct dialogues in a way that:
lowers stress levels,

- reduces tension in relationships,
- strengthens a sense of emotional safety,
- supports psychological well-being, as it teaches empathy (toward oneself and others) and emotional regulation through conscious self-connection.

Everything is grounded in empathy – toward oneself and toward others.

Description of exercises / activities

Module I: Introduction (Intro)

Reminder of NVC assumptions – what criticism, aggression, and the “no” message are in the NVC perspective.

Negotiations in the spirit of NVC – presentation of the negotiation framework and discussion of individual elements of the process:

1. Resistance/refusal,
2. Active listening,
3. Empathy (NVC),
4. Self-expression,
5. Brainstorming,
6. Reaching agreements (Slide 1).



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Module II: Active listening and empathy in listening

Discussion of the principles of active listening – presentation of the active listening framework (Slide 2).

Exercise: “Active listening” – participants form groups of three (roles: speaker, listener, observer). The speaker talks about a situation in which they heard a refusal (“no”). The listener’s task is active listening and reflecting the statement according to the framework (for 7 minutes), and then asking about the speaker’s needs (3 minutes). The observer takes notes of observations. After approximately 10 minutes of conversation, there is a discussion (feedback – 5 minutes) and a change of roles. The exercise continues so that three rounds take place – each participant performs each role.

Discussion of the exercise – group discussion, sharing experiences from the exercise.

Module III: Self-expression – 11:50–13:45

1. Bridge between Part I and II: summary of the first part of the workshop and introduction to the second part (introducing the topic of self-expression) – 5 min.

2. Diagnostic exercise: “Self-expression” – participants continue working in the same groups of three, analogously to the previous exercise. The speaker describes a situation in which they wanted to express themselves (communicate their expectations) and formulates:

- what they want to achieve,
- what action they expect from the other person,
- what needs underlie the above (i.e., behind their request/proposal).

Time for the speaker’s statement: 7 minutes, followed by 3 minutes for discussion in the group of three after each round.

The exercise aims to show how difficult clear self-expression can be and how important proper preparation for this stage of negotiation is.

3. Discussion of the exercise – discussion in the full group (sharing observations from the exercise) – 10 min.



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4. Discussion of the self-expression process in NVC and presentation of a framework that facilitates formulating a message – (Slide 3) – 5 min.

5. Check exercise: participants, in the same groups of three, prepare individually for a statement according to the presented self-expression framework. Preparation time: 10 min, then each person expresses themselves on a chosen topic (within the group of three) – 5 min per person.

6. Discussion of the exercise – discussion in the full group, conclusions – 15 min.

Summary – closing the workshop, final questions and reflections – 5 min.

Invitation to further practice

- Over the next week, the participant chooses one real-life situation in which they will apply the NVC self-expression model.
- Every day for a few minutes, they practice:
 - recognizing their feelings,
 - naming needs,
 - formulating requests toward themselves and others.
 - Invitation to keep a short “3 minutes of NVC” journal – what I noticed in my reactions, what was difficult, what worked.
 - Recommendation to have a conversation with one close person using active listening.

