

# RESTORATIVE PRACTICES RESOURCE

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The purpose of this resource is to support the transformation of interpersonal and systemic tension and conflict in our community during the 2023-24 Immersion in Nonviolent Communication.

**We seek to create a framework that supports these qualities:** Equity, trust, inclusion of all, brave space, dignity, respect, connection, understanding, empathy, good will, flexibility, care, honesty, vulnerability, effectiveness, community restoration, healing, and clarity of process.

In this multicultural community, each of us brings wisdom and skills to conflict transformation that arise from our different experiences and traditions. We aim to honor the unique set of identities and world lens each person brings. By tending to conflicts, we believe we have an opportunity in this community to understand everyone's life experiences and be enriched by what we learn.

## **Multicultural awareness and practices to create inclusive space:**

- We acknowledge that each person is a complex, dynamic, multilayered human being with unique perspectives and experiences that matter.
- We acknowledge that we all are born into systems that impact our individual and group experiences, and that the ways we intersect individually with systemic patterns influences our experiences. Points of intersection include race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, body ability, social class, language, culture, ethnicity, geography, religion and education.
- We hope that you will be curious about life experiences different from your own. When faced with new perspectives we invite you to:
  - listen with curiosity and respect, welcoming cultural norms different from your own.
  - suspend judgment and see the world through a lens different than your own.
  - if you have questions about race, equity, gender, systemic issues or life experiences different than your own, please ask designated assistants or community members rather than a person who holds the identity you are curious about (unless you have a prior agreement welcoming such questions). Understand that many find it exhausting to be asked questions about their culture from those outside of their culture and that receiving such questions may impact their sense of inclusion.

## **Considerations when working through conflict via digital communication:**

Sometimes using text messages, email, or social media platforms for actively working through conflict may exacerbate or even distract from the original tension or conflict. The lack of non-verbal cues can be limiting to establishing connection and the immediacy of digital communication may discourage pauses for self-connection before responding. *With these challenges in mind, we ask that you consider the following:*

- If all parties are open to it, schedule conversations live instead of communicating digitally.
- If you choose to communicate digitally, consider waiting 24 hours before responding to allow yourself time to pause and self-connect.
- Consider asking for support from someone else in between exchanges.

### **Restorative practices options during and after conflict:**

The following is a document of practices that can be selected when someone is experiencing interpersonal and or systemic tension or conflict. We affectionately refer to it as a “menu.” The order of these practices (depending on the situation) is from least to most human resources required.

Out of consideration for managing limited human resources we request that you try the lower resource-intensive options first. For example, first try self-empathy. If you’re not able to settle from that, you may choose to name impact in the moment or ask for someone else to support you with an empathic presence. If after utilizing both of those practices the tension is still alive for you, you may choose to move on to the next practice, and so on. With that said, we understand that given the nature of the tension or conflict, someone may be aware of our request and still consciously choose to start with a higher resource practice.

**Self-Empathy:** A person experiencing tension or conflict may practice self-connection as a method of transforming pain they are experiencing (see below for a worksheet on self-empathy).

**Name impact in the moment:** Ask for a pause to name impact in the moment it is experienced and to determine strategies to tend to it then or later.

**Empathic Presence:** A person may invite an empathy buddy, assistant, or any other member of the community to offer them empathic presence for the purpose of discovering what’s important to them, in a space removed from the larger group.

**1-on-1 Conversation:** If both people are willing and confident in their ability to resolve the conflict with each other directly, they may do so in a space removed from the larger group.

**Supported 1-on-1 Conversation:** This is the same as a 1-on-1 Conversation, but in the presence of a third person. This third person contributes their presence as needed to support reconciliation, from silent witnessing to active NVC mediation. Either of the two persons involved, or a third person, may invite such a conversation. Participation is voluntary.

**Group Process:** When a person experiencing or impacted by a conflict sees it as necessary for multiple members of the community to be present to address the conflict, they may initiate a group process, such as a Restorative Circle, a talking circle, or a facilitated group dialogue. Participation in such a process is voluntary for all involved.

**Restorative Circle:** One group process option is a Restorative Circle, involving facilitated Pre-Circles, Circle, and Post-Circle. Participation is voluntary.

**Emergent Requests:** Someone experiencing pain/disconnect may also simply notify the group of their needs and make an in-the-moment request for any specific form of support.