



## Framework for Tough Conversations

### CP3 Toolkit: Building and Strengthening the Care Team

The Nonviolent Communication Model (also called Compassionate or Collaborative Communication) is a 4-step framework for talking through a difficult situation. This framework was presented by Catalyz at a July 21, 2016 learning session. Download the [complete handouts](#).

#### **Background on the Nonviolent Communication Model:**

It's a communication process developed by Marshall Rosenberg (psychologist) in the 1960s, which focuses on self-empathy, empathy, and honest self-expression. The Observation-Feeling-Need-Request script is one of the best techniques in giving critical feedback. Normally people have a tendency to use "you-blaming" statements like, "You're always late to our meetings." In contrast to these statements, we need to take responsibility to express our feelings and let the person to whom we are giving feedback know the effect of her/his behavior on us.

| Step         | Definition   | Things to Try  |
|--------------|--|--|
| Observations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the behavior you observed factually.</li> <li>Use statistical information/Data</li> <li>Share the quantity, frequency and duration of observed behavior</li> <li>Avoid words like "always" "never" and "whenever"</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be specific</li> <li>Don't generalize or characterize</li> <li>Pause after you share the observations to see if they agree</li> <li>Observations can sometimes be the origin of the conflict</li> </ul> |
| Feelings     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge your reactions to what happened, and its impact on you</li> <li>Express your feelings, ideas, and reactions</li> <li>Be clear, sincere and concise</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feelings are typically adjectives such as frustrated, ignored, overwhelmed.</li> <li>These feeling are about the behavior, not how you feel about the person</li> </ul>                                 |
| Needs        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect your feelings with what you need. This increases chances of your needs being met.</li> <li>Instead of using the expression: "I feel__ because you.." Try: "I feel__ because I need__"</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This action is preventing some need from happening for you</li> <li>It's the person's behavior, not their personality which you are requesting modifications to</li> </ul>                              |



| Step     | Definition  | Things to Try  |
|----------|---|--|
| Requests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a request</li> <li>• Be clear, positive and give concrete actions to let him/her know what you really want</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider what you can do! It can feel more supporting to collaborate on the problem</li> <li>• Restate your commitment to him/her. You want them to be successful, which is why you brought this up.</li> </ul> |

**Examples:**

| Poor Version   | Better Version   |
|--|--|
| I feel scared when you raise your voice.   | When you raise your voice [Observation], I feel scared [Feeling] because I'm telling myself someone might get hurt here, and I need to know that we're all safe [Need]. Would you mind not raising your voice when you speak with me? [Request]    |
| You never get the data to me on time. You make me so angry I could scream. Can't you get the numbers to me on time for once? | When you turn in the staff absentee reports after noon on Monday [Observation], I feel frustrated and rushed [Feeling] because I didn't want Personnel to complain again [Need]. Would you mind next time to get the data to me by noon? [Request] |

**Sample Script**

When \_\_\_\_\_ happens, I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because I need \_\_\_\_\_ to happen. How might we \_\_\_\_\_?