

EMPATHY MATTERS

Embodying Nonviolent Communication

Training course
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WHY DOES EMPATHY MATTER ?

We are all unique. Each of us is a unique and complex human being that is being transformed by each experience. Our thoughts, emotions, sensations and memory create constantly new perceptions of reality and new points of you. Even when we say we never change we do change. That's why it's so difficult to understand the other person. because we constantly improvise

with what we know and what we learn. Each point of contact is a new door for thousands of directions. We only need to stop and embrace the unknown. For that we need to learn to listen. Ourselves and others. To embrace the unknown we need to acknowledge that we do not know and let curiosity enter the play. And for that we need empathy.

Empathy is all about being present. Being present in the moment allows us to welcome the unexpected and to hear the story that is being told. That's how empathy is born - by wanting to hear the story instead of making our own. By stepping into a state of curiosity and accompanying someone in their process of making a meaning out of their experience. Being present with our ears and heart open.

HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF **WORLD BASED ON EMPATHY, HONESTY** OR **DIALOGUE**?

If yes, you share this dream with doctor **Marshall Rosenberg** who created **Nonviolent Communication**. As a little boy, he was trying to figure out why some people choose violence and others not and what can be done to make his dream come true.

He studied psychology and, inspired by his teacher, Carl Rogers, decided to work on an approach towards relations and communication that is based on empathy and honesty. This approach, later on called **Nonviolent Communication (NVC)**, puts in the centre our needs as the source of our actions, including what we say to others. He taught how we can communicate our needs to help others to see them and to take them under consideration. He taught NVC at schools, in families, in companies, in NGO's, in places where people were looking for dialogue and understanding. In 1985 he established the Centre for Nonviolent Communication which till today promotes knowledge about NVC, certifies people who want to share it in the world.

The community of people eager to learn and to share NVC is growing in the world more and more together with hope for the world in which we could collaborate effectively through empathic connection with ourselves and with others.

PRACTICING EMPATHY THROUGH CONTACT IMPROVISATION

A practice of contact improvisation in which both body and mind remain without expectations, without planning or projection. There is no predictability and no established movement patterns. The body is a tool for searching and discovering the possibilities that flow from a constantly changing point of contact with a partner. The constant play with the laws of gravity, the forces of momentum and interaction make this technique and the resulting dance have a varied character (gentle, gentle, wild, acrobatic), but always authentic, resulting from natural movement. It is a free interpretation of the **"here and now"** movement of presence. The characteristic features of this dance are: movement developing from within, free improvisation occurs, movement is natural.

This type of dance resembles a kind of **"conversation"** between the people who perform it, the only difference is that we use gestures instead of words. In such an arrangement, the dancer can be **both "talking" and "listening"** It is about communicating your ideas and movements to your partner, which he can ignore while remaining passive, or pick up and develop. Sometimes partners "talk" - they move at the same time, initiating and reacting to movement at the same time. It is a difficult art that requires a lot of concentration and awareness of your own body, but also trust in yourself and your partner.

The precursors of CI in the **1970s**, **Steve Paxton** or **Nancy Stark Smith**, never patented this technique and did not introduce a unified teaching scheme and alphabet of movement, assuming that this type of communication is unique and adapted to the individual needs of the people dancing at a given moment. It is also a new type and model of non-hierarchical teaching with the same importance and equality of people who are just starting to dance as those who have been practicing CI for many years. It also involves an element of constant exchange between the dancers - giving and taking at the same time and looking for balance and harmony in communication through movement, the visual effect of which is a fluid dance with flow. The teachers are experienced dancers, CI practitioners, but also practitioners for themselves, as well as new dance partners each time, but most of all our bodies that react and respond quickly in movement. The trick is to learn to listen to yourself, respect your own limits, but also to allow yourself to do something new with curiosity and openness, and from this it will be natural to listen to others in the NVC trend in motion and through the body.

CONTACT

If you would like to learn more about NVC, you can contact Paulina Orbitowska-Fernandez, certified trainer of NVC, by her e-mail paulina@orbitowska.pl or by visiting web page www.cnvc.org or www.empathiceurope.com where you can find of charge resources.

If you would like to learn more about Contact Improvisation, you can contact Paulina Świącańska, paulina.swiecanska@perform.org.pl or by visiting web page www.perform.org.pl or www.polandcontactfesyoval.com

If you want to organise a project with us please contact us erasmus@perform.org.pl



EMPATHY MATTERS



**I am unique
I am enough
I am resourceful
I am colourful
I bring joy and I'm ready to receive love**

**The world cares about me
I am a blessing to this world**

**I'm the bridge for the souls
I am the light reflecting the universe
I'm bringing the light to humanity
I am the light**

**I am inspired and creative
and I have the resources
to resolve every problem
in my life**

**I am health, I am love
I am electricity
I am abundance
I am enlightenment
I am a hero**

**I am and
that's
enough**



“Empathy is the key to creating a better world.”

WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS LEARNT DURING THE COURSE?

“Empathy is a way to relate to other people and myself, focusing on the present, the emotions, trying to communicate in the best way to really be there for the person and not through our own experience. Without Empathy it’s Impossible to properly connect, accepting our differences and cherishing them, and solving conflicts in a way that really makes everybody move on.”

“All actions attempt to meet needs and at the same time, all humans have the same universal needs and all of them are equally important.”

“Empathy can also mean being silent and connecting through the body with another person. Sometimes empathy can be experienced better in movement rather than words. “

“Behind even the meanest words/ the most aggressive communication there is a subtle message of unmet needs.”

“Empathy is first a practice about self, and then can be done in a relationship. It is a practice of honesty & acceptance.”

“The main lesson I learned during the project is that empathy is a muscle that you can train, which means that you can teach everyone to communicate in a healthy way with a little bit of effort and love put into it.”

SELF EMPATHY

IS THE CORE OF EMPATHY

SELF EMPATHY TOOL KIT

BEFRIENDING WITH YOUR BREATH

Best way to start to practice empathy is befriending with your breath. Find five minutes a day to stay with your breath. Just observe it and notice how it transforms when you give it attention. Breath is always trying to keep you alive, so allowing it to work should make you feel more grounded and calm.

DEVELOPING VOCABULARY OF SENSATIONS

In order to understand and name our feelings we need to become more aware of what happens in our body. If we learn to distinguish our sensations and name them it will become easier to understand our feelings and needs. Everyday find five minutes to scan your body from the head to your toes and just notice what and where you feel any tension, warmth, trembling, contractions or expanding. The list of sensation can be long and it becomes longer the more you spend time on listening to your body.

EMOTIONAL DICTIONARY

Naming emotions is like a bridge between our thoughts and needs. Our feelings are expressions of our needs met or unmet. Developing an emotional vocabulary will give us the power to describe and understand what we want and make better choices in life. You can download the list of feelings from Nonviolent Communication resources and use it every time you struggle to name your feelings on your own.

EXPLORING THE WORLD OF NEEDS

According to Nonviolent Communication all people share the same needs. We only choose different strategies to fulfil them. If we understand what need is behind the feeling or behaviour we can realise that we can choose different strategies to meet that need that might be easier to achieve or less harmful for other people.

CREATIVE WRITING

Becoming aware of the world of needs and feelings may be a difficult process at least at the beginning. Writing may be very helpful. You can start with simple exercises like writing down everything you feel for 10 minutes. Another way to approach this is to explore the needs. For example starting from: "I really need serenity right now." You explore what does "serenity" mean to you or how do you know that you feel serene? What are the things or situations that bring serenity in your life?"

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Another way to approach self-empathy is creative expression through arts. For example you can draw or paint how you feel, or use other creative means to express feelings and needs. Both feelings and needs are abstract concepts and therefore sometimes art can help us to give them meaning.

MOVEMENT EVERYDAY

No matter what we feel and if we are able to name it or not, emotions still move around our body. If we express them they usually flow and the body stays in harmony. Yet, if we are not able to notice them and give them the attention they can stay and create blocks that may even bring pain or illness. Any kind of movement can help them to flow and release blockages. Dance is one of the most recommended because it usually involves movements that are different from the usual ones and therefore can bring more flow inside of the body.

RELAXATION

Never underestimate relaxation. But do you know what makes you feel relaxed? How do you know your body is relaxed? Make your own list of activities that bring you relaxation and make sure that you do one of them at least once a day!

The training course **“EMPATHY MATTERS”** was created in cooperation with:

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www.associazionejoint.org
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