9 Skills for Navigating Conflict

Some NVC-based skills to support connection in the midst of conflict

0. Zero Step: Attending to what is happening in the present moment...with an intention to connect in the service of compassionate giving and receiving

- Calm
- Warmth and empathy for self and other
- Present and alert
- Open to outcome

1. Inviting: Opening a dialogue with warmth and brevity to increase chances of connection

- Notice (and ask): Do conditions support connection right now? Consider gratitude.
- Maintain focus on the Present for connection
- Share brief vulnerability of your feelings and needs
- Use observations, rather than evaluations of right or wrong, good or bad
- Finish with a request that invites connection

2. Gratitude: Focusing on what is going well to support resilience, safety, trust and expanded perspective for yourself and others

   One strategy to consider: What are you grateful for in this relationship or moment?

3. Self-Empathy: Noticing and recovering from your own reactivity. For example:

   - Notice tension or resistance in yourself
   - Give yourself permission to be feeling what you feel
   - Extend this permission of humanness to others
   - Re-Source (e.g. Gratitude, Amusement, Love)
   - Choose again

4. Vulnerable Honesty: Expressing your present experience

   - Being connected to your observations, feelings and needs (vs evaluations)
   - Sharing as deeply as you are willing to share.

5. Empathy: Space, Presence and Focus on what is alive in the other

   - Put your attention on their observations, feelings, needs, requests, wishes rather than judgments.
   - If you sense it would support connection, briefly acknowledge their present experience. For example: "So, for you...

6. Confirmation Request: Determining if you have expressed clearly and are understood

   For example: "Was I clear? What did you hear is important to me?"

7. Feedback Request: Inviting other to share what is important to them

   For example: "How are you right now?"

8. Action Request: Offering a next step to address needs identified

   - Stated in the Positive (what you do want, rather than what you don’t want)
   - Needs-based (everyone’s Needs matter)
   - Open to outcome (a proposal vs. a demand)
   - Concrete/Specific (clarity of action to be taken vs. a vague wish)
   - Present, actionable with at least one step now, e.g. “How do you feel about this?”