



Assessing the Impact of Nonviolent Communication An Outcome Evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a communication technique built on principles of nonviolence used to help us connect authentically with others and ourselves at all times and in any situation, whether pleasant or challenging. NVC extends globally as a communication tool that has been applied in a variety of settings and with diverse people and populations and yet data supporting its efficacy are very limited. Furthermore, NVC may hold important implications for violence prevention, a serious public health problem in the United States.

For Sacred Space, Inc. the long-term outcome of NVC is a world of empathic, nonviolent communicators who share and experience mutually beneficial communication and relationships, positively impacting their own and others' well-being. This evaluation served as an opportunity to assess the reality of that transformation among NVC practitioners. Thus, the evaluation team and Sacred Space, Inc. developed the evaluation question: "How has NVC impacted participants' lives?" in order to contribute to the evidence-base supporting the effectiveness of NVC.

The four evaluation standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy guided the planning and process of this evaluation. Revisions were made to the original data collection plan in order to collect sufficient, accurate and meaningful data. In all, there were 11 responses to a web-based survey of participants from a 2007 NVC training weekend, 69 responses from a general survey of people on NVC affiliated listservs, and a focus group with 9 Compassionate Leadership participants. This multifaceted approach allowed data to be triangulated and analyzed for consistent themes and valid results. The results support the efficacy of NVC primarily through themes of self-awareness and subsequent improved communication and relationships with others. Unanticipated findings reveal opportunities for NVC training to reach and affect more people. By expanding the accessibility and feasibility of NVC and assessing the impact of NVC trainings more frequently, the associated positive impacts experienced by current participants can reach particularly vulnerable populations, thereby contributing to a world transformed by nonviolent communicators.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Background and Literature Review

Evaluation Goals:

Determine how NVC has impacted participants' lives and contribute to the evidence supporting the effectiveness of NVC.

Communication approach, purpose and effectiveness determine outcomes, relationships, reactions, and decisions. Communication includes personal expression as well as interactions between individuals and groups. Marshall Rosenberg developed Nonviolent Communication (NVC) in the 1960's to "create human connections that empower compassionate giving and receiving" [1]. It is a communication approach that emphasizes compassion to meet everyone's basic emotional needs. The underlying premise is that every person has the same needs, but we use different strategies to meet them [2]. With NVC, people can learn their own and others' needs and thereby communicate with respect and empathy. There are four specific principles that comprise NVC. These principles shape personal responsibility to encourage actions and choices that contribute to relationships and effective communication of cooperation and collaboration:

1. Differentiating observation from evaluation, being able to carefully observe what is happening free of evaluation, and to specify behaviors and conditions that are affecting us;
2. Differentiating feeling from thinking, being able to identify and express internal feeling states in a way that does not imply judgment, criticism, or blame/punishment;
3. Connecting with the universal human needs/values (e.g. sustenance, trust, understanding) in us that are being met or not met in relation to what is happening and how we are feeling; and
4. Requesting what we would like in a way that clearly and specifically states what we do want (rather than what we don't want), and that is truly a request and not a demand [1].

NVC techniques can and have been applied in a number of settings. These include, but are not limited to, health care, education, and theology. To support its application, several authors have described how NVC works within a particular environment. NVC also has the potential to help address violence, a staggering public health concern both domestically and globally.

Rosenberg and Molho [3] argue that NVC can increase physician empathy, which is often lacking in health care settings. Increased empathy can subsequently lead to improvements in both patient and provider satisfaction. Additional uses of NVC in health care settings include conflict resolution between work team members, preventing "burn-out", and improving customer relations. Koegel [4] argues that NVC techniques can be utilized to enhance an educational style called partnership education. Partnership education emphasizes both students and teachers as important players in the educational process. Techniques of active listening and understanding the needs of students are considered especially important for the effective implementation of a partnership education strategy. Spiritual

teachings are also believed to be compatible with the underlying philosophies of NVC. Latini [5] describes the ways in which NVC fits with specific theological teachings and practices, and further elaborates on the ways in which NVC can be utilized by seminarians and seminaries.

More broadly, NVC methods can help prevent violence overall. This important public health problem requires attention and action due to the number of lives it claims and affects. In the US, 51,000 deaths occur annually related to violence, and injury or death from domestic violence, intimate partner violence, youth violence, bullying, and homicide or suicide. These various forms of violence claim lives but also leave victims scarred emotionally and physically [6]. One preventative approach may be to reach out to teachers, counselors, social workers, students, families and communities with NVC training in order to facilitate healthy dialogue and conflict resolution before situations escalate. In this way NVC may be an approach to violence prevention still left untapped.

As described above, NVC is useful in a number of arenas. To date, however, only a handful of studies have assessed the impact and effectiveness of NVC techniques. A number of these studies have been conducted by master's and doctoral students, and therefore are not included in the peer-reviewed literature. Even fewer evaluations have been conducted of programs that utilize NVC techniques or training. The lack of science-based evidence of NVC, despite its widespread use, remains an issue for NVC trainers and proponents. In order to provide an understanding of the research that has been conducted around NVC, a summary of the available literature is provided in the following section.

One of the few published studies demonstrating the utility of NVC was conducted in 2005 [7]. Three university students enrolled in an online coaching and mentoring module were assigned mentors in an NVC learning process. Each student was also actively coaching another student volunteer. This published case study was designed 1) to illustrate how NVC techniques can be utilized to enhance online mentoring relationships, and 2) to explore whether the NVC process was able to facilitate electronic dialogue in such a way as to develop the openness necessary to allow the mentor and client to address deep issues and affect client behavior. Participants were encouraged to utilize their newly learned techniques in their own counseling sessions. Qualitative analysis of student journals and final essays, recorded conversations with mentors, and tutors' reflections during the module was conducted to determine how students changed during the course. Within this particular sample of students, learning the NVC process helped to improve openness, trust, and clarity of expression between mentors and mentees. Students also learned tools to help overcome the loss of nonverbal and visual cues that occur during online communications and the transactional nature of such relationships.

In 2009, a master's thesis conducted by Suzanne Jones also used a case study approach to investigate whether the utilization of an NVC communication model would increase understanding of partnership education [8]. Participants consisted of two school directors, nine teachers, and 15 students in a private charter school. At the time the thesis was written, the school was attempting to implement a partnership education style. Over the course of the school year, the nine teachers enrolled in the study participated in NVC training sessions and attempted to teach these practices to their students. Jones conducted observations within several classrooms over the school year, as well as collected pre and post surveys with students and teachers. She also conducted in-depth interviews with each of the nine teachers to gain a better understanding of how NVC had affected them and their teaching styles. The greatest understanding of the impact of NVC was revealed through these personal interviews. Major themes included a perceived shift in student behaviors from blaming and tattling to solving conflicts, increased expression of feelings and needs, an increase of respectful requests, and challenges of using the NVC model.

Another master's student focused her thesis on understanding the effectiveness of an NVC training program for staff working in a residential juvenile detention facility [9]. Her aim was to determine if those staff that participated in the training program increased their use of nonviolent verbal resolution to settle conflicts among residents. Twenty staff members (out of 50) took part in a voluntary training session that consisted of two, two-hour sessions separated by a 15 minutes break. These sessions took place once annually for two years. In order to reinforce the techniques, weekly one hour and 15 minute empathy circles took place at the residential facility. Pre and post test measures were administered to assess changes in conflict resolution. At post test, survey results revealed that the NVC trained staff increased their use of nonviolent resolution and decreased their use of violent resolution. On the other hand, an opposite effect was found for non-trained staff- they decreased usage of nonviolent resolution and increased usage of violent resolution.

Finally, a master's student at Emory conducted an evaluation of a six-hour training workshop that took place in conjunction with Sacred Space, Inc [10]. The particular workshop being evaluated was conducted in multiple states in the Southeastern U.S., as well as in Australia. In all, data from 108 participants was included in the evaluation. The specific aim of the thesis was to assess the effectiveness of the NVC workshop in increasing knowledge, skills, and applications of NVC tools and principles. Both pre and post test measures were collected, with post test measures distributed immediately after the workshop, as well as at two and six weeks after the training. In addition, a friend or family member of each participant was surveyed in order to assess bystander perceptions of the participant's application

of NVC techniques. At posttest, participants reported both increased intention to apply and actual application of NVC techniques.

Organization Overview:

Sacred Space, Incorporated is a non-profit organization founded and managed by Cynthia Moe and Mark Feinknopf. Through providing services and partnering with similar organizations, including the Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC), Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication (GaNVC), and Civil Services LLC, Sacred Space aims to expand and contribute to the local and global use of NVC.

Cynthia and Mark envision a world of caring, creative and vital people who are engaged in passionate, satisfying, and meaningful life pursuits. In order to meet organizational goals, Sacred Space provides corporate and community facilitation, communications training, strategic planning, and transportation-related urban design. A number of session types are available, including restorative practices, nonviolent communication techniques, community circle facilitation, and consent circles. Training sessions are customizable in response to client needs, including workshops for small groups, corporations, schools, or one on one individual or couples' counseling. Session length is also flexible, as previous trainings have lasted for as little as a few hours, to weekend or weeklong retreats, and even multiple sessions over the course of months or a year.

Stakeholders and Key Stakeholder Interviews:

Identification and collaboration with key stakeholders provided the crucial dialogue around the purpose and design of the evaluation plan. We initially conducted an interview with key stakeholders- Cynthia Moe and Mark Feinknopf at their home. Also present was Ms. Faye Landey, a certified NVC trainer who works closely with Sacred Space, and who serves as an additional key stakeholder for this evaluation project. Jeff Joslin, another colleague of Sacred Space, was included in communications and revisions throughout the evaluation process per the request of Cynthia, Mark, and Faye, and therefore also a key stakeholder.

During our first meeting, Cynthia, Mark, and Faye provided an overview of Sacred Space, personal histories with NVC, and goals and expectations for this evaluation project. These key stakeholders all emphasized the importance of establishing science-based evidence for the efficacy and long-term impact of NVC training. In order to do this the group decided to develop the evaluation around surveying participants of a three-day NVC Training that took place in Atlanta in 2007.

In order to gain an understanding of NVC from additional stakeholder perspectives, we conducted additional interviews as well. Informants included past evaluators and organizations that work closely with Sacred Space, facilitate NVC training, and had knowledge of the 2007, three-day NVC training. We attempted to contact the national Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC), the Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication (GaNVC), Civil Services LLC (consulting group for NVC) as well as Jane Branscomb, who conducted an evaluation of a NVC training workshop hosted by Sacred Space in 2011. Sacred Space and the evaluation team identified each of these organizations and individuals as important partners in the field of NVC. We established contact with two members of Civil Services, Mr. Paul Hiltman and Ms. Linda Ratto, as well as Ms. Branscomb. Interviews took place through the mode of communication most convenient for that particular stakeholder, ranging from email, to phone, to an in-person meeting. The interview guide for key informants was developed based on overarching evaluation questions, but also anticipated flexibility to incorporate specific interest and feedback for each stakeholder. Primary stakeholders were notified prior to contacting informants. Key questions asked during these interviews included:

- How did you get involved with NVC?
 - How long have you been involved?
 - Can you describe what prompted your initial interest in NVC?
 - What impact has NVC had on your life?
- How does your organization conduct NVC trainings?
- Are there specific outcomes you would like to see as a result of NVC training?
- Has your organization previously conducted any NVC evaluations?
 - If so, can you describe your evaluation process?
 - If not, what type of data would you like to see collected as part of an evaluation?
 - How could you utilize evaluation results within your organization?

An open-ended format was used to conduct the interviews in order to provide the evaluation team with a greater understanding of how NVC is practiced in each of the stakeholders' lives and the impact that it has had on them and their families. Although stakeholders were introduced to NVC techniques in a variety of ways, each expressed an interest in personal growth through communicative techniques as the impetus for becoming involved with Sacred Space. Informants stated that "learning the difference between needs and wants" was an important skill learned from their primary introduction to NVC methods. Additionally, stakeholders expressed an interest in research methods that would produce evidence in support of the utility of NVC techniques for all people.

A recurrent theme expressed by informants was whether NVC participants continued to seek training and use NVC techniques in their daily lives. There was a belief that NVC techniques were applicable to people dealing with a variety of situations that could benefit from the use of NVC methods. Stakeholders stated that phone and email follow up conversations with participants were performed in order to sustain and encourage use of NVC. They shared their personal encounters, experiences others have shared with them, and expressed a desire to learn ways other people have been impacted by NVC. Lastly, informants were aware of the time commitment involved in not only learning but also practicing NVC techniques. One informant stated that the time commitment is justifiable due to the difficulty in changing behavior surrounding people's communication skills.

Another group of stakeholders are intended users who we anticipate will utilize and appreciate the results and recommendations of this evaluation. Due to limited evidence-based data on NVC, CNVC, GaNVC, Certified NVC Trainers, past and potential NVC training participants, and Marshall Rosenberg, PhD will have accessibility to the findings of this evaluation through Sacred Space, Inc. At a minimum, results may affirm, expand, or contradict their experiences or beliefs. Other potential benefits include insight into the design and implementation of future evaluations and the publication of accessible NVC participant feedback obtained from an organized data collection process.

Overarching Evaluation Goals

Based on the collaboration of evaluators and key stakeholders and inclusion of input from stakeholder interviews and existing literature and evidence, the overarching goals of this evaluation project are to:

1. Determine how NVC has impacted participants' lives
2. Contribute to the evidence-base supporting the effectiveness of NVC

Logic Model

Development of the NVC Training Logic Model [Figure 1] was created based on input from primary stakeholders, a previous evaluator (Jane Branscomb), classmates, and our evaluation team. Ultimately, it is a diagram representation of what is required for NVC training, which includes: raw material resources and inputs, the activities that must be completed using specific resources, measurable outputs after activities have been completed, and finally intended and anticipated outcomes that occur as a result of the process. The underlying assumptions had been identified through the prior evaluation process led by Jane Branscomb with the primary stakeholders, and therefore remained relatively unchanged in addition to the overall depiction and content.

Outputs were added to identify the measurable components of NVC training, which included time participants spent in NVC training, NVC use after training, engaging in additional training, sharing NVC techniques with others, and the impact of NVC on relationships, communication and well-being. Outcomes were modified to emphasize the anticipated change at short, intermediate, and long-term time intervals. Namely the short-term outcome was NVC training whereby participants learn NVC tools and the four guiding principles. Intermediate outcomes are achieved when participants practice and share NVC, which is achieved by applying NVC in multiple settings, supporting ongoing learning and practice of NVC and offering NVC to others. The ultimate goal of NVC for Sacred Space is to create a world of empathic nonviolent communicators who share and experience mutually beneficial communication and relationships, positively impacting their own and others well-being. This evaluation focused on data collection of outputs and outcomes in order to answer the evaluation question of how NVC impacts participants' lives.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Training - Logic Model

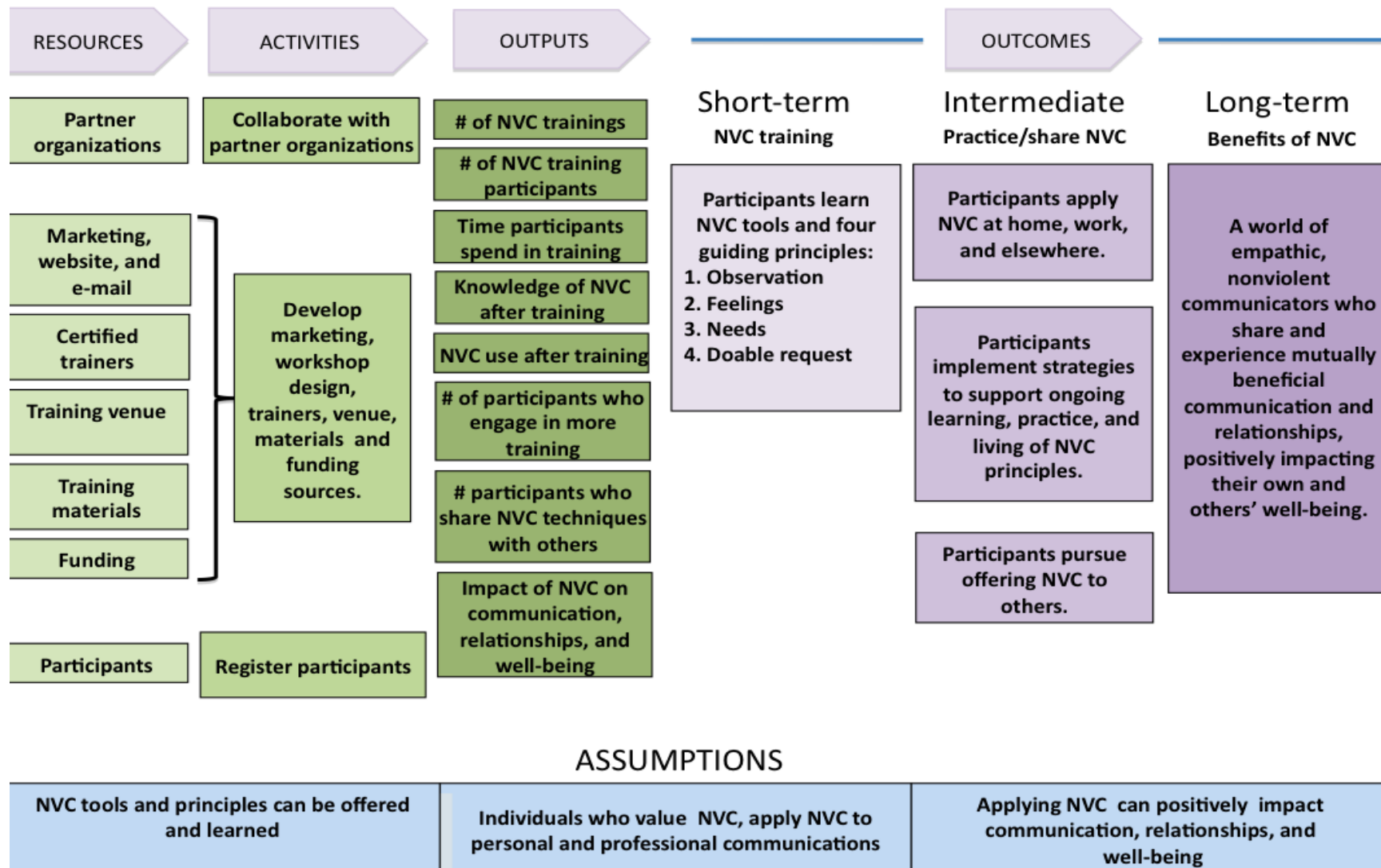


Figure 1: Nonviolent Communication Training Logic Model

METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Design and Overview

Goals of the evaluation included assessing nonviolent communication's impact on the lives of individuals that have participated in training to support evidence of NVC's efficacy. Sacred Space staff originally desired a qualitative method of data collection, but the logistics of meeting with and contacting individuals who had attended a training over 4 years ago did not seem feasible within the time constraints of this project. Therefore, the evaluation team and key stakeholders decided on a web-based survey (henceforth referred to as the 2007 survey) in order to reach as many possible participants as possible [Appendix A]. Thus, initial data collection plans included only surveying participants of the 2007 weekend training in Atlanta.

However, due to outdated contact information for some participants and an insufficient response rate, the evaluation team revised the data collection plan to include a second web-based survey (henceforth referred to as the general survey). The general survey [Appendix B], non-specific to a particular training, was designed to focus more on NVC methods and impact and was distributed through the GaNVC newsletter distribution listserv [Appendix C], a worldwide Certified Trainers Yahoo Group, and the Compassionate Leadership (CL) listserv. In addition to the web-based surveys, the evaluation team conducted a focus group with a convenience-sample from CL retreat participants to obtain additional qualitative perspectives on the impact of NVC.

Study Population

As discussed above, the evaluation team focused on three sample populations: 1) participants of the 2007 NVC Training Weekend 2) individuals on NVC affiliated listservs and 3) members of the 2011 Compassionate Leadership community.

The NVC Training Weekend took place February 2-4, 2007 in Atlanta, Georgia. Training attendees were able to register online, over the phone or in person on any day of the training. Sacred Space supported the weekend retreat in conjunction with GaNVC and CNVC. The event was advertised locally through flyers posted in local grocery stores and other venues. In addition, this flyer was sent to NVC affiliated listservs and email groups. Throughout the course of the weekend, three daytime large group sessions and three evening small group sessions took place. Each of the large group sessions addressed a different theme - appreciating differences and resolving conflicts, generating trust in tough relationships, and building positive relationships. A concurrent children's program in NVC was held for

children of those attending the main sessions. Participants were able to attend all sessions or individual sessions according to their choosing, and continuing education credits were available.

The general survey was sent to three different NVC affiliated listserv groups as mentioned above, and all contacts had registered to be in these groups. The evaluation team worked with Sacred Space Inc. and CL to gain access to listservs of NVC web-based communities. Cynthia Moe contacted GaNVC and the Yahoo Group to establish access to those populations, while Faye Landey assisted with administration of the general survey to the CL group.

The focus group was also conducted with participants of CL, a web-based community that offers an 8-month NVC curriculum annually. This particular group is composed of approximately 150 people who have been participants in CL activities and training for some period of time between 2008 through 2011. 22 members of this group, who have been active in the training offered during 2011, attended the third and final retreat for this year in November. Of the 22 participants at the retreat, 9 volunteered to participate in a focus group held at the retreat facility and conducted by the evaluation team. Focus group participants were read an informed consent before beginning any discussion [Appendix D]. Discussion topics included personal definitions of NVC, describing the impact of NVC in specific areas of their lives, and involvement in NVC. The discussion lasted an hour and was guided by eight questions derived from the surveys.

Data Collection Instruments

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Survey questions were developed using feedback from key stakeholder interviews. A 15-item web based survey created using Survey Gizmo was shared with Sacred Space stakeholders to ensure the appropriateness of the questions in relation to the overarching evaluation question. Key stakeholders reviewed and provided feedback on the survey and provided final approval before survey distribution. The purpose of the survey was to address the participant's sustained use of NVC techniques, whether they taught NVC principles to others, and the impact of NVC on their lives. Survey items included several open-ended questions to allow for the collection of qualitative data and also features multiple response options to reduce measurement error by avoiding incomplete responses. The final version of the 2007 training survey contained ten close-ended questions and three open-ended questions.

The general survey was a revised edition of the 2007 survey, with more generic questions replacing the training specific questions. After revisions were approved by key stakeholders, the final version of the general survey contained 12 close-ended and four open-ended questions. Specific

evaluation questions for the 2007 training and general surveys are included in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively. Survey data collection was completed by November 12, 2011.

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Survey questions were tailored to create the Focus Group Discussion Guide [Appendix E]. Close-ended survey questions were restructured to prompt open-ended responses. The evaluation team wanted the data collection instruments to contain similar question to relate to the goals of the evaluation. Participants were guided through eight questions including: a description of what NVC is to them, how participating in training has contributed to their lives, settings in which they used NVC, examples of situations where they applied NVC methods and strategies that support their practice of NVC [Appendix F].

Table 1: 2007 Training Survey Questions

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	Indicators
Were participants satisfied with the 2007 NVC training weekend?	Survey targeted at participants of the Nonviolent Communication Training with Marshall Rosenberg, held February 2-4, 2007.	1. Proportion of participants who reported “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied”.
Do individuals trained in NVC apply NVC techniques in their lives?	Survey targeted at participants of the Nonviolent Communication Training with Marshall Rosenberg, held February 2-4, 2007.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of participants who reported application of NVC techniques. 2. Proportion of participants who use or have used strategies to support their practice of NVC. 3. Proportion of participants who reported offering NVC training or education to others.
How has NVC impacted participants’ lives?	Survey targeted at participants of the Nonviolent Communication Training with Marshall Rosenberg, held February 2-4, 2007.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of participants who reported that NVC has contributed to changes in their lives. 2. Proportions of participants who reported any impact on specific needs.

Table 2: General Survey Questions

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Methods	Indicators
Were participants satisfied with their overall experience with Nonviolent Communication?	Survey targeted at 1) members of the Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication listserv, 2) participants of the 2008-2011 Compassionate Leadership group, 3) members of a certified NVC trainers Yahoo group.	1. Proportion of participants who reported “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied”.
Do individuals trained in NVC apply NVC techniques in their lives?	Survey targeted at 1) members of the Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication listserv, 2) participants of the 2008-2011 Compassionate Leadership group, 3) members of a certified NVC trainers Yahoo group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of participants who reported application of NVC techniques. 2. Proportion of participants who use or have used strategies to support their practice of NVC. 3. Proportion of participants who reported offering NVC training or education to others.
How has the use of NVC impacted participants’ lives?	Survey targeted at 1) members of the Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication listserv, 2) participants of the 2008-2011 Compassionate Leadership group, 3) members of a certified NVC trainers Yahoo group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proportion of participants who reported that NVC has contributed to changes in their life. 2. Proportion of participants who reported any affect on specific needs.
Is amount of NVC training associated with greater impact?	Survey targeted at 1) members of the Georgia Network for Nonviolent Communication listserv, 2) participants of the 2008-2011 Compassionate Leadership group, 3) members of a certified NVC trainers Yahoo group	1. Association between days of training attended and impact on specific needs.

Data Collection Procedures

2007 TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

A total of 96 people were included on the original registration list that was provided to the evaluation team. Of these 96, 70 people had provided both a phone number and email address at the time of registration, and 26 had only provided a phone number. Phone calls were made to these 26 participants in order to obtain current email addresses for the administration of our online survey. Participants were given information on why they were being contacted, a description of the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation's overarching question. Of these 26 participants, nine were wrong or disconnected numbers, messages were left for twelve contacts, and two people declined participation. In total only three of twenty-six people contacted by phone provided their email addresses. There were also three different participants from the same family who submitted the same email address, resulting in 71 email contacts for potential evaluation survey participants. An introductory email was sent to these participants with known email addresses one day prior to the actual survey to introduce the topic and increase survey response. Evaluation team members waited one week before sending a reminder to participants who had not responded to the web-based survey.

GENERAL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The Certified Trainers Yahoo Group received the survey link on November 2, 2011 and GaNVC and CL listservs received the survey link on November 3, 2011. The evaluation team encountered administration issues with the second survey. After being initially sent to GaNVC listserv members on November 3, 2011, stakeholders began hearing reports that the survey link was not working properly. After some investigation, we discovered that the problem was with the way in which the link had been embedded into the GANVC newsletter. It appeared that some listserv members had been able to circumvent the problem by copying and pasting the link into their computer search bar, but others had not. The evaluation team addressed this concern with the help desks of the online programs that were used for the survey and newsletter creation. After correcting the problem, the survey was re-sent on November 4, 2011, where it remained open and able to collect responses from all groups until November 14, 2011.

FOCUS GROUP

The focus group was conducted at the Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center in Norcross, GA. The setting was composed of several buildings and churches in a highly wooded area. One of our primary stakeholders introduced us to several members of the CL group. Chairs were set in a circular formation to facilitate conversation. One team member served as the recorder, another as a

group moderator and one as a discussion note-taker. After reading the informed consent, the discussion, which lasted one hour was recorded to ensure accurate retrieval of information. The primary stakeholder who was present at the retreat was asked not to participate in the discussion to give participants freedom to speak candidly. A rapport building question was used to orient the group and initiate the participants to the format of the discussion.

RISK TO HUMAN SUBJECTS

Characteristics of Human Subjects

In order to be eligible as participants in our study respondents 1) were 18 years or older and 2) participated in the 2007 training or 3) have subscribed to the GANVC online newsletter or Compassionate Leadership newsletter or 4) a member of the worldwide trainer online Yahoo group.

DATA/MATERIAL SOURCES

Previous source material was granted permission of use by Sacred Space staff and authors of previous evaluations. Online reports were available for public use. Key informant interviews, survey development and focus groups were used to inform evaluation data collection.

POTENTIAL RISK

Participants' potential of experiencing risk was unlikely. Any social, physical or psychological risks were little or not experienced. Focus group respondents were not required to answer any questions that they were not comfortable answering. There were no activities asked of participants that would lead to physical harm. Minimal demographic data was collected; therefore any risk surrounding a breach of confidentiality was circumvented. Psychological risk associated from recounting events where NVC techniques were used was also minimal.

Adequacy of Protection Against Risks

RECRUITMENT AND INFORMED CONSENT

Participant contact information for the first survey was obtained through the registration list kept for the event coordinated by Sacred Space. Contact was made through Sacred Space Inc. to gain access to the GaNVC and Compassionate Leadership listservs for administration of the second survey. The opportunity to send the survey to the international network of trainers was performed through our key stakeholders. The evaluation team did not have access to either listserv. Recruitment for the focus group was performed by one of our key stakeholders during a yearly training performed by the stakeholder. Survey and focus group participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the discussion. Survey participants read a web-based informed consent prior to beginning the survey, while focus group participants were read an oral consent before beginning any discussion. The electronic consent briefed respondents on the evaluation's purpose, provided information on other organizations helping to administer the survey, indicated voluntary participation in taking part in the evaluation and assured anonymity of responses. The oral informed consent for the focus group included the same elements as

the electronic consent but also included notification that the discussion would be recorded, the option to contact group facilitators following the group, and discussion facilitation guidelines.

MINIMIZING RISK TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Identifying information obtained from this evaluation included a list of names, numbers and addresses of 2007 training participants. After email addresses were transferred to a separate email contact list the document was discarded. Any email addresses were secured with a password protected group email on password protected laptops. Specific Individuals were not referred to by name in this evaluation report. Survey respondents were not asked for any identifying information. Any information volunteered by survey respondents was destroyed before data analysis. Only evaluation team members had access to the recorded focus group discussion. Following analysis written and recorded information was discarded.

Potential Benefits to Subjects

There were no direct benefits to survey respondents. A benefit for both survey and focus group participants is their potential contribution to science-based research in a field of public health.

Importance of Knowledge to Be Gained

Information gained in this evaluation was used to inform and add to the existing body of NVC research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data Management and Analysis

Data collected from SurveyGizmo online administration software was imported into SPSS for analysis. After visual inspection of the data, it was determined that most of the partially completed responses only answered demographic questions (i.e. age, gender, date of last NVC training) and did not continue on to the questions regarding impact of training. In the results section below, overall descriptive statistics will be generated for the entire sample. Specific answers to evaluation questions and statistical testing will include only responses from those that fully completed the survey. Additionally, no significant differences were found between participants that fully completed and did not fully complete the survey.

Descriptive statistics were generated for of each of the two survey groups. All character variables were converted to numeric variables in order to facilitate analyses. For example, questions with response options represented by characters (A great deal, much, somewhat, etc.) were converted into corresponding numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). Several additional variables were created for analysis purposes. Days of training attended, originally a categorical variable which measured days in five day increments was collapsed into another variable which measured days of training in ten day increments. New categories were: less than one day, 1-10 days, 11-20 days, 21-30 days, 31-40 days, and greater than 41 days.

Prior to the analysis of the general survey, days of training was collapsed into a second new variable which indicated whether participants had had a low or high amount of training. Having less than or equal to 30 days of training corresponded with having a low amount of training, while 31 days or greater corresponded with having a high amount of training. A question which asked participants to indicate the extent to which specific needs were impacted by utilizing NVC was originally a categorical variable with five levels. A single continuous variable called Impact was created by summing individual scores for each of the six needs (compassion, connection, power, relationships, understanding and well-being). This measure represented the amount of impact on overall needs for each participant. Potential scores could range from 5 to 30 with a higher score indicating a higher level of impact on the six basic human needs. This continuous variable was further split into a dichotomous variable based on a median split. People with scores falling at or below the median were considered to have a low impact, which people with scores above the median were considered to have a high impact score. Finally, for those participants that provided both a month and year of their last training date, month and year were

combined into a single date variable. This date was subtracted from the current date in order to create a continuous variable which represented the length of time (in months) since most recent training for each participant.

For the participants of the 2007 training facilitated by Dr. Rosenberg, analyzed data included:

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Number of daytime and evening sessions attended
4. Overall satisfaction with NVC training
5. Change in experience of needs as a result of NVC training
6. Settings in which participants have applied NVC techniques
7. Strategies used by participants to support learning of NVC
8. Proportion of persons who have offered NVC training to others
9. Proportion of persons who intend to pursue further NVC training

For the participants surveyed from the general survey, data analyzed included the above measures (excluding 3,4) in addition to the following:

1. Date of last NVC training session attended
2. Number of lifetime hours of NVC training attended
3. Value of experience NVC training
4. Additional comments

Following generation of descriptive statistics, evaluation team members coded open-ended questions for overall themes. Two of the evaluation team members independently coded responses and discussed codes until agreement was reached. Following agreement themes were finalized from responses to the open-ended question. Once data collection procedures were completed, notes were distributed to each team member. Each evaluation team member was responsible for a data collection method (i.e. one of the surveys or the focus group). A recording of the focus group was available for group members to review. Survey and focus group data were analyzed by each team member independently for thematic content and commonalities between each of the measures. Major themes were identified, and any emerging themes were also considered. Team members explored their findings and determined predominant themes. Finally, major themes from the surveys and focus group were triangulated to inform recommendations.

RESULTS

2007 Training Survey Results

Eleven participants fully completed and five partially completed the web-based survey out of the 71 attendees of the 2007 NVC Training Weekend with a working email address (response rate: 15.5% complete; 22.5% partial or complete). Completed surveys were defined as surveys that provided answers to both closed and open-ended questions. Table 3 displays all relevant demographics for respondents of this survey. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents were female (n=12) and 31.3% (n=5) were between 65-69 years old. Most participants (n=8, 61.5%) attended three daytime sessions, which equated to 24 hours of training. Fewer participants, 38.5% (n=5) attended two evening sessions which equaled approximately six hours of training. Participants reported either being very satisfied (n=7, 58.3%) or satisfied (n=3, 25%) with the training. Overall, respondents reported that the training they participated in contributed to changes in their lives (n=11, 91.7%) with only one person reporting no changes. Respondents also used NVC techniques in a variety of settings, with the majority of the sample utilizing techniques at home (n=10, 90.9%) followed by “with another social group” (n=7, 63.6%) and with friends and in intimate relationships (n=7, 63.6%). Approximately three-fourths of the sample practiced NVC intentionally in their daily lives (n=8, 72.7%) and use NVC resource materials (n=8, 72.7%) to support their practice of Nonviolent Communication. A little less than half of the sample (n=5, 45.5%) had taken additional trainings to support their practice of NVC. Out of the entire sample, 64% (n=16) respondents have offered NVC training to others either through informal sharing (n=8, 72.7%), referrals (n=4, 36.4%), offering a formal training (n=1, 9.1%) and offering and facilitating a formal training (27.3%). The mean impact score was 23.2 (sd=6.8).

Table 3: 2007 Training Survey Demographics

Characteristic	N	Percentage	Mean (sd)
Age			
70 and older	2	12.5	
60-69 years old	7	43.7	
50-59 years old	6	37.5	
40-49 years old	1	6.3	
30-39 years old	0	0.0	
18-29 years old	0	0.0	
Gender			
Male	4	25.0	
Female	12	75.0	
Number of Daytime Sessions Attended			
Three	8	61.5	
Two	2	15.4	
One or less	1	7.7	
Did not attend any daytime sessions	2	15.4	
Number of Evening Sessions Attended			
Three	4	30.8	
Two	5	38.5	
One or less	0	0.0	
Did not attend any evening sessions	4	30.8	
Overall satisfaction with NVC training			
Very Satisfied	7	58.3	
Satisfied	3	25.0	
Impact Score	xx	xx	23.3 (6.8)

2007 Training Qualitative Findings

The 2007 training survey also included several open-ended questions that allowed participants to provide examples of how NVC has impacted their lives. Participants responded to the following questions: “Please describe how the Nonviolent Communication Training you participated in contributed to changes in your life?” (n= 11) and, “Please describe a situation where you applied Nonviolent Communication Methods” (n=10). Frequencies and examples of themes from these two questions are highlighted in Tables 4 and 5.

Three major themes emerged when participants were asked in what ways the training had impacted their lives including: self-awareness, self-control, and tool of expression. In general, respondents remarked that it affected the way they communicated with people in their daily lives. Participants expressed a greater personal responsibility for the way they reacted emotionally, with one

participant noting, “I learned to listen to my own needs and honor them.” Changes were also seen in control over one’s emotions with observed differences in the way that participants responded to their emotions before and after training, “It was the beginning of a real paradigm shift [...] from getting triggered easily to processing my reactivity when it happens.” Lastly respondents reported that the NVC training was a tool of expression leading to better communicative skills commenting “communication with my husband is greatly improved” or that “my negotiation skills have greatly improved.”

Survey participants applied NVC in a variety of situations and were grouped under four major themes. Overall, respondents described common situations in different settings. Some respondents have examples of using NVC techniques to diffuse hostile situations. Other respondents used techniques to solve one on one conflicts. Many participants recalled using NVC methods in their friendships and intimate partner relationships. Others recalled situations in which they used NVC as a tool to listen effectively, “In dealing with my spouse I tried to really listen and tell him what I needed, not what he needed to do for me.” One participant distributed NVC resource materials to during public events. Survey respondents from the 2007 training generally had positive experiences as a result of participating in the training and were able to recall situations in which they used NVC techniques.

Table 4: Frequency of Themes Related To Changes Since 2007 Training (n=11)*

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
Tool of Expression	6	“It gave me a tool to use daily to make life more wonderful by knowing how to express me needs in a way that I get the response I am wanting, and I learned to listen to my own needs and honor them.”
Self-Awareness	4	“Reaffirmed my commitment to working to be in charge of my own life by not allowing others' demands and insecurities to dictate my behavior.”
Self-Control	3	“Reinforced ways of staying centered when another person blames or demands things of you. Also helps to identify my own ‘jackle’ behaviors and how to re phrase my thoughts into feelings and needs.”

Table 5: Frequency of Themes Related To an Applied Situation (n=10)*

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
Solving One-on-One Conflict	4	“Had to ask a friend I let stay with me to move out. Wanted to be firm and hold my limits without making him feel like he was "bad", worthless, and to retain some friendly feelings.”
Diffusing Hostile Situations	3	“Most recently I diffused an angry homeowner on attack at a condo board meeting. I raised my hand and when recognized, was verbally able to communicate his idea to the board and the board’s idea back to the gentleman. Very rewarding, as things were loud and turning hostile.”
Tool for Effective Listening	3	“An old friend wanted to talk with me about an interaction between us which had really upset her. I cleared my mind of judgment and just really listened to her with an open heart -- empathy -- and heard her pain and her needs. We both felt grateful afterwards.”
Use/distribute Resources	1	“I bring my Here2Hear - Empathic Listening sign to festivals, conferences, farmers markets, and occupations and engage empathically with the person in front of me.

*Some responses contributed to multiple themes; therefore number of frequencies may be greater than actual number of responses

General Survey Results

1122 GaNVC contacts were sent the survey link. 101 bounced back, leaving 1021 working email addresses of which 157 were opened and 2 opted out. Approximately 150 members of the Compassionate Leadership group and 553 NVC Certified Trainers Yahoo Group members also received the survey link through email. Thus, 1724 participants received a survey link, with 69 completing the survey (response rate: 4%) and 27 partially completing the survey (96 total). Table 6 displays demographic characteristics for this subsample.

Over one third of participants were between the ages of 50-59 (37.1%, n=33). The next largest age category was 60-69 years old (25.8%, n=23). The majority of the sample was female (67.7%, n=65). Previous NVC training experience varied across the sample. 41.5% (n=34) reported having greater than 41 days of NVC training, while an additional 30.5% (n=25) reported having between one and ten days of training. Very few participants (3.7%, n=3) reported that they had never had prior NVC training. Approximately 20% of participants had attended an NVC training session one month in the past (21.2%, n=14). On average, participants had last attended an NVC training session 14.7 months ago (sd=25.21).

Overall, the majority of participants placed high value on their experience with NVC. Nearly all (97.6%, n=79) indicated that they found their experience to be either “moderately valuable” or “very valuable”. The majority also indicated that having participated in NVC training contributed to changes in their lives (79.2%, n=76). The mean impact score for the sample was 25.18 (sd=4.39), indicating relatively high impact on all needs.

Table 6: General Survey Demographics*

Characteristic	N	Percentage	Mean (sd)
Age			
70 and older	8	8.3	
60-69 years old	23	25.8	
50-59 years old	33	37.1	
40-49 years old	13	13.5	
30-39 years old	8	8.3	
18-29 years old	3	3.1	
Gender			
Male	23	24.0	
Female	65	67.7	
Other	1	1.0	
Length of time since last NVC training session (months)	xx	xx	14.7(25.21)
Lifetime days of NVC training attended			
31 days or greater	35	36.4	
30 days or less	47	49.0	
Value of experience with NVC			
Very Valuable	68	84.0	
Moderately Valuable	11	13.6	
Impact Score	xx	xx	25.18 (4.39)

*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to inclusion of missing values

In regards to impact on individual needs, understanding and connection were the most affected. Approximately half of the sample indicated that understanding (50.7%, n=35) and connection (48.4%, n=32) were impacted a great deal. The needs of relationships and compassion were a close second in terms of impact, with 44.9% (n=31) indicating that each of these needs were impacted a great deal. No participants indicated a complete lack of impact for any of the needs presented.

Participants were highly active in regards to utilizing NVC in their lives. When asked to choose from a variety of settings, 91.3% (n=63) reporting using NVC at home, 79.7% (n=55) with another social group, 76.8% (n=53) at work, 33.3% (n=23) at school, and 43.5% (n=30) in another setting. The group utilized a variety of strategies to support their learning of NVC. 75.4% (n=52) reported use of NVC

resource materials, 63.8% (n=44) participated in practice groups, 60.9% (n=42) attended additional NVC trainings, 79.7% (n=55) reported intentional practicing of NVC in their daily lives, and 21.7% reported using another type of strategy. Offering NVC training to others was also common among participants. Over three fourths of the sample had informally shared NVC techniques with others (79.7%, n=55), while almost half had offered and facilitated some form of NVC training (44.9%, n=31). Another 62.3% (n=43) reported having referred others to NVC training opportunities.

Finally, a chi square test was performed in order to understand the association between amount of training and impact on overall needs. Results revealed that people with a high level of training were more likely to report a higher impact on overall needs (65.5%, n=19) than people with a low level of training (34.1%, n=14; $\chi^2 = 6.70$, df=1, p=.01)

General Survey Qualitative Findings

Of participants that completed the entire survey, 94.20% (n=65) indicated that NVC did contribute to changes in their lives. The most commonly cited way in which this change manifested itself was through enhancing connection and communication with others (n=37). Persons citing this theme both explicitly and implicitly expressed the idea that NVC had brought about changes that led to an increased feeling of closeness with those around them. Overall, persons citing this theme did not discuss specific persons in their lives with whom communication and connection had increased, but instead elaborated on the fact that NVC had allowed them to become more connected to all.

The next most common theme that emerged was that NVC had increased participant awareness of feelings and needs (n=33). This increase in awareness could apply to the participant's own feelings and needs, the feelings and needs of others, or to a greater understanding of the concepts themselves. Several people remarked that NVC had provided them with a set of tools through which they were able to navigate the world in a different way. As one participant stated, NVC provided her with the "capacity to self connect to become aware of feelings and needs and consciously choose a request or action". It is possible that this increased awareness experienced by much of our sample led to an effect on relationships, the third most commonly cited theme within this question (n=19). Responses categorized within this theme included those that specifically mentioned effects on relationships as a result of the participants' NVC experience. A small number of participants (n=6) specifically mentioned their increased ability to understand the meanings of and navigate situations with conflict and violence. A participant who identified himself as a certified trainer stated that, "Both the students and the trainer

learn from each other. As the trainer I learned that it can be violence if someone withholds important information that they need to share to sustain the relationship”. This statement is indicative of the type of lessons learned from the practice of NVC. Lastly, some participants (n=3) did not indicate certain actions taken as a result of involvement with NVC, but instead discussed the ways in which involvement led to a change in their thought processes and views of the world around them.

A much smaller minority of participants who completed the entire survey (5.8%, n=4) indicated that NVC had not contributed to changes in their lives. The most commonly cited reason was that while NVC had had some influence, it was not significant enough to constitute a change in “life” overall (n=3). One participant indicated that the NVC training he attended lacked diversity and applicability to situations where external factors, such as racial tensions, might be high.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of how NVC is utilized in daily living, survey respondents were asked to describe a situation in which they applied NVC methods. The most common way in which participants cited its use was to enhance communication with family and friends (n=24). Participants described utilizing techniques generally “at home”, or with close family members or significant others, particularly to resolve arguments. In addition to using techniques at home, participants carried techniques over to the workplace, school, and with other established groups with whom they were involved (n=13). One respondent described a situation in which she utilized NVC while working with a specific political group. From this interaction, she noted that the “disarming effect of empathy” that she saw every day also became applicable to the political atmosphere.

Participants also utilized techniques to gain a better understanding of themselves (n=10) and to assist others with the process of self-awareness (n=12). NVC was used as a tool for self-awareness in both intentional settings (i.e. meditation and counseling sessions) as well as in everyday life. It also appears that several participants felt empowered enough to utilize their communication skills to assist others. As described by one participant, “...recently my sister was overwhelmed and confused since she values order and clarity, and my aging parents are changing in ways that doesn’t support those needs of hers. I was able to help her see her own part in her perception of their needs”. A smaller subset of respondents also reported utilizing NVC with children (n=8). While most discussed situations in which communication and understanding was enhanced with their own children, some also mentioned working with at-risk youth populations or within public schools. Finally, five participants did not describe a specific situation in which they used NVC, but did report using the techniques in daily life.

At the close of the general survey, participants were asked to share any additional thoughts. The majority of persons who answered provided positive comments and feedback regarding their NVC experience (n=24). Others expressed interest in seeing the survey results or thanked the evaluation team for their work in demonstrating the efficacy of NVC (n=7). Another portion of respondents described challenges in adopting NVC practices (n=6). In particular, participants were able to easily grasp NVC core concepts, but had more of a challenge in integrating these practices into their lives. As one respondent stated, “I hope that there is someone I can talk to about difficulties I have with NVC (putting it into practice and things I would like to understand more about it), because I feel a lot of hope with the practice of NVC”. Others mentioned personal difficulties they had with implementing techniques in specific situations, as well as described concerns about the financial feasibility of offering NVC trainings. Remaining responses discussed future directions that they envisioned NVC taking. Comments ranged from restructuring the umbrella CNVC organization and certification process, to offering NVC in elementary schools, to expanding the reach of NVC to underserved groups. One participant elaborated on the ways in which other community organizations facilitate use of their services to groups at highest need and suggested that NVC based organizations create action plans to expand their services. Specific to Atlanta, suggestions were made to lower cost of trainings and to change locations to be more accessible to the community at large. Frequencies of themes are listed in the following tables:

Table 7: Frequency of Themes Related To Changes (n=65)*

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
Enhanced connection and communication with others	N=37	"I am less angry because of receiving empathy and I am interacting with people on a deeper, more satisfying level. People seem to want to be with me more now"
Increased awareness of feelings and needs (for self and others)	N=33	"I got present to my <i>needs</i> and <i>values</i> ! I learned to stand up for myself! That was <i>huge</i> !"
Affected specific relationships	N=19	"It changed my ability to communicate with my family and especially those with whom I have a deep personal connection"
Increased understanding of the meaning of and ways to handle conflict and violence	N=6	"...It has helped me be more comfortable with conflict...to even see conflict as a valuable opportunity to connect with the other person who I may disagree with"
Changed worldview	N=3	"Fundamental restructuring of my view of people/humanity/psychology..."

Table 8: Frequency of Themes Related To No Observed Changes (n=4)

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
Did not feel changes were significant enough to constitute impact on "life"	N=3	"It changed the way that I perceive situations, but did not truly empower me to react to others who do not act in an NVC way"
Did not see applicability of NVC to diverse situations	N=1	"...the panel as well as the discussions lacked diversity...the discussion presumed a sense of community and trust that I would expect within a homogenous (white) community, but I could not see such interventions...working if...the juvenile perpetrator was an African-American teen who committed a fairly petty crime in a predominantly white neighborhood"

Table 9: Frequency of Themes Related To No Applied Situations (n=69)

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
To enhance communication with family and friends	N=24	"In my relationship with my husband and father most notably. Also in my every day life with people that I interact with that I feel could use some empathy"
In the workplace, at school, or with another established group	N=13	"I use it in my work as an ombudsman as well as in my other relationships. I use it as a strategy that I advocate with visitors to our office"
To help others achieve a greater understanding of themselves and/or their situations	N=12	"I go to nursing homes and visit the elderly. In sharing my experience with a lady I was able also to empathize with her in her pain of a difficult family relationship. And help her recognize her need for forgiveness of the past"

To gain a better understanding of self; during self reflection	N=10	"In a mediation session, I sought to more fully explore possibilities for resolving intense anger and frustration"
In situations involving youth and children	N=8	"Juvenile dependency mediations at a local nonprofit. I am the mediator and I work with SSD, lawyers, and parents around situations where children have been removed from the homes"
In daily life (no specific situation)	N=5	"Can't think of a specific instance but I use NVC all the time-compassion and respect; feelings and needs"
To help navigate difficult personal situations	N=4	"Talking to my parents about coming out as queer"

Table 10: Frequency of Themes Related To "Any other thoughts" (n=51)

Themes	Frequency	Quotes
Overall positive attitudes towards NVC	N=24	"NVC has been one of the greatest transformative modalities I have experienced. I enjoy the practical aspects and the consciousness. I have studied it for over 10 years, and am continually surprised by the power of empathy..."
Expressed interest in or gratitude towards evaluation project	N=7	"Thank you for this survey and having the interest in understanding if NVC has a measureable result. In the world we live in some people desire and need this type of proof and I appreciate that there has been a way to meet that need..."
Challenges of working with NVC techniques	N=6	"While it seems like an easy concept, it's harder to implement and requires constant review and practice (like Zen). It is something I'm hoping to attend to further in the future (without small children in tow)"
Future directions for NVC	N=5	"NVC needs an umbrella organization and certification procedures that are friendlier..."
Seeking additional training opportunities	N=3	"I hope that there is someone I can talk to about difficulties I have...because I feel a lot of hope with the practice of NVC..."

Focus Group Results

The focus group discussion yielded similar results to the data collected with the survey instruments. When asked to describe or define NVC the major theme that emerged was self-awareness, which then contributed to improved communication and relationships with others. Participants identified the technique as a way of life that provides a way to understand yourself and then be intentional, clear, and compassionate in action and communication with yourself and others. One participant summarized NVC in 10 words defining NVC in the following way: "Who needs what right now

and how can I help.” This theme was also evident as participants talked about the removal of power barriers between people as feelings and needs are expressed through empathic listening and connection. Rather than a tool or technique to be utilized, NVC is understood as a way of being in the world by bringing participants to a new level of consciousness and awareness that is present at all times and not just in conflict situations.

Focus group participants understand and value NVC in their own lives in a variety of ways. Participants use NVC as a tool for self-expression, conflict resolution, enriching and enhancing relationships, making decisions, increasing a sense of community, and uniting people in the midst of differences. NVC has also been an effective tool for participants in a variety of settings including: the Department of Family and Child Services, a private school, prison facilities, a university setting, an intentional community, and in homes, work places, and churches. Several participants commented on how their relationships with themselves and other people had improved since they started using NVC including the following: re-establishing communication with siblings, open and honest communication with teenage children, a positive effect on depression symptoms, co-worker and client interactions, deeper and more meaningful personal relationships, and increased awareness and sensitivity to themselves which then affects all other relationships. One participant facilitated NVC training for prisoners and after attending only one NVC session an inmate had a story of how he did not punch another inmate when he normally would have because of how NVC helped him think about the other person’s needs. Another point made during the discussion was how NVC does not just help with conflict, but that it enriched the positive side of relationships by emphasizing how to express gratitude with specificity, namely telling others how and why they are important to us.

Of note about the focus group participants was the longevity of their involvement and engagement in NVC, as nearly all of them have been practicing and supporting their practice of NVC for several years or more. Focus group participants are involved in ongoing and continuing NVC education and training through online sessions, practice groups, workshops, teaching NVC to others, and referencing books and manuals written by Marshall Rosenberg. The sentiments expressed by the participants revealed a genuine and honest gratitude for the positive impact that the technique has had in their lives, and yet they also recognize that it is a challenge and even struggle to use and apply the principles of NVC on a daily basis. It requires intentional practice and application that are counter intuitive to the human tendency to react.

Data Triangulation

Survey and focus group results were triangulated to address the original evaluation aims and to inform recommendations for Sacred Space Inc.

- **How has NVC impacted participants' lives?**

Respondents from both surveys and focus groups were affected by their experiences with NVC trainings in two main ways: their sense of self and relationships with people around them. An integral part of NVC trainings are teachings about recognizing the difference between feelings and needs. The majority of respondents stated that they had had noticeable changes in the way they responded to stressors before and after NVC training. Many situations were highlighted that remarked on heightened awareness of what respondents needed for them to interact positively to an incident. Respondents also commented on their increased ability to actively listen to others. Consequently, this change greatly affected specific relationships in the respondents' lives. In addition to their greater awareness of their own emotions participants noticed better interaction with individuals around them. NVC trainers and students believed that they were more capable of handling situations with others that may be hostile or awkward. Participants called on their training techniques, sometimes intentionally, to guide them through challenges at home, school and work.

While most respondents looked favorably upon NVC and its use in their personal lives some respondents expressed a concern about NVC's applicability to situations or social problems that are higher in stress or that require more complex solutions. For example, one participant noted NVC's possible value in implementing NVC trainings in prison systems. Initiating trainings in hostile environments may aid in decreasing tensions between individuals in these communities. Further, the complexity of behavioral change was cited as major barrier to practicing NVC techniques. Participants stated that although comprehension of NVC concepts seemed simple, intentionally practicing the concepts in their daily lives was difficult.

- **Contribute to the evidence-base supporting the effectiveness of NVC**

An underlying theme was the desire to share NVC with others. Many participants' expressed an overall positive attitude toward NVC and this evaluation process. Frequently, respondents saw value in the principles of NVC. Individuals that stated that NVC did not impact their lives they still supported the efficacy of NVC. Participants who reported no impact from NVC still attributed a change in thought patterns as a result from the training but did not feel empowered to practice NVC

with individuals who do not practice NVC techniques. Respondents stated that they would appreciate the dissemination of findings from the evaluation and that they were interested in hearing the results.

Dissemination Plan for Results

Dissemination has been a plan of the primary stakeholders since the onset of the evaluation project. As with the previous evaluation conducted by Jane Branscomb, Sacred Space Inc. will have the authority to share the evaluation with NVC affiliated organizations.

CNVC, for example, maintains an online directory of research related to Nonviolent Communication. Once finalized, the full evaluation report will be submitted to this directory for inclusion. The final report will also be provided to local organizations GaNVC and Civil Services. A shortened version of the final report will be created for distribution to NVC trainers and participants worldwide. This summary version of the report will be provided to persons in the certified trainers Yahoo group, current and past members of the Compassionate Leadership training program, and subscribers to the GaNVC newsletter. Once published online, a link to the full report will also be provided to these groups. Additionally, evaluation team members will meet with Sacred Space to answer any additional questions they may have regarding the evaluation process.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

To our knowledge, this evaluation is one of the first to assess the impact of NVC techniques on participants' lives. Previous evidence of the effectiveness has all been anecdotal. Second, evaluators were able to assess the impact of a single training and multiple trainings using two sample populations. This allowed for more valid conclusions as to NVC's effectiveness overall. Online surveys allowed access to a broad population each with unique perspectives and experiences and some even from different countries. The evaluation also utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, which offsets the shortcomings of both techniques. Lastly, individuals that have participated in NVC training may have a greater awareness and aptitude for expressing their feelings and ideas. Therefore, survey and focus group respondents may be more forthcoming in their opinions of NVC contributing to higher quality data.

There were also several limitations affecting evaluation outcomes. First, due to time constraints team members were unable to pilot the survey instruments. Pilot testing would determine whether evaluators were asking valid questions and how respondents would interpret questions. To reduce the effects of this limitation both surveys were reviewed three to four times by key stakeholders in order to ensure that appropriate language related to NVC principles was used. In addition to lack of pilot testing, 2007 training attendees did not participate in a pre-test to assess their needs prior to the training. The presence of a pre-test would have allowed evaluators to formulate a more tailored survey, compare results following the training with evaluation results, and obtain a more accurate measure for sustained use of NVC techniques.

The low response rate obtained from the 2007 training survey may result in a sample population that is not representative of the target population. Team members considered many reasons for the low response rate including lack of recall since the training took place in 2007 and unwillingness to open or respond to an unfamiliar email address, even though the email address was created to address this concern. Evaluation team members anticipated a possible low response rate and developed several alternative data collection methods that were used.

While we did generate significant findings, it is probable that self-selection bias affected our results. Typically respondents with more positive feelings toward a subject respond in greater numbers than those that have had negative experiences. While those who had not found NVC as effective may

have declined survey participation to the array of responses obtained counter this limitation. Although, this does seem to be the case, as the majority of participants reported positive experiences.

In addition, our report excluded survey responses that did not include information besides demographics. This may have led to more positive findings than if the persons with missing data had been included. However, since these persons did not contribute any pertinent information to the specific questions (many questions beyond the demographic questions were left blank or incomplete) evaluators felt that exclusion from the analysis was justifiable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey, focus group and evaluation team members derived several recommendations to provide Sacred Space and other NVC organizations with useful suggestions to aid in their goal of a more empathic and communicative world. The recommendations related back to the overarching evaluation question of NVC's impact on the lives of participants. Mixed data collection methods supported the validity of results that were used to inform recommendations. Suggestions were made based on the greatest number of responses to specific themes and ordered accordingly. Due to the positive impacts NVC has had on its participants' lives evidenced by the evaluation it is worthwhile to 1) Investigate barriers to NVC acceptance 2) implement NVC techniques with underserved/at risk groups 3) Increase assessment of future trainings.

Although impact was made on individuals that have participated in trainings and on those that continue on to facilitate trainings of NVC techniques several participants commented on the general public's lack of familiarity with NVC methods. It is beneficial to address the lack of familiarity because the long-term goal of Sacred Space is to affect the majority of individuals in the world. To address this concern, evaluation team members suggest an analysis of methods of advertisement and outreach to gain a better understanding of the population that NVC currently serves. . Hopefully, this would identify the characteristics of NVC participants and identify groups that are not being reached. As the majority of survey and focus group participants were over the age of 50, there appears to be an opportunity to reach out to younger cohorts. Other possible barriers to acceptance were personal challenges in implementing techniques and the cost of resources and training. Respondents stated that although NVC techniques are abstract and require difficult behavioral changes, more training results in greater personal acceptance of NVC techniques. Additionally, some NVC resources that are effective and have greater impact are costly. Offering practice groups to continue training would not only increase exposure to NVC but also address cost issues. Lastly, the evaluation team suggests disseminating testimonial or statistical findings that highlight the positive impact of NVC similar to the results of this evaluation to address barriers to acceptance.

An unanticipated finding from results across both surveys was a concern about the "reach" of NVC. Specifically, although respondents themselves found it valuable, they would like to see the reach expanded to populations that have been historically untouched by NVC. Participants in the focus group discussed the value of implementing NVC training in prisons. This setting maybe an ideal place to implement NVC and would increase the scope of people impacted by NVC techniques. While a focus

group participant shared a very positive personal experience from a prison setting, it seems to be an untouched population overall. In order to achieve identified long-term goals, intentional outreach to at risk or high-risk populations that normally would not have access would increase overall impact.

Finally, evaluation team members suggest strengthening the research and assessment methods of future trainings. Following up with first time trainees would allow for more opportunities to offer training thus optimizing NVC impact in participants' lives as well as in the participants' social network. Administering pre and post-test measures during trainings would lead to increased insight into the learning process surrounding NVC techniques. Although this evaluation assessed the impact of single and multiple trainings, a longitudinal study that follows and records participant experiences and use of techniques would yield data that shed light on NVC's sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation conducted for Sacred Space, Inc. by public health graduate students resulted in valuable findings as to the efficacy and impact of NVC methods. Implementation of recommendations, including addressing barriers to NVC acceptance, initiating training with underserved and at risk group, and consistently evaluating future trainings would support the expansion of NVC locally and globally.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Evaluation of Nonviolent Communication Methods

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our online evaluation of Nonviolent Communication Methods. We received your contact information from the Nonviolent Communication listserv that is hosted by GANVC/Compassionate Leadership and being administered by Faye Landey, Cynthia Moe, Mark Feinknopf, Jeff Joslin and the Atlanta NVC EVAL Team.

The survey should take about 5-10 minutes. Your privacy is important to us; therefore, your answers will never be linked to you personally. The results of this survey will be added to the growing body of research regarding NVC's efficacy.

Thanks again for your participation and contribution to worldwide NVC research!

1) What is your age group?*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39 | <input type="checkbox"/> 56-60 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 61-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-69 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-55 | <input type="checkbox"/> 70 or older |
-

2) What is your gender?*

- Male
 - Female
 - Other
-

3) Please select the MONTH of the MOST RECENT Nonviolent Communication training session you attended.*

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> January | <input type="checkbox"/> June | <input type="checkbox"/> November |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February | <input type="checkbox"/> July | <input type="checkbox"/> December |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March | <input type="checkbox"/> August | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April | <input type="checkbox"/> September | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> May | <input type="checkbox"/> October | |
-

4) Please select the YEAR of the MOST RECENT Nonviolent Communication training session you attended.*

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1990 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1997 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2004 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2005 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2012 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2006 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2013 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2007 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2001 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2008 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1995 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2002 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2009 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1996 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2003 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 | |
-

5) Approximately how many hours of NVC training have you had?*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> < 1 day | <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 days | <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 days | <input type="checkbox"/> > 41 days |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-25 days | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
-

6) Overall, how valuable has your experience been with Nonviolent Communication?*

- Very Valuable
 Moderately Valuable
 Neutral
 Slightly Valuable
 Not Valuable
-

7) Would you say that the Nonviolent Communication Training you participated in contributed to changes in your life?*

- Yes
 No
-

8) Please describe how the Nonviolent Communication Training you participated in contributed to changes in your life.*

9) Please describe why you believe the Nonviolent Communication Training did not contribute to changes in your life.*

10) Please describe a situation where you applied Nonviolent Communication Methods.*

11) Has practicing Nonviolent Communication in your life impacted any of the following?*

	A				
	Great	Much	Somewhat	Little	None
	Deal				
Compassion (Deep awareness of the pain or joy of another)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connection (Rapport or meaningful relationships with others)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Power (Sense of living life with capacity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

for effectiveness and self-sufficiency)

Relationships () () () () ()
 (Mutual experiences with and dealings between two parties)

Understanding () () () () ()
 (Ability to appreciate the meaning of the life experience related by the others)

Well-Being () () () () ()
 (The experience of being healthy, happy, and comfortable as it relates to psychological, emotional, spiritual, and mental states)

12) in which settings have you applied Nonviolent Communication Techniques?*

- I have not applied the techniques.
- At home
- At work
- At school
- With another social group
- Other

13) What strategies have you used to support your practice of Nonviolent Communication?*

- I don't use any strategies.
- NVC resource materials

- Practice groups
 - Additional NVC trainings
 - Practicing NVC intentionally in daily life
 - Other
-

14) Have you offered Nonviolent Communication Training or Education to others?*

- I have not offered NVC training to others.
 - I have offered NVC training, but the training never occurred.
 - I have offered and facilitated NVC training.
 - I have informally shared NVC techniques with others.
 - I have referred people to NVC training opportunities.
 - Other
 - I have no plans to offer NVC training to others at this time
-

15) In regards to the future...*

- I plan to take more NVC training.
 - I do not plan to take more NVC training.
 - I plan to offer NVC training to others.
 - I do not plan to offer NVC training to others.
-

16) Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank You!

Thank you for taking this survey. Your response is very important to us.

APPENDIX B

Evaluation of Nonviolent Communication Methods

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our online evaluation of Nonviolent Communication Methods. We received your contact information from the Nonviolent Communication listserv that is hosted by GANVC/Compassionate Leadership and being administered by Faye Landey, Cynthia Moe, Mark Feinknopf, Jeff Joslin and the Atlanta NVC EVAL Team.

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-

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 1991 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1998 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2005 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2012 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1992 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2006 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2013 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1993 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2007 | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable |
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- Yes
 No
-

8) Please describe how the Nonviolent Communication Training you participated in contributed to changes in your life.*

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10) Please describe a situation where you applied Nonviolent Communication Methods.*

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Connection (Rapport or meaningful relationships with others)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Power (Sense of living life with capacity for effectiveness and self-sufficiency)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships (Mutual experiences with and dealings between two parties)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding (Ability to appreciate the meaning of the life)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

experience
related by the
others)

Well-Being () () () () ()

(The
experience of
being healthy,
happy, and
comfortable
as it relates to
psychological,
emotional,
spiritual, and
mental states)

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- I do not plan to take more NVC training.
- I plan to offer NVC training to others.
- I do not plan to offer NVC training to others.

16) Is there anything else you would like to share?

Thank You!

Thank you for taking this survey. Your response is very important to us.

APPENDIX C

History of GaNVC listserv:

In 2007, as Sacred Space was transitioning out of NVC event management and hoping to empower GaNVC, they donated their listserv accumulated from five years' promotion of NVC in the Atlanta area. At the time it was comprised of local event attendees and any people who had inquired about NVC during that period.

There were also some professionals (social workers and psychologists) from lists that we had purchased in 2004 (From lists of several hundred each, not too many emails available at that time - we used direct mail). We also had connected with many local professional groups over the years from which we garnered interest and contact information.

The list provided GaNVC numbered 1500-2000 emails. There was a mix of ages, professions, and geography - many from Metro Atlanta and the Southeast. Subsequently, local NVCers who provide training have been requested to add to the now GaNVC Listserv, the contact information of people with whom they've worked.

APPENDIX D

We are students at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health. As part of an evaluation class we were asked to evaluate the use of Nonviolent Communication techniques. The overarching question of our evaluation is "How has NVC training impacted participants' lives." The findings of this evaluation will be given NVC trainers, other organization that utilize NVC techniques and NVC training participants, like yourself. The information we receive from you will help us make recommendations to Sacred Space so that they can better serve future NVC training recipients. You have been asked to attend this focus group to discuss your satisfaction with NVC training and methods, any impact that participating in trainings has had on your life and situations where you may have used NVC techniques. The discussion will last about an hour.

With your permission we would like to record the session so we can get an accurate record of what you say. Only the project team members will have access to the recorded information. After all information has been analyzed we will discard any recordings and written information associated with the session.

We will not ask you for your full name and you are more than welcome to use a fake name to ensure anonymity. Taking part in this focus group will in no way affect your relationship with Sacred Space or Emory University.

Being a part of this discussion group is entirely your choice. If you decide not to take part you are free to leave the group at any time. If you have any questions about this project or your part in it or if you have any concerns you may contact any one of us. We will provide you with our contact information at the end of the session.

We want to set up some guidelines prior to the discussion.

(Team members will discuss ground rules prior to the discussion; participants will be asked if they have additional rules they would like to include.)

- There is no need to raise your hand but speaking one at a time will help us better understand each other.
- Please refer to someone else using his or her first name only.
- To ensure everyone's privacy, let's agree that any information shared in this room will not be shared with anyone outside of this room.
- Don't be offended if we have to move on from a topic
- Please place your cell phones on silent.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are excited to hear what you have to say so please be as honest as you can. Are there any questions before we begin?

APPENDIX E

Nonviolent Communication Discussion Guide:

A focus group conducted for the purpose of evaluating the impact of NVC on participants' lives.

- I. Introduction of focus group facilitators
- II. Informed Consent (verbal): purpose, use, recording, confidentiality protection, opportunity to opt-out, address questions, contact information for follow-up questions or concerns.
- III. Introduction of participants (first name only)
- IV. Focus group discussion
 1. How would you describe NVC?
 - Key features?
 - How is it used?
 - What is the purpose of NVC?
 2. What is the purpose of NVC in your life?
 - Why do you use NVC?
 3. Has NVC contributed to changes in your life?
 - How?
 - Why?
 - Can you share specific outcomes of using NVC?
 - Have you experienced any negative consequences of using NVC?
 - Has it impacted particular areas of your life? (Relationships, communication, conflict resolution...)
 4. In what settings have you applied NVC?
 - Home, work, school, church...
 - With particular people?
 - In certain situations?
 5. Can you describe a situation when you utilized NVC?
 - How does this compare to other situation when you have not used NVC?
 6. Can you describe the NVC training you have participated in?
 - Where? When?
 - How long was the training?
 - Were you satisfied with the experience?
 - Is there anything you would change about the training to improve it?
 7. Do you use any strategies to support your practice of NVC?
 - Training, Practice Groups, talking with other practitioners...
 8. Have you offered to share the purpose and techniques of NVC with others?
 - Through conversations, referrals, attending practice groups, etc?
 - Talked about NVC with someone who didn't know what it was?
 - Shared opportunities for NVC training or resources?
 - Actually trained someone in NVC techniques?

APPENDIX F

NVC Focus Group- Setting & Themes

Date: 11/12/2011 Time: 7 PM

Setting: Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center, Norcross, GA

Key Ideas:

1. Definition of NVC (Question 1)

- Connection to self and to others
- A way of life
- “Intentional and clear in actions and relations to others”
- Removes differences in power between people
- “Who needs help right now and how can I help”
- Nonjudgmental , non-blaming
- Self-understanding of “triggers”, feelings and needs
- Practice of conflict resolution
- Compassion, listening, empathy, awareness of feelings and needs, remove power differences

“NVC is a way to walk through life. It is a process that allows me to stay as much as possible in compassion with myself and others.”

“NVC is what happens when differences in power are removed between people. It is the natural form of communication.”

“Who needs what right now and how can I help.”

“A way of connecting with others by being intentional and clear.”

“NVC is “a technique of communication that tries to get past barriers... Another level it is a level of consciousness and a level of awareness...a way of being in the world rather than just something I might use to achieve a goal.”

2. Purpose of NVC in one’s life (Question 2)

- Tool for self-expression (especially with and for children)
- Conflict resolution
- Enriched and enhanced relationships
- Enhanced decision making
- Improved working relationships
- Unity (people of all religions, races, ages, etc.)
- Increased sense of community

“Makes me a less violent mother” not angry in response to child’s actions

Approach an upset child by identifying feelings “now my 3 year old says “I got my feelings hurt” Prior to my knowledge of NVC, when conflict was encountered I would withdraw and avoid that person.

Listening to people empathically. Able to approach sister who has faced many struggles.

“All of the tools of NVC provided me with a clarity regarding what my deepest needs, desires, wants are and also those of other people.” Affected how I make decisions in all aspects of life.

Found it very helpful in my job to just listen to people when they are upset. My interpersonal relationships have experienced less conflict because I listen differently. “The relationship I have with myself has been a huge piece which then affects every other relationship.”

3. Impact of NVC in specific areas of one's life (Question 3- Prompt 5)

- Enhanced communication, connection, and trust with daughter during teenage years
- Deeper and more meaningful personal relationships
- In prison, impact on one inmate who didn't respond to a fellow prisoner with a punch, instead understood there were needs present

Without reserve NVC has affected every aspect of my life. Relationship with myself, my husband, co-workers, patients, sister. "You have a need that has not been met." "I just love turning people around like that." Rude patient apologized for previous behavior, felt better, shared gratitude.

I use it in almost all my interactions with people now, even when I'm just buying something in the store."

"The changes in me have helped in a lot of places. Separating out the emotional component from what you are talking about is so helpful."

Talking with teenage daughter even with topics such as experimenting with drugs and sex. "The connection was the bridge."

NVC does not just help with conflict. Enriches the positive side of relationships. Telling friends how they matter to me.

Express gratitude with specificity. It is our nature to want to give and receive compassionately.

4. Involvement with NVC Training (Questions 6, 7, 8)

- Online training sessions
- Practice groups (attended and established)
- Hosting NVC workshops
- Teaching NVC based courses (university level)
- Most learned of NVC through Dr. Rosenberg (hearing about or attending training with)
- NVC books and manuals
- Trainings offered to:
 - DFACS
 - Parents
 - Private school
 - Prison system
 - University students
 - Intentional communities

5. Additional Thoughts on NVC

- Challenges of practice – struggle to use and apply
- Caused an increased ability to connect with others
- Caused increased quality of life (mental, physical, spiritual)
 - happier (comments from friends, family, co-workers on a noticed change)
 - positive affect on depression
 - better marriage
 - better able to work with angry or frustrated patients in healthcare setting
- Holistic practice

