nonviolent community safety and peacebuilding

handbook

Safety is more than the absence of danger.

Safety is pro-active; the creation of space in which all people, women and men, gay, lesbian, bi or straight and of all colours and cultures, can experience and express their life to the fullest. It is about overcoming fear, rebuilding human communities and resisting from a place of strength.

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other publications by pt'chang:

the peacekeeping handbook, november 1996

pt'chang protocol and procedures handbook, september 2000

pt'chang volunteers manual july 2002

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about **pt'chang**

Pt'chang is a Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacekeeping Group that assists community groups and grassroots organisations create safety in a wide variety of areas and situations.

We provide training workshops, material and human support to community groups and can also provide coordinated teams of trained Nonviolent Peacekeepers upon invitation.

Pt'chang is an all-volunteer and non-profit organisation that seeks to promote and extend the idea we all can create safety ourselves.

Pt'chang asserts that we all have a basic right to feel safe at all times and that all of us share responsibility for creating safety in our lives and communities.

Pt'chang sees safety as pro-active - the creation of space where all people can express and experience their life to the fullest - that it is possible to create safety powerfully and nonviolently. It is not something that we should leave to somebody else or to 'the authorities' but something that all of us can do something about.

Pt'chang uses co-operative and power-with processes to help create safety in ways that empower and bring people together.

We are committed to active nonviolence, responding to all situations and parties with an open mind and respecting the value and shared humanity of every person.

Pt'chang is an open and inclusive group. We attempt to liaise and build relationships with all groups and maintain a non-partisan stance in relation to conflicts or differences between groups and individuals. This non-partisanship reflects our role as mediators in some situations. We seek to remain accountable and responsible to the all parts of the wider community.

Our training is diverse and practical. We learn active listening skills, creative and nonviolent ways of intervening in violence, conflict resolution skills and practise diverse, and effective ways of creating safety and reducing violence in different situations (and we are learning all the time!).

Pt'chang was initially formed in 1992 and has grown out of our combined experiences within community safety projects, social

change movements, nonviolent activism and work in the human services and community development fields.

vision **statement**

Pt'chang works toward the vision of a world free from fear and violence. We believe that everybody has a basic right to feel safe at all times and that everybody is, in their own way, responsible for creating safety within their lives and communities.

Pt'chang sees safety as pro-active - the creation of space where all people can experience and express their lives to the fullest - that it *is* possible to create safety powerfully and nonviolently.

Pt'chang sees itself as a small part of a wider movement toward restorative justice systems, toward safe, peaceful and sustainable communities and toward social systems and structures that meet human needs.

pt'chang **safety themes**

- we all have the right to feel safe all the time
- we are all responsible for creating safety within our lives and communities
- we can respond powerfully, effectively and nonviolently to violence within our community
- creating safety is a crucial part of building real and sustainable communities

introduction

The purpose of this handbook is twofold. Firstly it is designed as a training resource for volunteers working with Pt'chang on any of it's community safety and peacebuilding projects.

Secondly, the handbook is designed as a handy and unique resource for activists and community workers engaged in work for peace at a community level throughout Australia.

Inspired by and drawn from local and international peace initiatives, we have attempted to adapt and integrate many diverse nonviolent activist and peacekeeping skills and concepts used for decades in social change movements throughout the world into the context of peacework in our local community and city.

Pt'chang would like to thank the many contributors to this manual and to especially pay tribute to the many volunteers who have worked with Pt'chang over the years.

Work to create safety and peace, to transform conflict in creative ways is constantly evolving and we are continually learning.

Pt'chang has long seen its work to be an experiment in developing increasingly effective ways to intervene in violence, to transform conflict and to build peace. This handbook also draws from the work and experience of so many tireless volunteers in Pt'chang who apply so much of these skills and techniques with such effectiveness.

Pt'chang hopes that this handbook contributes, in some small way, to the creation of a safer and more peaceful world.

Anthony Kelly

Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group inc.

April 2003

nonviolent **community safety**

Presently one of the most exciting developments is the application of nonviolent peacekeeping and peacebuilding skills and concepts in the context of local community conflicts and violence.

Many skills and concepts that we use in nonviolent peacekeeping have been developed, tried and tested in the context of international armed conflict or war, but can usefully be applied within local, smaller scale conflicts present in Australian communities, cities and urban centres. In this way, nonviolent peacekeeping skills are used in an overall 'nonviolent community safety' approach.

Nonviolent Community Safety, essentially, brings peacebuilding approaches together with community development and social activism to form empowering, nonviolent community building approaches to creating safety in local communities.

Nonviolent Community Safety describes approaches to safety that are community initiated and controlled. It is much more of an 'opening-up' and community building process than the common 'lock-up' and isolating 'power-over' responses to safety that tend to dominate in our society. The annual 'Reclaim The Night' marches Aboriginal Night Patrols and the many Lesbian and Gay anti-violence street patrols are just some examples of nonviolent community safety initiatives.

justice

Nonviolent community safety holds that concepts of justice are paramount to the creation of lasting and genuine safety and peace. Dr. Martin Luther King Junior said that there can be no peace without justice – it is also true that there is no community safety without a truly just community

nonviolent peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is an important and powerful way of creating safety, intervening in and resolving conflict, interrupting actual violence and controlling our own space. It uses strategies and methods that are safe, effective, creative, empowering, non-heroic, and that do not escalate the overall level of violence or victimisation. It can be used by individuals in many contexts but also used by trained and co-

ordinated groups of people in situations that are particularly unsafe or when conflict, violence or repression is anticipated.

In our everyday lives we already have many personal safety strategies and techniques. We often practise techniques that minimise, reduce, or interrupt violence, resolve conflict, resist harassment within our lives, communities and relationships. Nonviolent peacekeeping draws from and is based on these everyday skills and strategies.

Peacekeeping begins with and is guided by an awareness of 'safety' and 'unsafety' that is centred in our own bodies. This body-centred awareness forms a secure, grounded place from which to act that is trustworthy and unalterably ours. Using clear and identifiable 'Body Alerts' which are a part of our bodies Sympathetic Nervous System, we can define safety ourselves and act in ways that are safest for us.

Peacekeeping is about using power, but in a way that seeks to work with rather than against other people. Nonviolent Peacekeeping is based on co-operative and open 'Power-with' principles rather than the forceful, coercing, discriminating and often violent 'Power-over' that is commonly seen in the actions of police and private security guards. This use of Power-with is important and something that allows us to create safety in ways that do not exclude, alienate or repress the needs of others.

Indeed, Peacekeeping is about meeting people's needs, not only people's very basic need to feel safe but many other needs that may lead to conflict, aggression or violence if they are not met. Recognising and helping to meet people's needs for self-esteem, identity, control over their lives (and sometimes actual material needs) forms the basis for Nonviolent Peacekeeping strategies for creating safety.

In short, Peacekeeping is not about curtailing, suppressing, or coercing people or their behaviour (which tends to only contain violence - if not actually escalate it!).

Peacekeeping is about creating space, often on a small scale, in which people can express themselves to the fullest. A very common example of this is the Peacekeeping practise of active listening that aims to allow an aggressive, angry or upset person to calm down by meeting their immediate need to simply be heard. Active listening also allows us to identify other needs that person may have that we can then, hopefully, help to meet.

At one level, nonviolent peacekeeping is a way of creating safety at actions, protests and political events that is often the most consistent with the aims of the social change group or of the movement as a whole. Actions which challenge prevailing conditions or injustices can seek to create safety and resolve conflict in ways that are just, peaceful, culturally appropriate and nonviolent by developing peacekeeping strategies. Trained groups of peacekeepers form very viable and effective, community-initiated alternative to allowing police or private security to control our 'space' for us.

In numerous political actions and demonstrations in Australia, Asia , Latin America, ad North America and Europe it has been found that the effectiveness and nonviolence of the action has been greatly enhanced by the participation of people with special skills. These specialised participants, or peacekeepers, perform specific safety roles for the action which are described in more detail in the 'roles of a peacekeeper' section below.

To be most effective, peacekeeping should be applied within a wider strategy of nonviolent community safety, peacemaking and peacebuilding. It is important to see peacekeeping as just one component of long-term and community wide efforts to create peace and safety at actions, events and in our lives and communities.

defining safety for ourselves

The concept of 'safety' is very difficult to define.

It is often defined for us by the media, police, security companies etc and by politically fuelled 'crime- scares'. For instance, crimes involving violence are commonly only make up about 2 to 5 percent of the total crime figures yet the vast majority of crime reported in the media is violent. Companies sell security systems by emphasising house burglaries and politicians so commonly use particular serious incidents of violence to their own advantage. All this serves to generate fear and to severely distort people's own sense of safety and security.

The ability of people and communities of people to be able to 'define' safety for themselves is an important first step in that community's ability to create genuine safety for themselves. "Where and when do I feel unsafe?", "What do I mean when I say Safety?".

When we ask these questions to people at our training sessions, most replies are about the relationships between people, support networks, having basic needs being met or about us having a degree of choice and control over what is happening to us. Usually very little is mentioned about isolating, lock-down or violence ways of creating safety. In other words, a good definition of safety according to the Protective Behaviours model is:

'Safety =choice + control'.

This has so many implications for communities of people trying to create safety.

There is a difficult tension in so many crime and violence prevention initiatives between making it 'safe' for some people and removing the 'choice and control' for other people. A security – surveillance system for instance might help residents of an inner-city apartment block feel safer, but remove even more 'choice and control' from the homeless people using the alley for shelter from cold winds. It is in this tension where so many community safety initiatives form nothing more than another mechanism for social control.

Nonviolent community safety initiatives look at safety for the whole community. Creating genuine and lasting safety is about restoring everyone's sense of choice and control.

strategies for **peace:**

First described by peace researcher, Johan Gultung, in 1982, these three major approaches to peace outlined below are now well known. The three strategies for peace are not meant to function separately or in a particular order. Strategies can be applied proactively, to prevent violence occurring or reactively to reduce the likelihood of violence reoccurring. Each strategy on its own cannot really be effective in creating peace without the application of the other strategies.

peacekeeping

Peacekeeping is often the most urgent and immediate of all peace strategies as the primary aim is to intervene in actual violence and prevent further violence occurring. Peacekeeping strategies deal directly with the actors involved with violence. Peacekeeping approaches are often 'dissociative' – aimed at keeping opponents apart from each other by the use of direct interposition, 'buffer zones', or 'peace zones' but can also include monitoring and observation and protective accompaniment of threatened activists. Establishing a level of physical safety is the primary goal. Often peacekeeping will aim to create the pre-conditions necessary to allow peacemaking or peacebuilding work to occur or continue.

Johan Galtung warns that peacekeeping can be effective when used in situations of 'horizontal violence' (between parties of relatively equal power) but can serve to maintain the status quo when used in situations of 'vertical violence'. Approaches such as protective accompaniment or observer teams may be more suitable when violence is between parties of unequal power.

peacemaking

Peacemaking is primarily concerned with the search for a negotiated settlement between the parties. Peacemaking activities include bringing the parties together in dialogue about a possible resolution to the conflict. Typical peacemaking activities include mediation, conflict resolution workshops and dialog meetings at various levels. There are a wide variety of negotiated, third-party or facilitated

approaches. The application of the law would be seen as a peacemaking approach. Focus is on the parties interests and positions in a conflict and the aim is to shift parties onto the path of positive and nonviolent conflict resolution.

peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is seen as a strategy aimed at changing the underlying conditions which allowed or caused the conflict or violence to occur in the first place. It focuses on longer-term change at the attitudinal –social level and changing the structural cause of the violence. Peacebuilding generally has a long-term perspective and includes a huge range of activities and approaches aimed at reducing fear, prejudice and mistrust, humanizing former opponents and building positive relationships. This is often done via mutual social, sport or cultural activities or working on shared concerns. Peacebuilding works to develop a 'peace–culture' where nonviolent methods of dealing with conflict are well socialised and prominent. Psycho/social healing processes such as debriefing, ongoing emotional support for traumatized people, reconciliation processes and ensuring justice is seen to be done is crucial peacebuilding activities after periods of violence.

On a social/economic level, peacebuilding works towards the meeting of basic needs by establishing just and equitable economic and political systems.

roles and functions of a **peacekeeping team:**

setting the tone for the action or event.

A nonviolent safety and peacekeeping team seek to establish a positive and affirmative atmosphere by being warm and helpful to participants, by leading songs and chants, and by providing needed information to the group as a whole.

acting as a communication network.

Peacekeepers act as an important face-to-face and radio communication link between the coordinators of the action/event and the participants as well as the internal communication system. Peacekeepers are often well informed of what is going on and so can provide accurate information to the activists. This in itself can help reduce fear and prevent the spread of rumours. Large actions could have a dedicated radio, mobile phone pushbike communication teams, in which case the peacekeeping team maintains communication with this wider network.

providing emergency medical and legal aid.

Peacekeepers are frequently the first people on the spot when a medical or legal emergency arises. They can play an important initial supportive role for the person who needs assistance. Large actions should have separate Medical and Legal Teams who can work with a Peacekeeping team.

maintaining safety and intervening in aggressive situations.

Like marshals, peacekeepers can facilitate the movement and action of large groups of people by directing traffic, encouraging people to walk and not run and co-ordinating the pace and direction of a march. Most importantly, however, Peacekeepers primary focus is on safety of all participants. Peacekeepers are prepared to nonviolently intervene in aggressive situations and to mediate conflicts amongst activists, or between activists and police, counter-demonstrators, or other parties.

acting as go-betweens between authorities and demonstrators.

It may be important to have people as buffers between law enforcement officials, security personnel, workers, and the activists. Peacekeepers can act as mediators in confrontations between authorities and protesters. Peacekeepers have primary responsibility to the participants in the action, but they should be prepared to protect legal authorities, workers, and non-participants from demonstrators if necessary.

acting as lookouts for external threats

In cases where high levels of violent repression or attacks are anticipated, a peacekeeping team should always be looking out away from the action or demonstration in order to observe any possible threats coming towards the action. The aim of this is to provide an early warning for any possible attacks or surprise response from military, police or opposing groups.

components of a **local community peacebuilding project**

peacebuilding

Building relationships

- Creating and forming channels for communication prior to, during and after events,
- Discovering and defining needs of the different parties
- Sharing information appropriately in ways that builds trust and humanises parties
- Getting to know people and building personal relationships
- Shared sporting, cultural or social activities

Peace education

- Nonviolence training,
- Prominent people speaking out for nonviolence,
- Community education activities,
- Distribution of nonviolence resources and tools

Anticipating safety issues and potential conflicts

- Research into the conflict,
- Conflict mapping and conflict analysis,
- Coordinating and planning peacekeeping team responses.

Setting a tone for a safe and peaceful space

- Ensure safety of physical space
- Cleaning up or changing physical appearance of environment
- Socialising a culture of safety and peace
- Communication via ‘safe place’ signs, rainbow stickers etc.,
- Creative elements, art, music, performance, humour

Psycho/social healing and trauma recovery

- Group and individual debriefing

- Cultural activities assisting community heal from past violence
- Work with children healing from trauma
- Counselling and ongoing support

peacemaking

Conflict resolution

- Facilitated dialog
- Joint workshops or conflict resolution training
- Mediation program
- Community conferencing
- Ongoing negotiation pathways

peacekeeping

Containment or disassociation

- Contain and limit the immediate impacts of violence,
- Isolate or separate the parties – barriers, human walls,
- Creation of 'peace zones' – 'Gun-free zones'.
- 'Time –out' periods – community truce.

Crisis Intervention

- Use of peacekeeping and safety teams,
- Community monitoring, Peace Monitors or Observer teams,
- Nonviolent interventions by community members,
- Diversion activities, clowning, music, sports activities.

staying **non-partisan**

Non-partisanship is a widely misunderstood concept facing many people who work in situations of conflict. Non-partisanship can be defined as the refusal to act according to the political alignment or ideology of the conflict, or to act for or against any party.

Non-partisanship implies:

- dealing with all parties, when possible, with an open mind
- reporting as objectively as possible
- refraining from judgmental responses
- voicing concerns to those responsible without being accusative

Non-partisanship does not mean indifference, neutrality or passivity towards injustice or towards violation of human rights, personal dignity and individual freedom. On the contrary, we need to be fully committed to these values and struggles against violence- physical or structural - as means of establishing an enduring peace.

Non-partisanship is different to being *impartial* but the terms are often confused. We may be *partial* towards criteria external to the actual points of the conflict. Peacekeepers may be very partial towards creating safety, to nonviolence and justice and towards people who have experienced violence or who need assistance. In other words we *do* take a philosophical and very practical position. But that does not mean we will *take sides against* anyone else.

Situations of conflict, particularly violent conflict, are highly polarised. Non-partisan action treads the fine line of neither endorsing or opposing any party in a conflict, while often making clear statements of opposition to policies and behaviour being used. Peacekeepers will often state that they are concerned about the safety of everyone. We may refer to the statement that *everyone* has the right to feel safe.

Within Buddhist terminology, the path of non-partisan action is the Middle Path: neither joining the fight or hiding from it. Within a Gandhian framework it is the method that exemplifies his prescription to: "Resist the evil not the evil doer."

Non-partisan action can be a difficult path in conflict situations as it calls for a very clear awareness not only of the actual effect of our

actions, but of the perception of these effects by the combatant parties.

"Non-partisan service responds to demonstrable objectives and external criteria rather than to alignments in the conflict. Categories such as the poor, the suffering, and those in need are criteria that cross boundaries of specific political conflicts. To be partial but non-partisan, then, is to say, "We will be at your side in the face of injustice and suffering, but we will not take sides against those you define as enemies." *- Liam Mahoney, "Unarmed Bodyguards"*

A commitment to non-partisanship is a commitment to supporting the independence and right to self-determination of local organisations. As well as maintaining the peace team's independence, this minimises the risk of fostering local people's dependence and helps avoid the label of "paternalist" which is often given to people involved in peacebuilding work. Peacekeepers should *intervene* in conflict situations but do not *interfere.*

Non-partisanship, finally, also involves an awareness of cultural and religious factors, societal hierarchies, and inter-organisational politicking which can lead local organisations to try to influence the conflict. It is also being mindful anything that that could possibly compromise the independence and non-partisanship of any nonviolent peacekeeping team.

using **power**

We all use power in some way. In our daily lives we use power to get things done, to achieve things to make things happen. What is important, from a nonviolent perspective, is *how* we use that power.

power-over

Power-over is a term used to describe the ways of using power that dominate or control. It stems from a value set that sees one person is better than another and therefore can use power-over them. Power-over is often characterised by threats and intimidation. It aims to subordinate, control, dominate or manipulate. It is often backed in some way by violence or threat of violence. In other ways power-over can be used in deceptive, manipulative, secretive, distorting, lying ways. In many of our daily interactions we use power-over in subtle and not so subtle ways. When we utilise our privilege as white people, or tertiary educated people, or as men etc we are using power-over, often in a subtle or unconscious way. Police, security personnel and others in authority positions will commonly use power-over techniques as the way in which to do their jobs.

In many ways we are extremely familiar with how power-over is used because it is so common in our society from the family, school to our social institutions. Its' consequences can be mistrust, defensiveness, fear and the breakdown of relationships. Power-over is the predominate way of using power in our society today.

power-with

Power-with is another way in which we use power that doesn't seek to dominate or control, in fact the opposite. Power-with is the co-operative use of power. It sees power as something that happens in the interaction between people. When we work together with other people to achieve a goal we are using power-with. The use of power-with can be seen all around us all the time. People working together. People carrying a large piano up a stairs are using power-with. Musicians in a band or orchestra are using power extremely co-operatively. People join a trade-union to utilise power together co-operatively to achieve an end. We are constantly working with other people in complex and co-operative ways and using power together

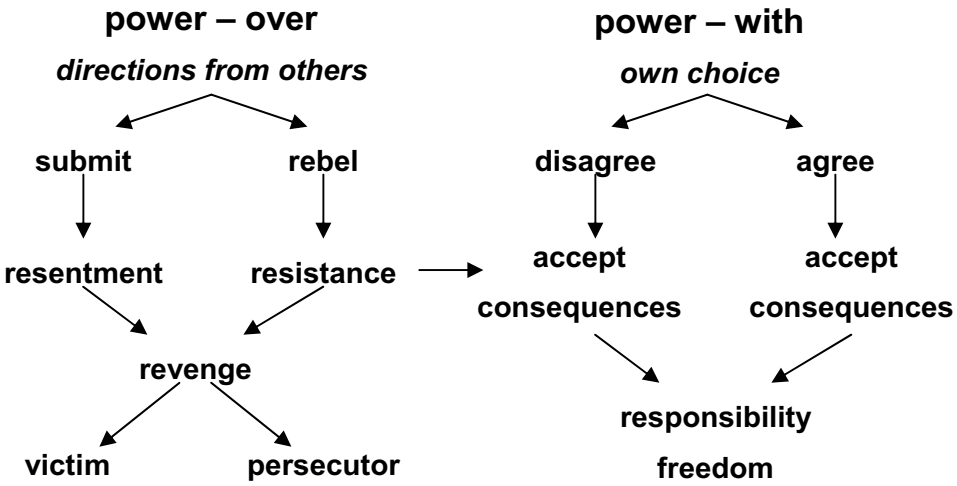
all the time. Power-with tends to build trust, interdependence and mutual respect.

Throughout history, nonviolent struggle has emphasised power-with as a better and more effective way of using power to achieve social change.

Peacekeeping is about using power, but in a way that seeks to work with rather than against other people. Nonviolent Peacekeeping is based on co-operative and open 'power-with' principles rather than the forceful, coercing, discriminating and often violent 'power-over' approaches.

This use of power-with is important and something that allows us to create safety, resolve conflict and respond to aggressive situations in ways that do not exclude, alienate or repress the needs of others.

personal power



nonviolence

Nonviolence is often described as the *'politics of ordinary people'*. As a means of radical social change, nonviolence draws on a rich history of people's struggles from around the world. Grassroots people's movements have brought down dictators, stopped armies, undermined corporations and halted entire industries with nonviolent resistance.

Nonviolence can be applied personally as a way of life, or collectively as a method of transforming conflict and building peace. As a strategic and grassroots approach to social change, nonviolent campaigns apply a huge array of creative protest actions, mass nonco-operation and nonviolent interventions with the aim of redistributing power in society. Revolutionary nonviolence aims to create conditions for just, peaceful and sustainable societies that meet the needs of all people. At its core is a recognition of the shared humanity of all people and the value of life itself.

Nonviolence as a guiding principle is at the core of work to create genuine safety and peace. Principled nonviolence usually implies a commitment to reconciliation, a basic respect for life and a refusal to apply violent methods of resolving conflict or resisting injustice.

Many people have a moral and philosophical commitment to nonviolence, but some espouse nonviolence for partly, or purely, practical reasons. Some recognise that "violence perpetuates violence", and wish to break the cycle of attack and retaliation in which their community or society may be trapped. Some feel that to bear arms would make them more of a target to others. Many communities in regions of intense conflict are deeply sick of violence and wish to create a space in which its members are safe to live, work, and raise their families.

training for nonviolence

Training for nonviolence is necessary in all cultures as so few human institutions teach us how to deal constructively with conflict. Usually we are taught to avoid it or to leave it to the authorities. Neither of these paths are open to people who directly confront violent conflict. Experience gained by Pt'chang over many years has allowed us to improve our training program each year.

A principle trainer for the Dharmayietra peace walks in Cambodia once said *"Our biggest obstacle to working for peace is fear. We have to help people continue to act and confront their fears if we will ever make peace."*

nonviolent communication skills

active **listening**

This is a fundamental skill applied in so many aspects of nonviolent community safety, which, when sensitively used, is one of the most powerful and useful tools we have for peace.

Active listening is a tool and only a tool: Just as the ability to use a hammer does not make a carpenter neither does the ability to actively listen make a counsellor. The skill of the trade comes with the appropriate application of the tool.

Active listening is more than hearing: It involves processing what has been heard and skilfully selecting a response. At its most basic, active listening serves to encourage the person to tell more and most importantly, communicates to the person that you are interested and listening.

Self awareness will alert you to your own attitudes and biases, so that you resist imposing these on other people. Your own attitudes can intrude on the listening process and it is important that this does not happen.

attitudes that contribute to active listening

You need to be aware of your own beliefs, needs, biases and limitations.

Basic to the quality of your communication are the beliefs and attitudes you bring, attitudes you hold in relation to others, and to yourself.

You want to listen and are interested in the person.

People quickly sense when your response is not genuine 'Phoney sincerity' does not work: your tone of voice will convey your sincerity.. If you are patient and not anxious to put in your 'two cents' worth, and show that you remember what the person is saying *"So you've been married to Mary for 7 years now"),* your interest can be demonstrated and conveyed.

You respect the person's individuality and right of self-determination.

This means that every person has a right to make his/her own decisions and choices even if you disagree or disapprove. It is inappropriate for us to try to convince others that we are right and they are wrong. Preaching and patronising attitudes are not the domain of peacekeepers.

You avoid labelling and dismissing the caller or their feelings

"It's not really such a big problem", is not helpful to the person with a problem. Minimising others feelings *"It'll be alright, don't worry, don't feel so bad",* is usually an expression of your own discomfort with those feelings, rather than a helpful response for them.

"I understand how you feel", is one of the most aggravating phrases and invites the aggressive retort *"You DON'T KNOW how I feel!"!*

You are able to tolerate less than perfect outcomes

You need to be able to tolerate differences of outlook, and a person's unwillingness to change his/her situation. Sometimes you will need to accept that the person has unresolved issues and feelings even when they leave. Often all we can do is allow people to experience and better understand their feelings. You cannot make the feelings go away. People will only tackle difficult situations when they feel ready to risk experiencing the stress of change.

Some people are dealing with a myriad of problems and it is inappropriate to try to consider them all. Focusing on one issue may help. Other people may be too distressed to do this and may not be at a point where we can listen to them or support them effectively.

skills used **in active listening**

opening up skills

Paraphrasing: consists of restating in your own words what you think someone has just said. This can be a primary tool when responding to an aggressive person. The benefits of paraphrasing include:

People really know that they are being heard.

It prevents you from escalating anger and lets you cool down.

False assumptions, errors, and misinterpretations are corrected immediately.

Helps you remember what was said.

Paraphrasing prevents you form using the blocks to listening so much.

Repeating what was said in the same words as the person, e.g.,"I felt as though no-one was listening to me so I thought I'd make them listen and then I stood right next to my son and screamed at him. He listened but I hated myself."

"So because you felt no-one was listening to you, you thought you'd make them. So you went right next to your son and screamed... and he listened and you hated yourself."

Reflecting feelings: Include a feeling in the paraphrase, e.g., *"You're feeling upset because no-one was listening to you....."* Reflective listening can be over many levels, You can reflect back feeling and content and also other messages you are hearing in the tone of voice or the context. This allows you to check how the person is really feeling and often tells you some of their underlying needs.

Reflecting feelings is crucial to express empathy and enable the person to move beyond telling their story. The sharing of feelings is the beginning of the healing process. By expressing the feelings and by having them acknowledged, the person is able to look at her/his situation more objectively and consider what can then be done.

"You sound really worried" In this case you infer feelings from the tone of the previous statement.

You can also predict feelings by putting yourself in the other person's shoes: *"I would feel really distressed in your position".* If your prediction is not accurate the person will quickly correct you. The exchange is still useful.

It is helpful in reflecting feelings to identify 'feeling words' and reflect them back. I'm so confused I can't think straight. I'm all uptight. *"You're upset and confused."*

Open Questions: "How are you feeling?"

"What happened when....."

"Can you tell me about....."

Encouragers: uh huh, right , yes, mmm, oh (keep the ball rolling) Repeating the last word of a sentence, e.g., So then we had a fight. *"A fight?"* And I am really confused. *"Confused?"*

Empathy: "I can hear how hurt you sound." (can be opening up) "It sounds as though it's very painful for you to talk like this." (or containing) "You were angry and now you're feeling disappointed. That can be a very difficult feeling to deal with."

containment skills

Summarising: This is an extended form of paraphrasing; it identifies themes and issues and reflects or feeds them back to the person. This is often used after listening for a while and 'sums up' what has been said. *"Am I right in saying this has frightened you and this time you're determined to do something about it."*

Focusing: "There's a lot going on right now. Can we go back to....."

Prioritising: "You've explained that there are many things which are affecting you and ..... is causing most concern."

Immediacy: Being able to response to where the person is at in the moment. "There's a bit of a silence. How are you feeling?" "I get the impression you didn't like my response."

Closed questions: "Have I heard you correctly?". "Do you want to do something about it?". "Do you feel you have the will power to do it?"

active listening **- a summary**

Active listening reflects back to the person what has been said helps a person simply to feel heard. It demonstrates genuine interest, tells the person that you have heard what they have been saying, both in content and feeling, and encourages a deeper exploration of what is going on for that person. It also effectively reduces the need for questioning.

At first practising this skill seems artificial and uncomfortable, but that is common when handling a new tool. With practice it can become a valuable aid that will assist you in nonviolent peacekeeping.

listening for needs

In nonviolent peacekeeping, active listening can be used to help calm an agitated, angry or upset person down by meeting their immediate need to be heard.

Importantly, active listening allows us to discover the person's underlying needs which may be making them angry, agitated or upset in the first place. It allows us to provide a more accurate and effective intervention if we have listened to them well. In other words it is our most important assessment tool. Needs are often hidden and undeclared. The person may not be fully aware of them in an articulate way. With active listening we can listen for and reflect back what the person needs.

active listening to respond to an aggressive person

Active listening is also used as a useful tool in calming down and responding to an agitated or aggressive person. Get the aggressor talking and listen to what s/he says. Encourage him/her to talk about what s/he believes, wishes, fears. The listening is more important than what you say - keep the talk going and keep it calm.

Listen to what they say carefully and reflect back. Let the aggressor know you are listening and try and build some commonground or agree with things that you do agree with. Ignore words of abuse and insults and focus on what is going on. It may be appropriate at times to state clearly what is happening and what you would like. "I'm interested in what you have to say" or "I'd like to listen to you but you are shouting too loudly." Express what you observe in a clear, and calm manner. Avoid sparring or returning insults at all costs.

listening **blocks**

Most people use some of these listening blocks from time to time. It's extremely helpful to identify which ones you use with certain people.

Comparing: You listen to work out who is smarter, who has suffered more, who makes more money, etc. you're so busy assessing that you can't let much in.

Mind reading: You pay little attention to what the person is actually saying because you are concentrating on what you think the person is *really* thinking and feeling. Mind reading relies on making assumptions.

Rehearsing: Your attention is on preparing what you are going to say next. You may *look* interested but your mind is on your own point or storey.

Filtering: You listen to some things and not others, often due to you own prejudices or deeply held beliefs

Filtering In: Looking for an indication of you expect or fear, e.g. Are they angry with you?

Filtering Out: Avoid hearing certain things which are negative, critical or unpleasant.

Judging: When you prejudge someone (e.g. stupid, unqualified, immoral) you don't place much value in what they have to say. Negative labels have enormous power. A basic rule of listening is that judgements are made *after* you have already heard and evaluated the message.

Day-dreaming: Something the person says suddenly triggers a chain of personal associations and you're somewhere else for a while. Everyone dreams sometimes, but you are more likely to dream if you are bored or anxious. If you dream a lot with certain people its worth while asking yourself ' Why '.

Over identifying: Everything a person tells you is related back to your own experience. You launch into *your* story without having really heard theirs.

Advising: Intent on solving problems, you're so busy working out suggestions that you may miss hearing the feelings. When the

person's feelings are not acknowledged, he or she still feels basically alone. You also may make it more difficult for the person to learn how to solve their own problems.

Sparring: You're so quick to disagree that the other person never feels heard. There is a tendency to take strong stands in regard to your personal beliefs and references. The way to avoid sparring is to repeat back and acknowledge what you heard. Look for one thing that you might agree with.

Put-downs: Sarcastic or belittling remarks which dismiss the other person's point of view, This pushes the communication into stereotyped patterns where each person repeats a familiar hostile response.

Discounting: Running yourself down in response to a compliment. The other person doesn't feel that his/her appreciation was heard.

Being right: You avoid being wrong at any cost -- you don't accept criticism, you can't be corrected, and you can't listen to suggestions for change. Since you don't acknowledge mistakes, you are likely to repeat them.

De-railing: When bored or uncomfortable with a topic you suddenly change the subject or make a joke out of it. This saves you the discomfort or anxiety involved in serious listening.

Placating: You want to be nice, pleasant, supportive. You want people to like you. So you agree with everything. You're placating, rather than really listening and examining what's being said.

Adapted from " MESSAGES " By McKay, Davis & Fanning

assertive **communication**

sending messages effectively

The first aspect of effective communication is the sending of a message. What can we do to make sure our ideas and feelings are effectively communicated? Research supports the conclusion that the skills of sending messages involve:

Clearly "own" your messages by using personal pronouns such as "I" and "my"; personal ownership includes clearly taking responsibility for the ideas and feelings that are expressed by you. People "disown" their messages when they use terms like "most people", "some people", "some members", or "our group". Such terms make it difficult to tell whether the person really thinks and feels what he is saying or whether he is repeating the thoughts and feelings of others.

Make your messages complete and specific. Include clear statements of all necessary information the receiver needs in order to comprehend the message. Being complete and specific seems obvious, but often a person will not communicate the frame of reference he is taking, the assumptions he is making, the intentions he has in communicating, or the leaps in thinking he is making. Thus while a person may hear the words she will not comprehend the meaning of the message.

Make your verbal and nonverbal messages congruent with each other. Every face-to-face communication involves both verbal and nonverbal messages. Usually these messages are congruent, so if a person is saying that he has appreciated your help, he is smiling and expressing warmth verbally. Communication problems arise when a person's verbal and nonverbal messages are contradictory. If a person says "Here is some information that may be of help to you" with a sneer on his face and a mocking tone of voice, the meaning you receive is confused by the two different messages being simultaneously sent. The nonverbal message is always more powerful than the verbal one.

Be redundant. Repeating your messages more than once and using more than one channel of communication (such as pictures and written messages as well as verbal and nonverbal cues) will help the receiver understand your messages.

Ask for feedback concerning the way your messages are being received. In order to communicate effectively you must be aware of how the receiver is interpreting and processing your messages. The only way to be sure is to continually seek feedback as to what meanings the receiver is attaching to your messages.

Make the message appropriate to the receiver's frame of reference. The same information will be explained differently to an expert in the field than to a novice, to a child than to an adult, to your boss than to a co-worker.

Describe your feelings by name, action, or figure of speech. When communicating your feelings it is especially important to de descriptive. You may describe your feelings by name ("I feel happy"), actions ("I feel like dancing") or figures of speech ("I feel like I'm floating I'm so happy"). The description will help communicate your feelings clearly and unambiguously.

Describe other people's behaviour without evaluating or interpreting. When reacting to the behaviour of other people be sure to describe their behaviour ("You keep interrupting me") rather than evaluating it ("You're a rotten, self-centred, egotist who won't listen to anyone else's ideas").

Johnson, D and Johnson, F. (1987) 'Joining Together', Prentice-Hall

giving and receiving **feedback**

'Feedback' is a communication to a person or a group which gives that person information about how they affect others. Feedback helps an individual consider and alter their behaviour and thus better achieve their goals.

It is important to be able to give feedback in such a way that people can hear it, take it in, evaluate it, and change behaviour which affects their relationship with others.

A basic premise here is that people really do want to hear what other people have to say about them, both positive and critical. We may have unpleasant feelings about how it has happened in the past, but we do look for all kinds of signals and messages about ourselves from others. When someone takes the time to think about us and give us direct information about how we are perceived, it can be quite an affirming experience.

A simple and very useful model for nonviolent feedback is:

Observing – “I’ve noticed that…”

Feeling – “What I’m feeling is…”

Needs – “What I need is…”

Request – “I’d like to ask that…”

From Marshall Rosenberg

giving feedback

Below are seven criteria for useful feedback:

Useful feedback is **descriptive** rather than evaluative. It merely describes what is seen or heard, thus the receiver is left free to use it or not. By avoiding evaluative language, it reduces the need for the receiver to respond defensively.

is **specific** rather than general. "You weren't listening", is not as helpful as "Just when Sam started talking about his mother, your eyes looked elsewhere and it looked as though you were not listening to what he was saying".

It **takes into account the needs** of both the receiver and the giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only the giver's needs and fails to consider the needs of the receiver.

It is **directed toward behaviour that the receiver can change**. Frustration is only increased when one is reminded of a shortcoming over which there is little control.

It is **asked for** rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when it is asked for.

It is **well timed.** In general, feedback is most useful when given as soon as possible after the observed behaviour (depending of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, and on the support available from others if the receiver is acutely vulnerable, etc.).

It is **checked** with the receiver. When people receive feedback they are likely to be anxious and consequently they may hear a different message than what was intended. It is therefore important to check that the person has correctly heard the feedback.

receiving feedback

Most people feel they are in the 'hot seat' when receiving feedback and many people block out positive acknowledgment and only hear critical comments. In these circumstances it is common for the negative criticism to be exaggerated or distorted, rather than being counterbalanced by positive acknowledgments

To make use of feedback it is important to accurately hear it, and for it to be in a useful form.

- Stay calm, receptive and listen attentively.
- Use your active listening skills.
- Try to reflect back what you heard, in both the feelings and content.
- Ask for clarification, and check out the person's meanings.
- Ask if you have correctly heard the key points.
- Assert your right to have feedback given in a useful form.
- Attempt to make use of the information provided.

respecting **difference**

We react and respond to other people out of our own values – what we would do, think or believe. That's fair enough unless we start to assume that everyone has the same values as we do. Values are an important part of who we are.

We can decide to not acknowledge our values when we talk with someone. But that's not really practical because our faces and body language can often betray our values, and not very assertive as it doesn't acknowledge our own needs.

OR

We can get to know our own values clearly so that when we are communicating with someone we can make a decision whether to;

- Test our values out
- Stand up for them
- Put them on hold
- Leave them out

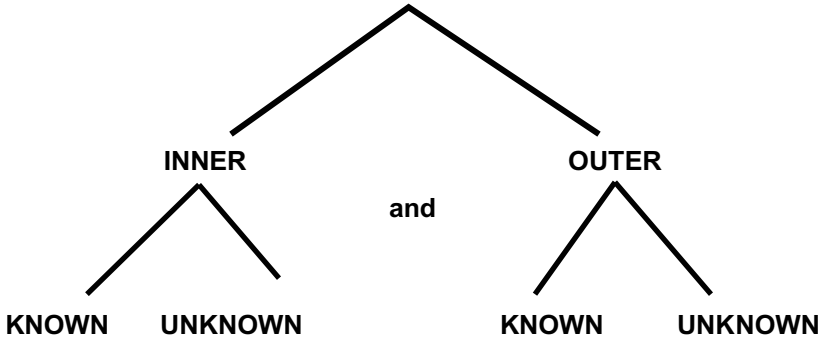
According to the particular situation.

empowerment

Because people can be in some form of crisis when peacekeepers come into contact with them, they may discount what they know or need assistance to get in touch with their 'inner' resources (courage, faith, experience, age etc) and their 'outer' resources (friends, family, networks community services etc.)

Empowerment is the process of people recognising and utilising their own inner and outer resources.

EVERYBODY HAS RESOURCES



OUR TASK IS TO INCREASE THE KNOWN

approaches to empower people

Clarification: A full exploration of the situation will help the person appraise possibilities and gain perspective.

Acknowledge positives: Acknowledging positives will reinforce the persons' strengths - attempt to shift the focus away from failure. Listen for clues about and ask about exceptions to "failure dominated lifestyles".

Give information: eg. An explanation of the uniqueness and normality of the grieving process can be helpful to someone who

cannot make sense of their experience in grieving. eg. Information about contracting HIV is important if someone has ungrounded fears that they may have contracted HIV.

Provide motivation: e.g. "It takes great courage to persevere .... you've already overcome many obstacles ....", "I really admire how you have persevered under great difficulty". "I am sure there is enough determination within you to try... "

Externalise the problem: Externalise the problem from the person eg. "I'm a schizophrenic" is very different from "You're a person suffering from an illness called schizophrenia."

Externalisation allows the person to view the problem as separate from themselves: they can then be freer to tackle the problem.

Reframe constraints: eg. "I can never find the right words to say", reply: " I actually appreciate it when there are pauses in conversation. It allows me time to think and reflect."

Consideration of options: Have the person think of possible options for actions. The trap here is controlling your own desire to rescue by providing solutions. Instead help the other person to think of possibilities. Get them to do the work. Only if they are really stuck, make suggestions.

Exploring similar circumstances from the past: Ask the person if they have ever experienced a similar situation and help them examine the resources they used then. Ask whether the caller could use the same resources to advantage again.

Explore support systems: What are the person's outer resources? (Family, friends, community supports and services). How useful have these resources been to them in the past? What would be the best approach with these resources to get the best outcome? Consider; friends, family, contacts, community services, 24 hour phone lines.

Provide a referral: always provide something for the person to follow up on and seek further support.

nonviolent intervention and peacekeeping skills

what right do I have to intervene?

where does our 'authority' to peacekeep come from?

Everybody's basic right to feel safe and be free from harassment and coercion

Our relationship with each other; for example, the sort of relationship you have with another person will affect how they react to you. Includes:

level of trust and respect;

empathy;

power relationship (gender/race/class etc)

Our sense of personal 'truth'. "Where am I coming from right now?", "How 'right' do I feel." "How centred am I?"

guidelines for **peacekeepers**

Be warm, friendly, and helpful. The tone of the demonstration depends on how you respond to your fellow activists, police, the media, and workers. Our attitude should be one of openness, friendliness and respect toward all officials and participants. Peacekeepers are not junior police, and this is no place for power trips.

Be creative. Nonviolence does not mean being aloof or failing to act. You must be creative in your attempt to intervene and resolve a conflict.

Be assertive. Deal fairly and honestly with people engaged it conflict, no matter what they have done. If you don't know the answer to something, say so. If you have agreed to be a peacekeeper you must have agreed to uphold the(nonviolent principles of the demonstration. This occasionally means pushing people to do things they do not want to do. Stick to your commitment to nonviolence and strongly encourage others to do the same.

Remain calm. It is a rare person who does not become angry or afraid under stress. Don't think that you are weak if you have fears. The important thing in being a peacekeeper is learning how to manage fears and stress by remembering the overall goal of the action. Try to deal with any fears and anger before the demonstration rather than during it.

Remain impartial. Give up resentment over the wrong you are trying to set right. Gandhi said, "Hate sin, and love the sinner." This applies to conflicts between demonstrators as well as to conflicts with police, workers, onlookers.

Work as a team. You don't have to do everything yourself. Use and rely on the support you can get from other peacekeepers and from your fellow activists. Good and clear communication are crucial to allow a team to work well together. Any more than six peacekeepers in a team should have a co-ordinator and a radio comms in order to co-ordinate communication.

Do your job. If you feel you cannot perform a specific task due to either physical, emotional, or moral reasons, inform the team coordinator so that a person can be found to replace you. It is not a disgrace to say "no, I can't do it." If you feel you cannot handle

yourself nonviolently in a situation, notify another peacekeeper and step away from the conflict. It is better to step out than to risk an escalation of the conflict. Peacekeepers should also avoid other responsibilities during the time they 'on duty" as peacekeepers, This includes caring for children, carrying signs or banners, working at a concession or table, distributing literature for other organizations, etc.

- Adapted from Rocky Flats Action Group nonviolence manual

area coverage and observation skills

area coverage and observation at a political protest or event aims to:

1. to provide the earliest possible warning of an unsafe or dangerous situation, in order to take steps to protect self, team mates and people;
2. to provide chronological and accurate reporting of any incident afterwards.

as a team:

Maintain eye contact with team members whenever possible;

Remain aware of where team members are in relation to yourself;

Look for areas not covered and walk into them;

Ensure that team is covering both internal space and looking outwards for external threats.

what might we be observing?

people and their behaviours and body language

other people scanning crowd (police observers)

changes in crowd movement, pace, noise level

snipers and police/military positions, rooftops etc.

police/military numbers and unit information

road blockages

bottlenecks (narrow areas)

entrances and exits

escape routes

dangerous things in area

potential threats coming from outside area

observations can be categorized by:

Individual people, and their behaviours and body language;

Crowd changes in pace, size and patterns of movement;

Environmental factors: buildings, exits and entrances, objects and ground conditions.

when observing:

With your eyes and head movements, scan the immediate area first (within 10 meter radius), then middle distance (radius of quick walk or run) and then far distance, (what you see around immediate area). Scan each area in turn, Immediate area first for safety.

when intervening in **aggression or violence:**

Be observant of people's mood and behaviour and try to anticipate aggression or violence at the earliest possible stage. Finding a gentle way of intervening early is preferable to waiting until it escalates to physical violence

Work in pairs and call/signal for support from other peacekeepers before intervening

Just observe before intervening. Gain as much info as you can from the scene, from other people about the situation *before* you go any further.

Make sure you are calm. 'Centre' yourself by taking a deep breath, taking time. Evaluate the level of risk.

Face the greatest threat. For example, the most aggressive person. If activist are aggressive, face them. If police or counter-demonstrators get aggressive, face them.

When facing an aggressive person be aware of **safe distance**, and an escape route.

Remain aware or your **body stance** (confident, open, non-threatening), and maintain reasonable and non-threatening **eye-contact.**

Just listen and make sure that the aggressive person knows that you are listening. Nodding, verbal acknowledgements and asking open questions. An aggressive person will not listen to reasoned arguments so don't try to argue facts or debate issues – just actively listen until the person calms.

While one peacekeeper is facing aggression others can support be **isolating the aggression** – keeping other people away who may want to argue and potentially escalate the situation. Human chains can form walls around aggressive people.

Look for creative ways of isolating and calming aggressive people by **building a positive relationship** with them. "I'd like to listen to you

but I'm having trouble because your shouting." "Do you want to talk with me over here away from the crowd?" and by asking simple open questions "What do you think?" Your respectful and friendly attitude will help this.

Be prepared to **swap peacekeepers** as one aggressive person can tire out peacekeepers quickly. Support each other to do this.

Remain in the area until you feel (body alerts?) certain that it is 'resolved' and the area is safe.

As a group, **debrief** and **evaluate** after the incident.

de-escalating **conflicts**

All these techniques below can be used to de-escalate , manage and transform conflict. Many conflicts *get worse than they actually need to be* because the participants lose control of themselves and retreat into self-reinforcing patterns of attack and counterattack. Here are some suggestions, drawn from the literature of conflict resolution and psychotherapy, that can be used by yourself or in a peacekeeping situation to de-escalate conflicts.

Calm yourself down. Breath very slowly and deeply. While breathing, think of a moment of great happiness in your life. Doing this will help you from feeling totally swallowed up by the current situation. It is not all of your life.

Just listen. Listening actively and intently to the other person can help them articulate all there concerns all issues and allow you to search for underlying needs and common ground

Acknowledge and apologize for any mistakes you may have made in the course of the conflict. Others may do the same if you get the ball rolling. Make an accepting space for your partners-in-conflict to start over. Letting go of defending past mistakes can allow participants in a conflict to see their situation from fresh angles. Apologies can often transform and de-escalate conflicts very quickly.

Imagine your partner-in-conflict as a potential ally. Imagine that the long-term survival of both of you depends on the two of you cooperating in some sort of creative way that will meet more of both your needs.

Affirming anything that you can agree on. Look for areas where your interests and needs might overlap with the interests and needs of your "partner-in-conflict.".

Summarize the other person's needs, feelings and position as fairly as you can, and do this first, before you present your own needs or requests. When people feel heard, they are more likely to listen.

Think about what you really need. What is best in the long run for your mind, your body, your spirit, your workplace, your family, your community? Don't allow yourself to get distracted from your own goals and needs by what you may see as someone else's misdeeds.

Focus on positive goals for the present and the future, no matter what you and/or your partner-in-conflict may have said or done in the

past. Punishing or shaming someone for past actions will not put that person in a frame of mind to meet your needs in the present. The present and future are all you can change.

Make requests for specific actions that another person could actually do, rather than for overall feelings or attitudes. Explain how the requested actions will help you, so that the other person feels powerful and respected in complying with your request.

tokyo **train story**

A turning point in my life came one day on a train in the middle of a drowsy spring afternoon. The old car clanked and rattled over the rails. It was comparatively empty--a few housewives with their kids in tow, some old folks out shopping, a couple of off-duty bartenders studying the racing form. I gazed absently at the drab houses and dusty hedgerows.

At one station the doors opened, and suddenly the quiet afternoon was shattered by a man bellowing at the top of his lungs--yelling violent, obscene, incomprehensible curses. Just as the doors closed the man, still yelling, staggered into our car. He was big, drunk, and dirty. He wore labourer's clothing. His front was stiff with dried vomit. His eyes bugged out, a demonic, neon red. His hair was crusted with filth. Screaming, he swung at the first person he saw, a woman holding a baby. The blow glanced off her shoulder, sending her spinning into the laps of an elderly couple. It was a miracle that the baby was unharmed.

The couple jumped up and scrambled toward the other end of the car. They were terrified. The labourer aimed a kick at the retreating back of the old lady. "You old whore!" he bellowed. "I'll kick your ass!" He missed; the old woman scuttled to safety. This so enraged the drunk that he grabbed the metal pole at the centre of the car and tried to wrench it out of its stanchion. I could see that one of his hands was cut and bleeding. The train lurched ahead, the passengers frozen with fear.

I was young and in pretty good shape. I stood six feet, weighed 225. I'd been putting in a solid eight hours of aikido training every day for the past three years. I liked to throw and grapple. I thought I was tough. Trouble was, my martial skill was untested in actual combat. As students of aikido, we were not allowed to fight.

My teacher taught us each morning that the art was devoted to peace. "Aikido," he said again and again, "is the art of reconciliation. Whoever has the mind to fight has broken his connection with the universe. If you try to dominate other people, you are already defeated. We study how to resolve conflict, not how to start it."

I listened to his words. I tried hard. I wanted to quit fighting. I even went so far as to cross the street a few times to avoid the "chimpira," the pinball punks who lounged around the train stations. They'd have

been happy to test my martial ability. My forbearance exalted me. I felt both tough and holy. In my heart of hearts, however, I was dying to be a hero. I wanted a chance, an absolutely legitimate opportunity whereby I might save the innocent by destroying the guilty.

"This is it!" I said to myself as I got to my feet. "This slob, this animal, is drunk and mean and violent. People are in danger. If I don't do something fast, somebody will probably get hurt. I'm gonna take his ass to the cleaners."

Seeing me stand up, the drunk saw a chance to focus his rage. "Aha!" he roared. "A foreigner! You need a lesson in Japanese manners!" He punched the metal pole once to give weight to his words.

I held on lightly to the commuter strap overhead. I gave him a slow look of disgust and dismissal. I planned to take this turkey apart, but he had to be the one to move first. And I wanted him mad, because the madder he got, the more certain my victory. I pursed my lips and blew him a sneering, insolent kiss. It hit him like a slap in the face. "All right!" he hollered. "You're gonna get a lesson." He gathered himself for a rush at me. He'd never know what hit him.

A split second before he moved, someone shouted "Hey!" It was ear splitting. I remember being struck by the strangely joyous, lilting quality of it--as though you and a friend had been searching diligently for something, and he had suddenly stumbled upon it. "Hey!" I wheeled to my left, the drunk spun to his right. We both stared down at a little old Japanese man. He must have been well into his seventies, this tiny gentleman, sitting there immaculate in his kimono and hakama. He took no notice of me, but beamed delightedly at the labourer, as though he had a most important, most welcome secret to share.

"C'mere," the old man said in an easy vernacular, beckoning to the drunk. "C'mere and talk with me." He waved his hand lightly. The giant man followed, as if on a string. He planted his feet belligerently in front of the old gentleman and towered threateningly over him.

"Talk to you?" he roared above the clacking wheels. "Why the hell should I talk to you?" The drunk now had his back to me. If his elbow moved so much as a millimetre, I'd drop him in his socks.

The old man continued to beam at the labourer. There was not a trace of fear or resentment about him. "What'cha been drinkin'?" he

asked lightly, with interest. "I been drinkin' sake," the labourer bellowed back, "and it's none of your goddam business!"

"Oh, that's wonderful," the old man said with delight. "Absolutely wonderful! You see, I love sake, too. Every night, me and my wife (she's seventy-six, you know), we warm up a little bottle of sake and take it our into the garden, and we sit on the old wooden bench that my grandfather's first student made for him. We watch the sun go down, and we look to see how our persimmon tree is doing. My great-grandfather planted that tree, you know, and we worry about whether it will recover from those ice storms we had last winter. Persimmons do not do well after ice storms, although I must say that ours has done rather better than I expected, especially when you consider the poor quality of the soil. Still, it is most gratifying to watch when we take our sake and go out to enjoy the evening - even when it rains!" He looked up at the labourer, eyes twinkling, happy to share his delightful information.

As he struggled to follow the intricacies of the old man's conversation, the drunk's face began to soften. His fists slowly unclenched. "Yeah," he said slowly, "I love persimmons, too..." His voice trailed off.

"Yes," said the old man, smiling, "and I'm sure you have a wonderful wife."

“No," replied the labourer, "my wife died." He hung his head. Very gently, swaying with the motion of the train, the big man began to sob. "I don't got no wife, I don't got no home, I don't got no job, I don't got no money, I don't got nowhere to go. I'm so ashamed of myself." Tears rolled down his cheeks; a spasm of pure despair rippled through his body. Above the baggage rack a four-colour ad trumpeted the virtues of suburban luxury living.

Now it was my turn. Standing there in my well-scrubbed youthful innocence, my make-this-world-safe-for-democracy righteousness, I suddenly felt dirtier than he was.

Just then, the train arrived at my stop. The platform was packed, and the crowd surged into the car as soon as the doors opened. Manoeuvring my way out, I heard the old man cluck sympathetically. "My, my," he said with undiminished delight, "that is a very difficult predicament, indeed. Sit down here and tell me about it."

I turned my head for one last look. The labourer was sprawled like a sack on the seat, his head in the old man's lap. The old man looked

down at him, all compassion and delight, one hand softly stroking the filthy, matted head.

As the train pulled away, I sat down on a bench. What I had wanted to do with muscle and meanness had been accomplished with a few kind words. I had seen aikido tried in combat, and the essence of it was love, as the founder had said. I would have to practice the art with an entirely different spirit. It would be a long time before I could speak about the resolution of conflict.

Terry Dobson was a holder of a fifth-degree black belt in aikido, co-author of "Aikido in Everyday Life" (North Atlantic Books). This article was originally published as 'A Soft Answer'.

skills for looking after ourselves and others

emotional preparedness

Your emotions can contribute to a situation's effect on you and to your response to it, because our responses are not only based on what we know, but on how we feel. Our experiences reinforce our emotional habits, often causing us to react inappropriately to situations requiring a particular, unique response. By focusing attention on our feelings, we can become more consciously aware of how our emotions and life experiences affect our judgement and can contribute to serious errors.

Begin with thinking about how you feel about the situation you are in now, and be as honest as possible about your concerns, fears and anxieties related to peace work. Try to find out what triggers an emotional response. Answering the following questions may help. These are some of the "big questions" that people face when they are going into a conflict situation, and may make you stop and think quite deeply about the work you are about to do. Try not to be overwhelmed by these thoughts, but factor your responses into your preparation.

- What emotional life experiences have affected your decision to volunteer for peacekeeping or peacework? In what ways have these experiences affected your ideals, beliefs and responses?
- What emotional benefit do you hope to gain from your peace work?
- Are you a perfectionist, always trying to get everything right? What do you do with your frustration if you are not permitted to "get it right"?
- How do you react under pressure? How do you react when you are angry? Afraid? Confused? Tired?
- How do you respond to other people's anger or confrontational styles?
- Have you ever had violence directed at you? Or witnessed violence being directed at someone else? What emotions did it bring up in you?
- List two or three things that make you feel uneasy. Why do they make you feel this way?

- What frightens you about the situation you will be going into? What do you NOT want to see happen? What is the worst scenario you can imagine taking place there?
- How do you react to the possibility of your own death? To other people's deaths?

stress and **burnout**

Stress is response to strain. It is an inevitable part of life - we need a certain amount of stress to enhance performance, but too much stress debilitates performance. Many people effectively manage continuing stressful events whilst others 'cave in' under the strain. What makes the difference is the effectiveness of the individual's response to strain and coping mechanisms. Excessive stress is known as 'burnout'.

burnout

Burnout is defined as physical and emotional exhaustion involving the development of negative self-concept, negative job attitudes and a loss of feeling for others.

Symptoms: Tension, fatigue, inability to relax, easily startled, moved to tears easily, trembling, paranoia, feelings of omnipotence, overconfidence, stubbornness and inflexibility.

importance to peacekeepers

It is crucial that you learn to look after yourself, and be able to *meet your needs.* Remember, extended periods of stress will burn out your body and mind.

Although the primary role of nonviolent peacekeeping teams is to be help people feel safe and look after others, it is crucial to make sure that we know *how to* and *actually do* look after ourselves - if we are under too much stress we won't be capable of 'being there' for others or meeting people's needs.

Looking after ourselves ranges from keeping healthy lifestyle habits - eating, resting, having fun and relaxing and exercising adequately, to having a break when needed on your shift, or refusing to continue an intervention with someone abusive.

stress management and **burnout prevention**

High stress levels and burnout are very common among grassroots activists and community workers - both paid and voluntary workers. High stress levels are, obviously, bad for individuals, for those close to them, and for the organisations in which they work. Turnover can become high, with loss of skilled and experienced people. Stressed people are not effective and can often create conflict and contribute to low morale. Cynicism, negativity and rigid thinking are side effects of chronic stress. Serious anguish and long term physical, emotional and motivational effects that are suffered privately are not unusual amongst activists who have worked hard for several years.

Taking care of the thing which we have the most control over - that is, ourselves, is a vital part of effective activism. Putting some attention into stress management and physical, emotional and spiritual renewal is crucial to looking after ourselves for the long haul.

symptoms of stress and burnout

physical

- Chronic tiredness - sleep does not refresh
- Decreased immunity - susceptible
- to colds, flu, allergies
- Aches and pains in joints, muscles, stomach or back
- Sleep affected - hard to get to sleep or wake early
- Weight loss / weight gain
- Decreased interest in sex

behavioural

- Withdrawal and isolating oneself from friends and colleagues
- Rejecting help
- Lack of effectiveness
- Paranoid reaction, overly suspicious of others
- Not turning up to work / keeping commitments/decreased responsibility / professionalism

emotional

- Depression

- Rigid thinking, lack of problem solving ability
- Resentfulness
- Negative mind set and irritability
- Crying or getting angry easily and inappropriately
- Forgetfulness
- Anxiety
- Cynicism about previously valued things
- Devoid of joy and unable to laugh
- Sense of futility and loss of meaning
- Inner sense of emptiness - nothing left to 'give'

spiritual

Which of these symptoms do you experience? Which ones would motivate you to change the stressful pattern that caused it?

contributing factors to stress

There are many potential contributing factors to stress. They can be grouped in four ways: the nature of our work; personal or individual factors; organisational factors -

the nature of our organisation (which the whole group is responsible for); and larger socio-political factors over which we have little control

the nature of our work

Much social change activist work involves some or all of the following:

- Prolonged attention on disturbing and negative information and future projections Crisis work with a short term focus
- Apparent lack of results - sometimes unrealistic expectations due to lack of understanding of the long-term nature of social movements
- Working against societal resistance
- Lack of resources

personal factors

These interact with stressors related to personal relationships, identity, state of health:

- Motives / sense of identity (who we are) / personal values are equated with what we get done (or are seen to be doing)
- Accumulation, of emotions that are not dealt with for instance: grief, disappointment, conflict, uncertainty, frustration and obsession
- Denial of basic needs, for example the needs for adequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, time-out, recreation, creativity, intimacy, spirituality, or privacy
- Lack of personal planning / time management skills
- Inability to set boundaries and limits - staying focussed and effective

organisational factors

- A group culture or ethos (often set by role models) of working too hard, competitiveness, overly-task focused, with a low process orientation
- Lack of clear and achievable goal setting, prioritising or realistic expectations
- Lack of review, evaluation, feedback or celebration
- Low team morale or support for individuals
- Unresolved conflicts or unawareness of oppressive attitudes or practices
- Chaotic, noisy, cramped or un-aesthetic work environments
- Insufficient induction to jobs/roles and/or lack of training

Socio-political factors

- Patriarchal values such as: 'an attitude that workers are expendable', 'focussing on feelings or relationships is a waste of time', 'productivity is everything' etc.
- Lack of resources for activist work
- Early stages of a campaign or setbacks, etc
- Larger political climate

strategies **for managing stress**

alter / remove stressors

- Learn to recognise / anticipate your potential stressor
- Remove yourself from stress inducing situations if feasible
- Take action to manage your environment
- Take organisational / political / social action
- Build up conflict resolution / communication skills
- Life planning, eg set priorities
- Manage your time

reduce individual vulnerability & build resistance

- Develop self exploration / self awareness to rework attitudes, beliefs and self talk
- Talk, investigate check out perceptions
- Increase self confidence and assertiveness skills
- Improve social supports
- Balance work and leisure
- Get enough sleep
- Improve health status through nutrition and exercise
- Decrease use of alcohol, drugs, caffeine and nicotine

reduce impact of stress reactions

- Recognise symptoms - link to causes
- Modify negative self talk and self criticism
- Learn and use calming techniques and stress releasers eg:
- Relaxation training
- Meditation
- Massage
- Exercise
- Give priority to self renewal activities
- Be willing to seek professional help and other support
- Increase the amount of fun!

preventing stress and burnout **as part of group culture**

some recommendations

- Create a group culture / ethos that supports self-care, balance and sustainable work loads and patterns.
- Take a long-term perspective of planning and working for the long haul, to keep experienced / skilled group members for as long as possible
- Balance task focus with process and relationship / maintenance focus - in meetings, in daily work, in planning, and in evaluation
- Provide workshops / training in stress management and burnout prevention - can be as part of conferences, gatherings or ongoing training / orientation.
- Use regular planning and evaluation as a tool to reduce stress
- Build stress level checks into reviews and evaluations - how stressed do people feel? What is contributing? What do we need to do about these?
- Put stress prevention strategies on the agenda for meetings.
- Allow people to express feelings of distress, grief and loss and frustration - regard them as normal and healthy responses to unhealthy situations and state of the world.
- Provide individual or group debriefing after critical incidents or high stress campaigns. Keep an eye open for vulnerable individuals and see intervention as valid.
- Create support structures, eg support / affinity groups, routine debriefing, supervision, mentoring for new people, group workshops and training.
- Put value on socialising, fun, humour, relaxation time as a group.

motivation **and despair**

why support and debriefing is important

- Feelings of discouragement, exhaustion and even bitterness are not uncommon among activists who have worked for more than a few years.
- Turnover is extremely high, with subsequent loss of skilled people.
- Many groups do not attract enough new members or work as effectively as they could, and the causes can be linked with not dealing effectively with these issues.
- Research by Mary Gnomes on peace activists in the USA. found the major cause of dropping out and discouragement was not campaign losses or lack of results, but unresolved and unsatisfactory relationships with other activists.
- Bill Moyer highlights that many people adhere to a belief that they are powerless and that what they are doing is failing. They are often hostile to the notion that the movement is progressing along the normal road of movement success and that they could afford to celebrate their successes.
- Groups are often led by highly task/action-oriented personalities who may remain highly motivated, but who do not acknowledge the needs of others for training and support, or for validation, and who do not give attention to individual needs and group process until it is too late.

As activists and community workers we need to individually and collectively deal with feelings such as loss, grief, frustration, anger and despair

We are continually bombarded by signs and information telling us that the world is not safe, and that horrific violence is random and everywhere. Feelings of pain or distress caused by this are natural and healthy, if acknowledged, expressed and used as a motivating force for acting positively for change.

What is not healthy is the denial, the psychic numbing that prevents many people from really taking in what is happening around us, and

which also saps energy and blocks the ability to take action for change, sending people scurrying into escapist activities.

Or, unacknowledged, unexpressed feelings of pain for the world can cause people to take action in an unhealthy way - acting for change from a sense of desperation and/or driven-ness, so that their actions are more frantic than effective. This is a sure recipe for eventual burn-out. Cynicism, can be seen as a form of congealed disappointment, feelings that have not had an opportunity to be expressed and to shift.

Actions which rely on anger as their only fuel can result in behaviour which is counter-productive, lacking well-thought-out long term strategies and appropriate responses.

When we can express our feelings of pain for the world - whether they manifest as anger, fear, sadness, hopelessness, frustration, numbness, etc. - in a safe way and in the company of others, it helps to release the mind, to clear the energy, and to overcome the fear that these feelings will destroy us. It helps us to re-connect with others, with the vast web of life, and with the resources we have for creating change. It reassures us that we are not in this alone - we have support for the journey.

This support can be done at a very simple level by being willing to listen to and support colleagues feelings, or to allow time in meetings and workshops to acknowledge this dimension, through to specially designed workshops and training

supporting each other

It is never an easy road for people committed to fundamental change. For many of us this work represents a lifelong commitment. How do we sustain ourselves through the inevitable hard times? How can we hold on to our faith and resolution?

Where do we recharge and renew our commitment? How do we find resources?

Who can help us to stay on track? Few people who devote their lives to such work do it without some regular source of reflection, challenge, and affirmation - necessary for sustained and effective efforts for change. Too often we are confronted with feelings of isolation - even from those with whom we work closely.

Support from our community and from the groups we work in are one way to give regular attention to each person's social change work - to reflect on directions, goals, effectiveness, rough places and growing points, to challenge each other - taking into account all dimensions of our lives.

by supporting each other we can:

- Hear each others' stories of despair and of hope and to gain support
- Allow full expression of the feelings of despair and other feelings
- Reclaim our sense of power
- Create visions of positive futures
- Develop more skills and strategies for action
- Enhance our sense of community - with each other and with the web of life

supporting others

There are three basic elements to the support: emotional support, support for action, and educational support.

Emotional support can be: giving encouragement, affirming and validating thinking and achievements, allowing space for expressions of feelings, checking on physical health and discouraging over-work. Support can be loving challenges based on seeing a person and their life clearly and then thinking carefully about that person.

Support for action can be: helping to clarify goals, set directions and take actions. It can also help solve problems in specific difficult situations, to look at longer-range strategy questions. It can focus on areas of skill and leadership development for each individual.

Educational support can encourage learning as a primary focus by attending workshops or seminars together, or reading and discussing books or journal articles, or asking members of the group to share special knowledge or expertise.

if you are supporting another worker

- Have clear agreements around boundaries - what you want to do together, how often, how long, to meet, being respectful of each other etc.
- Confidentiality is very necessary for building trust. Make a clear commitment that sensitive personal matters raised between you will not get discussed with anybody else.
- Practice good listening - this is the key element. Allow enough time for the person to speak and have the focus of attention.
- Keep to the stated purpose - keep the focus on the person - resist getting sidetracked.
- Ask pertinent, strategic questions to encourage clarity on each person's objectives and how to reach them.
- Encourage and affirm self-care - physical and emotional.
- Allow silence - encourage the focus person to pause occasionally, to go within, to reflect without interruption.
- Provide challenge and feedback - gently, skilfully and honestly. And practice receiving feedback. Encourage boldness.
- Draw out deeper feelings - this takes time and skills.
- Deal with conflicts as they arise.
- No recruiting - support time is about support for you, not for recruiting the other members for your cause, unless they offer.

maintaining **group morale and motivation**

developing a good task / maintenance balance

Groups can become overly focused on the task at hand - especially when the task is preventing environmental destruction - at the expense of the maintenance of individual and group well-being. This means paying attention to how things are done not only what gets done particularly in terms of attending to group process that maintains interpersonal relationships and work satisfaction. Attention to group maintenance whether it be in meetings or daily activities can help to sustain your group for effective work in the long haul.

building team relationships

Good teamwork can be one of your most effective tools for making a difference. Understanding and valuing the individual needs, skills, talents, resources and styles of working and communicating which each person brings to your team can help each person to do their best work. Your team can then synergise these energies for maximum effectiveness. There are many options for training and support for team building.

resolving conflicts and improving communication

Nothing saps the energy like unresolved conflict, or confuses an issue like misunderstanding and mis-communication. Good techniques for communication - both oral and written - and for resolving inevitable conflicts, will help your group to function effectively. Groups that see conflict as an opportunity for development rather than as something to be avoided, are more likely to flourish. Basic training in conflict resolution skills can be a good in investment maintaining the group. Taking time to resolve conflict, if necessary with a neutral third party mediator or facilitator can prevent serous damage to group morale.

celebrating successes & achievements

Too often our successes and achievements are overlooked in the rush on to the next thing. In the world of social change activism,

where there are many setbacks, it is vital that the group does take time to celebrate, to validate achievements and provide impetus to carry on.

dealing **with fear**

- Fear is a natural and very important human survival response;
- Fear is part of our human 'flight, fight, connect' response – our bodies can feel like running, hiding, fighting, or being close with others or sometimes all at once;
- Fear can be managed in the same we 'manage' stress;
- There is a huge range of useful and effective fear management techniques we can use at any time.

Breathing: focus on breathing, slowing down breathing, counting breaths, count slowly to 10 with each breath.

Communication: eye contact with others, talking about feelings with partner, sharing the fact you're scared with others, reassuring others, self-talk, telling yourself you'll be okay, laughter, humour.

Touch: clasping your partner's hands, clasping your own hands, holding an object, a crucifix, prayer beads, a small stone or precious object in your pocket.

Grounding: touching the ground or earth, holding onto a tree, a leaf, something alive or natural.

Body: washing your face, quick body shake, vigorous exercise, a quick run, jumping up and down, stretching, touching toes.

Visualisation: Closing eyes and visualizing an image of a 'safe place',

Voice: humming or singing a song softly.

Meditation: meditation, calming and centring techniques. Many spiritual, martial arts and meditation practises have techniques for managing fears.

critical incident **debriefing**

The importance of early and effective intervention into the negative effects of trauma, on both a personal and community scale, cannot be underestimated.

Pt'chang recognises that the types of traumatic incidents that can occur at community events, festivals and nonviolent protests can have a lasting impact on a community's sense of safety and upon the individual's capacity to recover and continue working in a particular role. Effective and appropriate intervention after a traumatic incident is crucial.

It is not enough, according to Pt'chang, to put in place preventative measures or to just have the ability to respond to unsafe situations as they occur. It is important and integral to a community safety strategy to also have in place processes to deal effectively with the aftermath of a traumatic incident should it occur.

Although Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CICD) and its variations are still a relatively new procedure in fields such as emergency and police services, it remains a virtually unknown practise in much of the community service and voluntary sector, particularly among grassroots social change networks. Often social change workers and activists will face a range of highly traumatic incidents and situations with little or no structured support or intervention. These incidents could include assault or threat of assault, fatal or near fatal drug overdoses, suicides or attempted suicides, fatal or near fatal accidents, arrest and imprisonment and high-levels of personalised abuse and victimisation.

The process of debriefing is to assist in the normal recovery processes and to intervene early in the negative or damaging impacts. Symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) can be identified and further support for people arranged.

In many ways, Pt'chang is attempting to encourage a culture of increased personal support and debriefing for volunteer social change workers amongst community and activist networks. We continually highlight and promote the importance of adequate support structures within campaigns and organisations and encourage the adoption of debriefing as a routine process after events and protests and other political or community action.

responding **to a critical incident?**

A Critical Incident is "any situation faced by any person that causes them to experience unusually strong reactions which have the potential to affect the person immediately or some time later."

Critical Incident scan include serious accidents, injury or life threatening situations, witnessing or assisting with serious accidents or injury, attempted suicides or suicides, acts of violence, sexual abuse or assault, personal, racial or homophobic abuse, threats or death threats.

Critical Incident Stress refers to stress which is causes emotional and/or physiological reactions to demands or pressures which are *sudden, unexpected* and due to a *specific incident* or *set of incidents*. It is a normal reaction to an abnormal event.

People may go through certain stages during and immediately after a critical incident:

- Shock – it couldn't have happened;
- Disbelief or denial – this is not real – it's a joke;
- Realisation – it has happened, this is real;
- Survival state – 'on automatic pilot', allows people to survive event without 'thinking'.

People respond differently top incidents due to the person's life experience, belief systems, coping mechanisms, age, role in the incident, state of mind at the time, current health and social support systems.

A **Critical Incident Debriefing** session should ideally be held as soon as possible after any potentially traumatic or 'critical incident' and involve all people involved in the event. An outside professional de-briefer may also be brought in for this de-briefing.

A de-briefing can be a standard and routine practice at the end of every peacekeeping shift and as soon as possible at the end of every peacekeeping project – whether or not there was a critical incident.

A standard Critical Incident Debriefing procedure includes the following stages:

1) Immediate Personal Support: (after the Incident.) The aim of this stage is to meet the persons' immediate physical and emotional needs, re-establish a sense of safety and security as much as possible and to assist people make the transition from a state of high arousal associated with the incident to a more normal state. This is also called 'diffusing'.

2) Debriefing: (12 to 72 hours after incident.) An organised, preventative intervention designed to reduce the likelihood and impact of critical incident stress symptoms and encourage a self-managed recovery to take place. An individual or group de-briefing session could be needed to help people involved to form clear idea of events, identify assess personal stress symptoms, normalise the stress responses, promote self-care and support strategies, enable people to integrate experiences.

3) Follow –Up: Where ever possible, maintain contact with and check up on people involved in a critical incident. Individuals may find that other aspects of the situation come into prominence after the de-briefing. Signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) should be looked for. Follow-up de-briefing sessions may be required. If stress responses continue referral to a clinical PTSD counsellor.

conducting **a mini-debriefing**

If you find yourself in situation where you feel a mini-debriefing is necessary, here are some guidelines to consider.

1. Not everyone can conduct mini-debriefings. Those best suited have good interpersonal skills, know from experience that critical incident stress is real and a normal reaction to acute trauma, are comfortable with the expression of emotion in themselves and others and are trusted by those they plan to assist. Knowledge of crisis intervention, grief and loss is a definite plus.

2. You must be seen as an ally to the people you plan to debrief. Sometimes even the warmest supervisor cannot lead a debriefing due to the attitude some may have towards management or an existing climate between groups and management. It is

recommended that debriefers be at the peer level. If there is no one else, simply put your cards on the table right away. Inform the group (or individual, if that is the case) that your role here is as a supportive friend. If you feel your position would get in the way of a debriefing, get someone else to lead the process.

3. Make the rules clear. This is to be a debriefing, not a critique or evaluation. The purpose of the session is to share your feelings about a difficult incident, not to criticize others. Also make sure participants agree that the proceedings will be confidential.

4. Pick a time and a place that is comfortable and where there will be no interruptions. The debriefing should be a continuous process with no one else wandering in and out.

5. Do not assume how participants are feeling. Explain why you have initiated the debriefing and your knowledge about critical incident stress. Then simply invite participants to individually respond to how the incident has affected them. Listen and watch for signs of emotional vulnerability. If there is none, fine, you have done your job. If there is, let it flow and the group will establish its own emotional level. Remember, the expression of extreme emotion is a healthy, normal process that so many people have learned to suppress.

6. Don't force the group process, but try to get each individual to contribute at least once. One suggestion is to follow the traditional debriefing steps and have participants discuss what they actually said and heard at the scene. If individuals have been traumatized, it normally shows through their tone of voice. When this happens, let them express themselves. Affirm that what they are experiencing is normal given the circumstances.

7. Stop criticism of others. A critique can come later, but if individuals start complaining about others behaviour, stop it by saying something like: "Bob, we will be doing a critique later this week. The purpose of this session is to share our feelings about the call. Tell us how you felt during the incident when things started going wrong." Being criticized by others before you are debriefed can be more traumatic than the incident itself.

8. Do not permit tough, insensitive comments or any gallows humour. This will quickly put an end to the expression of personal feelings.

9. Watch for the non-participant especially the one who is visibly shaken. Touch base with him/her later in private to make sure he/she is not simply reluctant to talk in a group setting.

10. If the mini-debriefing becomes emotional, do not stop until all the grief and pain is out. You may go through the entire group without any expression of feelings and finally the last person shares some emotional pain. Make sure you allow time to go around the group again allowing others to do the same.

11. End the session with "What do we need to do now?" question. After an emotional session there is a need for a transition. Talking about action plans and support structures gives time for individuals to internalise what has happened and get ready to return home or to work. Never underestimate people's own individual stress management strategies – even though they may not be yours.

12. Finally, after the session is over, you should contact a trained debriefer and debrief yourself. Doing this will release any pent-up stress and build your confidence about further debriefings.

Remember, the worst thing you can do when others have experienced critical incident stress is to criticise them before they are emotionally debriefed.

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