

Preventive work and work with
perpetrators of VAWG
in Association for Nonviolent
Communication

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Basic information

- Association for Nonviolent Communication is an NGO working in the field of violence prevention, **VAWG**, bullying and discrimination in Slovenia
- we provide services for victims (counseling, advocacy, legal aid, safe houses, groups) and perpetrators
- established in 1996, 36 employees, 60 volunteers
- 700 perpetrators per year, most referred
- 700-900 victims per year
- members of WWP EN, WAVE, EWL

Preventive work

- Trainings for teachers in kindergartens and schools and other professionals
- Preventive workshops for children and youth in schools
- Individual work with children and youth at risk to prevent violence
- Social campaigns

Programmes for perpetrators

- Training of Social Skills for Perpetrators of VAW
- Training of Parental Skills (incl. women)
- Caring Dads groups
- Group for Teenage boys
- Individual counselling (incl. women)

Primary prevention

- Any action, strategy or policy that works to stop domestic violence from occurring in the first place.
- Primary prevention seeks to reduce the overall likelihood that anyone will become a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence by creating conditions that make violence less likely to occur.
- Activities include:
 - education and public awareness,
 - early identification of people at risk,
 - empowerment and life skills development (incl NVC),
 - legislation and enforcement to prevent and stop violence

Secondary prevention

- Secondary prevention is intervening and responding to violence that has already occurred in order to stop violence from happening again.
- Activities include:
 - shelter
 - counseling
 - safety planning
 - protective orders.

Tertiary prevention

- Tertiary prevention focuses on ongoing support to victims and ongoing accountability for abusers. Tertiary prevention activities address the long-term consequences of domestic violence.
- Activities include:
 - support groups
 - other resources for survivors to help them heal so that they do not experience abuse again
 - batterer programs to prevent perpetrators from continuing to perpetrate violence in the future

- A combination of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions are needed to achieve a meaningful degree of prevention and protection for the victims.
- Funding is crucial.
- Prevention in lock-down situation.

Nonviolent communication is not enough

- Nonviolent Communication (also Compassionate Communication or Collaborative Communication) is an approach to nonviolent living developed by Marshall Rosenberg beginning in the 1960s.
- taught as a process of interpersonal communication designed to improve compassionate connection to others
- based on the assumption that all human beings have capacity for compassion and empathy and that people only resort to violence or behavior harmful to others when they do not recognize more effective strategies for meeting needs

Practising NVC

- Open-hearted living:
 - Self compassion
 - Expressing from the heart
 - Receiving with compassion
 - Prioritizing connection
 - Moving beyond "right" and "wrong" to using needs-based assessments
- Choice, responsibility, peace:
 - Taking responsibility for our feelings
 - Taking responsibility for our actions
 - Living in peace with unmet needs
 - Increasing capacity for meeting needs
 - Increasing capacity for meeting the present moment
- **Sharing power (partnership):**
 - **Caring equally for everyone's needs.**
 - **Using force minimally and to protect rather than to educate, punish, or get what we want without agreement.**

Understanding violence

- Violence is abuse of power and disrespect of personal boundaries of another person. Intimate-partner and domestic violence occurs when one person feels entitled to power and control over the other and chooses to gain and maintain control using violence. Most victims are women and children.
- Violent behaviour is a matter of an individual choice. **Every person** chooses a way to express their needs, wishes, values and feelings. We learn to behave violently in a society, which tolerates and often even promotes violence. That is why it is important **to create a society that condemns violence** and promotes equality and nonviolent conflict resolutions.

Perpetrator work - objectives

- Increase safety and quality of life of the victims.
- Encourage perpetrators to face consequences of their violent behaviour, take responsibility and begin to think critically about their beliefs and expectations.
- Change traditional beliefs about women and men, sexuality, division of power. Violence against women is rooted in patriarchal cultures and traditions that are based on expectations and beliefs of men that they should establish power and control over women.
- Better knowledge and understanding of violence, which is a direct consequence of the basic structural inequality in gender relations.
- Learn about nonviolent communication, constructive conflict resolution and other social skills. Practice and use them.
- Take responsibility for their thoughts, feeling and behaviour.

Lessons learned in almost 25 years

- While working with perpetrators it is crucial to increase safety of the victims.
- Perpetrator and victim programmes should always cooperate to exchange information about victim safety.
- Programs for perpetrators should not include couples (or family) therapy or mediation and should never be replaced by addiction treatment.
- One professional should never work with the victim and the perpetrator.
- Participation in perpetrator programme should not replace criminal prosecution of the offender.

- Victims have to be notified when perpetrators drop out of the programmes.
- Dealing with intimate-partner and domestic violence should never be gender neutral.

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