

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

Purpose: This exercise leads participants in noticing the patterns of their responses to violence and breaking this cycle. This requires developing an awareness of our responses, stopping the violence and finding new ways of responding.

Time: 30 minutes

Preparation: This exercise is best preceded by one which has asked the participants to think about their ways of responding to violence, such as Reflecting on Ways of Responding to Violence; see manual more ideas.

Explanation for facilitators:

Through the years societies have developed skills and for living together more nonviolently, but simultaneously we've also become more sophisticated with our technology and accompanying ideology for solving problems with violence. Gandhi said that his technique and understanding of nonviolence struggle is at the same level of Edison's understanding of electricity. Nonviolence needs time to be developed and further refined.

Description of Exercise:

- In groups of 3, ask participants to share their usual/more common response to violence – do they avoid it? accommodate it? or respond with another form of violence? See Reflecting on Ways of Responding to Violence for more details.

avoid violence	Accept violence	respond w/ violence
- decide it is "not my problem" - get someone else to deal with it, eg police, military - look the other way	- that's just the way it is - adapt to the violence <i>'If I do anything it will just get worse. Maybe if I keep quiet it'll go away.'</i>	- take the offensive, try to get power over and control to stop the violence - an eye for an eye - the ends justifies the means

- Suggest that each participant have 5 minutes each to share, they should focus on (1) telling the pattern, (2) share an example, (3) idea storm with the small group alternative (nonviolent) ways of responding that would meet their and the other person's needs
- After all participants have shared, call everyone back to plenary and ask if anyone has any 'a-ha! moments' to share, or issues that stumped them.

Follow-up:

This exercise can be followed up with a film snippet (eg, a chapter from 'A Force More Powerful') or distribute written case studies (see TTT website) where nonviolence was used to address a situation of social, cultural, political or personal oppression. Analyse these pieces for insights or solutions that might be applicable to personal situations shared in this exercise. The amount of time allowed would depend on the case study chosen but allow between 30 to 60 minutes.