

## Dealing with Violence

Purpose: To explore our assumptions about violence. What is violence? What makes it violence? How do our assumptions affect our behaviour, beliefs and vision of the world?  
*N.B. A useful exercise to follow the discussion from the Nonviolence Spectrum exercise.*

Time: 20 minutes

Directions: Explain to participants that we're going to discuss how assumptions affect our behaviour, beliefs and world vision. If following up on nonviolence spectrum, refer back to the flip notes. Otherwise ask the group to identify some common assumptions about violence, such as

- only when someone is physically harmed
- always intentional
- some kinds of violence are acceptable
- something done to someone else
- only done to people or animals

Important to say we're not looking for definitive answers, rather opening the complexity of the issues involved. Using either a plenary discussion or small groups, ask participants to consider 3 questions. Alternatively if short on time and using small groups, give one question per group.

- Does intention play a role in defining whether an action is violent or not? If so, in what way?
- What if an intention is good, but clearly the act is violent? Does that make a difference? Does it make it a different kind of violence?
- Are some types of violence acceptable where others are not? If so, how do we decide which is which?

If using small groups, call participants to plenary and have brief feedback.

Optional Add-on: Ask the small groups to come up with one sentence that encompasses the flavour of their discussion. This could be in addition to, or if short on time, replace the brief feedback with the sharing of this one sentence.