Total Honesty/Total Heart:
Fostering empathy development and conflict resolution skills.
A violence prevention strategy

by

Marion Little
BA Linguistics, University of Victoria, 2002

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Sibylle Artz, School of Child and Youth Care
Supervisor

Dr. Tara Ney, Dispute Resolution
Departmental Member

Dr. Joseph Kess, Linguistics
Outside Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Sibylle Artz, School of Child and Youth Care
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This research assesses the impact of a violence prevention training, *Total Honesty/Total Heart*, based on the *Nonviolent Communication* model (Rosenberg, 2003) for conflict resolution and empathy development (including self-empathy). This study offers a strategic response to adolescent aggressive/violent behaviour. The participants, aged 16-19, were all experiencing the stresses of poverty and marginalization at the time of the study, and were familiar with both domestic and peer violence. Some had received criminal charges, some were raising children, and all were struggling to complete high school. The research methodology is located within the traditions of educational research and program evaluation. Subsequently, this project combines a simple quasi-experimental pre-training and post-training written test (providing descriptive statistics) with qualitative data gathered through training sessions and interviews. A case illustration is included to further enhance the findings. This approach allowed a rich multi-dimensional analysis to be generated for such a small pilot project (*N*=14).

The test results showed a notable increase in skills comprehension and applications for the participant group, while the comparison group showed no increases. The participant group interviews revealed that the training had been engaging, and that the skills were practically applicable as well as meaningful. The case illustration revealed the transformative impact of integrating the Nonviolent Communication conflict resolution, empathy, and self-empathy skills into one participant's life. In particular, this thesis suggests that self-empathy may be integral to supporting the development of conflict resolution skills specifically, and healthy relationships generally, for young women who have experienced abuse, trauma, and domestic violence.

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Dedication

For Abigail Grace,

and for the 14 girls who participated;

hoping that their lives will be rich with empathy (especially self-empathy), honesty,

and mutual respect.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose

This thesis documents the delivery and assessment of a conflict resolution and empathy development program, called *Total Honesty/Total Heart*. The program was offered to a group of adolescent girls identified as "at-risk" because they are parenting, and/or on probation. Total Honesty/Total Heart is based on the *Nonviolent Communication* model developed by Marshall Rosenberg (1999, 2000, 2003, 2005).

The central purpose of this program evaluation is to determine the training's impact, and whether or not the training intentions were met: to expand participants' vocabularies regarding feelings and needs; to support participants in distinguishing between observations and evaluations; to facilitate the development of clear, concrete, realistic requests; and to apply these skills dynamically towards oneself and others. It was anticipated that, if the training intentions were met, participants would be able to navigate conflict with greater honesty and empathy, towards both themselves and others. Ultimately, the hope was that participants would be able to generate more mutually satisfying conflict outcomes, having begun a socio-linguistic transition from retributive to restorative social paradigms.

Rationale

The Big Picture

There is no debate that interpersonal aggression and violence among youth profoundly impacts and harms perpetrators, bystanders, targets, and by extension entire communities

(American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2001; American Psychological Association [APA], 1993; Artz, 1998, 2004, 2005; Boivin et al., 1995; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Canadian Red Cross, 2005; Committee for Children, 2001; Craig, 1998; Craig, Pepler & Atlas, 2000; Egan & Perry, 1998; Eron, Dubow, Romanoff, & Yarmel, 1987; Fairholm, 2002; Kaltiala-Heino, M. Rimpela, Marttunen, A. Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999; Lantieri & Patti, 1996; Olweus, 1994, 2003; Pepler & Craig 2000; Rigby, 2001; Salmivalli 1999, 2001; Salmivalli, Ojanen, Haanpaa, & Peets, 2005; Slee, 1995; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). Fortunately, there is reason for hope on many levels. Recent studies show a steady decrease in several forms of interpersonal violence in Western Europe over the past 500 years (Eisner, 2001) and in North America over the last century (Huffine, 2003; LeFree, 1999; Paglia & Adlaf, 2003).

These researchers argue that decreasing population growth following the Baby Boom generation and the introduction of birth control, coupled with increased literacy rates, awareness of human rights, greater social disapproval towards violent behaviour, prevention education, and healthy economies have contributed to decreasing levels of interpersonal violence in Western Europe and North America (Blumstein, 2000; Eisner, 2001; Huffine, 2003).

The Need for a Conflict Resolution Training Program
This potential trend towards decreasing violence in many Northern and Western countries is heartening. However, the research also shows that violence prevention, along with peace-building work, continues to be necessary as long as any community is affected by violence. If Eisner's conclusions are accurate, namely that declines in homicide follow institutional and educational practices which facilitate coping with the challenges of modern life (Eisner, 2001), then violence prevention and peace-building are integral aspects of the skills development necessary to cope in our increasingly multicultural, computerized, and transient communities.

The Total Honesty/Total Heart project was undertaken in response to the still urgent need for practical, responsive intervention strategies that effectively and efficiently address adolescent violence and aggressive behaviour (Artz, Nicholson, & Rodriguez, 2004; Committee for Children, 2001 ; Fairholm, 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Reitsma-Street, Artz, & Nicholson, 2005). Literature and research across a broad range of fields attest not only to the reality of peer harassment and violence as a significant problem among teens, but also to the damaging impact of interpersonal aggression and violence on whole communities (AAUW, 2001; APA, 1993; Artz et al., 2004; Committee for Children, 2001; Eron et al., 1987; Fairholm, 2005; Kaltiala-Heino et al.,1999; Olweus, 1994; Craig, Pepler & Atlas, 2000; Reitsma-Street et al., 2005).

> Fifteen percent of [Norwegian] students reported involvement in bullying on a regular basis. About 7 percent of students regularly bullied others, while 9 percent were frequent targets of bullying. Children's reports of bully/victim problems from many different countries reveal rates comparable to or higher than the Norwegian sample (Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, & Slee, 1999). A survey of British adolescents indicated that 21–27 percent of the sample was regularly targeted (Whitney & Smith, 1993). Canadian research has estimated the rate of bullying to be approximately 20 percent (Ziegler & Pepler, 1993). In the United States 10 percent of a group of American third- through sixth-graders experienced chronic victimization (Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). A recent study of American fifth-graders found that 18 percent of the sample was regularly targeted (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). (Committee for Children, 2001, p. 8)

The Families and Work Institute in conjunction with The Colorado Trust administered a study spanning middle schools in the United States which found that almost half the students surveyed reported being hurt by peers physically or verbally, and two-thirds reported being the subject of mean-spirited gossip or teasing during the month prior to their survey (Galinsky & Salmond, 2002). The same study found that students who have close relationships with parents, teachers, and friends were much less likely to be either victims or perpetrators of violence,

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indicating the integral value of interpersonal skill development and support for those primary relationships.

Individuals, families, and communities are all impacted by the interpersonal violence of our youth. Encouragingly, several researchers have found that parents, teachers, mentors, neighbours, and other caring adults can effect positive change in the lives of our young people through role modelling and intervention programs specifically focused on conflict resolution skills and empathy development (Committee for Children, 2001; Fairholm, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Lantieri & Patti, 1996; Craig, Pepler & Atlas, 2000; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). The American Psychological Association's Commission on Violence and Youth offers the following comments in its 1993 report:

> We overwhelmingly conclude, on the basis of the body of psychological research on violence, that violence is not a random, uncontrollable, or inevitable occurrence…Although we acknowledge that the problem of violence involving youth is staggering…there is overwhelming evidence that we can intervene effectively in the lives of young people to reduce and prevent their involvement in violence. (APA, 1993)

The American Psychological Association (1993) recommends that schools play a critical role in any comprehensive plan for preventive intervention to reduce youth violence and aggression. Canadian violence prevention researchers Debra Pepler (York University) and Wendy Craig (Queen's University) emphasize that bullying and victimization happen in the context of the whole community and that, to be effective, interventions must reach youth within the context of their broader society (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Collaboratively engaging young people, and their communities, in developing and learning strategies for peacefully navigating conflict is an important step towards supporting healthy relationships and preventing interpersonal violence on all levels (Artz, 2004; Frey et al., 2005; D. Johnson & R. Johnson,

2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Roberts, White, and Yeomans, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2005 ; Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, Grasley, & Reitzel-Jaffee, 2003; Wolfe,Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, & Grasley, 2004).

While some forms of violence appear to be declining in Western Europe and North America, interpersonal violence and aggression, including sexualized violence and domestic violence, continue to be realities for our youth and their families. In order to cope effectively, ending cycles of aggression and violence, the literature states clearly that all youth need practical information, support for skills development, consistent role modelling, and encouragement on a continuing basis (Artz, 1998, 2004, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Hoskins & Artz, 2004; D. Johnson & R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Roberts, White, & Yeomans, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Wolfe et al., 2003, Wolfe et al. 2004).

The Value of Conflict Resolution and Empathy Development Training

The research demonstrates that intervention programs focusing on conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, particularly empathy, can significantly decrease aggression and violence among North American, Western European, and Australian adolescents (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). Further, it appears that fostering these capacities is a key factor in supporting interpersonal respect and consideration – what some refer to as "A Culture of Civility" (Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Lantieri & Patti, 1996; W.T. Grant

Consortium, 1994). In some cases, researchers also found that the introduction of conflict resolution and interpersonal skills training, including empathy, was positively correlated with enhanced academic achievement (Laird & Syropoulos, 1996; Stevahn et al., 2002; Stevahn, 2004; Seligman, 2007).

Wallace Kahn and Catherine Lawhorne (2003), violence prevention researchers at West Chester University in Pennsylvania, comment on the shift in focus of violence prevention programs since 1995. They point out that many earlier school programs, particularly in major American cities and some Canadian schools in Toronto and Vancouver, focused solely on issues of physical safety through zero tolerance policies, surveillance, metal detectors occasionally, and in some instances even police presence. These researchers observe that although sometimes necessary, "…physical safety precautions are insufficient in creating school norms of civility, respect and prosocial behavior" (Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003, p. 4). They call attention to the recent focus on prevention through promotion of prosocial behaviours, distinguishing this as significantly more reasoned and persuasive than earlier surveillance-based and zero tolerance efforts, an opinion echoed by many others in the field (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Fairholm, 2005; Goleman, 1995b; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Pepler & Craig, 2000; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). They identify the necessity for systemic interventions, from individual remediation for aggressors to classroom initiatives, and ultimately school-wide policies and practices "that promote norms of acceptance, empowerment, communication, accountability and respect" (Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003, p. 5). Kahn and Lawhorne (2003) also outline the three central components of effective intervention programs that emerged from their study of various prevention initiatives: (a) anger management, (b) conflict resolution skills, and (c) consistent procedural responses to antisocial behaviour. Finally, each of the above referenced

authors emphasizes the fundamental influence of empathy on the creation and sustenance of safe, humane schools. They insist, along with several others (Committee for Children, 2001; Almeida & Denham, 1984; Deutsch, 1993; Giancola, 2003; Goleman, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Gordon, 2005; Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, and Miller, 2006; Schonert-Reichl, 1993, 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; Seligman, 2002, 2006, 2007), that empathy is a "critical human skill susceptible to social influence and deliberate instruction" (Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003, p. 5).

The W.T. Grant Consortium for School-based Promotion of Social Competence (1994) evaluated violence prevention programs across the United States to determine the qualities of effective violence prevention trainings. They provide a list of competencies that they have determined are key components of effective violence prevention programs. They claim that when learned, these competencies combine to convey emotional and cognitive social proficiency. Further, they state that these competencies coincide with decreased school violence, and increased prosocial behaviours. The competencies are identified as follows:

- Emotional competency skills (ex. identifying feelings in self or others, empathy, self-soothing, and frustration tolerance);
- Cognitive competency skills (ex. analytic thinking, creative problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and self-talk);
- Behavioural competency skills, including:
  - Nonverbal skills (ex. facial expressions, tone of voice, personal presentation, gesture or eye contact),
  - Verbal skills (ex. clear requests, responding to criticism, expressing feelings clearly), and
  - Proactive skills (helping others, walking away from negative situations, participating in positive activities). (p. 136)

Hawkins and Catalano (1992) research ways to reduce risk-behaviours in adolescents, they specify that in addition to learning interpersonal skills (such as anger management, social competencies, and conflict resolution) and developing core capacities (such as empathy, self-soothing, self-awareness, and creative problem-solving), adolescents also need to see these skills

modeled. Further, according to Lantieri (a long-time teacher and co-founder of the Resolving

Conflict Creatively Program in New York) and Patti (professor of curriculum and teaching at

Hunter College, New York) adolescents need to exercise their newfound skills and capacities in

a setting where both feedback and encouragement are provided (Lantieri & Patti, 1996).

Correspondingly, the Washington DC Drug Strategy commissioned *Safe Schools Safe

Students Guide to Violence Prevention Strategies* (Commission on Youth and America's Future,

1998) also offers information regarding the composition of effective programs. The Safe

Schools Safe Students Guide surveyed 84 violence prevention programs in the United States,

which were assessed by a panel of violence prevention experts. This panel identified nine

elements, summarized below, which are critical to effective school-based violence prevention

programming:

- Activities fostering school norms against all forms of violence and aggression;
- Skills training based on a strong theoretical foundation;
- A systemic approach (incl. family, peers, media and community);
- Physical, policy, and practice changes promoting a positive school climate;
- A minimum of 10-20 training sessions (per training group) during the first year of a program and 5-10 booster sessions in the succeeding two years;
- Interactive teaching;
- Developmentally tailored interventions;
- Culturally sensitive material; and
- Teacher training

In keeping with the three year program strategy recommended by the Safe Schools Safe

Students Guide, the W.T. Grant Consortium on School-Based Promotion of Social Competence

(1994) also proposed that programs designed to impact student behaviour must allow for change

to occur over time. Overall, the Safe Schools Safe Students Guide (Commission on Youth and

America's Future, 1998) determined that learning prosocial skills not only enriches interpersonal

relationships but also student experiences of school and academic performance. Lantieri and

Patti (1996) also report that teachers and schools concentrating on social competency show

demonstrably fewer behavioural problems among students and a more cooperative school climate overall.

A Closer Look at Canadian Violence Prevention Programs

Canada has begun to take a leadership role in the areas of conflict resolution and violence prevention program design, implementation, and evaluation research. Innovative people who care about our communities are collaborating in both rural and urban areas across the country to support increasing peace and well-being. A sampling of current Canadian programs and program assessment provides a more specific context for the Total Honesty/Total Heart program delivery and evaluation.

The Community Based Violence Prevention Project (CBVPP)

Sibylle Artz and colleagues from the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria undertook a five-year study of anti-violence initiatives in a Vancouver Island School District (The Community Based Violence Prevention Project) (Artz, Reicken, MacIntyre, Lam, & Maczewski, 2000). The Project assessed 13 anti-violence initiatives developed by school-based health teams and administered to 5,400 students in 16 schools. A high level of community participation in the research was a priority for the researchers in addition to empirical evaluation of intervention outcomes. Artz and her colleagues specify that the overarching goal of their project was "...educating participants in a preventative approach to violence that includes training them to change their attitudes and behaviours in ways that help them to act differently in situations which previously would have called forth violent responses" (Artz et al., 2000, p. 9).

Of the 13 programs assessed as part of the Community Based Violence

Prevention Project (CBVPP), four demonstrated the most significant positive effects on

their program participants. These include: (a) *Systematic Positive Reinforcement* at

Elementary School No. 2, (b) *Bully Proofing* at the only Middle School studied, (c) a

series of violence prevention presentations at High School No. 1, and (d) a series of

interactive violence prevention workshops at High School No. 2 (Artz et al., 2000).

(a) CBVPP – Systematic Positive Reinforcement, including Second Step

Systematic Positive Reinforcement aimed to create a positive atmosphere in the school by

engaging the whole school community (adults and children) in fun, interactive, creative,

collaborative, respectful daily activities. Activities ranged from theme days to showcasing

student talents to student-organized assemblies. The program also included regular training

through the *Second Step* conflict resolution program. Second Step training includes building a

broader feelings-vocabulary, imagining the experiences of others, and anger management skill

development. After three years, the findings show a 40 percent overall reduction in violent

incidents (Artz et al., 2000). A gender breakdown shows that the program was particularly

effective in fostering non-violent positive social behaviour among boys, and that their decrease

in violent incidents was the main factor generating this overall measure of reduced violence.

While females committed far fewer acts of violence proportionately, both before and after the

program, their number of reported violent incidents actually increased. This suggests that for

some reason the program was less effective for the girls. Even so, both genders showed a

dramatic reduction in worrying about being hurt, indicating a greater sense of comfort and safety

generally. Artz and her colleagues (2000) flag the finding that fathers at the elementary school

were less informed than mothers about the Second Step Program. They suggest that given the

significant impact fathers have on their children's social and emotional development, ensuring

program fluency among fathers may be important to program success.

(b) CBVPP – Bully Proofing

The Middle School studied during the Community Based Violence Prevention

Project employed a violence prevention program called Bully Proofing. Similar to

Second Step, Bully Proofing is a conflict resolution training program emphasizing anger

management and assertiveness skills for responding to bullies. The program was only

offered to selected classes rather than as a whole-school initiative. After three years of

trainings, the post-training findings show that while violent incidents at the school

decreased, attitudes favouring violence actually increased for males (including boys

identified as student leaders). Attitudes towards violence remained essentially stable for

females. The researchers indicate that this kind of isolated violence prevention effort has

little effect alone (Artz et al., 2000). These findings, along with the Systematic Positive

Reinforcement findings from Elementary School No. 2, suggest that not only do males

and females respond differently to trainings, but they have different social concerns and

training needs. These must be discerned and accommodated if conflict resolution

trainings are to be successful.

(c) CBVPP – A Series of Violence Prevention Presentations

Secondary School No. 1 implemented 40 broadly ranging violence prevention

presentations and information events over the course of two years. Topics spanned

assertiveness skills, sexual harassment, bullying, and ideas about violence generally. The

presentation series was predominantly didactic and included few opportunities for student

interaction.

In response to the training, males indicated a decreased willingness to fight; however they also reported a 100 percent increase in violent incidents. The female participants indicated an increased willingness to fight, but simultaneously reported a 75 percent decrease in violent incidents (Artz et al., 2000). It is possible that males were experiencing and identifying more violent incidents because they had become more sensitized to them and less willing to engage in them. Meanwhile, it is similarly possible that the females increased willingness to fight may actually have been realized as more assertive behaviour which resulted in their declined experience of actual violence. Regardless, based on the findings of Artz and her colleagues, it seems that this type of training affected male attitudes but not behaviour and female behaviour but not attitudes.

(d) CBVPP – A Series of Interactive Violence Prevention Workshops

Finally, Secondary School No. 2 implemented a series of interactive violence prevention workshops which encouraged reflection on the personal impacts of violence. The workshops focused on abuse prevention, anger management, and peer mediation. The girls participated in workshops addressing date rape prevention and assertiveness training in addition to the other topics. Teachers of several different subjects incorporated related projects into their classroom curricula (English, Art, Drama, etc.) to support more in-depth examination of the impacts of violence. Post-training, the researchers found that males were more sensitive to the impacts of actions such as unwanted touching, stealing from a shop, preventing someone from leaving, and ruining property after an argument (Artz et al., 2000). They were more likely to see these actions as offensive after the training, on par with the females' pre-training scores. Post-training, males also matched the females' response that it is not okay to hurt others. Further, male

interest in watching fights declined to the same levels as the females' pre-training interest levels (Artz et al., 2000).

CBVPP – Summary

Overall, Artz and her colleagues determined that the girls in the Community Based Violence Prevention Project seem to be more responsive to prevention programs because socially and developmentally they tend to be ready for contemplation, action and behaviour maintenance (Artz et al., 2000). Meanwhile, the boys in the study appear to be socially and developmentally more pre-contemplative and respond better to interactive programs that challenge them to address their own personal experiences of violence in familiar scenarios and in the moment (Artz et al., 2000). Both genders responded more positively to whole-school initiatives that combined interactive workshops, individual projects, and group presentations (Artz et al., 2000).   Artz's recent research investigates these gender differences in more detail and adds that for adolescent girls, particularly those who have experienced domestic violence; violence prevention trainings must also address antecedents to violence, family context, and the highly influential role of fathers (Artz, 2004).

Roots of Empathy

Roots of Empathy (ROE) was developed by Mary Gordon (2005), former Parenting Program Administrator for the Toronto Board of Education. ROE is a 10-month whole-school social competence training program for kindergarten to Grade 8 students. During the 2003 school year, it was implemented in five Canadian provinces and over 4,500 children and youth participated (Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). The program sessions are built around monthly visits by an infant and

parent. The primary goals are: (a) to develop emotional awareness, vocabulary, and discernment, (b) to foster social competence, and (c) to illustrate human development and compassionate parenting practices (Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007). Empathy is seen as essential to deterring aggression and developing positive relationships among individuals (Schonert-Reichl, 2005). Empathy is defined by Gordon and Schonert-Reichl as comprising three abilities: (a) to identify others' emotions, (b) to understand/explain other's emotions, and (c) to be emotionally responsive to others (Gordon, 2005). The Roots of Empathy curriculum and evaluation are based on this definition (Appendix A – Definition of Key Terms offers a comparative definition).

The Roots of Empathy program has been evaluated through four outcome studies:

1. Effectiveness with Grades 1-3 children from Vancouver (*N*=132);

2. A national evaluation of Grades 4-7 students from Toronto and Vancouver schools (*N*=585);

3. A rural-urban evaluation of Grades 4-7 students (*N*=419); and

4. A randomized control trial.

The findings of all four studies revealed that in comparison to their control group peers and in comparison to their own pre-training tests, program participants showed more highly developed social-emotional understanding paralleled by significant reductions in aggressive behaviours. Participants also showed significantly increased prosocial behaviours, while their control group peers showed significant increases in aggressive behaviours (Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007).

Lion's Quest

Lion's Quest Conflict Resolution Programs come out of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. The organization has developed a number of curricula tailored to meet the social and developmental needs of four different age groups: kindergarten to Grade 6, Grades 6 to 8, and Grades 9 to 12, as well as teacher training. The curricula are designed to be integrated into standard provincial language arts, health, life skills, and social studies, courses. The classroom component of this conflict resolution and general life skills program is offered in conjunction with whole-school activities aimed at changing school culture. The overall program focuses on conflict resolution skills applied directly to classroom conflict, anger management, bully prevention, violence prevention, sexual harassment prevention (for Grades 7 to 12), and diversity training.

Laird and Syropoulos (1996) evaluated the impact of the Lion's Quest program called Working Towards Peace on a group of Grade 7 and 8 students (N=1,900). Working Towards Peace is the program module targeting Grades 6 to 8 students. This module specifically addresses basic conflict theory, learning and practicing conflict resolution and negotiation skills, and dealing with bullies, within the context of the overall program focus outlined above. On all evaluation measures, the Working Towards Peace training group achieved the highest scores after one year and after two years. They also demonstrated increased grade point averages at the end of the first year. The control students showed no significant gains in any area including grade point average. At the end of the study, teacher behaviour logs showed a 68% decrease in violent incidents among the Working Towards Peace training group participants, while the control students showed no significant changes.

The Lion's Quest Program aims are similar to most of the programs discussed thus far. It is among the few that offer whole-school learning, and is the only program reviewed that overtly addresses issues related to racism and prejudice as a central part of violence prevention training.

It is also the only program reviewed that offers a continuum of training from kindergarten through to Grade 12.

Other Programs

Conflict resolution, violence prevention, and peace building programs are being implemented with heart and enthusiasm across the country from the Annapolis Valley to the Cowichan Valley. Some are the efforts of a lone teacher in one classroom, while others demonstrate the commitment of an entire community including parents and community service providers. Based on the literature reviewed to this point, it is clear that these kinds of trainings are needed, and that trainings tend to engage and serve their participant groups best when they are collaborative, comprehensive, pertinent, informative, and interactive.

Total Honesty/Total Heart as a Relevant Training

Violence prevention and peace-building continue to be necessary as long as any interpersonal violence is experienced in our communities. Interpersonal aggression and violence are critical issues requiring attention particularly among adolescents. The research demonstrates that prevention and intervention programs focusing on conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, particularly empathy, can significantly decrease adolescent aggression and violence while supporting respectful considerate relationships and enriched school experiences (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D.

Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). In terms of skills and training, this research shows that effective programs emphasize three competencies: conflict resolution, emotional awareness and management, and empathy development. In terms of program implementation, effectiveness is marked by long-term planning, complementary administrative policies and practice, a systemic approach, collaboration, cultural sensitivity, and interactive developmentally tailored workshops (Artz et al., 2000; Artz, 2004; Frey et al., 2005; D. Johnson & R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Roberts, White, and Yeomans, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2005 ; Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, Grasley, & Reitzel-Jaffee, 2003; Wolfe,Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, & Grasley, 2004). Importantly, programs assessed as effective also incorporate adult role modeling, feed-back, and encouragement.

The Total Honesty/Total Heart conflict resolution and empathy development program, based on Rosenberg's (1999, 2000, 2003, 2005) Nonviolent Communication model, incorporates the three competencies summarized above (conflict resolution, emotional awareness/management, and empathy development) as well as the program implementation recommendations. Long-term planning and complementary administrative policies are not included due to the short time frame for this research pilot.

Choosing a Research Topic

This research is rooted in my long-standing interest and work towards supporting the well-being of individuals, relationships, and communities. While there are many approaches to facilitating greater ease and harmony between people, I am most interested in those that support the development of individual capacities and self-sufficiencies. Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005) is a model for conflict resolution and empathy

development intended specifically for that purpose. Nonviolent Communication addresses conflict resolution skills, emotional awareness and management, and empathy development (including self-empathy) in a way that I believe is relatively easy to adapt to the cultural and developmental needs of many different groups.

Having practiced and taught the Nonviolent Communication process for eight years, I wanted increased clarity about its effectiveness as a conflict resolution and peace-building process. Subsequently, I designed, delivered, and assessed a conflict resolution and empathy development program based on Nonviolent Communication and tailored to the needs of adolescent girls who have been labelled "at risk." This pilot project was accepted into an alternative public school program for girls who are pregnant, parenting, and/or on probation. This particular alternative school is housed within the local public school system of a mid-sized Western Canadian city. It offers accessible secondary schooling as well as support for adolescent girls who want life skills training not otherwise available in their homes, schools, or the community at large.

For me, the greatest significance of this research project lies in the reported experiences of the adolescent girls who participated: Was it valuable to them? Was it practical, applicable, useful, and meaningful? Over and above all other motivations, it was the desire to contribute to the participants' lives in a practical, applicable, useful, and meaningful way that most powerfully informed the topic selection for this thesis.

Chapter Conclusion

The central purpose of this thesis is to determine the impact of Total Honesty/Total Heart, a Nonviolent Communication training program. The study was undertaken at an

alternative high school program for adolescent girls labelled "at-risk", in a mid-sized Western Canadian city. The training was intended to contribute to the participants' skills base for conflict resolution and empathic connection. This program is one of many throughout North America, and around the world, being initiated in response to the very real and devastating effects of interpersonal violence and aggression among adolescents. It is the fourth academic research project of any kind undertaken to assess the impacts of a Nonviolent Communication training program.

The human and economic stresses of interpersonal violence at the global and community levels are rooted in basic human interactions. There is no argument that aggression and violence adversely affect perpetrators, bystanders, and targets. Given the wide-ranging incidence and longitudinal impacts of youth peer harassment and violence, adolescents particularly benefit from violence prevention and interpersonal skills training.

Encouragingly, the limited research available suggests that violence prevention and conflict resolution programs can significantly decrease adolescent aggression and violence while supporting respectful considerate relationships (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). This research further indicates that effective programs for both genders tend to emphasize emotional, behavioural, and cognitive competencies through interpersonal and conflict resolution skills training, as well as empathy development.

Importantly, effective programs have also been identified as those which incorporate adult role

modelling, feedback, and encouragement.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review explores the development of Nonviolent Communication, considers parallel models for conflict resolution, examines the relationship between Nonviolent Communication and restorative justice, and describes the Nonviolent Communication model itself. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the research.

The Development of Nonviolent Communication as a Model

Carl Rogers and Humanistic Psychology

Rosenberg refers to working and studying with Carl Rogers, particularly during a research project which investigated the components of a helping relationship, as central to the development of Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2005). The roots of his Nonviolent Communication model began to emerge while Rosenberg was facilitating racial integration in schools and organizations across the Southern United States during the 1960s (Rosenberg, 2005). Certainly, Nonviolent Communication rises directly out of Carl Roger's tradition of Humanistic Psychology, which emphasizes empathy as the fundamental key to human psychological development and fulfilling human relationships. Rogers' 1964 lecture at the California Institute of Technology (Rogers, 1980) is frequently referenced by Rosenberg as a central inspiration. In that lecture, Rogers emphasized: experiential learning; frankness about one's emotional state; the satisfaction of really hearing others in a way that resonates for them; how enriching and encouraging it is to experience creative, active, sensitive, accurate, empathic listening; the deep value of congruence between one's own inner experience, one's conscious awareness, and one's communication; and subsequently, how enlivening it is to unconditionally receive another's love

or appreciation and extend the same (Rogers, 1980, pp. 5-26). Further, the Rogerian tradition

uniquely trusts each individual's capacity to generate solutions, rather than relying on a

therapist's expert advice. Diverging from a clinical focus, the development of Nonviolent

Communication is marked at its earliest stages by community-level applications of the concepts

outlined above in conflict resolution, interpersonal skills training, and violence prevention

efforts.

Other Key Influences

Publications from the beginning of Rosenberg's career shed light on the historical and

theoretical development of the Nonviolent Communication model. These include a paper titled

"Application of Behavioral Science Principles at a Community Level" presented to the American

Psychological Association (1970), and an article titled "Community Psychology as Applied by a

Clinician", published in the *Journal for Social Changes: Ideas and Applications* (1971). These

two publications neatly summarize Rosenberg's early influences as well as his move away from

clinical psychological practice and towards community-focused work. This shift was strongly

influenced by Erich Fromm's (1955) insistence that individual mental health is dependent on the

social structure of a community, George Albee's (1967) assertion that it is not logistically

possible for therapists alone to meet the psychological needs of all community members, and

George Miller's (1969) insistence on giving psychology away to the community, thereby making

knowledge about human behaviour as widely and readily available as possible (Rosenberg, 1970,

1971).

The idea of giving away expertise was embraced by a number of practitioners in a variety

of different fields during the early 1970s. Rosenberg (1970, 1971) cites several as influential in

the development of his own "giveaway" work: Rogers (1967) principles of interpersonal

relationships fostering psychological growth; Dreikurs and Stoltz' (1964) and Deutsch's (1969) principles of constructive conflict resolution; the principles of experiential learning and student-led classroom instruction as articulated by Cantor (1953), Postman and Weingartner (1969), and Bower and Hollister (1967); as well as Rosenberg's own (1968) principles of collaborative diagnostic assessment and responsive teaching.

Developing Community Based Practices

In both of these early publications, Rosenberg (1970, 1971) discusses the challenges of providing large groups with the kind of intensive, meaningful, personal learning experiences he was accustomed to facilitating during private counselling practice. Early on, he specified that supporting institutional self-sufficiency, through training trainers within organizations, is an effective and efficient way to facilitate broadly available, meaningful learning experiences. Another solution to the challenge of working with large groups has been the use of vicarious role-playing. This practice provides the opportunity for individuals to reflect on and chronicle their own personal responses to a variety of familiar scenarios while a trainer works directly with one participant in front of the whole group (Rosenberg, 1970, 1971). Training internal trainers and employing role-play scenarios are techniques that continue to be applied by Nonviolent Communication instructors.

The limited amount of time available to work with a group increases the challenge of facilitating meaningful, practical, learning experiences. Due to a range of constraints, organizations often asked Rosenberg to achieve with a large group, over three days, the kind of results he had been accustomed to facilitating in one individual, in a clinical setting, over the course of months or even years. Setting realistic expectations, establishing measurable learning

objectives (which are known to the training participants), including interactive teaching techniques (such as role-play, psychodrama, and structured small group activities), employing visual recordings as a feedback tool for workshop participants, and providing supplementary reading materials, were (and continue to be) all strategies utilized by Rosenberg to make the most efficient use of training time with a large group (Rosenberg, 1970, 1971).

Foundational Concepts

Rosenberg's contributions to a series called *Educational Therapy*, first as a chapter author in 1966 and seven years later as both editor and a chapter author, offer further insight into the theoretical underpinnings that shaped his later work. Rosenberg's chapter in Volume 1 of *Educational Therapy*, edited by Jerome Hellmuth (1966), outlines the context of his early work with children identified as having learning disabilities. That chapter reveals an emerging interest in psycholinguistics and the power of language use; it introduces his insistence on coordination between service providers or other community supports; and it emphasizes collaboration between all affected parties (in this case educational staff, service providers, the child, and the child's family).

Rosenberg edited Volume 3 of *Educational Therapy* (1973), which also includes a chapter written by him titled "New Directions in In-service Education for Teachers" (pp.367-381). Through his selection of chapter authors, the reader can see Rosenberg's persistent interest in "…educational programs that are innovative, operational, and practical" (p. 9). Topics featured address learning motivation, socially responsible behaviour, the inclusion of alienated youth, humanistic education, re-evaluating power in the classroom, experiential learning along with student-led teaching, and finally, the consultation and inclusion of community members in

the education of their youth. Rosenberg's own chapter addresses enriched teacher training intended to vitalize teaching practices and humanize students in the eyes of teachers. Here Rosenberg expresses clear precursors to the Nonviolent Communication concepts of assertive, honest, needs-based expressions, combined with respectful, empathic listening. As in his earlier articles, Rosenberg again looks at the dynamics of facilitating meaningful learning for large groups over relatively short time frames.

Challenging Power Dynamics in Hierarchical Relationships

Within this same period, from 1966-1973, Rosenberg also published two books addressing the teacher-student relationship: *Diagnostic Teaching* (1968) and *Mutual Education* (1972). These explore in more detail many of the topics addressed in Volume Three of *Educational Therapy* (1973). The beginning stages of Rosenberg's current approach to facilitating learning become increasingly apparent, as do the formative stages of his current focus on enlivening relationships and effective conflict resolution through honesty, empathy, and mutual respect.

A central goal for the Nonviolent Communication model's initial phases was the radical restructuring of teacher-pupil roles in the classroom to facilitate greater student responsibility for learning processes and greater participation in decision-making related to learning (Rosenberg, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1973). Over the years this last aim has broadened to include all institutionalized hierarchical relationships (e.g. police-citizen, boss-employee, priest-parishioner, etc.), and their informal counterparts (e.g. man-woman, rich-poor, adult-youth, parent-child, etc.), with an eye towards what some call the transformation of a retributive, fear-based,

"domination" paradigm into a restorative, "partnership" paradigm based on mutual respect (Skye, 2004; Eisler, 2000).

Gandhi as a Touchstone for Nonviolent Communication

This current articulation, emphasizing intention, quality of connection, and self-empathy, continues to reflect Rosenberg's early aspirations. Rosenberg identifies Mahatma Gandhi as a central influence throughout his adult life and as an inspiration for the articulation and re-articulation of the Nonviolent Communication process over the years. From the beginning, Rosenberg's goal has been to develop a practical process for interaction, with oneself and others, rooted in Gandhi's theory and philosophy of "ahimsa" (Rosenberg, 2005). Ahimsa is translated as the overflowing love that arises when all ill-will, anger, and hate have subsided from the heart (Fischer, 1962). Steven Smith (2006a; personal communication, March 19-27, 2006), lawyer-mediator and Nonviolent Communication practitioner, notes that while deeply inspiring, Gandhi's approach to developing nonviolence involves extensive lifestyle changes and complex processes of self-assessment which are unattainable for most Westerners. According to Smith, Rosenberg's distillation of Gandhian philosophy has provided a practical, adaptable, accessible process for developing "ahimsa" in thought and in communications:

> Rosenberg has isolated the critical point where a choice is made, in a moment, regarding how we proceed to relate to others. *Nonviolent Communication* provides a syntax that focuses language on the beauty of needs, which subsequently focuses both thought and attention. (Smith, personal communication, March 19-27, 2006)

Smith asserts that through syntactic structure, Rosenberg's model facilitates increased possibilities for needs-based choices when faced with painful or unwanted stimuli, rather than the restriction of standard "knee-jerk" reactions. "The model is simple enough that anyone can learn it and apply it. It makes readily available the grace that Gandhi was accessing and

engaging. This two-step dance [honesty & empathy] accesses what Gandhi called loving-

kindness" (Smith, personal communication, March 19-27, 2006).

Evolution of the Nonviolent Communication Model

The earliest version of the Nonviolent Communication model (observations, feelings, and

action-oriented <u>wants</u>) was published by Rosenberg in a training manual prepared for

Community Psychological Consultants in St. Louis, Missouri (Rosenberg, 1972). The model

continued to evolve through the 1980s–observations, feelings, <u>values</u>, and requests (Rosenberg,

1983)–until it reached its present form as articulated in 1999 (observations, feelings, <u>needs</u>, and

requests). The continuing growth and evolution of the model has unquestionably been

influenced by Rosenberg's dialogues and collaborative trainings with some of his longest-

standing trainers such as Nafez Assaily (Palestine); Anne Bourrit and Barbara Kunz

(Switzerland); Bob Conde (Sierra Leone); Vilma Costetti (Italy); Dunia Hategekimana

(Burundi); Nada Ignjatovic-Savic (Yugoslavia); Samie Ihejirka (Nigeria); Jean-Francois LeCoq

(Belgium); Pascale Molo (France); Theodore Mukudonga (Rwanda); Sister Carmel Neland

(Ireland); Chris Rajendram (Sri Lanka); Jorge Rubio (Brazil); Rita Herzog, Allan Rholfs, Susan

Skye, Robert Gonzales, Lucy Leu (United States); Towe Widstrand (Sweden); Penny Wassman

and Sister Judi Morin (Canada); and many others (Rosenberg, 2005).

The preface to his 1972 training manual indicates that Rosenberg's work initially grew

out of a desire to support individuals "in overcoming a sea of words and communication habits

that might keep [one] from enjoying the humanity in [one's] self and others." He reminds the

reader to focus on the simple pleasure of connecting authentically with others, and cautions the

reader to use his model only as long as it is useful, discarding it if it becomes a burden

(Rosenberg, 1972). Rosenberg's evolving articulations of the Nonviolent Communication model have retained the integrity of this original aim.

Currently, the model and its applications appear to be undergoing yet another evolutionary stage with an increasing focus on self-empathy (appearing earlier in trainings, but not in publication until 1999) as central to the model's effectiveness as a practical process. Empathy towards others was a constant aspect of the model from 1972 onward (focusing originally on the other's feelings and wants, then feelings and values, then feelings and needs, in keeping with the timeline above). Another apparent shift in Nonviolent Communication trainings and publications since 2000 is increasing reference to the model as a process. This has involved redirecting the central focus away from the "steps" per se, and towards the practitioner's intentions in speaking (Is the intent to get others to do what one wants, or to foster more meaningful relationships and mutual satisfaction?), listening (is the intent to prepare for what one has to say, or to extend heartfelt, respectful attentiveness to another?), and the quality of connection being experienced with others (Rosenberg, 2000, 2003, 2005).

Academic Analysis of the Nonviolent Communication Model

Aside from this thesis, only four other studies offer evaluations of Nonviolent Communication training programs (Little, Gill & Devcic, 2007; Nash, 2007; Blake, 2002; Steckal, 1994).

Steckal's (1994) doctoral dissertation evaluates the impact of a seven hour Nonviolent Communication training presented by Marshall Rosenberg. Tests measured the empathy and self-compassion (self-empathy) levels among a group of adult university students both before and after the training. Her results showed statistically significant increases in both empathy and

self-empathy for the Nonviolent Communication training participants, while the control group

showed no significant changes on the same measures.

Blake's (2002) master's thesis examines the impact of a two-day Nonviolent

Communication training program offered by Blake to two groups of university students enrolled

in a Communications class. Two groups of students enrolled in a Communications class at

another university acted as Blake's control group and received another two-day interpersonal

communication course (not Nonviolent Communication) also offered by her. The study

measured increases in levels of empathy for the students in both participant and control groups.

Blake found no evidence to suggest that exposure to Nonviolent Communication training

uniquely contributed to an increase in empathy, concluding that any program focused on

interpersonal communication skills probably supports the development of empathy in training

participants. Blake states that she was unable to discern the impact of the Nonviolent

Communication training separately from the rest of the communications course which the

participant students were enrolled in. She also suspected that longer exposure to the Nonviolent

Communication material might have a more significant impact on participants.

Nash's (2007) master's thesis evaluates a two-year Nonviolent Communication training

program for staff at Tekoa Boys Institute, a private non-profit residential juvenile treatment

facility licensed by the Virginia State Departments of Social Services and Education. Staff

received a four-hour Nonviolent Communication training followed by weekly one-hour and 15

minute practice sessions. Her study measures two statistically significant positive impacts for

the participant group despite a 62% turnover in staffing during the two-year study period. By the

end of the study, peaceful conflict resolutions between residents and Nonviolent Communication

trained staff had significantly increased, at the same time violent resolutions decreased between

these two groups (2007). In contrast, untrained staff significantly decreased their rates of peaceful conflict resolution and increased their rates of violent conflict resolution with residents (2007). Nash notes that during her posttest, none of the physical conflicts ended in violent resolution, suggesting that perhaps trained staff were choosing to become involved in the physical conflicts to ensure they were solved peacefully (2007).

Little, Gill, and Devcic (2007) assessed a three month Nonviolent Communication program for Grade 7 students in Vancouver BC, Canada, under the auspices of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. The Vancouver research shows that the training participants experienced statistically significant and dramatically increased empathy and conflict resolution skills comprehension and applications. The control group showed no significant changes. Qualitative analysis of the interview data reveals that the participant students found the training to be engaging, useful, and meaningful. The majority of the participant students reported practicing their new skills in daily conflicts with friends and family members, particularly with siblings, and that they experienced more satisfying conflict outcomes than before the training.

These four studies provide the only program evaluation research currently available which assesses the impacts of Nonviolent Communication training. While they are all relatively small, they indicate some positive effects that practitioners are experiencing from learning and applying the model. This thesis explores, in yet another pilot study, the impacts of Nonviolent Communication training on participants, so that clearer trends may begin to emerge and a stronger understanding of the model's applications may be determined.

Rosenberg's Psychology master's thesis (1958, University of Wisconsin) and doctoral dissertation (1961, University of Wisconsin) were also reviewed as part of the search for academic writing that addresses Nonviolent Communication or its precursors. While the overt

connections are slim between his very first academic research and his current work, an interest in feelings, self-assessment (self-reflection), responses to certain contexts and the impact of one's social environment, are all evident early themes which continue to be relevant.

Nonviolent Communication and Other Early Conflict Resolution Models

According to Yarn's (1999) Dictionary of Conflict Resolution, most Western mediation and conflict resolution practices developed from early to mid-1900s labour arbitration, collective bargaining, and workplace disputes (this form of conflict resolution traditionally dates to medieval guilds and was first revived in North America for railway disputes). "As an area of scholarship and professional practice, conflict resolution is relatively young, having emerged after World War II" (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). Yarn (1999) explains that as the field grew, practices also arose out of volunteer community mediation programs that had evolved during the civil rights movements of the 1960s. Modern Western European and North American mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution practices are firmly rooted in family therapy, couples therapy, and social work practices that developed through the 1970s and 1980s (Yarn, 1999).

Yarn claims that the common underpinnings to most modern Western conflict resolution approaches were first articulated in the 1980s interest-based conflict resolution, negotiation, and mediation model. The *interest-based model* was developed by Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991) through their work with the Harvard School of Business (Yarn, 1999). It is generally agreed that since the 1980s, most other Western conflict resolution, negotiation, and mediation practices have developed in that model's shadow, either influenced by it or in reaction to it.

While neither references the other, Nonviolent Communication and interest-based negotiation were clearly evolving within the same theoretical and socio-political milieu. Prior to

Nonviolent Communication and interest-based negotiation, another similar model had already been articulated: Thomas Gordon's (1970) *Parent Effectiveness Training*, also known as *The Gordon Model for Effective Relationships*. Unexpectedly, over the course of preparing this literature review The Gordon Model was revealed as a likely precursor to most modern North American conflict resolution and effective communication models. Before describing the Nonviolent Communication model in full, interest-based mediation and the Gordon Model will be briefly reviewed as central figures in the contextual background.

The Interest-Based Model

Essentially, interest-based negotiation involves: (a) separating the people from the problem at hand; (b) focusing on underlying interests rather than specific positions; (c) inventing options for mutual gain; and (d) insisting on using objective criteria for reaching and assessing the agreed-upon solutions (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991).

(a) Separating the People from the Problem

Separating the people from the problem involves discussing each other's perceptions (avoiding blame), recognizing and making emotions explicit, allowing each other to speak freely and uninterrupted, listening attentively and checking for accuracy, talking about the issue at hand as a joint problem, and using "I" statements rather than accusative "you" statements. Once the shared problem is clear, parties discern between positions and underlying interests.

(b) Identifying Interests

Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1991) state that "Your position is something you have decided on. Your interests are what caused you to decide" (p. 41). They identify interests as needs, desires, concerns, or fears, which underscore a position. According to this model, there are

complementary interests, differing interests, and conflicting interests. They point out that

sometimes a resolution is possible specifically because interests differ. For example, two

children might fight over an orange and possessing the whole orange might be each child's

position. However, one's interest is actually eating the fruit, while the other's interest is the zest

in the peel for flavouring a cake. Now, based on their interests, they can divide the orange so

both are satisfied. The authors acknowledge that identifying interests can be difficult because

they are often unexpressed, intangible, and inconsistent. They also assert that the most powerful

interests are human needs, the "bedrock concerns which motivate all people" (p. 48). Needs

motivate individuals as well as whole groups, and they assert that "Negotiations are not likely to

make much progress as long as one side believes that the fulfillment of their basic human needs

is being threatened by the other" (p. 49).

(c) Creating Options for Mutual Gain and Setting Objective Criteria

The authors specify that one's own interests (needs, desires, concerns, fears) must be self-

represented insistently, specifically, and with regard for the other's interests, looking towards

what might satisfy both. Creative, flexible brainstorming is central to creating options for mutual

gain, which serve the interests of both parties. Finally, the authors encourage negotiators to

agree on objective criteria based on fair standards and procedures to ensure the negotiated

agreement is honoured, and everyone is clear on the rules for moving forward.

(d) Possible Influences for Interest-Based Negotiation

Fisher, Ury and Patton (1991) do not offer any references or provide a bibliography.

However, given the components of their model, it can be assumed that they were influenced by

the Humanistic trends, ideas, and authors that also influenced Rosenberg (such as Carl Rogers

and Morton Deutsch). Since Rosenberg's first articulations of the Nonviolent Communication

model were published in 1972 and 1976, it is possible that Fisher, Ury, and Patton had come across his ideas while developing their own model, which was first published in 1981. The Gordon Model was first published in 1970 after being popularly taught across the United States through the 1960s, and the interest-based model mirrors significant aspects of it. Again, this indicates common influences, and the possibility that Fisher, Ury, and Patton had been exposed to the Gordon Model, or variations on the Gordon model, at some point prior to their 1981 publication.

Nonviolent Communication in Relation to Interest-Based Negotiation

Nonviolent Communication is very similar in structure to interest-based negotiation, but differs by identifying interests (such as desires, concerns, and fears) as aspects of positions, or rather as strategies. Nonviolent Communication only acknowledges human needs as the inspiration for all human behaviour while it views positions, desires, concerns, and fears as culturally or socially informed strategies to meet those needs. Nonviolent Communication offers a more in-depth exploration of emotions in relation to needs, but interest-based negotiation offers more specific direction around developing strategies or options for mutual gain, as well as methods for maintaining a negotiated agreement.

Even though the interest-based model attends somewhat to the emotions of, and relationships between, conflicted parties, it is still predominantly strategic and outcome-oriented. The goal of interest-based negotiation is to broaden the possible outcome options by focusing on interests rather than positions, but the material outcome is still the main goal. Nonviolent Communication, due to its more intensive focus on feelings and needs, is predominantly relationship-oriented. The goal of Nonviolent Communication is to foster a rich quality of

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connection between parties, trusting that once that connection is established through compassion for each other's common human needs, mutually satisfying strategies will develop in due course.

The models are relatively compatible. Interest-based negotiation could be enriched by replacing its first two steps with the Nonviolent Communication process before moving towards the strategy development in steps three and four. Nonviolent Communication could be enhanced by adopting some of interest-based negotiation's strategies for developing solution options, when it serves the circumstances, after a rich quality of connection has been established.

The Gordon Model

A Pioneer in the Field

Over the course of developing this literature review, Thomas Gordon emerged as not only a pioneer in the field of conflict resolution, effective communication, and leadership training, but also as the source of several core concepts that are now commonly accepted, and broadly employed, by practitioners and instructors in all three areas. Gordon was heavily influenced by Carl Rogers' work and ideas. According to Gordon's website (Gordon, 2008), the roots of his model for effective relationships were developed during his years as a doctoral student under Rogers at the University of Chicago. Gordon's model was originally called Group-Centred Leadership, which Rogers identified as a new application of his Client-Centred Psychotherapy model. Consequently, Rogers included a chapter on that topic (by Gordon) in his seminal 1951 book *Client-Centred Psychotherapy.*

Roadblocks to Open Communication

Gordon went on to write his doctoral dissertation (1949, University of Chicago) about listener responses that tend to block open communication from a speaker (criticizing, name-calling, diagnosing, praising evaluatively, ordering/commanding, threatening, moralizing,

excessive/inappropriate questioning, advising, diverting, logical argument, and reassuring).

These "12 Roadblocks" were first publicly described by Gordon in 1957 and were later included

in his 1970 parenting book *Parent Effectiveness Training* (Gordon, 2008).

An Organizational Leadership Model Becomes a Family Leadership Model

Gordon's first book was titled *Group-Centered Leadership: A Way of Releasing the*

Creative Power of Groups (1955). It offered his leadership model as a tool to transform

organizational systems of domination based on rewards and punishment into partnership systems

based on human dignity, mutual accountability, and mutual respect (Gordon, 2008). Early

concepts included the "wisdom of the group" and the creative resources of group members, a

four-step group problem solving process (i.e. (a) identifying the problem, (b) diagnosing the

problem, (c) making a decision, and (d) accepting/carrying out the decision), and recognizing a

leader's limits regarding group action decisions. While many of these ideas have now gained

popularity, at the time very few corporations or businesses were interested in transforming their

traditional power dynamics.

By 1962, Gordon had identified parallels between the power dynamics of organizational

leader-member relationships, and those of parent-child relationships, and had begun offering the

Parent Effectiveness Training program. He anticipated that parents might find his leadership

model useful for fostering harmony, peaceful conflict resolution, partnership, and mutual respect

within their families. Throughout the 1960s Gordon's model continued to evolve as parents

across the United States participated in his trainings and offered feedback (Gordon, 2008).

Active Listening and "I-messages"

Initially, Parent Effectiveness Training focused predominantly on Rogers' empathic

listening practices, which Gordon developed further and termed *Active Listening*, a term coined

by one of his students. Parents responded well to these practices, but requested additional skills

training to help them express themselves more clearly and respectfully when they felt disturbed

by their children's behaviour. Gordon (2008) says that he was inspired by Oliver Brown, a

therapist colleague, and Sidney Jourard, author of *The Transparent Self* (1971), who both

recommended simply representing oneself openly, honestly, and directly in all relationships.

Combining this recommendation with his experience working with children using play therapy,

Gordon developed the "I-message" to represent one's own unmet need without blaming the

other. He also acknowledges his wife, Linda Adams, as another key influence who contributed

substantially to later variations of the "I-message," as well as to the general evolution and

refinement of the Gordon Model from 1976 onward (Gordon, 2008).

Shifting between Active Listening and "I-messages"

Shortly after integrating "I-messages" into his trainings, Gordon realized that a parent

often had to deal with a distressed child after uttering an "I-message." In response, he began to

teach the process of shifting between "I-messages" and active empathic listening. Towards the

end of the 1960s it became apparent that it was often not enough just to shift between listening

and "I-messages." During the late 1960s, Gordon began to look for and integrate conflict

resolution processes into his model for effective parenting. Ultimately, he formulated a complete

conflict resolution model within the broader context of his already articulated effective

communication skills (Gordon, 2008).

A "No-lose" Conflict Resolution Process

Gordon became a pioneer of win-win conflict resolution methods by incorporating

concepts developed by two of the early 20th century's great thinkers, Abraham Maslow and John

Dewey. According to Australian conflict resolution researchers, Davidson and Wood (2004),

Gordon adapted Maslow's 1970 concepts about human needs, and combined them with a newly

emerging practice called "brainstorming" as articulated by Maier in 1960 and Osborn in 1963, as

well as Dewey's 1933 and 1938 ideas about considering all possible solutions (Davidson &

Wood, 2004). This original combination resulted in Gordon's six-step "No-lose" conflict

resolution process used dynamically with empathic listening and honest "I-messages":

1. Define the problem in terms of conflicting needs (rather than conflicting solutions),
2. Generate possible needs-based solutions,
3. Evaluate the solutions,
4. Decide on a mutually acceptable solution,
5. Implement the solution, and
6. Evaluate the solution at a later date.
(Summarized from Davidson & Wood, 2004; Gordon, 2008)

Tools for Values Conflicts and for Discerning Ownership of a Problem

Further, in an effort to address parent-teen conflicts based on values, beliefs, or strong

preferences, Gordon (2008) developed a series of "non-power" strategies and a barometer for

measuring the varying degrees of risk associated with each strategy. He also created a visual

tool, called a "Behaviour Window", to assist parents in identifying whether or not there actually

is a problem, and determining who the problem belongs to (the child, the parent, or both), as a

first step towards addressing a potential conflict (Gordon, 2008).

Gordon's Credo for Healthy Relationships

Finally, inspired by Kahlil Gibran's poem *On Children* (Gibran, 1923, p.22), Gordon

articulated a relationship credo in the late 1960s, which was published in 1978. The credo

balances interconnectedness with autonomy, calls for openness and honesty, encourages mutual

empathy, invites changes of behaviour in service of each other's needs, resolves to engage

conflict from an attitude of partnership and an intention to hold both party's needs as valuable so

that solutions serve both, and concludes by holding up mutual respect, love, and peace as the goals of a healthy relationship (Gordon, 2008).

Summary of Gordon's Pioneered Concepts

Parent Effectiveness Training has been expanded and rearticulated over the past 20 years to create Teacher Effectiveness Training, Leader Effectiveness Training, and Youth Effectiveness Training. Parent Effectiveness Training is widely recognized as the first skills-based training program for parents in North America, and marks the beginning of a parent education movement that continues to grow. The Gordon Model concepts of "roadblocks" to effective communication, active listening, "I-Messages," identifying ownership of problems, the six steps for conflict resolution, the concept of needs as central to both conflict and solutions, and the "No-lose/Win-Win" approach to conflict resolution, have all had a profound influence. The impact has been so profound that some of these ideas (active listening, "I-messages," and Win-Win conflict resolution) now seem to be accepted as common knowledge in popular North American culture. Certainly, these ideas, or close variations, are standard components (with differing degrees of emphasis) of many modern conflict resolution, effective communication, parent education, and effective leadership training programs in North America (Gordon, 2008). Beyond that, Gordon has been recently acknowledged as one of the first theorist-practitioners to locate conflict resolution processes within a theory of healthy relationships (Davidson & Wood, 2004).

Nonviolent Communication in Relation to the Gordon Model

Both Rosenberg and Gordon studied and worked with Carl Rogers, and both express a debt of gratitude to Rogers for his formative influence on their work. Clearly, they had both been exposed to many of the same ideas and influences by the time they began to articulate

models for conflict resolution and effective communication. Gordon's model continued to evolve and develop through his work with parents in the 1960s, while Rosenberg's evolved and developed through his work with youth in the 1960s. Neither references the other in his writing.

Gordon's fully formed Parent Effectiveness Training model was first published in 1970, after being offered extensively throughout the United States starting in 1962 (Gordon, 2008). Rosenberg's fully formed Nonviolent Communication model was not published until 1972, and did not identify needs as the primary motivator for human behaviour or as a central component of the model until 1999. It seems likely that Rosenberg came across Gordon's writing or ideas simply through their prevalence between 1970 and 1999. Even though Rosenberg's work was less well known at that time, Gordon may still have been aware of it. Since both were students and colleagues of Rogers', it is possible that Rosenberg and Gordon were exposed to each other's ideas through their work with him. Or it is possible that they may have learned about each other's work through their own students and certified trainers. Nonviolent Communication certified trainer Susan Skye was familiar with, and practicing, Gordon's model in the 1980s when she began practicing and teaching Rosenberg's model (Skye, personal communication, March 19-27, 2006). Regardless of their levels of mutual-awareness, the similarities between Nonviolent Communication and Parent Effectiveness Training strongly demonstrate the parallel emergence of a series of Humanistic ideas that were simultaneously ripe for integration and dissemination.

Rosenberg's chapter titled, "Communication that Blocks Compassion" (Rosenberg, 2003) is essentially an adaptation of Gordon's "12 Roadblocks to Communication." Differing from Gordon, Rosenberg places a slightly greater emphasis on the development of a feelings vocabulary and emphasizes an explicit link between feelings and needs (Gordon does not make

that link explicit). Nonviolent Communication includes needs as an integral component of an assertive honest expression: essentially a leaner, more refined "I-message." The process of shifting between "I-messages" and active listening (Gordon, 1970), is articulated by Rosenberg using the metaphor of a dance between honesty and empathy (Rosenberg, 2003). Gordon is more specific about brainstorming, strategy development, and establishing strategy evaluation, as concluding aspects of conflict resolution. Rosenberg, on the other hand, focuses more on the articulation of requests, recommending a return to empathy and honesty when requests are not received as hoped. Nonviolent Communication offers the opportunity to extend empathy towards oneself (self-empathy) and can thus be applied to solve internal conflicts or as a mindfulness practice. Parent Effectiveness Training is a model intended only for application towards others.

Both authors developed their models with the intention to facilitate a socio-linguistic transformation of domination systems (based on rewards and punishment) into partnership systems (based on human dignity, mutual accountability, and mutual respect). There are several parallels between aspects of each model and their subsequent applications; however, they are clearly distinct from each other. Further, where Gordon's model is based on a number of guidelines and steps, Rosenberg's two-part (honesty-empathy) process accesses many of the same concepts in a simpler, more streamlined way. While the term "restorative justice" was not in common usage at the time these models were being developed, Nonviolent Communication and Parent Effectiveness Training both articulate practical means for engaging restorative principles in personal relationships.

Nonviolent Communication and Restorative Justice

Restorative justice has come into Euro-North American consciousness in concert with the development and growth of humanistic psychology practices and perspectives. Both schools of thought value and foster the lived experiences and solutions of all people regardless of social status, academic training, personal or professional background. Both also trust the capacity of individuals and communities to generate the solutions that will best serve them. Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication model – developed as a verbal process for facilitating peaceful, empathic relationships with oneself and others – is securely nested within the principles of humanistic psychology and restorative justice. The remainder of this chapter explores the characteristics and expressions of restorative justice and how those might impact daily life.

Socio-Linguistic Transition from Retributive to Restorative Paradigm

Ultimately, through teaching Nonviolent Communication, Rosenberg aims to foster a socio-linguistic transition from a retributive to a restorative social paradigm (Rosenberg, 2005). Locating Nonviolent Communication as a restorative practice is illustrated here by distinguishing between retributive and restorative language patterns in English. Some of the following examples point to formal justice processes for the sake of clarity, and because it seems to me that formal practices and values are also played out informally and interpersonally. This brief exploration provides a context for the Nonviolent Communication model as a practical strategy for engaging restorative justice principals on an interpersonal level. This practical application of restorative justice through conflict resolution and empathy skills development is the central reason for making the Nonviolent Communication model available to the youth who participated in this research.

Language and conflict are inextricably linked. Language use in a conflict reflects the intent of the resolution process, and profoundly influences its outcome. Increased awareness of

the dynamics between conflict, language, and self, is integral to moving towards justice and resolutions which are sensitive to individual differences, while also successfully meeting the needs of the community. Awareness of these dynamics supports more effective, conscious, and selective choices about how to engage justice or solve conflicts as individuals and as groups.

Retributive Language Patterns

The intentions of retributive justice are punitive. The three central questions asked are: what law was broken; who did it; and what punishment is deserved (Zehr, 2000)? This overarching, formal approach to justice is significant because that retributive paradigm consequently frames informal perspectives and values as well as processes for establishing fairness and interpersonal conflict resolution. The benefits of retributive justice will not be explored here; its basic characteristics are only described to reveal gaps in its capacity to serve the community, and as a counterpoint to restorative justice.

Some of the linguistic hallmarks of retributive justice are analysis, diagnosis, labelling, blaming, interrogating, demanding, threatening, judging, comparing, and denial of responsibility (Zehr, 2002). Incidentally, these are the very language patterns that Rosenberg identifies as "life-alienating communication" (Rosenberg, 2000), meaning that they do not serve to build connection and compassion between people (Gordon, 2008; Rosenberg, 2000). These forms of communication are identified as contributing to violent behaviour towards others and towards oneself. Rosenberg claims they alienate people from their natural state of compassion. He draws on the research of O.J. Harvey, Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Colorado University, regarding the relationship between language and violence. Harvey "...took random samples of literature from many countries over the world and tabulated the frequency of words that classify and judge people. His study shows a high correlation between the frequent use of such words

[*classification, labelling, blaming, judging*] and incidences of violence [*in those countries*]"
(Rosenberg, 2000, p. 17). The reader is encouraged to note that while analysis, diagnosis,
labelling, interrogating, demanding, judging, and comparing, may be useful skills for making
sense of the world around us, these skills do not seem to serve the development of
compassionate, mutually considerate relationships between people.

Formal conflict resolution in the retributive system emphasizes hierarchical power,
rigidly set language formulas, and the regimented timelines of "due process", it is difficult for
this method to do more than investigate, interrogate, label, and punish. Theoretically this process
establishes the truth, and delivers justice. In reality, the feelings and needs of the victim, the
offender, and the community, are left unrecognized and unaddressed. The language is used to
persuade a judge and/or jury that one person is more right than the other, the 'truth' can be
obscured, and the result is often a general sense of dissatisfaction and injustice for both parties
(Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2002). Informally, it seems that mimicking this game of "blame, judgment,
and punishment" impacts every member of English speaking societies, from conflicted
preschoolers to colleagues at work, whether this retributive process is being inflicted upon them,
they are inflicting it on each other, or they are inflicting it on other groups.

The intention to punish is clearly reflected in the use of language, which labels, blames,
judges, and the forum for that process which involves "victims" and "suspects/ offenders" being
brought before authority (such as a peer, parent, principal, boss, probation officer, or judge) who
will mete out what is "deserved." The most obvious impact is the punishment of one party. Not
so obvious is the impact of labelling a person "offender," without language or processes for
accepting responsibility for actions that resulted in pain or distress. The label itself inhibits
accountability, personal development, and can in fact become a self-fulfilling prophecy (Zehr,

2002). Without a process to claim responsibility, the labelled offender is unlikely to develop

empathy for those impacted, or to engage in sincerely compassionate behaviour within the

community (Zehr, 2002). Labelling a person "victim" also has far-reaching effects similarly

removing the harmed person from any opportunity to receive real information, clarity,

acknowledgement, apology, human connection, healing, or reparation, in the face of the harm

caused (Zehr, 2002).

Personal Observations of Retributive Language in Casual Conflicts

As a parent mingling with other parents and children in my community, I have observed

many informal, casual, domestic realizations of formal retributive processes. For example, often

when one preschool child hits another, the adults move in quickly to scold and punish the

"offender" while leaving the injured child "victim" alone in his or her fear and pain. The

antecedents to the strike are often unaddressed, the injured child is peripherally attended to, and

the experiences of other children in the room are generally unacknowledged, while the

"offender" receives most of the energy and attention related to delivering justice and re-

establishing order. In a scenario like this, involving children, I have noticed that a forced

apology is also a common element, unfortunately devoid of any real sense of responsibility on

the part of the child and often saturated with resentment. I also notice that parallel scenarios

seem to play out in various social venues between adolescents, between youth and adults, and

between adults, with varying levels of formality depending on how institutionalized the

retributive structures are (from street corners to schools to government offices).

In my professional life working with youth at risk of homelessness, I see a small segment

of our young people extending their own form of retributive justice to each other (faithfully

learned through regular encounters with institutionalized retribution). It is a form of covert

retributive justice meted out swiftly and often violently on peers who fail to honour their group's code of conduct. If we ever hope to see individuals extend informal justice towards each other more constructively and more compassionately, we might want to become conscious of which principles of justice we mean to engage formally and informally (and under what circumstances), as well as the language we use to articulate those principles. We might want to ask ourselves which motivation we would like to inform the behaviour of others in our communities: fear of punishment, or the desire for belonging, compassion, and mutual respect. Engaging the values and language of restorative justice seem to support the latter motivation, perhaps even expanding our options for maintaining harmony and order in our communities.

Restorative Language Patterns

In North America the principles of restorative justice are heavily influenced by traditional First Nations approaches to justice from some of the distinct cultural groups in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand. Among others, these include the Maori in New Zealand, the Hopi and Navaho in the United States, the Ojibwe, Cree, and Mi'kmaq in Canada (Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2002). Some of the justice practices of these diverse groups have influenced the growing development of formal restorative processes such as sentencing circles, family group conferencing, victim-offender mediation, as well as healing and reconciliation gatherings, within the context of mainstream Canadian justice and political systems (Ross, 1996). The growth of the contemporary restorative justice movement in North America has been predominantly driven by Mennonite communities, beginning with their pioneer work in the field of victim-offender mediation during the early 1970s. Restorative justice is strongly informed by values held in common across many cultures, such as community stewardship, responsibility to community/relationships, compassion, reconciliation, and honouring the sacred in all people (Boulding,

2000; Clark, 2002; Hadley, 2001; Lebaron, 2003; Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2002). Restorative justice is also based on the feelings and needs of the community, which include those of the person who has caused injury and those of the person who has been injured (Hadley, 2001; Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2002).

Sister Judi Morin, a Chaplin at William Head Federal Penitentiary in British Columbia, Canada, says that restorative justice primarily addresses relationships between people, and what needs to be done to either restore those relationships to health, or develop health when it is absent (Morin, personal communication October, 2001). Where retributive justice asks what law was broken, who did it, and what punishment is deserved, restorative justice asks who has been hurt, what are their needs, and whose obligation is that or how do we help (Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2002)? The contrasting intentions are retributive blame and punishment as opposed to healing and restoration. The language of restorative justice makes a distinction between the behaviour and the person. The act may be labelled and rejected, but the person is always considered acceptable. A distinct characteristic of restorative processes is the emphasis on authentic colloquial communication between conflicting parties, as pointed out by David Hough, co-founder of the Restorative Justice Coalition which began in 1999 at William Head Federal Penitentiary in British Columbia, Canada. "People are expected to speak for themselves, and to speak sincerely from the heart. The intent is empathy based, and focused on present-time feelings and needs, as well as future prevention. Restorative justice is all about community building and relationships" (Hough, personal communication, October 2001).

Dahnke, Rafferty, Hadley, and Evans (2000) are restorative justice advocates and members of the Restorative Justice Coalition, William Head Institution, who speak from their collective experience with the Canadian federal justice system. They, along with Hough

(personal communication, October 2001), Morin (personal communication, October 2001), Ross (1996) and Zehr (2001; 2002), agree on the following socio-linguistic characteristics for many realizations of restorative justice. The format for a formal restorative process is usually a circle, where all participants can clearly see each other, and no one person is set above the rest. The right of all participants to speak, to "tell their story", is respected through a system of turn-taking that reflects their normal dialogue patterns more closely than speaking patterns in a retributive court environment. There is an open attitude toward the expression of emotions, humour is often used to diffuse tension, and periods of silence are recognized as necessary for thoughts to be formulated and for ideas to be processed. As a result, the dialogue and resolution are completely focused on all involved parties. A great deal of effort is made to establish an environment where it is "safe" to express regret, vulnerability, and fears, and to take responsibility for actions without being verbally attacked. Little emphasis is placed on the social status of participants, and the language used tends towards the vernacular of those involved. Also, restorative processes allow enough time to reach a resolution, so that what is agreed upon more fully meets the needs of both parties.

By utilizing more inclusive language (inclusive in vocabulary, inclusive in manner), in a process designed to focus on the feelings and needs of all affected parties, restorative justice tends to reach conclusions which support the experience that actual, practical justice has been served for both the individual and the community. Further, and identified as integral by "offenders" and "offended" alike, all parties are fully acknowledged and have a full opportunity to be heard (Dahnke et al., 2000; Hadley, 2001; Hough, personal communication, October 2001; Morin, personal communication, October 2001; Ross, 1996; Zehr, 2001, 2002).

Practical Impacts of Restorative Processes

Rupert Ross (1996) offers an example of the real-life impacts of restorative justice,

illustrating how restorative practices can expose and transform cycles of abuse:

> I asked Georgina Sidney [*Community Justice Initiatives, Teslin YK*] about
> the impact of their healing approach to sexual abuse [*including restorative
> justice practices*], and she said: '…they had had offenders come forward
> and disclose their abusive behaviour ON THEIR OWN, asking for help
> for everyone…' To the extent that sexual abuse spreads from one
> generation to the next as long as silence is maintained, her comments
> suggested that our emphasis on punishment, by contributing to the silence,
> may also be encouraging the continuation of abuse. (p. 18)

Ross (1996) reports on New Zealand's Family Group Conferencing program,

implemented in 1989, as another compelling case for the positive impact of a restorative

approach to communicating with people who have been injured or offended and those who have

caused injury. This method is based on traditional Maori teachings and is used in dealing with

all "young offenders" between the ages of 14 and 16 regardless of background, their victims, and

concerned members of their community. Under this system, great care is taken to reject the

injury causing action, but not the "young offender" as a person. Rather, they are shown that

people in the community value and respect them. Instead of being reduced to a stereotype, the

youth is appreciated as a whole person. According to Ross, two responses are most common

when those injured or offended are asked: "what do you want out of this meeting?" The first is a

desire for the young person to learn from the mistake, and get their life in order. The second is a

desire to be compensated for the loss. Remarkably, those offended are often willing to waive

justifiable claims to support the youth making a fresh start. This contrasts starkly with the cries

for "more punishment" on the steps of North American courthouses in (Ross, 1996).

The concrete, measurable outcomes of Family Group Conferencing are impressive by any

standards: the number of young people in New Zealand youth custody facilities dropped from

2,712 in 1988 to 923 in 1992. As a result, half of all detention facilities for young offenders were closed. Importantly, the number of prosecuted cases against people aged 17 to 19 dropped 27% in the five-year period ending in 1992 (Ross, 1996). This suggests that the increasingly restorative system being used to address young offenders in New Zealand is producing adults less likely to reoffend. Strikingly, the effects of this process were evident after only three years. More recent studies by Donald Schmid (2001), Fulbright Scholar, Ian Axford Fellow in Public Policy, and Chief of the United States Attorney's Office in South Bend Indiana, reinforce these earlier findings and show even wider-ranging impacts. Schmid articulates a series of measured outcomes of restorative justice projects including: increased participation by the individuals harmed, dramatic increases in satisfaction (90% of participants on average), dramatic increases in acceptance of responsibility by offenders, significant decreases in recidivism (by 62% in one study) and in youth offending generally (by 2/3 in one study), a greater understanding of antecedents to youth crime (including cultural isolation and trauma), increased sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity, consensus based decision-making, increased community building, accommodation of spiritual experiences (like apology/forgiveness, generosity, and personal transformation), and improved perceptions of police and the legal system generally.

I suspect that familiarity with, and emulation of, these kinds of formal restorative processes will support more choices and create more balance as we resolve conflicts or extend justice to each other on an individual basis. This exploration of some broad language patterns and value differences between retributive and restorative justice provides a context for describing Nonviolent Communication as an application of restorative principles for daily interactions.

Nonviolent Communication, Restorative Justice, and the Use of Force

Nonviolent Communication facilitates the expression of anger without resorting to shame, blame, slander, and violence. It also addresses basic needs for individual and community safety through the "protective use of force." This concept is distinct from using force to inflict pain or punishment, and provides for instances "where the opportunity for dialogue may not exist, and the use of force may be necessary to protect life or individual rights" (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 155). This distinction between protective and punitive uses of force parallels the contrast between restorative and retributive justice.

The intention behind the protective use of force is to prevent injury or injustice. The focus is on the life or needs-based rights to be protected without passing judgment on either the person or the behaviour. The underlying assumption is that people harm themselves and others out of pain and/or ignorance. "Ignorance includes (a) a lack of awareness of the consequences of our actions, (b) an inability to see how our needs may be met without injury to others, (c) the belief that we have the 'right' to punish or hurt others because they 'deserve' it, and (d) delusional thinking that involves, for example, hearing a 'voice' that instructs us to kill someone" (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 156). The protective process for redirecting violent behaviour is one of empathy, honesty, and education, not punishment. Georgina Sidney's above-quoted observations of offenders freely coming forward for help and restoration provide reassurance and a startling example of how powerfully effective this kind of restorative approach can be (Ross, 1996).

The intention behind the punitive use of force is to cause individuals to suffer for their violence. It is based on the assumption that people commit offences because they are bad or evil. "Correction" is undertaken through action designed to make "bad people" suffer enough that they are inspired to "repent" and change. In reality, punitive force tends to evoke resentment and

hostility. Ironically, punishment also tends to generate resistance to the "corrective" behaviour and to reinforce the very behaviour being punished, typically under the guise of increased secrecy (Zehr, 2000). Rosenberg states that punishment damages goodwill and self-esteem, shifting attention from the intrinsic value of an action to external consequences (Rosenberg, 2000). Even more disturbing is Georgina Sidney's suggestion that punitive measures contribute to the silence around taboo behaviour and the subsequent continuation of abuse.

The major threads identified as central to the work of restorative justice include forgiveness, healing, compassion, respect, regret, and a radical change in direction. The goal is nothing less than a transformation of persons, relationships, communities and social structures (Dahnke et al., 2000). Michael Hadley, an Associate Director with the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, calls restorative justice a tough-minded journey that challenges the human spirit. He says: "It is never the easy way out: neither for the perpetrator, nor the victim, nor the community…it requires us all to come to grips with who we are, what we have done, and what we must do in the future" (Dahnke et al., 2000, p. 88). Through restorative justice, which relies on storytelling, listening, reflecting, empathic connection, and protective force to achieve a peaceful society, rules and laws are obeyed not out of fear but, ideally, because there is a fit between personal values and community values. The focus is not on obedience, but rather on a developed ethic of understanding and compassion.

A Descriptive Overview of the Nonviolent Communication Model

Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005) is a prototypical example of what restorative justice can sound like on a practical day-to-day level. It involves avoiding the "life-alienating" language (blaming, shaming, labelling, etc.) previously identified

as retributive. The model centres on making clear observations, and taking responsibility for one's own behaviour and feelings by recognizing the underlying needs which motivate them: "honestly expressing how I am without blaming or criticizing" (Rosenberg, 2000, p. 193). Two practical concepts form the basis for Nonviolent Communication, honesty and empathy.

(a) Honesty

Honesty involves four steps that are used as reference points for representing one's own experience candidly and assertively, without attacking the other. The first step, observation, entails identifying concrete aspects of one's environment, or interaction with others, exactly as seen or heard, without judgement: "When I see/ hear...". The second step entails linking that observation with the subjective feelings that have been stimulated: "I feel...". The third step entails articulating the met or unmet human needs within oneself that inspire those feelings: "because I need...". The fourth step in completing an honest expression entails immediately making a clear request for the other's honesty, empathy from the other, or action from the other: "Would you be willing to...?". The full referential honesty statement and request is: "When I see/ hear… I feel… because I need… Would you be willing to…?".

Table 1: Honesty

Observation	*When I see* you talking to my boyfriend with your hand on his arm (specific) NOT: When you try to pick up my boyfriend (evaluation) *When I hear* you say I "don't qualify for the Care-Home Parenting program" NOT: When you pull a *#@!ing power-trip and drop my *#@!ing case
Feelings	*I feel* frustrated/ sad/ scared/ worried/ pissed off (specific emotional states) NOT: I feel you should be a certain way or do a certain thing (strategy) 　　I feel you are… (evaluations) 　　I feel ignored, disrespected, cheated… (thoughts/ evaluations)
Needs	*Because I need* consideration/ mutual respect/ support (common needs) NOT: Because I need you to be… or do… (strategies) 　　Because I need my boyfriend/ that program/ some money (strategies)
Request	*Would you be willing to* Tell me how you feel when you hear that? (asking for the other's honesty) Tell me what you heard me say? (asking for the other to empathize with me) Call that office now and let me explain? (concrete, present, doable action) NOT: Would you be nice/ fix it/ never do that? (vague & indeterminate)

(Rosenberg, 2003)

(b) Empathy

Empathy involves two steps that are used as reference points for connecting with

another's experience with heartfelt respectful attentiveness. The first step entails focusing on the

other's possible feelings, and the second step entails focusing on the other's possible needs.

Table 2: Empathy

Feelings	*Silently focusing what the other might be feeling.*
Needs	*Silently focusing on what the other might need.*

(Rosenberg, 2003)

Empathy is occasionally followed by a verbal inquiry to confirm whether or not the

other's feelings and needs have been accurately received. The referential empathic inquiry

being: "Are you feeling… because you need…, and would you like…?". This kind of empathic

inquiry is usually only voiced if it seems the other person would like confirmation, or if the listener is genuinely unclear about the other's feelings, needs, and/or possible requests.

Table 3: Empathic Inquiry

Guessing the other's Feeling	*Are you* frustrated/ sad/ scared/ worried? (inquire about emotional state) NOT: Oh, you feel… (assumption about other) Do you feel I should be a certain way or do a certain thing? (strategy) Do you feel I am…? (evaluation) Do you feel ignored/ disrespected/ cheated? (thoughts/ evaluations)
Guessing the other's Need	*Because you need* consideration/ mutual respect/ support? (common needs) NOT: Because you need me to be… or do…? (strategies) Because you need your boyfriend/ that program/ money…? (strategies)
Guessing the other's Request	*Would you like…* To hear how I feel when you say that? (asking if other wants honesty) To tell me more about that? (asking if other wants more listening & empathy) To take some action or ask for action? (concrete, present, doable action) NOT: Do you want me to be nice/ fix it/ never do that? (vague, indeterminate)

(Rosenberg, 2003)

(c) Self-Empathy

Honesty and empathy as described here can also be extended towards oneself as part of a personal dialogue for resolving internal conflict. Self-empathy is practiced by clarifying one's observations and the feelings stimulated, then connecting with the underlying met or unmet needs. Typically, this is followed by simply sitting compassionately with oneself thinking something like: "No wonder I feel so… the need for… is so important to my well-being", until the emotional tension relaxes. I have noticed that the self-empathy process may be engaged for several purposes. These include self-calming, increased self-respect, increased personal accountability, and increased empathy or mutual respect towards others' feelings and needs through greater awareness of one's own feelings and needs. Many of the practitioners I spoke with also engage self-empathy because they find that afterwards they are less attached to

strategies or evaluations and are better able to creatively generate requests of themselves, or others, in order to meet their needs.

Putting Honesty and Empathy Together

Through a dynamic interplay between honesty and empathy (including self-empathy), the two parties in a conflict have an opportunity to generate creative solutions that honour as many of their needs as possible, rather than argue over whose judgements are right and whose are wrong. This dynamic interplay can be directed towards others or towards oneself.

The model is most effective if it is used as a reference point or touchstone to ensure an observation is truly an observation (description based on the five senses, like a photograph or audio recording, not a diagnosis), a feeling is just that (not a thought), a need is truly a need rather than a strategy, and a request is not a demand (meaning one can empathically receive the answer "No," with a willingness to hear the underlying feelings and needs as a way to move towards a more mutually satisfying request).

Nonviolent Communication is often applied formulaically, particularly by beginners. I have heard many practitioners report that when this formulaic speech is used, their family, friends, and colleagues find it difficult to trust that the intention is to connect with others rather than to manipulate others. In my own practice, I have found few circumstances where formulaic application of the model best serves the relationship or resolution of a conflict. However, when tempers are running high and the interaction is particularly intense, I have noticed that sometimes formulaic application of the model can relatively quickly diffuse anger and help both parties refocus on what really matters to each, while also shifting towards identifying shared needs and solutions. I believe this model is most efficient and effective once practitioners have

translated it into their own colloquial language patterns. Facilitating translation is central to the

work I do with all my training participants, including the participants in this research project.

Appendix A offers definitions and discussion of the terms empathy, feeling, thought, and

honesty as they are engaged in this thesis. Lists of feelings and needs as they are engaged by the

Nonviolent Communication model are also offered in Appendix A.

Figure 1, below, provides a visual outline of the basic Nonviolent Communication model.

Figure 2, below, provides a visual outline of the Nonviolent Communication model as it might

be integrated into other popular models for negotiation and conflict resolution. In a negotiation

process the Nonviolent Communication dialogue is followed by identifying and confirming

mutual needs, and together generating mutually satisfying strategies to meet the needs identified.

Figure 1: An Outline of the Nonviolent Communication Model

1. HONESTY
My observation, feelings & needs, plus a clear request.
(verbal connection)

Confirmation:
Checking to see if my message has been received as intended.
(verbal connection)

Confirmation:
Have I accurately received the other's feelings, needs & request?
(verbal connection)

2. EMPATHY
Focus on feelings & needs – the other's as well as my own.
(silent connection)
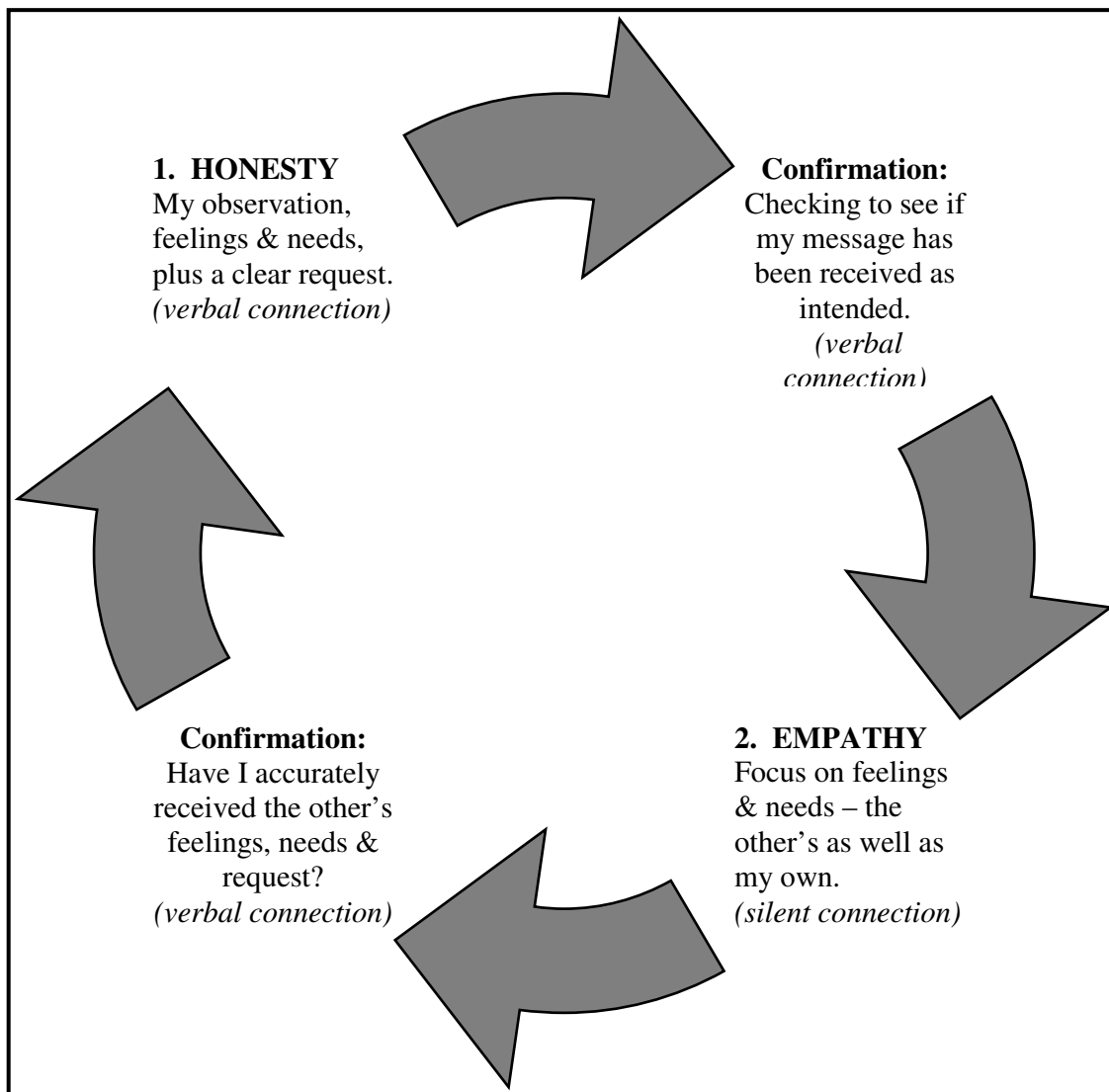
(Rosenberg, 2003) A dynamic interplay between honesty and empathy

Figure 2: Integrating Nonviolent Communication (NVC) with other negotiation models

NVC Dialogue
1. Honesty
Confirmation
2. Empathy
Confirmation
*(repeat until both
parties are satisfied
they've been heard)*

Mutuality
1. Identify Needs
2. Confirm the mutually
shared value of those
needs.
*(repeat dialogue
process if discord
recurs)*

Generate Strategies
1. Hold all identified
needs as mutually
valuable
2. Generate strategies
together to meet needs.
3. Set a time & process
for assessing strategies.

(Chicanot & Sloan, 2003; Fisher, Ury, & Patton 1981; Gordon, 1970; Rosenberg 2003)

Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2003) suggests that if individuals can see each other at the level of needs, then they can work together towards collaborative strategies that satisfy each other. One may choose to relinquish portions of, or all of, a previously held position in order to contribute to that satisfaction of needs, not to give up or give in but because it would satisfy one's own needs to do so. Connecting with one another at the level of common needs provides increased opportunities for parties to come from a more creative place, reaching beyond

individual positions and even beyond culturally based interests or strategies. As human beings

sharing fundamental needs, Nonviolent Communication (2003) encourages the questions: "How

can we work together to support needs we all value at some level?"; "How can we take care of

ourselves and each other within the context of our community?"; "How can we support our own

and each other's autonomy?" Essentially, individuals and groups are invited to practice

balancing our common needs for autonomy and choice with our common needs for belonging,

harmony, and community.

Summary of Nonviolent Communication as a Language of Restorative Justice

Marshall Rosenberg's (2003) Nonviolent Communication model provides a practical

application of restorative principles on an interpersonal basis, whether dealing with oneself or

with others. The Nonviolent Communication process focuses attention on connection with one's

own and others' feelings and needs. As an articulation of restorative values, it facilitates

responsibility for one's own behaviour and feelings by recognizing the underlying common

human needs which motivate them. It fosters apologies that are rooted in one's own sincere

regret and unmet needs combined with a full awareness of, and heartfelt respectful care for the

feelings and needs of others. It is a practice that balances honesty with empathy for the purpose

of supporting responsive, mutually respectful resolutions, relationships, and communities.

Rather than denying, silencing, and punishing our pain, restorative justice insists upon

each affected person telling the story and having it heard. Nonviolent Communication helps

listeners to extend themselves beyond simply "hearing" to what has been called "prophetic

listening" (Ross, 1996). Prophetic listening occurs when listeners connect with speakers at the

level of their common humanity: their common human needs. Crime and punishment, it would

seem, are symptoms of a community's woundedness, and alienation from one another. The

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unexamined application of retributive behaviour, regardless of whether it is called "just" or "criminal", tends to feed into a cycle of violent communication, fear-based relationships, and fragmented communities. Along with the authors cited here, I believe that it is through honest, compassionate connection, among other restorative principles, that cycles of violence can be broken and replaced by healing. It is by developing a rich quality of relationship, through honest empathic communication, that listening can become "prophetic." Ultimately, it is a keen awareness of the language use and intention in resolving conflict that will determine whether or not outcomes are in fact restorative and healing, or just another face for habitual retribution.

This awareness of language use and conscious selection of justice paradigms informs the application of Nonviolent Communication as both a model and a mindfulness practice.

Gaps in the Literature

The Total Honesty/Total Heart program for violence prevention, conflict resolution, and empathy development, focuses on two key components in solving conflicts, first, reducing violence, and second, maintaining harmony. These two key components are the dynamic interplay between increasing honest expression and empathic connection, towards oneself as well as towards others. While much research attests to the importance of empathy and conflict resolution skills (APA, 1993; Broome, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Della Noce, 1999; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Lantieri & Patti, 1996; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994), there is relatively little

research exploring how to practically and effectively foster social skills, such as empathy, required for peaceful conflict resolution and the communication of empathic concern (Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003).

These first two chapters essentially establish that conflict resolution skills combined with empathy and empathic behaviour are critical to effective violence prevention and peace-building. Consequently, assessing methods for fostering effective conflict resolution skills, particularly empathy, is an important step towards determining what is working and what can be expected from various programs. The Total Honesty/Total Heart program is intended to facilitate competencies related to honest assertive expression, empathy, self-empathy, and the integrated application of these in conflicts. This program is significant and unique due to its uncommon focus on empathy and self-empathy as integral components of conflict resolution training.

In summary, the most noticeable gaps in the literature include the lack of research connecting needs theory to empathy and self-empathy development as a key aspect in conflict resolution. There is a lack of violence prevention training assessments generally, and no assessments were found that specifically evaluate the effectiveness of empathy-based conflict resolution training. Finally, there are only four formal evaluations currently available that assess the Nonviolent Communication model as a strategy for conflict resolution and empathy development among youth (or any other group for that matter). This project begins to bridge the gap in all three areas.

The objective of this project is to gain a deeper understanding of this particular Nonviolent Communication training – Total Honesty/Total Heart which focuses on honest assertive expression in addition to both empathy and self-empathy development. This research will describe the program impacts and its value to the participants.

Chapter 3

Descriptive Overview of Total Honesty/Total Heart

I developed the Total Honesty/Total Heart violence prevention and intervention program based on the Nonviolent Communication (Rosenberg, 2003) model for effective communication, conflict resolution and empathy development, including self-empathy (see curriculum outline, Appendix D, and Appendix G). The curriculum development is described further in the Methodology Chapter (p. 74). This current chapter provides a descriptive overview of the training program itself. As discussed, Nonviolent Communication focuses on two main components: honest expression and empathic connection. Honest expression is articulated through clear observations, the identification of feeling responses and the underlying needs, and the formulation of clear, achievable, present-time requests. Empathic connection is developed through guessing, or sensing and focusing on the other person's feelings and needs.

Learning the Components of Nonviolent Communication

This Total Honesty/Total Heart series of workshops offered opportunities for the participants to distinguish between observations (explained to them as describing something as closely as possible to the way an audio recording or videotape would capture it) and evaluations. For example, they learned to differentiate between observing three books, five toys, and all the crayons on the floor, and evaluating the room as messy. Participants also practiced distinguishing between thoughts and feelings. Thoughts were explained as evaluations or assessments, where feelings were explained as a physical or emotional response. For example, they learned to translate comments like "I'm feeling ignored" into the specific feelings, thoughts, and needs: "I *feel* sad because I *think* I'm being ignored and I really *need* some affection" or "I *feel* relieved

because I *think* I'm being ignored and it meets my *needs* for peace and quiet." Participants practiced distinguishing needs (broad, common drives supporting individual/collective human growth and well-being) from strategies (specific, interest-based, culturally embedded), and also learned to formulate clear, doable, present-time requests. For example, the request "Would you be responsible?" is too vague for the listener to take action that is likely to satisfy the speaker. Instead, the participants made more specific requests such as: "Would you wash the dishes you used and pick up your books from the common room?" Participants also had an opportunity to practice self-empathy, identifying one's own feelings and needs and staying present with that experience, perhaps even mourning unmet needs, until there was an internal sense of space and relief.

Activities to Support Learning

The program itself employed a variety of exercises to introduce and facilitate the development of these skills. The central tool used during most sessions was a set of floor cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004) that physically lay out the various stages of the Nonviolent Communication process. The participants reported that they found this tool particularly useful because physically moving through the process made it easy to remember. Other tools included cards that assigned specific ways of responding to difficult messages so that participants could experience the differences and hopefully apply that knowledge to make more conscious choices about their responses in actual conflict. Participants also played a game that resulted in randomly composed nonsensical sentences that emphasized the structure of the Nonviolent Communication process (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Request). This exercise resulted in a lot of laughter and requests to repeat the game during other sessions. Finally, video clips of popular animated movies (e.g. *Shrek*) were used to analyze conflicts through applying the model and

translating dialogue from labelling, blaming, shaming language to observation, feelings, needs, requests language. The video clips were also used to practice empathic responses to another person's difficult message or expression of pain.

Overview of the Training Structure

The program began with an introductory session where participants created a code of conduct to ensure everyone in the room understood how we would try to meet needs for learning, order, and mutual respect, recognizing that we would revisit the code as situations arose. The group defined violence and began building feelings and needs vocabularies drawing from the feelings and needs lists included in Appendix A and Appendix G (Training Curriculum, see p.255). Throughout the course concepts of restorative and retributive power were explored, as well as restorative and retributive language use. During the second session the Nonviolent Communication model and the dance floor tool were both introduced. Subsequent sessions engaged various activities to further develop skills and support integration of the Nonviolent Communication process. Participants were encouraged and supported in finding ways to adapt the process so that it fit comfortably with their social environments, language styles, and senses of self. During the final few sessions exercises and practice focused on expressing anger, receiving anger, and translating angry messages, as well as expressing sincere regret and appreciation. The program concluded with a final session summarizing the material covered and supporting participants in developing strategies to apply their learning in conflict situations (see Appendix D, Curriculum Outline; Appendix G, Training Curriculum).

Role-modelling as Part of the Training

Adult role-modeling was a central component of the program and I endeavored to model the Nonviolent Communication process both formally and colloquially during workshops, group

conflicts, and encounters with all staff and students at the research site. Nonviolent

Communication principles were also role-modeled through room set-up and session structure. I

arrived early for each session and tidied the common room set aside for the workshops. Couches

and chairs were organized in a circle so that all participants could see each other clearly and to

foster a sense of inclusion in the group. I arranged a table in the centre of the circle and provided

a simple bouquet of fresh flowers (which were left for the students to enjoy through the week

between sessions) as well as a simple snack of fresh sliced fruit and squares of chocolate. The

unspoken intention behind the flowers and snacks was to demonstrate and share how much I

value recognizing and meeting needs for consideration, beauty, and nourishment (both physical

and emotional). The participants, as well as their non-participating peers, regularly commented

on how moved they were to receive fresh flowers each week. At the end of the program it was

an aspect of the workshops that staff and students recognized as having an uplifting impact on

the community of the school and on their own understanding of how often they neglect their own

needs for beauty and emotional nourishment.

Overview of Individual Session Structure

The structure of each session was also designed to model the Nonviolent Communication

process. Each session was opened by chiming a Tibetan singing bowl and a moment of silence

to help us gather our attention to the session ahead. The chime was followed with a short story,

poem, or song, called a "Remembering" which was used to help focus each person's attention

and intention on their own purposes for developing these skills. Students were invited to bring a

story, song, or poem to share at the beginning of our sessions. After these rituals, each person in

the room (whether participant, facilitator, or observing staff member) was offered a turn to

express the feelings and underlying met or unmet needs, without identifying the related

observation, that were being experienced. This "check-in" routine further allowed the group to settle in together and immediately focused our attention on the core exercise of identifying feelings and needs. It also provided an opportunity for participants to connect with each other around their authentic experiences in the moment.

Summary of the Training Program

The Total Honesty/Total Heart conflict resolution and empathy development program utilized several interactive exercises designed to support learning and integration of the Nonviolent Communication process. A set of dance floor cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004) physically outlining the model served as the central teaching tool. Learning activities also included video clips, discussion in pairs, small group exercises, large group exercises, brainstorms, and role-plays. Role-modeling was a key component throughout the program; the facilitator demonstrated the application of the model through personal presentation, room set-up, individual interactions, workshop facilitation, conflict navigation, and overall session structure.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This research assesses the impacts of a Nonviolent Communication training (Total Honesty/Total Heart) as a conflict resolution and empathy development process, including self-empathy development. The training was intended to expand participants' vocabularies regarding feelings and needs, to support participants in distinguishing between observation statements and evaluation statements, and to facilitate clear, concrete, realistic requests. Through the development of these skill sets, the program was intended to encourage self-empathy, as well as empathy towards another's feelings and needs. The overall anticipated result of developing these skills was that participants would be able to navigate conflict with greater ease and confidence, ultimately generating more mutually satisfying outcomes with others. The development of self-empathy in particular was expected to support a greater capacity for self-soothing during conflict, a greater capacity for empathy towards others during conflict, and a greater capacity to represent oneself honestly (clearly articulating feelings and needs-based requests).

Nonviolent Communication as a Central Touchstone

I would like to note that the training content itself significantly informed my research at all levels. My overarching approach engaged the Nonviolent Communication model (observation, feelings, needs, requests) as a central touchstone throughout this program evaluation research. I made every effort to represent the Nonviolent Communication process during my reading, research, thinking, speaking, and writing, not only while facilitating the training program, but also while gathering and deciphering information. The data collected

reflect the *observatio*n component of the Nonviolent Communication model. Quantitative data analysis enriches and clarifies the observations, while qualitative data analysis serves a double purpose, enriching observations while also distilling the *feelings* and *needs* articulated by participants. According to this thesis, attending to another's feelings and needs with respectful, heartfelt attentiveness is central to realizing empathy. Further, conveying the feelings and needs that arise in relation to observations is central to honest expression. The findings and discussion make meaning out of the data, honestly expressing my own response to the results and to the research experience. Likewise, my recommendations for future research fulfil the *request* component of the model.

The Nonviolent Communication process was also employed as a mindfulness practice on a personal level, with varying degrees of success. I engaged the model to the best of my ability in navigating conflict as well as extending honesty and empathy towards both myself and others (from my own family members, to my instructors, to the alternative school staff and research participants) over the course of completing my degree requirements. This process has been occasionally arduous and continually instructive. My own capacity for grounding communication in honesty (articulating myself using clear observations, feelings, needs, and specific requests) and empathy (focusing on feelings and needs) has been thoroughly tested. In particular, I have been most challenged and stretched in terms of listening more fully to others and in developing my own capacity for self-empathy.

Program Evaluation Methodology

In their text *Educational Research: An Introduction*, M. Gall, Borg, and J. Gall (1996) identify evaluation research as important to policy-makers, program managers, and curriculum

developers. They assert that program evaluation has become an important tool in policy

analysis, the political decision-making process, and program management. Further, they

recognize program evaluation as an increasingly significant contributor to the field of

educational research as well as the applied social sciences generally. Program evaluation

engages several of the research designs, measurement tools, and data analysis techniques that

constitute the social science methodology called educational research (M. Gall, Borg, & J. Gall

1996, pp. 679–681). As Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2004) note in *Evaluation: A Systematic*

Approach:

> Program evaluation is the use of social research methods to
> systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention
> programs. It draws on the techniques and concepts of social
> science disciplines and is intended to be useful for improving
> programs and informing social action aimed at ameliorating social
> problems. (p. 28)

Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) explain that modern evaluation research was

pioneered in the 1930s and expanded following World War II. At that time, new research

methodologies were being developed to keep pace with rapidly growing social programming

initiatives. Like M. Gall, Borg, and J. Gall (1996), these authors point to program evaluation as

increasingly necessary for justifying program implementation and resource allocation.

This study fell within the realm of educational research, specifically program evaluation

(Fenwick & Parsons, 2000; M. Gall, Borg, & J. Gall, 1996; Owen & Rogers, 1999; Rossi,

Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). The research methodology employed a basic mixed-methods

approach to discover the impact of the Total Honesty/Total Heart training both as a conflict

resolution and an empathy development process, including self-empathy. A simple quasi-

experimental written comprehension test (administered pre-training and post-training) measured

changes in key concept comprehension and application, while qualitative data gathered through

interviews and field notes revealed the subjective value of the training for participants. The evaluation also included a case illustration of one participant's background and training experiences as a more detailed example of program effects on an individual. As discussed in this chapter, the Total Honesty/Total Heart training program, comprehension test, and interview questions were developed and administered by me based on the Nonviolent Communication model.

Program Evaluation Research Domains

Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004) stipulate that program evaluation requires a clear description of program performance measured against specific criteria. They identify five program domains typically assessed: "(1) the need for the program, (2) the design of the program, (3) program implementation and service delivery, (4) program impact or outcomes, and (5) program efficiency." (pp. 28-29). This thesis research addressed these five program domains in combination. The literature review addressed the first domain by establishing a need for conflict resolution and empathy training programs.

The other four domains are described below in four phases: Phase One outlines program design (including curriculum development, recruitment, and ethical considerations); Phase Two outlines the program delivery itself; Phase Three outlines the evaluation methods for determining program impact, i.e. the development and implementation of evaluation tools, the impact assessment processes applied to the data, and the creation of a case illustration. Finally, Phase Four outlines the process for determining program efficiency.

Phase One – Program Design

Training Curriculum Development

Curriculum design involved a review of training materials collected over 14 years of

professional development training in violence prevention, peace-building, and conflict resolution

(including eight years of Nonviolent Communication training), along with the violence

prevention curricula located as part of the literature review (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004; Bodine,

Crawford, & Schrumpf, 1994; Dalton & Fairchild, 2004; Eisler, 2000; Fairholme, 2002; Hart &

Hodson, 2003; Kivel & Creighton, 1997). Drawing on these resources, combined with six years

of personal experience facilitating youth trainings on these topics, I developed an adaptable ten-

hour conflict resolution and empathy development curriculum and titled it Total Honesty/Total

Heart (see Appendix D, Curriculum Outline; and Appendix G, Training Curriculum). The

curriculum was derived from and focuses on the Nonviolent Communication model,

concentrating on a series of floor card exercises (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004) as the main teaching

tool. The overall training design supported responsiveness to the needs of participants by

presenting the Nonviolent Communication model as a structural or referential tool, and inviting

participants to experiment with personal contexts for its application. Ideally, this meant that the

real-life experiences, interests, and needs of the group drove the context of each training session.

This participant-driven contextualization was enriched by supporting participants in translating

the Nonviolent Communication structure, along with the feelings and needs vocabulary, into

their own familiar language patterns.

The curriculum (Appendix G) incorporates discussion topics from Canadian Red Cross

RespectEd (Fairholme, 2002) and *Keeping the Peace* (Kivel and Creighton, 1997) violence

prevention trainings, as well as exercises developed by local Nonviolent Communication trainers

(Kreyenhoff, 2004; Lamb, 2003; Wassman, 2001), and activities I created specifically for this

group. The Nonviolent Communication floor cards were the main tool employed to support participants' increasing conflict resolution skills by working through role-played scenarios while physically locating concrete steps in the process. The Total Honesty/Total Heart training content and program delivery are described more fully in Chapter Three and Appendix G of this thesis.

In developing the Total Honesty/Total Heart training I focused on discussions, exercises, and activities that I believed would increase awareness of the power language use has to escalate or diffuse conflict, develop empathy for one's own as well as others' feelings and needs, and support the creation of strategies that take each person's needs into consideration. The training design is skills-based and aimed at reducing aggression: physical, verbal, and social e.g. exclusion or gossip.

Recruiting Participants

The target population was composed of students from a mid-sized Western Canadian city who were registered in an alternative public school program for adolescent girls who are either pregnant or parenting, and/or on probation. Invitations to attend the preliminary session (Appendix F) were extended to all the students at the alternative school during the first week of April, 2005 by the program administrator and counsellors (third parties) as they described various life skills programs available to the students that term. Youth were not individually approached by me.

Twenty of the alternative school students chose to attend a preliminary information session where I introduced myself, the proposed training, and the research. This was followed by another information session where those who had decided to participate reviewed and signed their consent forms. Ten to 20 program participants were anticipated, 14 gave their consent for

participation. All 14 completed the skill comprehension test prior to the training period (the comprehension test is described below in Phase Three, also see Appendix E).

Participant Group and Comparison Group

Of the 14 who consented to participate in the training, and who completed the comprehension test, only seven students actually attended the training program and formed the participant group. The other seven indicated interest in attending the training, but chose to miss the first two sessions for a number of reasons: an expected delivery (birth) date during the training period, concerns about completing school work before the end of the school year, working on the year book, and appointments with social service providers. In order to foster trust within the group, as well as mutual learning, participants could not attend the training after missing the first two training sessions. This second group of seven, who missed the first two training sessions and so did not join the training, agreed to complete the comprehension test again after the training period, along with the participants, creating a comparison group.

The 14 students involved in this research project were female adolescents between 16 and 18 years of age. Participants were self-selected; all were experiencing the stresses of poverty and marginalization. Most were living independently from their parents. All claimed Caucasian Euro-Canadian backgrounds, with one member of the comparison group claiming some Plains Cree heritage as well. Most of the adolescent girls in both groups were parenting young children (five of seven participants were mothers, and four of seven comparison students were either mothers or pregnant, (see demographics, Appendix F). All seven participants had experienced some form of both domestic violence and sexualized violence. This last information was gathered over the course of the trainings and I am unaware of whether or not the comparison group had experienced these same forms of violence to the same degree.

As investigator in this conflict resolution and empathy development project, I took on the role of mentor and group facilitator. Participants who chose to attend the training sessions had the support of their regular on-site counsellor and the option to withdraw at any time. Participants were reminded of this at each session.

Why these participants?

This participants group interested me for a number of reasons. I care deeply about the well-being of youth, particularly youth who struggle with the impacts of poverty, neglect, abuse, and normalized aggression or violence. My entire adult work life, both volunteer and paid, has focused on wellness for youth. I have been involved in violence prevention and communication skills training work with youth for several years, and have recently wondered about the value of these programs for the participants themselves. I have also been curious about whether or not these kinds of prevention trainings have actually impacted their skills and comprehension levels. I wanted to assess the practicality and effectiveness of Nonviolent Communication as training for conflict resolution and empathy development (meaning both empathy and self-empathy). It seemed to me that this particular population was very likely to offer honest, straightforward feedback about their training experiences (in class, by attending or not attending, through the comprehension test, and during the interviews). Also, I suspected that if I could demonstrate training effectiveness among a group that was relatively resistant and that carried a history of aggression, others might be more likely to see value in the training itself. Most importantly, as someone who became a mother at the age of 21 and benefited immensely from the support of this and other related trainings, I hoped to offer some knowledge and skills that would help the participants create more ease, well-being, and mutual respect in their lives.

Ethical Approval

At the time of this conflict resolution and empathy development research project, the alternative school was already participating in a larger research project directed by my thesis supervisor, Dr. Sibylle Artz, School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. In the course of that larger project, the alternative school had requested an intervention program and Dr. Artz recommended my training to them. The alternative school administrator reviewed and approved my curriculum, inviting me to proceed with the Total Honesty/Total Heart training once I received the university's ethical approval. Approval from the alternative school's Board of Directors, as well as from the district principal for alternative schooling programs, had already been given to Dr. Artz's larger project, which included intervention programs such as mine.

My conflict resolution and empathy development research was approved in February, 2005 by the University of Victoria Human Research and Ethics Board. That approval process required information about a number of issues including anonymity, confidentiality, consent, benefits and risks, recognition of participation, and the use and storage of data. The procedures for addressing these issues are outlined below.

Confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are often the first concerns addressed in a formal ethics process. Participants in this project were not anonymous due to the small group participating from a small school community. Consequently, there were limits to the degree of confidentiality that could be maintained in relation to the training.

During the conflict resolution and empathy development training, confidentiality was protected by developing a confidentiality agreement with the participants during our first training session together. This agreement was written on large "flip-chart" paper and posted on the classroom wall. Its purpose was to support the group in honouring each other's confidentiality

(e.g. "What's said in the room stays in the room"). This agreement also served to reaffirm my commitment to honour the participants' confidentiality. Field notes were made without using names or reference to identifying information. I personally edited all raw audio recordings to excise names and identifying information and was also the only person transcribing the recordings. I ensured that participants were aware of my legal obligation to contact a school counsellor if a participant informed me that she was planning to hurt herself or others, or if she said she was being abused by someone. I also ensured that they understood my legal obligation to report anything said during the interviews if ordered by a court of law. Each of these processes for protecting confidentiality and making data anonymous was clearly described to the participants both verbally and in writing.

Consent

Consent forms (Appendix F) were provided for project participation, for all audio recording, and for future analysis of data. The audio consent form specified various potential uses for that data, as well as its treatment to ensure confidentiality. Participants could allow or disallow any of the potential uses of those recordings. Participants confirmed their participation by attending at least two training sessions. Before commencing each session, interview, or completion of the survey, participants were again informed of the consent procedures and their right to withhold information or withdraw at any time. They were also reminded of their free access to counselling should they become upset. Prior to the interview, participants were asked to sign the consent form again as well as the audio recording consent form, and the consent for future analysis of their data.

Use and Storage of Data

The data gathered for this Dispute Resolution Master's thesis may also be used for academic conference presentations and journal articles. It may be analyzed by me again in the future to further develop my understanding of conflict resolution and empathy development training, violence prevention and intervention programs, the role of empathy, the role of conflict resolution skills, and the role of language use as it impacts all four. The data may also be analyzed by my supervisor, Dr. Sibylle Artz, and her research team since it is a contributing part of the larger research project they are engaged in: developing gender-specific understandings of aggression and violent behaviour that can be used to develop intervention strategies, and improving our support for at-risk youth. The participants consented to these uses of their data; however, some requested that their audio recordings be destroyed within three years of the completed data analysis.

Dissemination of the Results

When complete, the research results will be disseminated directly to any interested participants through a summary report which will be provided to the school site. The alternative school's board of directors will receive a copy of the completed thesis, as will the area school board.

Phase Two – Program Delivery

Curriculum Consultation

The school counsellor and the administrator for the alternative school program were given copies of the Total Honesty/Total Heart curriculum three weeks prior to the training start date, for their reference and to generate feedback. After they had considered the curriculum for a week, I met with each of them to discuss their suggestions or comments. The alternative school

administrator approved the curriculum as it was and made no comments on it. The alternative school counsellor approved the majority of the curriculum, but had some suggestions to prevent overlap with other school programming, and to clarify the group facilitation format employed by the school. The curriculum format, and some activities intended to contextualize the Nonviolent Communication model, were adjusted accordingly in response to the counsellor's pre-training feedback.

Program Delivery Considerations

Group discussions about the Nonviolent Communication concept applications comprised a large part of the training sessions. Participants were invited to offer anonymous feedback or make requests between sessions via anonymous slips of paper and a feedback box kept in the training room. The Total Honesty/Total Heart training, was further adapted during each session to address the specific concerns of the program participants in the moment. Activities were repeated, deleted, inserted (from other sessions), or created, in response to interest and energy levels. All adaptation was related to contextual applications of the Nonviolent Communication model. Adjustments were not made to the model itself or to the core concepts. This meant the curriculum retained the integrity of all aspects related to the Nonviolent Communication model's structure, and so retained its clear ties to the comprehension test questions.

With the participants' written consent, audio recordings were made of each training session to ensure they were accurately represented in the later analysis. The recordings also provide data for possible case illustrations, case studies, and discourse analyses. Additionally, training sessions were documented through reflective field notes which helped to maintain the training's responsiveness from one session to the next.

Potential Benefits and Risks for Training Participants

Participation in the training invited youth to engage in discussions about their experiences (and use) of aggression. Discussions also addressed alternative methods for resolving conflict and explored ideas about respect, tolerance, and empathy towards themselves as well as towards others. The training focused on social skills development regarding positive communication, assertiveness, negotiation skills, and peacemaking, with the primary emphasis on empathy development, particularly self-empathy. I suspected that participants might experience less aggression in their daily lives. I also hoped they might gain practical conflict resolution skills and increased well-being.

While unlikely, it was possible that participation in the intervention program could upset some participants as they reflected on their feelings related to their own past aggressive behaviour or the aggressive behaviour of others. During the introductory session and at the beginning of each training session, I acknowledged the possibility that describing or recalling their experiences might bring up feelings of frustration, sadness, grief, anger, disappointment, or fear. Repeatedly, participants were encouraged to reveal only what they felt comfortable revealing and to decline responses, leave the room, or withdraw their participation without explanation if that best served their needs. During the training, assessment, and interview process participants had access to one full-time counsellor and one part-time counsellor, both available during regular school hours, to address any disturbances or concerns experienced by participants.

One participant chose to request this support for distress she experienced during a session where she began to intentionally reflect on the whole concept of having needs, particularly in relation to self-empathy. The content of all counselling sessions remained strictly confidential and I did not have access to any information shared during those consultations. That participant

continued to attend the full training program. The conflict resolution and empathy training program involved no risk beyond prompting youth to look at their thoughts, feelings, needs, and behaviours.

According to the alternative school administrator and counsellor, this training was in keeping with the life skills programs the participants were already attending. While the topics of violence prevention and conflict resolution are regularly addressed through the alternative school, I anticipated that several key concepts were likely to be novel to the participants (particularly needs, needs-based requests, and self-empathy).

Scheduling

The Total Honesty/Total Heart training was originally intended for delivery over the course of ten one-hour sessions. Due to the alternative school's set instructional time blocks, I was allotted seven 1.5-hour training periods, rather than ten one-hour training periods (see Appendix D). Unfortunately, one of these sessions was accidentally scheduled at the same time as a school field trip. Consequently, the training (Appendix G) was abbreviated, and delivered over the course of six 1.5-hour training periods, totalling nine hours of training time. The training was completed by participants as part of their regular life skills training and it was offered at the alternative school site during regular school hours.

Phase Three – Program Evaluation

Comprehension Test Development

Once the conflict resolution training curriculum had been drafted, I created a simple pencil and paper comprehension test (Appendix E). It required 30 to 45 minutes for completion, and was based on the core elements of the Nonviolent Communication training curriculum for the purpose of assessing: (a) understanding of key conceptual differentiations, (b) hypothetical

applications of self-empathy and other-empathy, as well as (c) ability to translate from thought and analysis vocabulary to feelings and needs vocabulary. Because this is such a small pilot project (*N*=14), alpha values and reliability coefficients have not yet been established. It is hoped that larger Nonviolent Communication research projects will make use of the test created for this project and establish its statistical reliability and validity.

The training and the comprehension test were built upon a series of concepts referred to as "key differentiations" (see Appendix B) by the International Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC, 2007). International Nonviolent Communication trainer candidates are requested by the Center to distinguish a number of key Nonviolent Communication concepts as part of their formal certification process. These key concepts, or "key differentiations" are set out in a binary system contrasted against other concepts with which they are often confused (for example, Nonviolent Communication differentiates analytical thoughts from emotional feelings; the terms "thought/think" and "feel" are often used interchangeably in common speech). This binary system is an effective template for testing comprehension of Nonviolent Communication training content.

The test (see Appendix E) invited the test writer to distinguish key concepts, to apply self-empathy and other-empathy for feelings and needs in three hypothetical scenarios, and to translate common analytical language into the parallel language of the key concepts (e.g. the analysis that one is being ignored could translate to a parallel feeling of sadness because the need for attention is unmet, or a parallel feeling of relief because the need for quiet is being met). It was designed to determine whether or not the program was effective in transmitting these key concepts to the participants, whether it supported them in retaining that information, and whether or not they could then apply the concepts in a situational context. The comprehension test also

included a self-assessment measure which asked the test writers to score their levels of ease under various social circumstances.

Comprehension Test Administration

The written comprehension test was administered simultaneously to all seven members of the training group and all seven members of the comparison group. Testing took place at the alternative school site during regularly scheduled class time, one week prior to the first training session and again two weeks after the training period ended. The central purpose of the test was to provide data that will help identify any changes that may have resulted between the beginning of the training and the end of the training. The pre-training test also provided valuable information which supported tailoring the training content towards participant knowledge level, needs, and interests.

Each skill comprehension test was coded to support individual evaluation of the pre-training/post-training tests for each of the 14 students. The survey data was assessed individually for each participant and comparison group member establishing a total out of 25 possible correct answers for each girl at each testing period. The self-assessment section of the survey was assessed using a Likert scale measuring degrees of comfort ranging from never easy, to sometimes easy, to often easy, to always easy. These were not assigned number values and shifts for individuals and for each group were tracked using these terms identifying levels of ease.

Test Anonymity

During the comprehension test administration, anonymity was preserved by assigning participants a five-digit alphanumeric code, matching the coding system used for Dr. Artz's research in that same school. In keeping with her survey procedures, codes were pre-entered on

individual surveys at the time of administration. A detachable name label was placed over the code to facilitate distribution and participants were instructed to peel off the label before beginning the comprehension test. The list linking names with code numbers was kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room.

Comprehension Test Results

Following both test periods, the tests results were scored and tabulated individually, then the individual scores were collated and tabulated for the participant group as well as for the comparison group. The test results were assessed by analysing the score changes for each individual, as well as the collated score changes for each group, and the results were graphed descriptively. This descriptive quantitative data was collected and analysed to support the qualitative data gathered through the interviews.

Post-training Participant Interviews

Demonstrating levels of cognitive understanding and retention of training content through comprehension test scores represents only a portion of any training's impact. I also wanted to gather information that reveals or demonstrates the meaning and value participants placed on the material and their training experience. For this purpose a series of post-training interview questions were developed, based on the training curriculum, to reveal participant experiences of learning and applying the Nonviolent Communication process (see Appendix E).

The interviews aimed to discern whether or not the training intentions, identified at the start of this chapter, were met. To that end, the questions focused on why participants chose to attend, their observations of conflict resolution among their peers, their own examples of NVC skills applications, the impacts they attribute to the training, aspects of the training sessions they identify as meaningful, their recommendations for changes to the training, and how they

summarize the whole experience. Two weeks after the post-training test administration, each

participant responded to these questions in an individual 30-45 minute interview with me. These

interviews were audio recorded, with the participants' consent, and took place in a meeting room

in the alternative school building, during regular school hours.

The audio recordings from each interview session were transcribed by me and the replies

to each question were collated, providing an overview of the participant group's collective

responses in each category. These collated responses were reviewed several times looking for

emergent themes, allowing an overall sense of the data to form, noting consistencies or

inconsistencies with the survey results, and emphasizing participant narratives of their

experiences engaging the training material.

Participant Recognition

In keeping with Dr. Artz's approved research protocol, and courtesy of Dr. Artz, youth

who participated in an individual interview with me following the conflict resolution and

empathy development training, received a twenty dollar honorarium. The intention was to

acknowledge each youth's contribution to the project and to maintain consistency with Dr. Artz's

umbrella project.

Impact Assessment

(a) Establishing Outcome Measures

According to Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman (2004):

> An impact assessment…gauges the extent to which a program
> produces the intended improvements in the social conditions it
> addresses. Impact assessment asks whether the desired outcomes
> were attained and whether those changes included unintended side
> effects. (p. 58)

To distinguish the intervention's impact from other factors affecting the targeted group, these authors advise evaluators to establish the status of program recipients on relevant outcome measures prior to the program. The comprehension test administered to both the participant and comparison groups provides information about their comprehension of curriculum concepts before the training period.

Rossi et al., (2004) also advise evaluators to develop methods for estimating what the participants' status would have been had they not received the intervention. This project addresses both by employing the quasi-experimental tool of a comparison group, constructed by matching, and simultaneously tested. Matching means that the intervention group was identified first and the comparison group was constructed from a group with similar characteristics that match the intervention group. The matched comparison group was not exposed to the intervention program (Rossi et al., 2004, pp. 275–277). The simple pre-test – post-test design developed for this study assesses the outcome measures for both the target group and the comparison group before program participation and again after participation (the comparison group responded to the same assessment tools, but did not participate in the intervention). Comparing the two sets of results produces an estimate of the program effect (p. 290).

(b) Quasi-experimental Design

Rossi et al., (2004) recognize that randomized experiments are often difficult to implement effectively in the environment of social programs. They also state that quasi-experimental designs can offer credible estimates of program effects while adapting to program circumstances: "In short, the advantages of quasi-experimental research designs for program impact assessment rest entirely on their practicality and convenience in situations where randomized field experiments are not feasible" (p. 295). Given the size and scope of this small

pilot project, statistical analysis was not possible, and while statistical analysis is often a central

aspect of program evaluation, the reader is cautioned by Rossi et al., to note that:

> Statistical significance does not mean practical significance or
> importance. A statistically significant finding may or may not be
> significant theoretically or practically; it is simply a result that is
> unlikely to be due to chance. (p. 308)

Whether or not statistical analysis is undertaken, each of the authors consulted advises

that no research results can be taken as definitive. They also caution that quasi-experimental

effect estimates may be biased due to the nature of non-randomized research design.

> Evaluators using nonrandomized designs…must rely heavily on a
> case-by-case analysis of the particular assumptions and
> requirements of the selected design, and the specific characteristics
> of the program and target population, to optimize the likelihood
> that valid estimates of program effects will result. (p. 296)

(c) Establishing Validity

Canadian researchers, Fenwick and Parsons (2000) provide clear descriptions of

validity and reliability in their textbook, *The Art of Evaluation: A Handbook for*

Educators and Trainers. Validity refers to whether or not tests, and the overall

evaluation, measure what they are intended to measure. Fenwick and Parsons identify

three factors which must be considered to establish validity: (a) content validity, (b)

criterion-referenced validity, and (c) construct validity. Content validity requires tests

that measure the actual course content and that show clear correlations between test items

and course objectives. Criterion-referenced validity calls for criteria and indicators for

each competency that can be applied to various program evaluation settings. Construct

validity asks whether participant behaviour and test responses accurately display the

targeted competencies. (Fenwick & Parsons, 2000, p. 31)

This thesis addressed content validity through a written test built directly from the course content. This test assessed comprehension of basic course concepts as well as theoretical applications of those concepts. Criterion-referenced validity was satisfied through precise criteria addressing emotional intelligence generally (Fenwick & Parsons, 2000, p. 86), as well as several of the specific core-competencies required by the International Center for Nonviolent Communication as part of trainer certification (CNVC, 2005, p. 12). Construct validity was established through post-training participant interview results (Fenwick & Parsons, 2000, p. 31) compared against the criterion validity and content validity outcomes established by the comprehension test.

(d) Establishing Reliability

Fenwick and Parsons (2000) also outline the requirements for establishing evaluation reliability (p. 31). Reliability indicates that the evaluation tests consistently measure the targeted competencies each time the tests are applied. Again, there are three factors which must be considered: (a) test-retest reliability, (b) internal reliability, and (c) inter-rater reliability. Test-retest reliability involves administering the same test to the same students at different times, or to a participant group and a control group at the same times, and correlating the results. This study administered the same test to the same students before and again after the training period, while also employing the control group approach. However, a true control group was not established, so a comparison outcome rather than a true controlled outcome is the result. Internal reliability requires consistency in difficulty between the different test items. According to Fenwick and Parsons, this can be addressed by scoring the odd numbered test questions separately from the even numbered questions. If the scores are similar, then this form of reliability

is satisfied. Internal reliability was not established for the comprehension test. Inter-

rater reliability refers to consistent grading from one rater to the next. However, as I was

the only person scoring tests, inter-rater reliability was not established for this study.

(e) A Structural Outline

Australian evaluation researchers, Owen and Rogers (1999), provide a structural

outline for program impact evaluation. I modified their outline to fit this project and

include it here as a summary of the Total Honesty/Total Heart program evaluation. This

structural outline was a useful tool for maintaining focus through the data analysis stage

and as a reference point while establishing the research findings.

Table 4: Program Evaluation Summary Chart

Considerations	Properties
Orientation	To assess and establish program value based on observable effects, and participant feed-back.
Evaluation Issues (questions applied to findings in the thesis conclusion)	- Has the program been implemented as planned? (Delivery) - Have the stated program goals been achieved? (Impact) - Do participants report that their needs were met? (Impact) - Does implementation lead to intended outcomes? (Impact) - Which goals are most successfully achieved? (Impact) - What are the unintended outcomes? (Impact) - What are the benefits given the costs? (Efficiency)
State of the program	Pilot project
Major focus	Outcome, with a minor focus on delivery (process-outcome)
Timing	Assessment after program completion
Key Approaches	Objectives-based – Needs-based – Process-outcome study
Assembly of Evidence	Preordinate mixed-methods research, using treatment and control groups (a *comparison group* is used in lieu of control), and quantitative data collection (such as tests). Impact studies also require qualitative data collection (such as field observations, and interviews)

Modified Impact Evaluation Summary chart based on Owen and Rogers, 1999, p. 265

Essentially, the program impact was assessed through four means in an effort to address the above evaluation issues. The first involved collating the data collected for each group through the comprehension survey, and comparing the test results for the two groups and the two test periods. The second involved collating the post-training interview responses from the participant group and examining the themes that emerged for each question. The third involved singling out one participant as a case illustration of possible training impacts on the individual. Finally, the fourth involved comparing the results of each means against the others to determine whether or not the findings supported each other, and how those findings answer the evaluation issues questions in Table 4.

Developing a Case Illustration

One participant was selected as a case illustration because of her initially high level of resistance to, and eventual enthusiasm for, the Total Honesty/Total Heart training. This participant had demonstrated, and reported, significant integration of the training materials by the end of the program. Her survey scores, self-assessment results, and post-training interview answers have been supplemented by reviewing the audio recordings of her training session participation, in addition to a follow-up interview one year after the training completion date, and analysis of an interview she completed several months prior to the Total Honesty/Total Heart training. Like the collated group data, the case illustration data was also reviewed many times to reveal emergent themes, identify parallels to (and differences from) the collated data, and to capture narrative descriptions of the training itself, as well as indications of integrating the training material and any practical applications of the Nonviolent Communication concepts. Descriptive analysis of the pre-training interview allows a case history to be developed, which provides a context for skill development and applications.

Phase Four – Program Efficiency

Determining Program Efficiency

Program efficiency is established by reviewing the time and resources required to implement the program alongside the resulting program impacts, the central question being: What are the benefits of the program given the costs (Owen & Rogers, 1999, p. 265)? For this purpose a log was kept of time and resources expended for training preparation and delivery. A summary of these expenses is outlined at the end of Chapter 5, the findings chapter.

Chapter Conclusion

Determining practical program significance requires a balance between quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Qualitative analysis provides the observations, contextual information, participant responses, and relevant assessments, which are supported by, and breathe life into, quantitative results. Statistical analysis was not undertaken for this research due to the small sample size of the pilot project. The focus of this study emphasizes program context, the perceptions and experiences of those involved, and training delivery observations.

Responsive program evaluation establishes the quantifiable significance of program effects then generates understanding of those effects through observation and interviews, as well as reports of participant observations, experiences, perceptions, feelings, and needs. This evaluation provides a preliminary, quasi-experimental assessment of quantifiable program effects then looks at reports of participant experiences in more detail.

According to the evaluation literature consulted (Fenwick & Parsons, 2000; M. Gall, Borg, & J. Gall, 1996; Owen & Rogers, 1999; Rossi et al., 2004), evaluations must be tailored (including questions, methods, and procedures) to the specific program implementation

circumstances. This customizing ensures that evaluations will yield credible answers while allowing for practical implementation given available resources. The methods engaged for this study include quantitative pen-and-paper test questions in addition to qualitative analysis of one-on-one interviews, audio recordings of training sessions, field notes, and a representative case illustration. The interview questions and training curriculum were reviewed by the school administrator and counsellor to ensure they suited the potential participants and complemented their life skills program. The ongoing development of the literature review, repeated listening to the audio recordings, and frequent reference to the field notes, have provided underlying support for the research and analysis, contributing to the evolution and responsiveness of the data analysis.

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test method was applied towards assessing comprehension of the program content on both the individual and group levels. This form of testing is called quasi-experimental because the comparison group is not a valid control; the participants in each group were self-selected, rather than randomly selected. A comparison of the results of the two groups provides meaningful information about the changes for this participant group that can be attributed to the training; however, these results cannot necessarily be generalized to other groups. Overall, the research findings that result will offer an indication of the kind of training impacts that can be hypothesized as likely in more comprehensive evaluations of Nonviolent Communication trainings. The findings derived from the data collection and analyses are outlined in the next chapter, demonstrating the training's effectiveness and whether or not the training had value for the participants.

Chapter 5

Findings

Uhhhhm (yawn)…*well, I've gone through lots of different ways of dealing with conflict, and I would have to say that this would probably be* (low laugh) *the best one. 'Cause I've gone through the violence, I've gone through the yelling, the screaming, the blaming, the name-calling, the whatever, and all of those just seem to work at the time. But they didn't really get you anywhere. And now this one, like, I've never actually had something where I'm like "Whoa! I just had a breakthrough!" And after using the skills that I learned from your class, I actually had a breakthrough – with the relationship in my life. So, it was just like "Whoa!" Like that's really cool. And it's just like, going up and up from there. And, I've never really had that very much. Yah.* – Participant, June 2005

This chapter focuses on program delivery and impact as described by participants during individual interviews. Program impact is further assessed through a pre- and post-training skills comprehension test. The findings are divided into three parts. Part One outlines descriptive numerical results from the skills comprehension test. Part Two details the participant group's collated interview results. Part Three provides a descriptive case illustration, focusing on one participant's skills comprehension test, and a series of three interviews (pre-training, post-training, and one year post-training).

Findings Part 1: Descriptive Numerical Data, Group Findings

The written comprehension test (see Appendix E) consists of a self-assessment (Section I) comprised of 20 social ease questions, and a scored comprehension assessment (Section II, A; B; C). Section II, A, tests student understanding of the key differentiations identified by Nonviolent Communication (see Appendix B). Section II, B, evaluates student empathy and self-empathy through their identification of feelings and needs in hypothetical scenarios. Finally, Section II, C, examines student ability to translate evaluations into feelings and needs.

Student Self-assessment

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section I: Content Ease Assessment* asks students to self-assess their general level of social ease under various circumstances by selecting between four options on a Likert scale ("Never Easy," "Sometimes Easy," "Often Easy," and "Almost Always Easy"). While the group is too small to generate statistical significance, seven areas showed noticeable changes in ease for the participant group, and 12 areas show noticeable changes in ease for the comparison group. Changes were perceived as marked, and are highlighted in grey, if there was an increase/decrease of two or more people selecting "Often" or "Almost Always" for a category (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5: Self-assessment, Participant Group Responses (*N*=7)

Number of students who respond that: "It is easy for me to…"	Pre-test Often/Always	Post-test Often/Always
1. Be honest without insulting people.	5/7	5/7
2. Say things to self that make me feel safe & strong.	3/7	5/7
3. Stop from saying things to myself that feel bad.	4/7	3/7
4. Be angry without scaring or hurting people.	3/7	5/7
5. Feel strong & safe when people are arguing	3/7	5/7
6. Tell people what I don't like & they still respect me.	5/7	5/7
7. Enjoy other people	7/7	7/7
8. Tell people when I really like what they do.	5/7	6/7
9. Express myself so I am understood	2/7	7/7
10. Tell people when I really like them.	4/7	5/7
11. Say "sorry" & mean it, without sounding stupid.	6/7	6/7
12. Be with people who are angry with me, without getting scared or hurt (staying safe and calm).	3/7	3/7
13. Feel okay when people complain about me.	2/7	2/7
14. Realize it when people really like me.	6/7	6/7
15. Be caring to friends & family when they're upset.	7/7	6/7
16. Realize when people really like what I do.	3/7	5/7
17. Communicate when people say "no" so that I still get what I want and they still like me.	5/7	5/7
18. Say "no" without getting into trouble or argument.	4/7	5/7
19. Protect myself without punishing others.	3/7	5/7
20. Protect others without punishing them.	4/7	6/7

Table 6: Self-assessment, Comparison Group Responses (*N*=7)

Number of students who respond that: "It is easy for me to…"	Pre-test Often/Always	Post-test Often/Always
1. Be honest without insulting people.	4/7	2/7
2. Say things to self that make me feel safe & strong.	4/7	3/7
3. Stop from saying things to myself that feel bad.	1/7	2/7
4. Be angry without scaring or hurting people.	4/7	2/7
5. Feel strong & safe when people are arguing	3/7	3/7
6. Tell people what I don't like & they still respect me.	5/7	3/7
7. Enjoy other people	6/7	5/7
8. Tell people when I really like what they do.	7/7	7/7
9. Express myself so I am understood	5/7	2/7
10. Tell people when I really like them.	6/7	6/7
11. Say "sorry" & mean it, without sounding stupid.	7/7	3/7
12. Be with people who're angry with me, without getting scared or hurt (staying safe and calm).	4/7	2/7
13. Feel okay when people complain about me.	3/7	0/7
14. Realize it when people really like me.	4/7	3/7
15. Be caring to friends and family when they're upset.	6/7	5/7
16. Realize when people really like what I do.	5/7	2/7
17. Communicate when people say "no" so that I still get what I want and they still like me.	4/7	2/7
18. Say "no" without getting into trouble or argument.	3/7	1/7
19. Protect myself without punishing others.	5/7	2/7
20. Protect others without punishing them.	6/7	2/7

The greatest increase in self-assessed ease for the participants occurred in category #9 "It is easy for me to express myself so I am understood." The participant group showed no decreases of two or more people in any of the 20 categories. Meanwhile, the comparison students showed 12 areas where there were decreases of two or more people. Further, the comparison group displayed no increases of two or more people in any category. The greatest decreases in ease for the comparison group occurred in categories #11 and #20 (see Table 6). In contrast to the increase seen for the participant group in category #9, the comparison group saw while I was explaining a concept or activity. During the subsequent four sessients offer a general sense of each group's perception of their own levels of interpersonal ease.

Comprehension of Key Differentiations

Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, A: Key Differentiations tests whether students

understand the key differentiations identified by Nonviolent Communication (e.g. observation

vs. evaluation; feeling vs. thought; need vs. strategy; request vs. demand). Students received a

point if they provided all correct answers for a specified category. Students received a zero if

they selected one or more incorrect answer for that category. A negative number is included in

the following bar-graphs so that a bar is visible when no students answered a category correctly.

Figure 3: Key Differentiations - Participants with Correct Answers
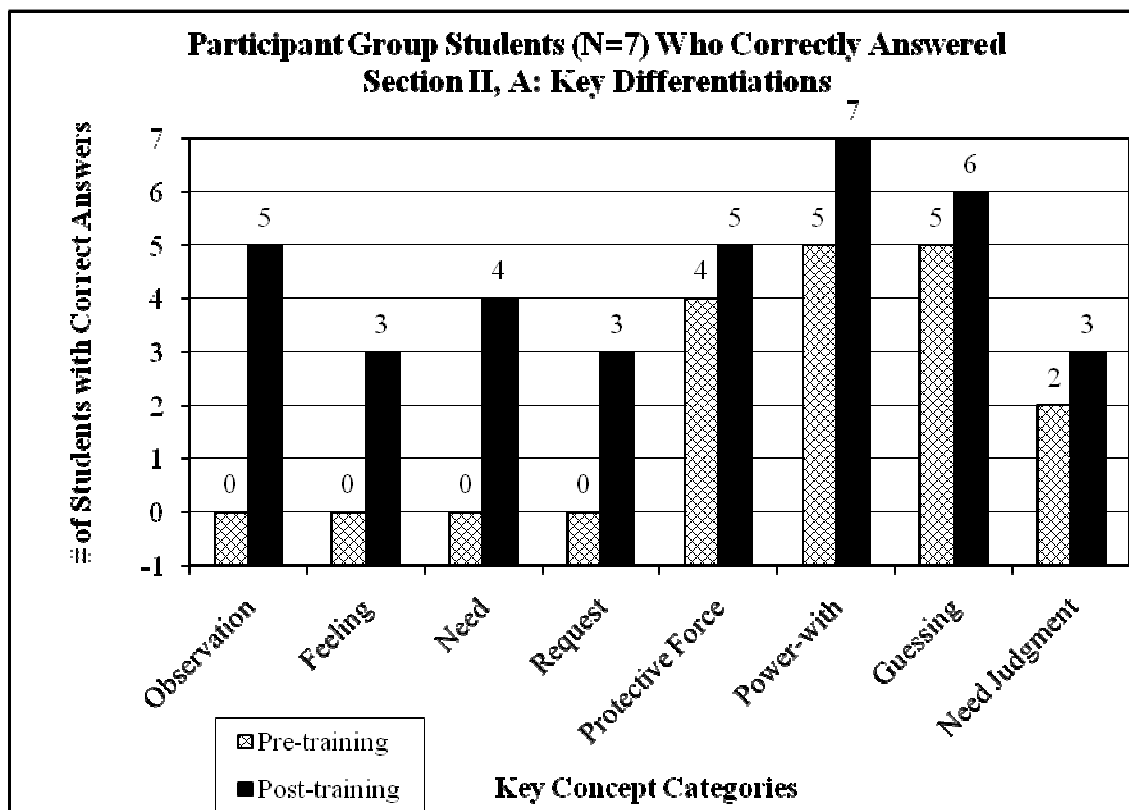
The greatest increases in participant comprehension are demonstrated in relation to the

four steps of the Nonviolent Communication model: Observation, Feeling, Need, and Request

(see Fig. 3). None of the participants correctly answered these questions on the pre-training test.

On the post-training test, five of the seven participants could distinguish between observations

and evaluations, three of the seven could distinguish between feelings and thoughts, four of the seven could distinguish between needs and strategies for meeting needs, and three of the seven could distinguish between requests and demands. Only one participant showed an increased understanding related to protective force vs. retributive force, guessing vs. telling, and needs-based judgment vs. values-based judgment. It's her experience that forms the case illustration.

The comparison group students showed no increases in understanding (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Key Differentiations - Comparison Students with Correct Answers
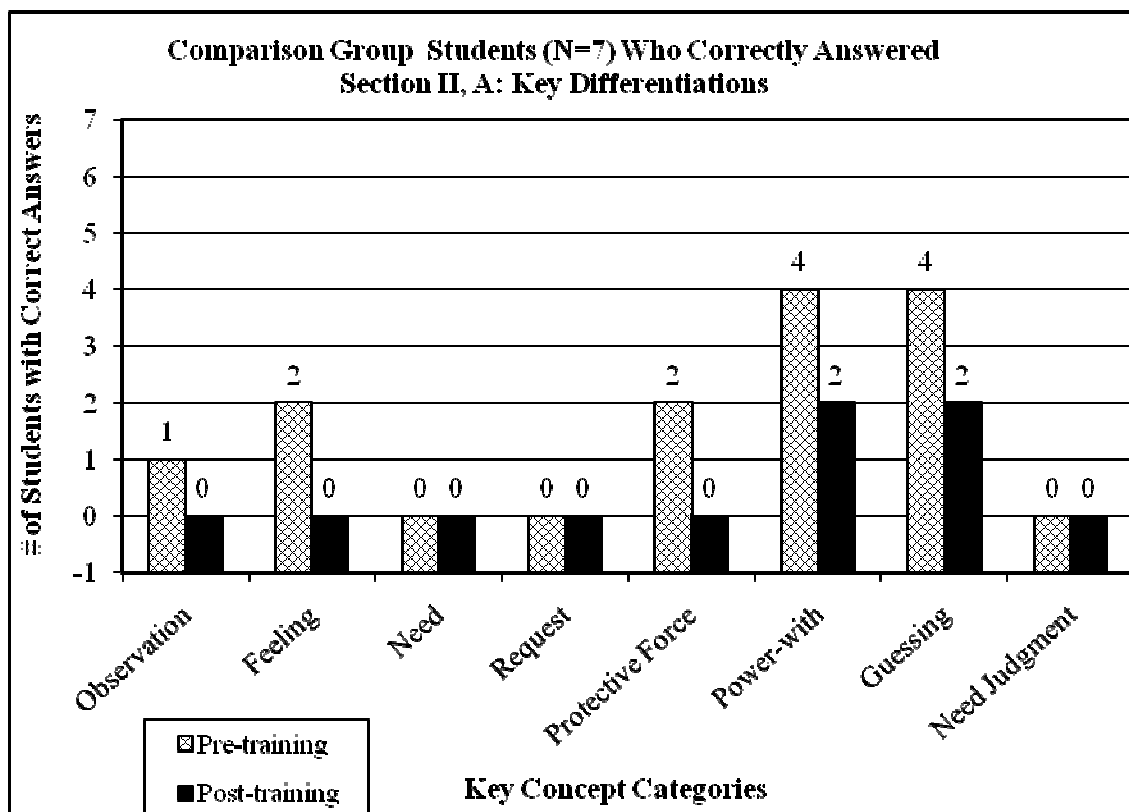
Figures 3 and 4 show how many students could answer every question correctly in each category. However, the seven participants increased their correct answers even when they had not answered an entire category correctly. To measure these changes, the students in both groups each received a point for every individual correct response. Each student was assigned a score, and these Key Differentiation scores were averaged for each group (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Key Differentiations - Test Score Averages
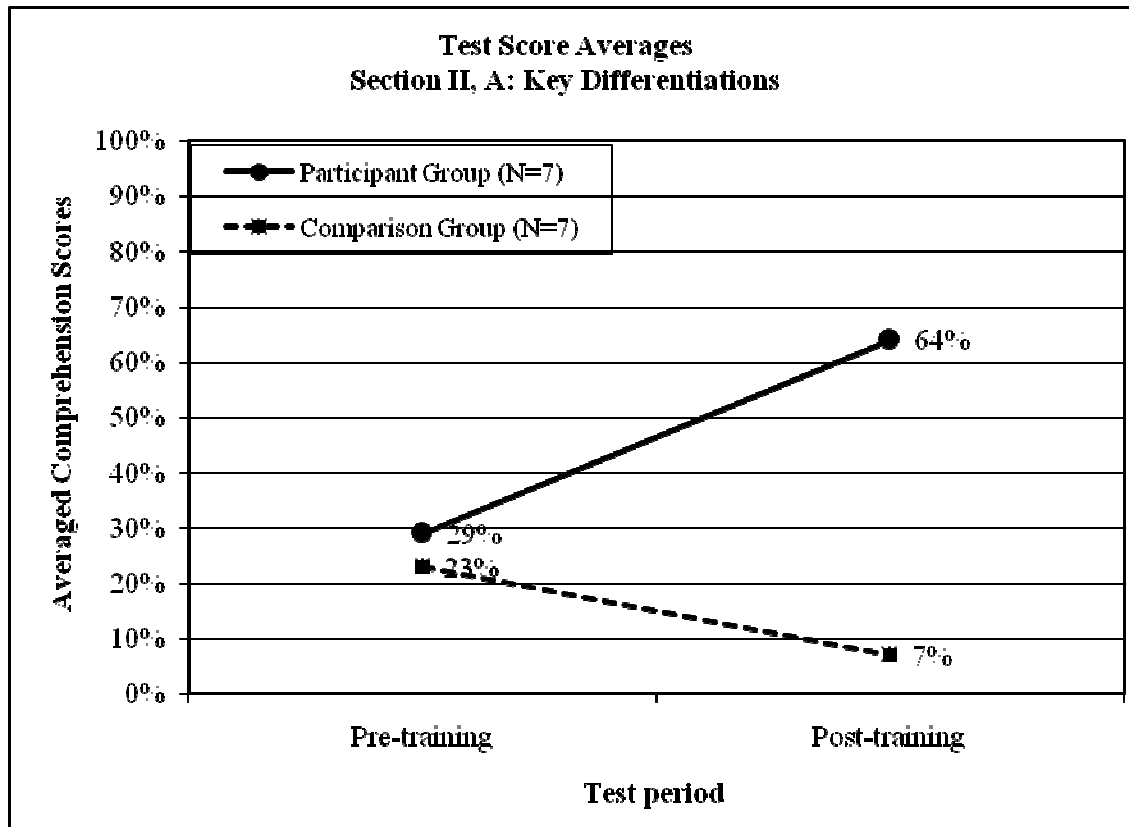
When the scores for each question in each key concept category are counted, the seven participants show a noticeable increase in correct responses, even though they may not have answered an entire category correctly (see Fig. 5). The participants demonstrated a 35% average score increase (from 29% to 64%) for comprehension of Key Differentiations, while the comparison students demonstrated a 16% average score decrease (from 23% to 7%). Please note that these scores compose a little more than one-quarter of the overall test score.

Self-empathy and Empathy Scores

Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, B: Situational Applications tests students' empathy levels by asking them to identify feelings and needs in relation to three cenarios. Students received one <u>self</u>-empathy point for each scenario where they identified both a feeling and a need, and one <u>empathy</u> point for each scenario where they identified the other person's

possible feeling and need. A score of zero was given where students mixed evaluations,

judgments, labels, or strategies with the feelings or needs. Each student was assigned one score

by totalling her empathy points and another by totalling her self-empathy points. The self-

empathy scores were averaged for each group, as were the empathy scores (see Fig. 6).

Figure 6: Self-empathy and Empathy - Test Score Averages
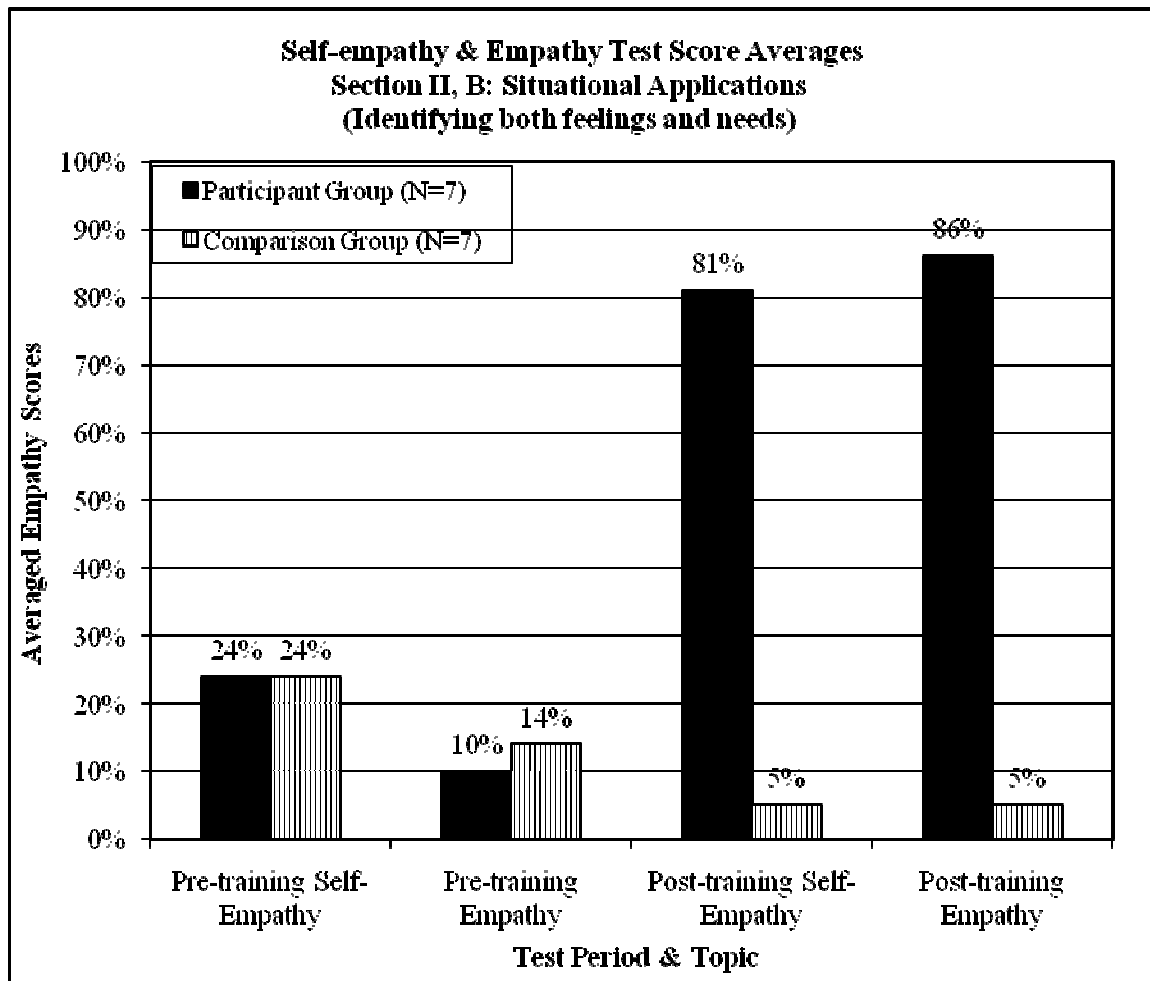
The participants demonstrated a 57% average self-empathy score increase, and a 76%

average empathy score increase. This suggests a greater capacity to estimate their own feelings

and needs as well as those of others. The comparison students' average self-empathy scores

decreased by 19% and their average empathy scores decreased by 9%. These scores compose

one-quarter of the overall test score.

Translating Thoughts into Feelings and Needs

Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, C: Translating Thoughts into Feelings and

Needs asks students to distinguish between thoughts and feelings, and link each specified feeling

with possible underlying needs. Students successfully translated thoughts to feelings and needs

if they could name both a feeling and a need for six or more out of 11 possible entries, without

referring to strategies, labels, evaluations, or judgments. A negative number is included in the

bar graph so that a bar is visible when no students answered correctly.

Figure 7: Translating Thoughts to Feelings & Needs - # Students with Correct Answers
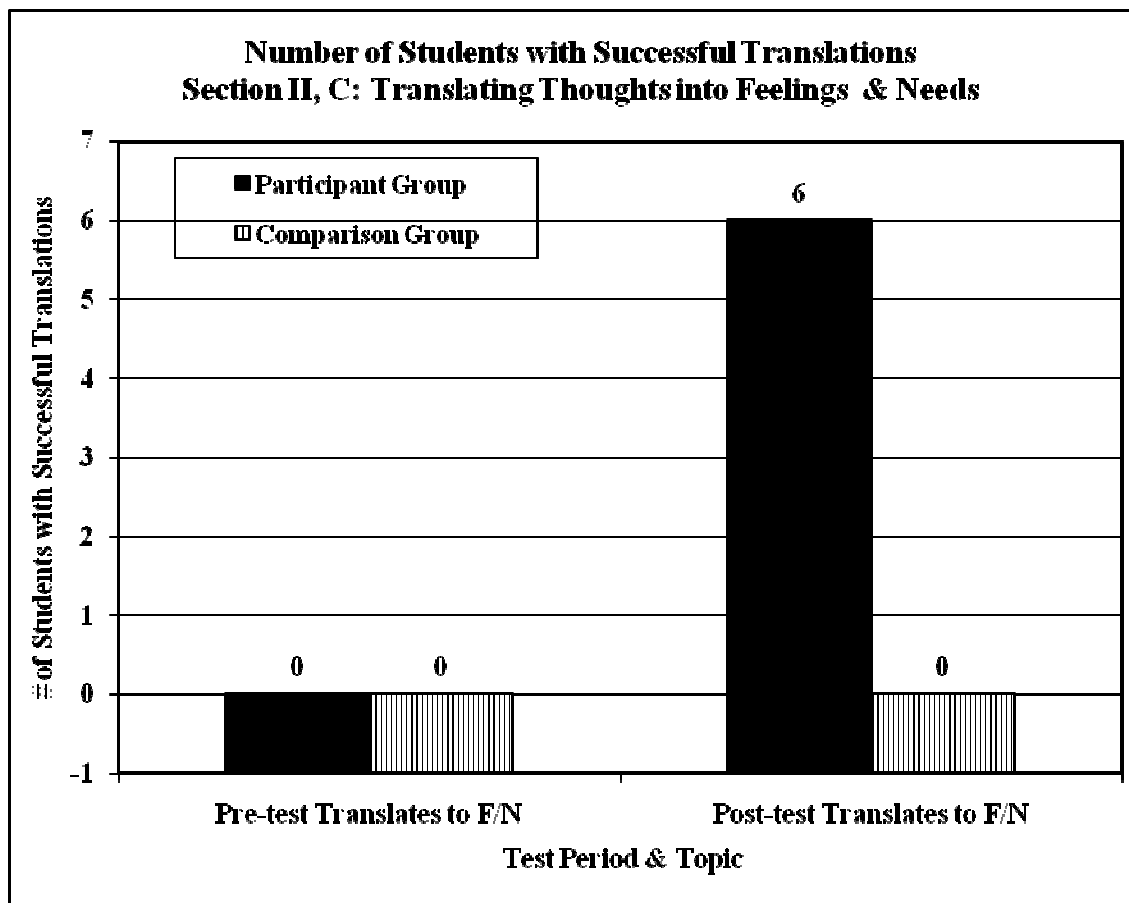
Only the participants could successfully translate thoughts into feelings and needs during

the post-training test. The one participant who did not successfully translate her thoughts into

feelings and needs actually chose not to complete this section of her post-training test. Given her

pre-training test score, and translation skills observed in class, I suspect that if she had completed

this section, her post-training score would have shown a 20-50% increase similar to the other

participants.

Figure 8: Translating Thoughts to Feelings & Needs - Test Score Averages
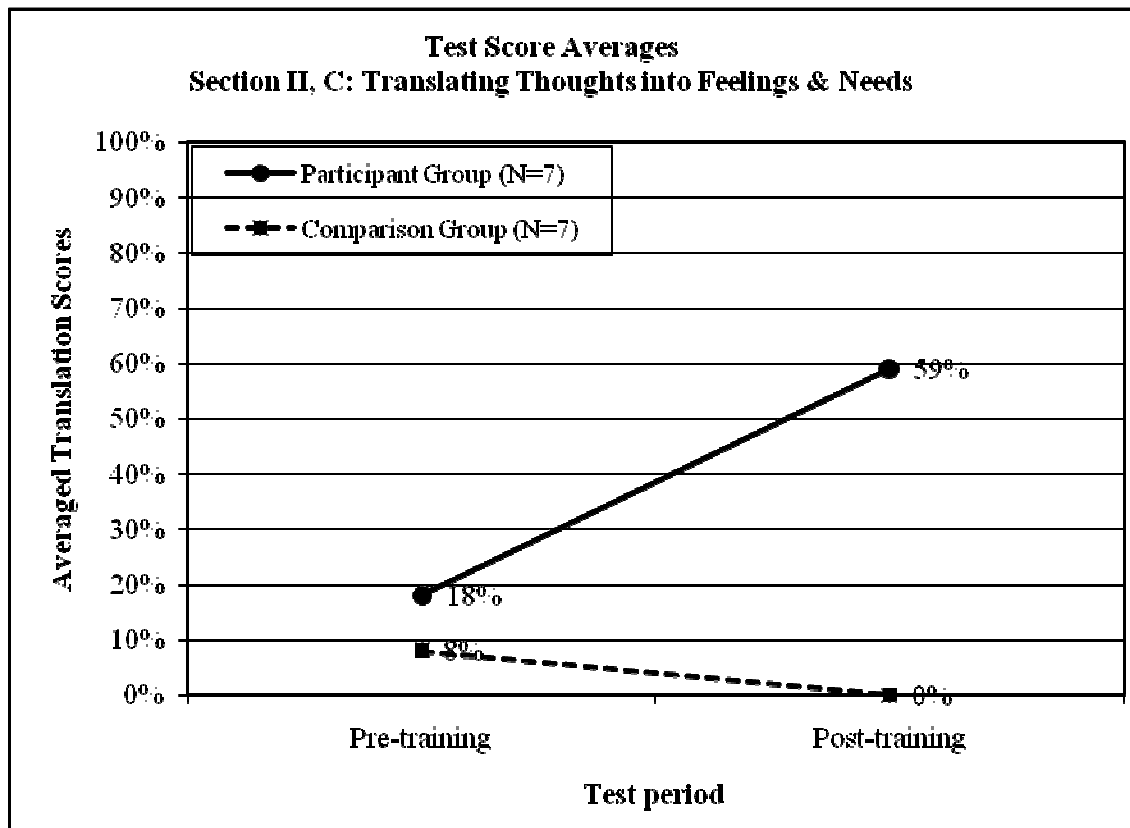
The seven participant students demonstrated a 38% average score increase (from 18% to

59%) for translating thoughts into feelings and needs, while the seven comparison group students

demonstrated an 8% average score decrease (from 8% to 0%). Please note that these key

differentiation scores compose a little less than half of the overall test score.

Total Honesty/Total Heart, Section II: Overall Comprehension Test Scores

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II* assesses student comprehension of key differentiations, student empathy in hypothetical scenarios, and student capacity to translate thoughts into feelings and needs. The individual test scores listed below (Fig.9 and Fig.10) offer an indication of changes in overall comprehension and applications for each individual. These score changes mirror the averaged group score changes reported in the above graphs.

Figure 9: Participant Group - Individual Test Score Results
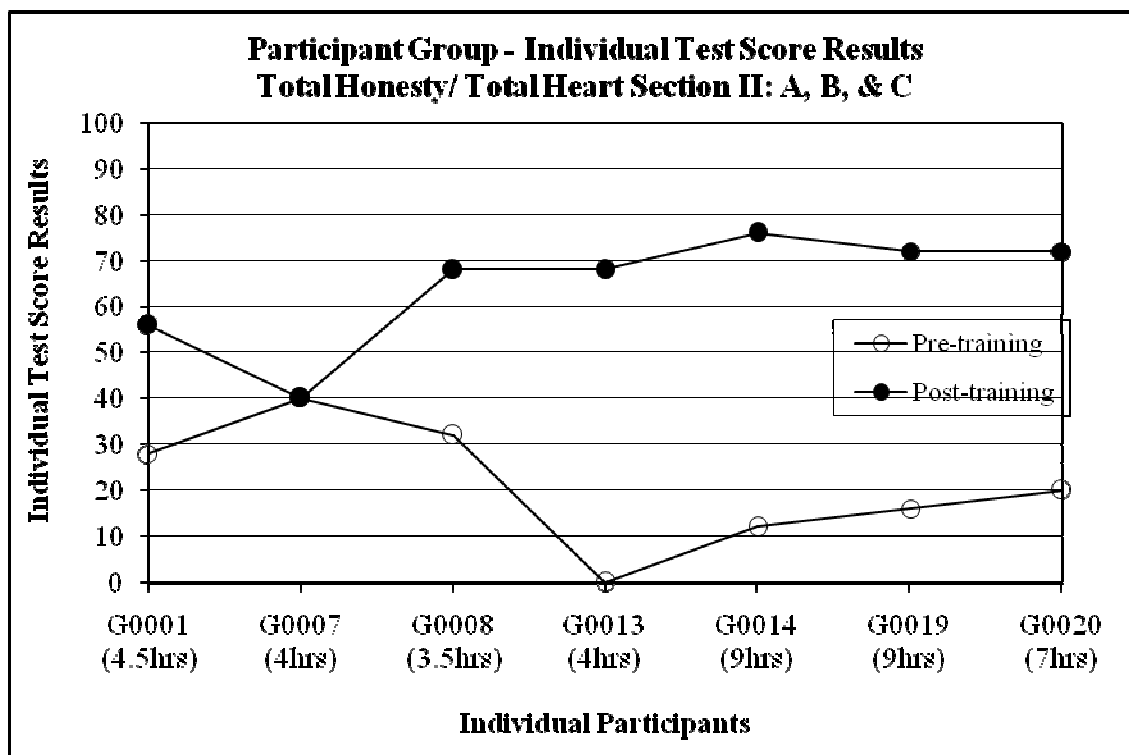
The participant group scored a 21% average on the pre-training test and a 65% average on the post-training test, resulting in a 44% average overall score increase. Participants G0001 and G0007 chose not to fully complete their post-training surveys (even though they had demonstrated their ability to do so during the training as well as in observed casual conversations with the other students during the post-training test period). Of particular note is G0007 who achieved a 40% score on her pre-training test after answering all questions and receiving less

than half marks in each section. She subsequently achieved a 40% score on her post-training test

after correctly answering only half the questions and leaving the second half entirely blank.

Based on their pre-training test scores, skills demonstrated in class, and the questions

successfully answered on the first half of the test, I suspect that if they had completed their post-

training tests, these two participants would each have achieved a 60% to 70% overall score

(rather than the lower scores measured here), in keeping with their participant classmates.

The comparison group scored an 18% average pre-training, and a 4% average on the

post-training test, resulting in a 14% average overall score decrease (see Fig. 10).

Figure 10: Comparison Group - Individual Test Score Results
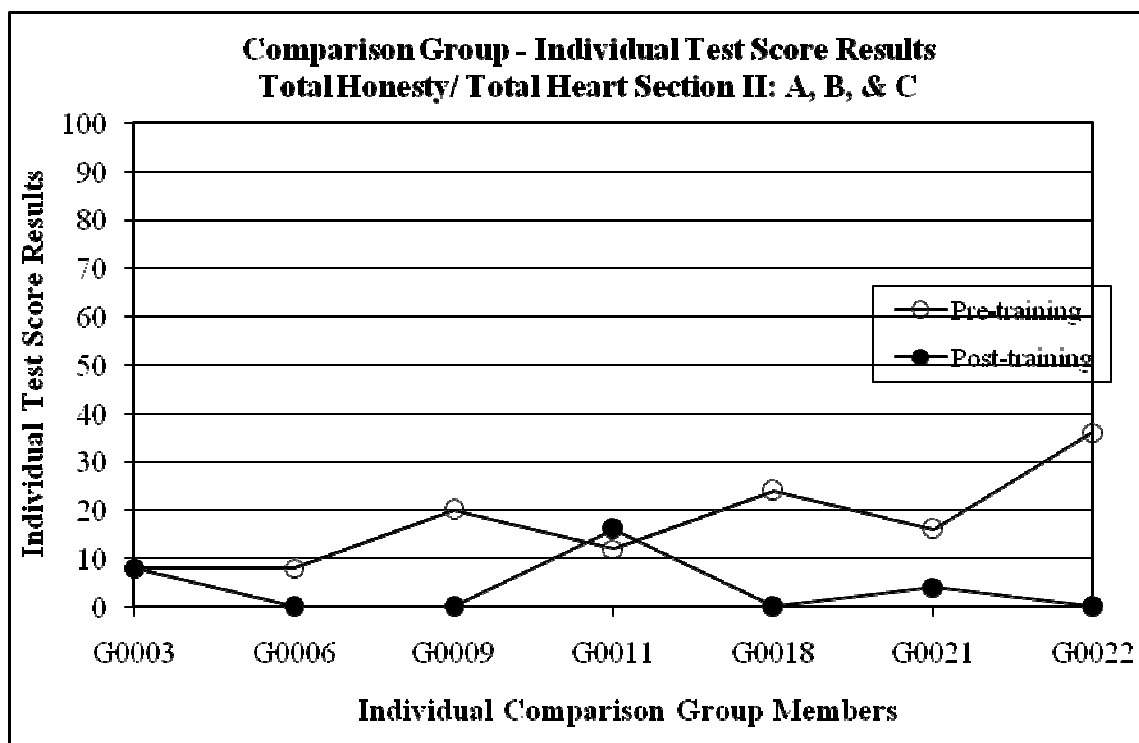
Both the participant and the comparison groups expressed frustration over not

understanding many of the concepts in Section II of the survey during the pre-training test. The

two groups completed their pre-training test together at the same time and in the same room, they

also completed their post-training test at the same time and in the same room. All 14 students were intermittently chatting and laughing while working on the tests during both test periods.

All 14 students answered all test questions during the pre-training test period. During the post-training test, five of the participants answered all test questions, while the other two answered only half the test questions (both saying they knew how to finish but were choosing not to because they were "*feeling tired and needing rest*"). None of the seven comparison group members answered all the post-training test questions. Three members of the comparison group sat with their test papers for 30 to 45 minutes and only made three or four marks on the self-assessment section. These three comparison group members returned their post-training tests leaving Section II entirely blank, saying they did not want to answer the questions a second time when the questions had not made sense to them the first time (during the pre-training test period) and still did not make sense to them. I suspect that if the comparison group had completed their post-training tests in full, the individual scores would range from 0-40% and the comparison group average score would have fallen in the range of 15-25% (rather than decrease to a 4% group average as measured here), consistent with the pre-training test results for both groups.

Findings Part 2: Participant Group Interview Data, Collated Findings

The descriptive numerical data above parallels and supports the collated qualitative data gathered through individual interviews. The interview questions (Appendix 2C) explored reasons for attending, how the participants see others solve conflict, pre-training familiarity with skills, meaningful aspects, impacts, feed-back on delivery, and descriptions of the training itself. Where the descriptive numerical test results indicate levels of comprehension, the interview data suggest the training's value for participants. Collated interview findings are summarized below.

Participant Reasons for Attending the Training

Reasons for attending the training ranged from wanting to be more self-aware, and solve conflict more effectively, to attending only because friends were attending but having no actual interest in the training at all.

How the Participants See Other Young Women Solving Conflicts:

The participants reported seeing other adolescent girls solving conflict mainly through indirect aggression (rumours, exclusion, lying, name-calling, intimidation), verbal aggression (threats, blaming, intimidation, picking arguments, yelling), physical violence, avoidance, and occasionally discussing the problem. They recognized some diversity in the way other girls respond to conflict, but agreed that among the girls they know these responses are the norm. All participants emphasized that the "girl-moms" at their school "do conflict differently": to set a good example for their babies, they tend to avoid physical violence, and talk things out more.

Pre-training Familiarity with the Nonviolent Communication Skills

Participant reflections on their pre-training familiarity with the skills (i.e. observation, feeling, need, request, and empathy for other's feelings and needs) revealed that they had had a limited understanding of the concepts. This matches their pre-training test results which show an almost nonexistent comprehension of those skills. The pre-training test demonstrates that, going into the training, participants already understood power dynamics and the differences between restorative (power-with) and retributive (power-over) paradigms. The interviews indicate that participants were also familiar with making "I feel" statements and recognized that articulating feelings was often helpful to them. However, the pre-training test shows relatively limited feelings vocabularies. Based on the pre-training and post-training test, the following lists were compiled (Tables 7 and 8). The number seven is indicated beside terms used by all seven group members. The lists show increased vocabularies for only the participants.

Table 7: Participant Group Feelings & Needs Vocabulary

	Pre-training Vocabulary	**Post-training Vocabulary**
Feelings	Mad/ angry/ pissed-off (7) Upset, frustrated Confused, unsure Jealous Scared, anxious, worried, nervous Lonely Guilt, regret Embarrassed Unhappy, sad, hurt (7) Disappointed Excited Bored (7) Nothing – no feelings (7) (Total = 22 distinct words)	Angry/ mad/ pissed-off/ furious (7) Upset, cranky, frustrated, stressed (7) Confused, unsure Jealous Scared, anxious, worried, nervous (7) Lonely Regret Embarrassed Unhappy, sad, hurt, withdrawn (7) Disappointed, discouraged Excited Tired (7) Agitated, restless, lost Irritated, annoyed (7) Concerned, helpful Shocked, disgusted Suspicious, cautious, distrusting Suffocated, smothered, overwhelmed Wondering, curious, interested Happy, content, mellow, relaxed (7) Proud, satisfied (Total = 51 distinct words)
Needs	A friend, Time with friends, quality time Acceptance, to be included To be listened to To explain my side To be noticed Trust, honesty Reassurance Time to think, to be alone, calm Nothing – no needs (7) (Total = 14 distinct words)	Friends, companionship, love (7) Time together, quality time Acceptance, inclusion, belonging (7) Listening, to be heard, understanding (7) To tell my story, to tell my side (7) Recognition, to be seen, to be valued Trust, to trust, to be trusted, honesty (7) Reassurance, assurance Time alone, a break, rest, space, calm(7) Fun, play (7) Responsibility, integrity, fairness To understand, answers, information (7) Equality, respect, shared respect (7) Consideration, compassion, caring Team work, cooperation Loyalty Freedom, choices (7) For the safety of things Help, support To help others Beauty (Total = 51 distinct words)

Table 8: Comparison Group Feelings & Needs Vocabulary

	Pre-training Vocabulary	**Post-training Vocabulary**
Feelings	Angry, mad, pissed-off, furious (7)	Angry, mad, pissed-off, furious (7)
	Upset, frustrated	Upset, frustrated
	Confused	Confused, weirded-out
	Jealous	Jealous
	Nervous, worried,	Nervous, scared
	Guilt	Guilt
	Embarrassed	Embarrassed
	Sad, down	Sad, down
	Disappointed	Disappointed
	Nothing – no feelings (7)	Nothing – no feelings (7)
	(Total = 15 distinct words)	(Total = 16 distinct words)
Needs	Friends	Friends
	To tell my side, understanding	To tell my side, understanding
	Attention, to be given credit	Attention, to be given credit
	Space	Space
	An explanation	An explanation
	Respect	Respect
	Compassion, comfort	Compassion, comfort
	Freedom	Freedom
	Nothing – no needs (7)	Nothing – no needs (7)
	(Total = 11 distinct words)	(Total = 11 distinct words)

The post-training interviews indicate that consciously identifying needs was new to all the participants. Beyond that, the whole idea of linking feelings to needs, empathizing with oneself, and formulating clear needs-based requests was also novel, as was the idea of linking another's feelings to their possible needs (empathy). Three of the participants noted that before the training they had only ever heard "communication" skills used formulaically, which they had found unnatural and patronizing. Translating Nonviolent Communication skills into familiar language patterns was described as not only useful and effective, but as transformative even.

How Participants Think People Learn These Kinds of Communication Skills

The participants emphasized that they believe communication skills require role-modeling, intentional learning, and practice. They guessed that others acquired them through

experience in a school program, through a counsellor/ teacher/ parent, or by attending a workshop. In their experience, these skills do not develop spontaneously, and they found it took practice and coaching to make the skills really work and sound natural.

Activities and Training Aspects that Participants Identified as Effective

The participants reported finding the main training activities to be both engaging and helpful. They found that the activities and materials helped them to remember the concepts easily and find ways to practice them in their own language. In particular, they identified four activities as fun and helpful in learning the key concepts: the Mad Libs game (where participants make mismatched, nonsensical, Observation-Feeling-Need-Request statements); the Nonviolent Communication floor cards where the observation-feelings-needs-request steps are laid out on the floor in three sequences: one for self-empathy, one for honesty, and one for empathy towards others (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004); the video empathy exercise where they translated what characters in conflict were observing, feeling, needing, and requesting – using *Shrek*, *Wizard of Oz*, and *Emperor's New Groove*); and the illustrated feelings and needs handout.

They also enjoyed the way the trainings were "framed" by the use of a chime to start the sessions followed by a story or poem and a snack of fruit or chocolate. The participants were deeply impressed by the fresh flowers I brought for them each week. They identified this aspect of the training experience as very special; they appreciated the smell, colours, freshness, prettiness, and how the flowers helped them to relax.

Several found it was easier to hear, rather than read, about the training concepts. Generally, they indicated that the sessions and course content supported each other and supported learning about the whole model. Two of the participants noted that they had not been interested initially and then continued to participate because they had found that the strategies

they were learning actually worked for them. Most of the participants had found the practical

applications both surprising and exciting. All five participants who are mothers also commented

that the training had been unexpectedly fun for them.

Participant quotes:

"The dance floor [NVC floor cards] exercise was really good because it's easier to remember stuff we've done instead of just heard"

"The Mad Libs game was very fun."

"Bringing flowers every week was really special. No-one ever did that for us before."

"We really liked the way you started each session with a poem and the chime and stuff."

Participant Suggestions to Improve the Training Delivery

Most of the participants found it hard to sit through explanations of concepts that lasted

more than about three to five minutes. While the training was designed to be highly interactive,

they would have liked shorter explanations and even more opportunities for interaction. In

particular, they wanted "more space to blurt things out." The challenge, however, is that trust

takes time to build. While the participants may have been interested in more interaction by the

end of the nine hour training, they were explicitly unwilling to participate in any but the small

scale two-person activities during the first three sessions. The Mad Libs game which invited

them to make mismatched sentences, using the Nonviolent Communication concepts, was

popular with all the participants and was requested twice more after it was first played. The floor

cards were very popular with all the participants because it allowed them to concretely see the

model, and physically place themselves on it. However, they were unwilling to actually move on

the floor cards themselves and preferred to direct me on it in their place, telling me where to step

and what the thoughts, feelings, needs, and requests were at each stage of the "dance". It was

only during the second last session that two participants actually tried the floor cards for themselves, and actually began coaching each other through it.

The participants specified that they would have liked more of their own real-life situations used as contexts for applying the model. This was challenging because one participant had been very upset after the second session where she had learned to identify her own feelings and needs in relation to a real-time conflict. This group of participants appeared to be very skilled at masking their own feelings and needs; they also appeared to have a fairly limited vocabulary for expressing feelings and needs at the start of the training. While that participant seemed to successfully process her distress over the course of the training and continued to participate in the program, the school administrator was concerned about further upsets and asked that I refrain from using the participants' real situations during the rest of the sessions. As a result I developed a series of activities using hypothetical scenarios created by the participants as well as scenes from popular children's movies (such as *Shrek*, *Wizard of Oz*, the *Emperor's New Groove*…). This allowed the group to explore the model and its concepts in familiar, engaging contexts, while maintaining enough emotional distance to prevent further distress. During the interviews, the participants emphasized that they preferred to get to the heart of things and risk feeling distressed. Interestingly, the participant who responded with distress after the second session suggested that in the future I should "Get participants to tell their own stories more and use more of the participants' own situations."

Additionally, the participants recommended more structure and group facilitation support regarding the maintenance of group rules. Finally, they suggested an even wider variety of activities, games, and role-play, so they could explore the model and concepts from a broader range of perspectives.

Why Participants Missed Sessions

Only two of the seven participants attended every session. The other five missed training sessions for a variety of reasons. One was frustrated with her pace of learning (this was a participant who chose to miss half the sessions), while others chose to complete school assignments that were due before year-end. Some were sick, tending to their babies, or attending appointments. One participant felt extremely irritated by another participant's behaviour and chose to stay out of the group after the fourth session to, as she specified, meet her own needs for ease and peace. Incidentally, this identification of feelings, needs and a clear strategy that balances one's own needs with those of others, could be seen as an example of integrating the course material. Finally, two participants (both missed approximately half the sessions) stopped attending after the fifth session because they were frustrated by the lack of regular group attendance.

Additional Comments Regarding the Training Delivery

The participants also made a suggestion for future training delivery, and expressed some concerns about practical applications of the training material. They emphatically recommended that middle school students learn these skills because, in the participants' experience, the social "drama" begins in middle school and escalates as youth enter high school. It is important to note that all of the participants had left home by the time they were 15 and were engaged in circles of friends who exhibited high-risk behaviours in terms of drug and alcohol use, extreme social drama, and regular use of violence. At the time of the training, three of the participants had returned to living with a parent, and four were living with their boyfriends.

One participant expressed concern about realistically using the Nonviolent Communication skills in the face of physical violence. She also wondered if a person would be able to remember and use the skills while high or drunk.

These are both worth pursuing through future research projects. Certainly, a long-term study could assess whether learning these skills in middle school impacts behaviour through high school. I suspect a longer training would be necessary to develop the skills so that participants could effectively apply them in the face of threatened violence or while intoxicated. Interestingly, two participants offered stories during the interviews indicating that they had used the skills to solve a conflict while under the influence of alcohol. One of these stories follows (the names are pseudonyms)**:**

Brigit – …*"Well, me and Sarah were out drinking last weekend and we used your model because me and my boyfriend got into an argument, and she was pretending to be you…* (laughs) *And she was like "Now Brigit what are you feeling and what needs are going unmet?"* (laughs) *and stuff. And I was like laughing and laughing 'cause I was like picturing you standing there at the bar, and she was like holding a drink, so I was picturing you standing there.* (laughing) *Yah, it was just so funny. Then we go back to the house and she'd forgotten all about what happened right, and we were like, I don't know, we were just reminiscing about the group and everything, and about your little bowl."*

Marion – *"Right* (laughing) *my chime? The bowl that I would ring?"*

Brigit – *"Yah and we picked up a glass and like a lighter and we were like "Ok, we're going to start the session now, everybody listen to the echoing of the glass tinging through the room"* (laughter) *and we were like Ting –TING-TING-TING-TING, 'cause we were so drunk right, and Sarah grabs my hand and cracks the lighter on the glass and the thing broke! And, like my boyfriend, like, it was his glass, we were at my boyfriend's place, and he just looks at us like (gazes at me eyes wide, mouth open in shock). Like, he could not believe what we did, we were like, "SORRY! But, you have to meet this lady, like, she's so cool!"*

Marion – (laughter)

Brigit – *"And then we were like "Are you feeling upset because your glass has been broken, would you like, would your need be met if we replaced your glass?" and stuff. Oh my God it was just so retarded. And he's lookin' at us like we had three heads, we were like "Ok, I think we're done for the night"* (laughing throughout). *Oh my God it was hilarious"* (laughter)

Marion – (laughter)

Brigit – (quietly) *But we actually used your model to sort out my differences with my boyfriend.*

Training Concepts that Participants Identified as Most Useful or Meaningful

When asked to identify which aspects of the training were most useful or meaningful, the participants specified each component of the Nonviolent Communication model (observations, feelings, needs, requests). These were identified as a set of complementary skills found to be effective, with emphasis on varying aspects, by all the participants. They reported that engaging these skills has meant becoming more self-aware and conscious of a wider range of choices. Part of this process involved learning to pause and consider their feelings as well as those of others, which all the participants valued highly. Being able to pause before responding was repeatedly identified as a skill that supported new communication patterns with others, in several instances preventing previously violent or aggressive encounters. Participants reported being surprised at finding themselves do this.

Finally, they all expressed appreciation for having developed a greater vocabulary for self-expression, self-empathy, and empathy towards others. Participants commented that these skills have been useful in their parenting, in their friendships, with parents, teachers and probation officers, as well as with boyfriends. One participant suggested that she thought these skills would be useful for helping a person stay safe at parties.

Impacts on Personal Behaviour that Participants Attributed to the Training

Since participating in the training and developing the Nonviolent Communication skills to varying degrees, the participants found themselves behaving in new ways. They reported representing themselves more clearly and with less blaming. They noted that when they become angry, they filter their thoughts through feelings and needs and use new words as a result (rather than yelling, blaming, and name calling). They have been surprised to note that others seem to be hearing and understanding them more easily.

The mothers in the group have found that they are better able to guess their child's feelings and needs. They have noticed that their children respond positively to their efforts to practice these skills and that they have been able to stay connected with their children even when they are frustrated. The participants also noted that representing themselves more clearly, and listening to others' feelings and needs, has had a positive impact on their relationships with partners, mothers, and friends.

All seven participants said the workshops helped them to consistently pause and consider their own and other people's feelings and needs, even if they did not choose to verbalize them. The five mothers in the participant group reported actively discussing the workshop content with their boyfriends and parents during the two-month period that the trainings ran. They also said they were experimenting with the ideas in everyday situations with their friends, boyfriends, parents, and babies. I heard these five participants, in particular, demonstrate integration of the skills by playing around together with them before or after the workshops (imitating me in fun, mocking the model itself, relaying stories to each other about "trying it out" on someone, and also exaggerating their use of the model when responding to one another in what seemed to be mild-moderate distress). During the last three trainings, several of the participants spontaneously reported to me about times when they had been trying their new skills with someone. Four of them said that they planned to find ways to continue building their new skills into their own language. One of the mothers made the point that she believed the teen mothers were differently motivated than other adolescents to learn these skills because of parenting challenges, and their desire to be "good" moms.

Participant comments:

"It seems easier for others to hear me and I make more sense to them."

"I have more self-control when I'm angry; it sort of filters and new words come."

"I can say what I feel and need, and imagine others', instead of yelling and swearing."

"My relationship with my mother/boyfriend is better because I can represent myself better and I can hear her/him more easily."

"I often hear Marion's voice in my head saying: What are you feeling, what are you needing? What are they feeling, what are they needing? And it helps."

Participants Identified New Feelings when They Think of Conflict Now
- Hopeful
- More calm
- More relaxed
- Comfortable representing my own feelings and needs
- Confidant

How Participants would Describe the Training

The participants were asked how they would describe the training to an interested friend. In summary, they described this program as a safe environment to explore the concept of conflict and develop ways to resolve a wide range of problems using Nonviolent Communication as a tool. Specifically, they said they had learned to identify their feelings and needs, which led to greater self understanding and clearer self expression. The participants reported that they had developed concrete communication skills which they found supported them in being more easily understood by others.

Participant quotes:

"Like, it's about what we need and how were feeling and how ta put it in, like, an easy to understand way."

"I'd say that it's a safe place to talk about conflict and that the information that you get there is really good to deal with conflict and stuff."

"I said that it helps you understand yourself more and he [boyfriend] was like: Why? And I'm like: You ever just sit there and wonder how you're feeling? And he's like: No. …I'm like: Well, it helps you to understand yourself."

"Um, I told my Mom that it was a group where we learned to identify with our feelings and what our needs are and if they're being met or not and how to express to people that we need them met. Or…how to deal with our conflicts…using that model. And she was kind of interested in it. And I was like: Cool, well whatever I learn I'll pass on to you."

Findings Part 3: Case Illustration, Descriptive Numerical and Interview Data

After reviewing the group's comprehension test results and interview data, it became

apparent that one of the participants, who had originally been the most resistant, had experienced

noticeable changes from the pre-training to the post-training test. She demonstrated a 56%

overall score increase on her post-training test. Moreover, from the interview data, it seemed

that she had experienced a significant shift in opinion about the training program and material.

Lindsay (a pseudonym selected by the participant) was also one of only two participants who

attended every training session. I became curious about Lindsay's experience and decided to

create a case illustration based on her background and training experiences. I reviewed her

individual interview and her individual skills comprehension test results. To provide more depth

to the case illustration, I reviewed transcripts from an interview that took place six months prior

to the training period (Artz, March 2005) in addition to my post-training interview transcripts

(Little, June 2005). I also engaged in a follow-up interview with her one year after the training

period (Little, June 2006). The interview responses were examined for a personal historical

context, clarity about pre-existent skill sets similar to the Nonviolent Communication skills,

specific training feed-back, impacts on personal behaviour (including parenting), shifts in

feelings about conflict generally, and any additional comments. This focus on Lindsay's

responses illustrates one participant's experience of the training and her practical applications of

the training material.

Lindsay's Comprehension Test Results

As described earlier in this chapter, the *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section I:*

Content Ease Assessment asks students to self-assess their level of ease in a variety of social

situations (see Appendix 2B). The students indicated a comfort level by selecting among four

options on a Likert scale (Never, Sometimes, Often, Almost Always). Lindsay's ease increased

to "Almost Always" in the categories listed below. She experienced the most dramatic increases

for categories 13, 19, and 20, where her responses shifted from "sometimes" to "almost always"

(see Table 9 below)

Table 9: Case Illustration - Self Assessment

SECTION I: Ease Assessment   Lindsay – Participant G0019
It is easy for me to…
1. Be honest without insulting people.
4. Be angry without scaring or hurting people.
5. Feel strong and safe when people are arguing
9. Express myself so I am understood.
11. Say "sorry" and really mean it, without sounding weak.
13. Feel okay when people complain about me.
14. Realize it when people really like me.
16. Realize when people really like what I do.
19. Protect myself without punishing others.
20. Protect others without punishing them.

Comprehension of Key Differentiations

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, A: Key Differentiations* tests a student's ability to distinguish key concepts identified by the Nonviolent Communication model (ex. observation vs. evaluation; feeling vs. thought; need vs. strategy; request vs. demand). Students received one point if they provided all the correct answers for a specified category. Students received a zero if they selected one or more incorrect answer for that category. Lindsay shows a shift in comprehension from understanding two concepts on the pre-training test to understanding seven on the post-training test (see Table 10).

Table 10: Case Illustration - Key Differentiations

SECTION II, A: Key Differentiations	Lindsay – Participant G0019	
Can the participant distinguish between:	Pre-training	Post-training
1. Observation or Evaluation? (4 answers)	0	1
2. Feeling or Thought? (4 answers)	0	1
3. Need or Strategy? (4 answers)	0	0 (3/4 correct)
4. Request or Demand? (5 answers)	0	1
5. Protecting or Punishing? (4 answers)	0	1
6. Power-with or Power-over? (5 answers)	1	1
7. Guessing or Telling? (4 answers)	1	1
8. Need or Right/Wrong Judgment? (6 answers)	0	1
Totals	**2/8**	**7/8**

Self-empathy and Empathy Scores

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, B: Situational Applications* asks students to demonstrate empathy by identifying feelings and needs in relation to three hypothetical scenarios. Students received one <u>self</u>-empathy point for each scenario where they were able to identify their own possible feelings and needs. Students received one <u>empathy</u> point for each scenario where they were able to identify the other person's possible feelings and needs. Zero

points were given where students mixed evaluations, judgments, labels, or strategies into the feelings or needs identification.

Table 11: Case Illustration - Self-empathy & Empathy Test Scores

SECTION II, B: Situational Application	Lindsay – Participant G0019			
Can the participant identify her own feelings and needs? Can she identify another's possible feelings and needs?	**My Feelings & Needs (self-empathy)**		**Other's Feelings & Needs (empathy)**	
	Pre-training	**Post-training**	Pre-training	**Post-training**
1. My sweetheart has plans to go out with friends, but I want to spend the evening together – just the two of us.	1	**1**	0	**1**
2. A girl sees me talking to her boyfriend and then "tells me off" after he's left. I was just checking a homework assignment.	0	**0** (N.B. the label "bitch" mixed in with the F & N)	0	**1**
3. The clerk at the store kept asking if I wanted help finding things and then followed me around pretending to arrange the shelves.	0	**1**	0	**1**
Totals	1/3	**2/3**	0/3	**3/3**

Lindsay successfully identified the other person's possible feelings and needs in all three scenarios on the post-training test, which she had been unable to do on the pre-training test (see Table 11). This suggests an increase in the cognitive skills necessary for engaging the practical components of empathy towards others, as defined in this thesis.

Lindsay was able to identify her own feelings and needs in an intimate relationship setting (scenario one) both before and after the training, indicating a pre-existing capacity for self-empathy in the context of conflict with an intimate. Prior to the training, she was not able to identify her own feelings and needs in the context of conflict with an acquaintance or stranger

(scenarios two and three). Lindsay successfully identified her own possible feelings and needs

in scenario three on the post-training test. This demonstrates an increase in the skills necessary

for engaging the practical components of self-empathy, as defined in this thesis. Scenario two

caused her more trouble, and while she was actually able to identify her own possible feelings

and needs in the situation, she persisted in adding the label "bitch" for the other person when

describing her own feelings (see Table 11).

Translating Thoughts into Feelings and Needs

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II, C: Translating Thoughts into Feelings

and Needs* tests the student's ability to distinguish between analytical or judgmental thoughts and

subjective emotional feelings. It also tests student ability to link the specified feelings with

possible underlying needs. Students were identified as successfully translating thoughts to

feelings and needs if they could name both a specific feeling and a specific need for six or more

out of 11 possible entries, without referring to strategies, labels, evaluations, or judgments (see

Appendix–1b). On the pre-training test, Lindsay was only able to identify three possible feelings

and no needs. She was able to accurately identify eight possible feelings and six needs on the

post-training test (see table# below).

Table 12: Case Illustration - Translating Thoughts to Feelings & Needs, Test Scores

SECTION II, C: Translation	Lindsay – Participant G0019	
Can the participant translate thoughts (ex. ignored) into feelings and needs (ex. feel sad/need attention, or feel relief/need space)?	**Pre-training**	**Post-training**
	No (0/11)	Yes (8/11)

Total Honesty/Total Heart, Section II: Overall Comprehension Test Scores

The *Total Honesty/Total Heart Test, Section II* assesses student comprehension of key

differentiations, student skill engagement exercising empathy in hypothetical scenarios, and

student capacity to translate thoughts into feelings and needs. The total test scores (see Table 13) show the changes in overall comprehension and applications for Lindsay from the pre-training test (16% score) and the post-training test (72% score). She demonstrated a 56% overall score increase on her test.

Table 13: Case Illustration - Overall Comprehension Test Scores

Total Honesty/ Total Heart: Overall Comprehension Test Scores		
Lindsay – Participant G0019 (Score out of 25 possible points)	**Pre-training**	**Post-training**
	4/25 = 16%	18/25 = 72%

Lindsay's Interview Findings

I met with Lindsay again in June 2006, one year after the end of the Total Honesty/ Total Heart training, at the same alternative school site during school hours. She reviewed the transcript excerpts I had selected from her March 2005 pre-training interview and her June 2005 post-training interview. I asked if she wanted to delete any aspect of the transcripts, offer any clarification, or provide further comments on any of the excerpts. Lindsay requested the deletion of her gang's name from her March 2005 interview transcripts. Aside from that one deletion, she approved all the transcript excerpts I had selected from the March and June 2005 interviews (Little, June 2006, p. 8). She also made a number of additional comments during the June 2006 interview which were audio recorded, transcribed, and included, with her permission.

All three sets of interview transcripts were reviewed several times, both individually and in relation to each other. The findings have been divided into a series of narrative sections: a brief background, pre-training shifts in perspective regarding conflict and emotional fluency, pre-training familiarity with skills and concepts, training feed-back and impacts (as per the June 2005 collated interview themes), and a post-training summary. The first three sections

distinguish post-training impacts from Lindsay's pre-training knowledge of conflict resolution, emotional vocabulary, self-representation, self-empathy and empathic expression.

Background

Lindsay explained that she began spending time downtown shortly after turning 12 and that by 13 she was regularly "hanging out" in Victoria's city centre. She said, "I went down there, and I just really liked it" (Little, June 2006, p. 1). She became part of a formal gang shortly afterwards, and continues to count its members as family. She noted that many of the gang members she knew are starting families and settling down now that they are moving into adulthood. Lindsay distinguished between her generation within the gang and the current generation of new-comers:

> *"…we could all hang out there together and, you know, make money, and whatever. And then we'd just go party for the night. But the majority of them are down there now and a lot of it has to do with 'meth' [crystal methamphetamine]. Everybody's doing drugs these days, and you know, they're not selling it they're doing it. And that was the difference, like, we were selling it to survive and, like, they're doing it to survive. You know, like, it's just really sad to see them."*
> (Little, June 2006, p.1-2)

Lindsay marked three generations since she had joined the gang, counting a "generation" as a two year difference between incoming cohorts of youth. She says she was attracted to the whole scene because she had no place to go. She didn't want to be with her Mom, and her Dad was out of contact (Artz, March 2005, p. 18).

> *"Like, I've never had a normal childhood… I was always hanging out with drug dealers downtown because I thought they were cool, or getting into the drug scene, or whatever… I dropped out of school when I was 15. I thought I didn't need school or parents and I could do it all on my own… I thought I had it so under control and it just spiraled out."*
> (Artz, March 2005, p. 12)

During her March 2005 pre-training interview, Lindsay offered definitions for aggression and violence. She defined aggressiveness as: "Someone who can't control their anger." (Artz, March 2005, p. 1), specifying that: "Violence is more physical" (Artz, March 2005, p. 1). She indicated that people can also hurt each other emotionally through words and actions (including gestures and faces). Lindsay suggested that "People do that because of their own emotions and thoughts and it ends up in everyone hurt" (Artz, March 2005, p. 25). When asked where she thinks her own anger and aggression originated, she identified a highly conflicted relationship with her mother, the social and emotional disruptiveness of being sent back and forth between her parents homes, antagonistic dynamics with each of her step-parents, the four-year absence of her father, and ultimately her membership in a formal gang which became her adolescent family. She says: "I hate it when people are right in my face yelling and I just don't like people right there in my personal bubble and that used to make me really angry and I'd just… I was tough and I could do something about it instead of taking it. I could turn around and hit them and take them to the ground" (Artz, March 2005, p. 4). Lindsay pointed out that her hard-core reputation and gang affiliation ensured others knew to "watch out" around her, to avoid "messing" with her, and to generally stay out of her way (Artz, March 2005, p. 4). When she was 13, 14, and 15 years old, she would engage in violence "Downtown, at house parties, anywhere" (Artz, March 2005, p. 4). She says that she generally did not fight alone, "…but if I was by myself and somebody was in my face all I had to do was make a call and I could hit this person and there'd by five people behind me in less than five minutes" (Artz, March 2005, p. 5).

While she does not like to see it in herself as she looks back, she says that having her reputation and such a tough group of friends made her feel powerful (Artz, March 2005, p. 14). Her use of violence escalated after her brother betrayed her trust, then "scratched up" her room

(smashing porcelain dolls, mirrors, projects and other things with a baseball bat), the conflict escalated to include her mother, and Lindsay capitulated by uttering death threats to her mother while holding a knife (for opening the moving boxes she was unpacking) (Artz, March 2005, p. 6). The police were called. Lindsay notes that they were familiar with her because of her frequent involvement in fights downtown. She was first criminally charged at 15 (for uttering the death threats), spent time in a juvenile detention facility on week-ends for a few weeks (Artz, March 2005, p. 7), and was on probation at 17 for missing a court date (Artz, March 2005, p. 8).

Reflecting on the sources of aggression in relationships generally, Lindsay noted that "…lots of couples fight about money and that's where aggression comes in, things like that" (Artz, March 2005, p. 1). In her experience, she observes that violence mostly happens when people are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and that fights are typically triggered by conflicts over money, drugs, a romantic partner that two people are competing over, and desirable objects (Artz, March 2005, p. 2). Lindsay commented that she sees fights "Everywhere you go. I see violence in everything right? You can look out the window and watch the kids play at recess time [at the middle-school beside the alternative school] and you can see violence." Continuing to discuss the violence she sees on the playground at the neighbouring middle-school she says: "…they think it's a game I think; pulling each other down to the ground, pushing or shoving or hitting and all that stuff" (Artz, March 2005, p. 2). She pointed to violent behaviour she is aware of in schools, on neighbourhood streets, and in some people's homes (Artz, March 2005, p. 3).

In June 2005 at her post-training interview, I asked Lindsay how she sees other young women her age solving conflicts. She said that physical violence is common among many of the young women she knows, and that when they engage verbally they tend to "…play the blame

game: they just blame it all on somebody else so that it doesn't reflect badly on them, which it still does" (Little, June 2005, p. 1). In June 2006, Lindsay expanded on the "blame-game" adding that this approach tends to be both "gossipy and dramatic" (Little, June 2006, p. 1).

A Shift in Perspective

In March 2005, Lindsay made it very clear that her views on violence and fighting had changed dramatically over the previous year, stating that:

- *"Violence and fighting are not right, they cause new problems and escalate conflicts"*
- *"It's not a good way to defend friends - walk away or talk them through it"*
- *"Threats are definitely not okay."*
- *"It's not okay to act up in class because you dislike the teacher; teachers are just trying to teach."*
- *"A person always has a choice about whether or not to fight"*
- *"Nobody deserves to be beaten up"*
- *"It's not okay to spank, I don't believe in hitting your child"*
(Artz, March 2005, p. 22)

She went on to say that in the past she would have agreed with violent conflict resolution, acting up in class, fighting as the only choice, thinking that people deserve to be beaten and children ought to be spanked. At the time of her March 2005 interview, Lindsay identified all of these as unacceptable (Artz, March 2005, p. 22), and spoke enthusiastically about the importance of helping younger people understand the reality of life on the street (Artz, March 2005, p. 13).

When asked what caused this shift from hard-core kid who joined a gang and uttered death-threats, to someone who describes herself as having good relationships with her family, Lindsay identified two key turning points: the deaths of four dear friends and the pregnancy/ birth of her son (Artz, March 2005, p. 8 & p. 11; Little, June 2006, p. 2). On November 3, 2003, four close friends passed away, one was a girl that Lindsay had known for 16 years. They had been toddlers together, and as teens they had shared the same lifestyle downtown. That friend had been pregnant when she died. Lindsay remembered how her friend had been doing well; she had gone back to school and was getting her life together. Lindsay noted that this was what she

had always wanted for herself: just to do well. It seemed to Lindsay as she reflected on her own pregnancy, that her baby had come to help her do well (Artz, March 2005, p. 8). Lindsay recalled grieving these deaths as the first time she had overtly expressed emotions, other than anger, in many years (Artz, March 2005, p. 18; Little, June 2006, p. 2).

On December 17, 2003 Lindsay learned that she was pregnant, and while she was unsure whether or not she wanted to keep the baby, the pregnancy became a critical turning point for her. She was specific about her reflections at the time and the decisions she made as a result:

> *Because, when I found I was pregnant, I stopped and looked at where my life was and where it'd be if I didn't have this baby. If I didn't have him, I'd probably be in jail, on the streets, dead, drunk, or high. And no contact with family, no school, no education, no good relationships, nothing. And then I looked at what I'd be with my son – in school with family support, Dad at first, and Mom now too.*
> (Artz, March 2005, p. 11)

The same day she learned about the pregnancy, Lindsay stopped drinking and quit all recreational drugs. She went through detox alone while still living in a "party house" through December 2003 (Little, June 2006, pp. 2-3). To help me understand how extreme detox had been, Lindsay explained that for the previous few years it had been her custom to start the day with a beer before her morning shower and continue drinking steadily from there, she had been regularly using ecstasy (which she described as a huge part of her life), and had been using cocaine from time to time (she said it had not been such a big part of her life). She depicted herself as someone who would rage if she did not have her beer first thing in the morning, and described her withdrawal as extremely hard and terrible. She coped by staying at the houses of friends (who lived with their parents) as much as she could during that stage.

> *Yah, I just quit. Like one day, I was just like ok, done – the day I found out I was pregnant I just quit 'cause I didn't know what I wanted to do yet, and I pretty much thought I was going to give him up but I didn't want to continuously harm him like if I decided to, you know, a month down the road say 'never mind'…*
> (Little, June 2006, p. 3)

Lindsay had scheduled an abortion for January 7, 2004, and that same day another dear friend died. She identifies him as one of her best friends and possibly her baby's father. She said that after his death, she could not bear to have the abortion and decided to keep the baby. Keeping the baby meant pretending to her mother that she was still planning an abortion so she would have a place to stay through January 2004. After she revealed the truth, Lindsay had to find other places to stay during the rest of the pregnancy because her mother disapproved.

Table 14: Case Illustration - Lindsay's Perspective Shift Timeline

Perspective Shift – Timeline	
Date	**Event**
Nov. 3, 2003	• 4 friends died in an accident • Mourning: several days/weeks of inconsolable crying and "24/7" drinking and drug binging (the first overt expression of emotions other than anger in many years)
Nov. 12, 2003	• Start of pregnancy (age: 16 years old)
Dec. 17, 2003	• Found out she was pregnant. • Stopped drinking alcohol, quit ecstasy, and quit cocaine. • Went through detox alone, initially while still living in a "party house."
Jan 7, 2004	• Date that her abortion was scheduled. • That same day a close male friend died (possibly the baby's father). • Decided to keep the baby.
Jan. 2004	• Pretended she was still going to have the abortion so she could stay with her Mom for a few weeks.
Feb/March 2004?	• Stayed with a girlfriend (T) and her mother
March/April 2004?	• Stayed with a single-parent friend
April/May 2004?	• Stayed with another girlfriend (A)
June/July 2004?	• Moved in with a male friend (P) who became her boyfriend that June & they have continued to live together since (they were married in June 2006).
July 22, 2004	• Son's birth (age:17 years old)
March 2005	• Pre-training interview with Sibylle Artz
April-May 2005	• Total Honesty/ Total Heart training with Marion Little
June 2005	• Post-training interview with Marion Little
June 2006	• 1-year follow-up interview with Marion Little

(Artz, March 2005 Demographics; Artz, March 2005; Little, June 2005; Little, June 2006)

Emotional Fluency

When asked about the role of emotions in her life before her baby was born, Lindsay

stated that other than her inconsolable crying following the deaths of her friends, she had no

feelings then: "I liked the feeling of power, but I didn't have any, like, *'sigh'* emotions. You

know? I was never really upset. I never cried." Accordingly, everyone other than her very

closest friends only saw "hard core attitude" (Artz, 2005, p. 16). During the June 2006

interview, Lindsay added that she "just didn't really care" at that time (Little, June 2006, p. 2),

and identified herself as essentially shut down emotionally before the pregnancy and her baby's

birth.

Since having her baby and caring for him, Lindsay's opinion about her own emotions has

changed dramatically. In March 2005, she stated the following opinions about emotions:

- "It's good to express them"
- Attending to them is important, especially when frustrated
- Her son is sensitive to her emotions
- She wants to take care of her own emotions so she can better care for her son.
(Artz, 2005, p. 19)

She went on to say she now believes that "You have to talk about them because if you

just say nothing you're going to be more angry later on. You have to get them out there." (Artz,

2005, p. 21). Lindsay explained that she came to understand these ideas by watching her friends

with their children, and by providing care for their children from time to time. At one point

during the previous three years, she had provided full-time care for someone else's baby for

approximately six months (Artz, 2005, p. 20). During the March 2005 interview, she identified a

dramatically new perspective on other people's emotions, stating that:

- "Everyone has their own way of dealing with them."
- "I'm respectful of other people's feelings."
- "It's important to understand emotions."
(Artz, March 2005, p. 21)

She emphasized that it is particularly critical, in her mind, to understand her child's emotions so that she can act on them and help him. She pays close attention to her baby's emotions, noting that different cries mean different things. At the time of the March 2005 interview, Lindsay commented that she particularly likes to help people calm down and get perspective. She suggests that people should wait until they are not angry anymore before trying to talk things out (Artz, March 2005, p. 21).

Pre-training Familiarity with the Training Skills and Concepts

Looking back on her pre-training knowledge base Lindsay explained that she "had not heard much about this kind of thing [*Nonviolent Communication* skills]…" when she was younger. While she had heard about related ideas over the previous year or two, she had not been interested in learning these kinds of skills: "It never really occurred to me. I was just like, OKAY psychiatrist. Thanks for your opinion. BYE" (Little, June 2005, p. 2). As noted above, in March 2005 Lindsay already held the opinion that emotions were good, and that expressing them was a good idea. She credits her school counsellor in middle-school with helping her build a basic feelings-vocabulary. She was in contact with that counsellor from the ages of 13-15 and remained in contact with her for about six months after dropping out of school. Lindsay recalls that most importantly her counsellor "could see past it all" and sincerely listened (Little, June 2006, p. 3). Lindsay remarked on how this had supported her during very difficult times.

After the baby was born, much of this came back to her and Lindsay was able to find a way to reduce the volatility between herself and her mother, which has been a huge achievement for her. This meant that after the baby was a few months old, her mother became more supportive. Lindsay emphasized that she has made some very difficult choices in order to care for her son and stay in relationship with her family. She really wants her struggle to be

acknowledged, to be fully seen for the strengths she has developed, and to simply be appreciated for who she is (Little, June 2006, p. 3).

Along with the other participants, Lindsay agrees that conflict resolution skills do not tend to develop spontaneously, and do seem to require focussed learning. Lindsay said that she believes people generally gain these skills through experience and from observing people like parents, counsellors, and teachers (Little, June 2005, p. 2). Lindsay acknowledges her middle-school counsellor as someone who helped her develop some anger management skills and a basic feelings vocabulary. The chart below outlines Lindsay's feelings and needs vocabulary as recorded on the pre-training and post-training test.

Table 15: Case Illustration - Lindsay's Feelings & Needs Vocabulary

	Pre-Training	**Post-Training**
Feelings	hurt, angry, pissed-off, unsure	Sad, tired, confused, angry, distrusting, unsure, stressed, annoyed, surprised,
Needs	Nothing, quality time together, to be alone	Time together, space, understanding, assurance, trust, reassurance, answers/ information, equality, recognition, help, rest, team-work, respect,

Feedback Regarding the Total Honesty/Total Heart Training Delivery

Lindsay was not at all interested in the training initially. She said that she only attended the first two sessions because most of her friends were attending and she did not want to sit in the academic classroom without them (Little, June 2005, p. 1). During the first two sessions I noticed Lindsay poking her friend in the ribs and giggling every few minutes, staring at the ceiling, arguing with the other participants, getting up to leave a few minutes before the break began, and frequently speaking out loud while I was explaining a concept or activity. During the subsequent four sessions, she sat leaning back on one of the couches with very little expression on her face (as did almost all the other participants). Over the course of those four sessions, she

did offer comments or questions two or three times per session, she participated in all the learning activities, and stopped poking her peers or arguing with them. Overall, it appeared as though she was tolerating the training sessions, but was not interested in them.

Lindsay recalled that after a few sessions she found some of the skills she had been learning were actually working for her at home and after that she had become both interested and excited about the whole thing (Little, June 2005, p. 1). As mentioned above, this was not apparent to me during the training sessions themselves.

> *"'Cause in the beginning I was kinda like: "Oh this is gonna be boring, I'm getting bored, I wonder how many speckles are on the ceiling". And me and Sarah were poking each other and laughing. And after a while it was just like: "WHOA! Hey!" I think it was when you brought out the dance floor* [Nonviolent Communication floor cards] *and you started explaining ways to work through things and relationships and stuff like that. It was just really weird how it all just kinda, it was just kinda: "Whoa! Hey, you know what?" 'Cause at first I think we all thought it was kinda funny: (In a mock sophisticated voice) "I'm FEELING, because I have a NEED for, could I ASK you to…" we just all thought it was funny. And then after you put it, like, I think once I put it in my OWN language, I think it worked out a lot easier. Like, it just seemed really cool."*
> (Little, p.10, June 2005)

In June 2006 Lindsay reaffirmed her post-training comment and added that she still finds the whole Nonviolent Communication model to be more useful when she can put it into her own language. When she has been successful at using the model as a touch stone and framing her concerns in her own language, Lindsay said that her fiance knows that "…its, like, ME talking and not, like, some little recording bird" (Little, June 2006, p. 4).   She commented on how she liked being given the bare basics and the support to translate the Nonviolent Communication model into her own language and situations. She emphasized again how important it is to her that people speak and act in ways that are real and authentic (Little, June 2006, p. 5).

> *"I just think, like, after you brought out the dance floor and the feelings and needs and requests, like, not a lot of us had heard that before. We had just heard it in somebody else's language, the way they would use it, and we didn't*

*have it broken down to like the bare basics of it so that we could put it into our
own language. So I think we were trying to use somebody else's and then we
were like: "Hey we can make it our own. Wow!"* (Little, June 2005, p. 10)

Lindsay particularly liked the Mad Libs game, where the participants made mismatched

nonsensical statements as a low-pressure way to familiarize themselves with the Nonviolent

Communication steps. She also found the floor cards a useful learning tool and appreciated

being able to move through the model physically (or direct me through the steps, as was the case

until the second last class) in relation to a conflict scenario. Lindsay responded immediately to

the laminated feelings and needs chart when I brought it out at the very beginning of the

sessions. Initially, she was laughing and pointing to the different cartoon faces assigned to each

feeling as a way to distract her class-mates. Regardless, she was responding to and playing with

the chart from the start of the training. By the end of the training she was also making practical

use of her chart, both for her own reference and as a learning tool for her baby:

> *"I really love my feeling chart… I've got it, like, right down on the
> bottom of my fridge so that [baby] can pat at it and point to things. And I'll just
> be like: "This one's sad, and this one's happy" Just, like the really easy ones, not
> like: "I'm feeling anxious," just show him the easy ones like happy or sad or
> tired…upset or frustrated. I show them to him and he seems to pick them out
> sometimes."* (Little, June 2005, p. 6)

Suggestions to Improve the Training

To make the training more relevant and useful to other young people, Lindsay suggested

offering it to youth aged 14 to 16, noting that relationship difficulties, the possibility of babies,

and general life challenges all seem to escalate around that time. She also suggested separating

boys from girls during training sessions to create more ease in learning for both groups, her

comment being that boys and girls learn on different levels in different ways, and they talk about

different things. Finally, Lindsay pointed out that when she had been those ages, she had not

been interested in knowing anything about these kinds of skills. She advised keeping an open

mind and refraining from judgements when working with that particular age group, or any age group. Above all she cautioned against pretending to know what any youth are going through, even if an adult has had similar experiences. She had appreciated my straightforwardness about having no personal experience dealing with drug addictions, probation officers, and teen motherhood; and my clarification that we might find we could talk about the basic human feelings and needs we did have in common (Little, June 2005, p. 8).

In terms of specific training content, Lindsay suggested that the first session where we spent time defining violence and power had not been very engaging for her or for the rest of the group. She said that she would have been more interested if we had just leaped straight into the model without spending much time introducing it, except to warn that it would sound strange at first (Little, June 2005, p. 10). Lindsay emphasized that she had particularly enjoyed the fresh flowers, sliced fruit or squares of chocolate, the stories and the chime that were part of each session; she found that it woke her senses (Little, June 2005, p. 11). She summarized her overall experience of the training sessions saying:

> *"I just thought they were all really interesting. I just thought it was cool that you were really open. And it was kinda like, lunch would come, and we'd be like: "Oh, its Marion's Group after lunch – oh I'm tired – well at least we can sit down." And then we'd just get in there and you always had your bright outfits and flowers and yummy food and we were all like: "Hey, right on – this is kinda cool!" And I just, ah,* (quietly) *I loved all the fruit and flowers, I thought that was really, really special and really nice. We never really had people do those kinda things for us so I think we all kind of appreciated it."* (Little, June 2005, p. 11)

In an effort to help me understand the impact of the training and how it had been received by her, as well as the rest of the group, Lindsay relayed a recent scene from the facilitated Mothers' Group in the alternative school program (all names are pseudonyms):

> *"…But, you know what was so weird?* (Very excitedly) *Like, we were having Mother's Group last week and everyone was just going around and having their own opinions on Marion's Group and, like, how it was. And me and*

Sarah were teaching, and like, just showing all of the different things you did and we were using all the diagrams and Jan [the school counsellor] *was like: "You want to know something really funny?" She's like: "You guys are sitting here laughing, dinging your cup with felts* [markers] *– but do you realize that you guys are remembering the most stuff from this class than any other one that I think I've seen in all the time that I've been here* [15+ years]*?"*

So like, we took so much from that. Like, we knew word for word, like even the story, the first story you read about pulling the whiskers out of the chin [The Lion's Whiskers – a fable about patience told two months earlier during the 1ˢᵗ session]*? Yah. I knew the whole story and I'm, like, sitting here telling Jan* [the school counsellor] *and I'm pretending I'm reading from a book, and she's just like, and she just went around the room and she's like: "Everyone tell me what you GOT from this class!" And everyone went around and it was just like: "Whoa, that's so weird!" We just couldn't believe that we remembered that much. 'Cause there's lots of people that, you know, catch our attention and we'll go to the group and we'll be like: "Oh yah it was about drugs and bad stuff." And then this one, we knew word for word, like the colours, everything, the flowers… like we just knew everything and it was so weird and we all just sat down and were like "What the hell? How did we remember all this?"*
(Little, June 2005, p. 12)

The Most Meaningful/Useful Aspects of the Training for Lindsay

Lindsay identified all the individual skills she gained from the training (clear observations, feelings, needs, concrete requests, self-empathy, and empathy towards others) as useful for dealing with relationships; she identified the model itself as a practical tool for dealing with abuse in a relationship, or dealing with a "bad relationship" (Little, June 2005, pp. 2-3). Specifically, Lindsay offered an example of how the four steps (observation, feelings, needs, & clear request) had meaningful, practical applications for her:

"That really helped. 'Cause, like, usually it's just like, "Oh, I'm just so fucking pissed off I don't even want to talk about it." But I think when you say it in a more serious manner, like, "I'm feeling really upset because I have a need for my space right now. Can you just, like, leave me alone?" I think it would be more understandable than "Get the fuck out of my FACE, I don't want to TALK to you, GO AWAY." Then people are just gonna be, they're just gonna be, like: "Well WHY, what's wrong, what's wrong?" And they just get more and more into you. So I think that [feelings and needs] *was really good. I think that part was really good."* (Little, June 2005, pp. 2-3)

Lindsay reported successfully engaging the Nonviolent Communication model inside her own head, with her fiancé, with her mother, with her friends, and with her baby. By the end of the training she had noticed a number of significant changes in her closest relationships and described some of those changes as important breakthroughs. A year after the training, she noted that these changes had continued to occur as she applied the model in new situations.

Impacts on Personal Behaviour that Lindsay Attributed to the Training

When asked to describe these impacts on her relationships and personal behaviour, Lindsay offered the following reflection:

> *"Uhhhhm* (yawn)*…well, I've gone through lots of different ways of dealing with conflict, and I would have to say that this would probably be* (low laugh) *the best one. 'Cause I've gone through the violence, I've gone through the yelling, the screaming, the blaming, the name-calling, the whatever, and all of those just seem to work at the time. But they didn't really get you anywhere. And now this one, like, I've never actually had something where I'm like "Whoa! I just had a breakthrough!" And after using the skills that I learned from your class, I actually had a breakthrough – with the relationship in my life. So, it was just like "Whoa!" Like that's really cool. And it's just like, going up and up from there. And, I've never really had that very much. Yah."*
> (Little, June 2005, p. 3)

I asked if she could provide an example of a situation when she had recently applied the Nonviolent Communication model and she recalled an argument from a few weeks prior to the interview:

> *"Well, 'cause with me and my fiancé, we were just having problems just with like, connecting, and with like, you know, like, I would yell: "Do the f-ing dishes, like I don't want to do them!" And he'd be like "Well, I worked all day!" And we'd just sit there and argue about it and they wouldn't get done. So we just basically sat down and talked about well "I have a need for more help, because I'm feeling really tired 'cause, you know, I go to school all day, I take care of the baby, 'n you get to just lie on the couch for three hours and just watch TV, 'cause you just went to work." And he was like, "Yah, I know. I don't need to watch TV for three hours. I do think I need to do more around here." And it's just been great ever since.*

> *Yah, it's weird 'cause I just figured we'd just start yelling, but I found that when I was talking calmly about feelings and needs then he was talking more calmly. And then I have a really bad problem with interrupting, and so if I would interrupt him he'd be like "Don't fuckin' interrupt me." And usually I would just be like "Aw fuck, blah-blah-blah" and just yell back. And [instead] I was like "Sorry, what were you saying?" Yah, and so it just worked out really well and I really enjoyed it."* (Little, June 2005, pp. 3-4)

This example mirrors a scenario Lindsay had suggested during the third training session. As a hypothetical conflict that all the teen moms in the group could relate to, she had suggested the following situation: the mom arrives home exhausted after school (she tends the baby, tidies the apartment and prepares dinner), when her boyfriend arrives home, she asks him to watch the baby while she has a shower but he refuses and a heated argument ensues. None of the girls were willing to role play the scenario on the floor cards, but they were happy to direct me on the cards in their place (happy to the degree that they frequently found it genuinely laughable). We worked through the process of identifying one's own needs and having compassion for oneself, then articulating those needs along with possible clear requests, and finally alternating between honest expression, self-empathy, and empathy for the boyfriend.

In June 2005, Lindsay revealed that this exact scenario had actually been recurring at home since her baby's birth (July 2004). She explained that her boyfriend had not yet offered to care for her baby, and usually refused when asked. She said these arguments took place several times each week and usually ended with both of them yelling and occasionally throwing things, followed by her boyfriend watching television while she had a cigarette on the balcony to calm down. Without any indication to me at the time, or during the rest of the sessions, Lindsay had practiced parts of the role play that same evening when their routine fight began. She said she had been amazed at what happened: she made her request for help with the baby, her boyfriend refused and began to get angry, instead of escalating with him she wondered what he might be

feeling (wiped-out/ exhausted) and needing (to kick back/ a rest) then asked. From his response, she learned that he was incredibly frustrated and needing more respect at work. After listening and empathizing for a bit she noticed his shoulders relax and asked how they could take care of both her needs and his. He suggested that he could look after the baby once he had watched a half hour of television, and then revealed that he did not trust himself with the baby when he comes home from work so angry. This last was new information to Lindsay, which she was glad to learn. She also expressed delight over his first spontaneous offer to care for her baby. Further, she said she was amazed that over the five weeks since first trying her new skills, they had been able to continue having these kinds of conversations instead of their standard fights: "…like with [my fiancé] with [him] that was a really big thing" (Little, June 2005, p. 5)

During the June 2006 interview, as Lindsay reviewed all the transcripts she paused when she came to the quote and scenario description above. She said it brought to mind a fight they had had in late July when she caught herself falling back into old patterns of arguing "…And I whipped the Nonviolent Communication book out ….and it just like, totally helped…. Finally, I just sat down and I was like: "You know what, like, this is fucked - we need to do something about this." And then we just totally used it. And it was like, WOW! Like, it was totally cool. It just, it just, it totally worked" (Little, June 2006, p. 4). She reported that the material is still referenced and applied by her at home, and that over the course of the year, her fiancé has occasionally picked up the books to flip through them (which she had found strange because she never thought he would be interested in any of it). She spoke about regularly using the book itself as a physical tool during arguments or when she is having a hard time expressing herself: "…like, when I have my bitchy moments I just posted it [with post-it notes] and I'm like: "Can you read that, 'cause this is how I feel!" …Yah, and then he'll just, like, read it and he'll be like

"Okay, I get it. Sorry. I love you" (Little, June 2006, p. 4). Lindsay said that at her house they keep the books in a kitchen drawer where they are easy to get at when she needs them, commenting that if she put them on a bookshelf she would just forget about them (Little, June 2006, p. 4).

Impacts on Parenting that Lindsay Attributes to the Training

Based on her March 2005 interview, I would identify Lindsay's pre-training parenting style as "attachment parenting"; an approach advocated by the La Leche League International since 1958, which is highly responsive to the baby's needs and is often described as child-led. Lindsay explained that she sees herself as an easy-going mom. At eight months she was still choosing to nurse her baby, consequently they often shared a family bed, and as much as possible she followed her baby's natural sleeping and eating patterns (Artz, March 2005, p. 28). Also, she has always made a point of getting right down on the floor with her son to talk to him and play with him (Little, June 2006, p. 5). I was interested in knowing if she found her new skills applicable to parenting. Immediately after the training, she noticed the following:

> *"I find it really useful with my son because I find, like, I did really good parenting when he was first born and sometimes now I just get really frustrated. I just wanna be like "Oh God, just please shut up."…like, if he's upset and I'm upset we can't connect. But if he's upset [now], then I just have to collect my thoughts and my feelings and my needs and then I just look at him and, like I have to look right into his eyes for him to calm down, and he just calms right down…"*
> (Little, June 2005, p. 5)

A year later, I asked the same question, wondering if there were any differences she noticed over the year that Lindsay linked to the training. Without hesitation, she identified a change in her tone of voice as the main lasting impact on her parenting. We had discussed tone of voice very, very briefly during one of the first two sessions, but it had not been a major focus of the training. Lindsay linked her shift in tone of voice to becoming more aware of her intentions when she speaks to her son, and choosing to make requests more often than demands;

all of which were concepts addressed in depth during the training. She also noted that she consistently deals with her frustration as a parent differently. She now sees frustration as an opportunity to take a minute and identify her own feelings and needs as well as her son's possible feelings and needs (Little, June 2006, p. 5). Lindsay continues to post the feelings and needs chart on her fridge and check-in each day with her son about how his feelings. At almost two years old, he has begun to make a game out of it and she finds it funny when, for example, he picks an angry face from the chart when he is really happy and laughing. Through a continued capacity to engage in conversations with each other particularly over conflicted topics, Lindsay and her fiancé have agreed to discuss their parenting after the baby is asleep. She found that they had been challenging each other and questioning each other's parenting in front of the baby, and it would often lead to arguments. She says that the training helped her to request parenting discussions away from her son, and to work through those discussions so each person's concerns are addressed. Lindsay credits the training with supporting her parenting as a mom as well as improving her parenting together with her fiancé (Little, June 2006, p. 6).

Other Changes that Lindsay Links to the Training

Lindsay reported using her Nonviolent Communication skills to deal with everyday concerns that come up with her Mom, and her Dad, in addition to her fiancé and her baby. The following excerpt from the June 2005 interview describes an ongoing conflict with her mother and how it was resolved:

> Lindsay – …*she would always be like: "Oh I want to take the baby, I want to take him overnight. I wanna take him overnight..." And I would be like: "Ok" and then I'd call her and ask her if next weekend would be good, and she'd say: "Ok, well I'll just call you closer to that day." And then she just kept doing that and kept doing that and I was just like: "Oh my God." …so when I would get a different babysitter she'd call and be like: "Oh why didn't you call me?" And so then I was like: "Mom if you have a need to see your grandson and take him, figure out a day that works for you, call me, let me know, and you can take him."*

Marion – *A really clear request.*

Lindsay – *Yah. A really clear request. And she was like: 'Ok.' And she called three days later and she was like: "I'm taking the baby on Saturday ok?"*

Marion – *Wow!*

Lindsay – *Ok. And so now it's just been a lot easier and it was really weird because before we started using that, like he had gone to my Mom's house three times overnight, and all three times he had to come back… Like he just LOST it… We just couldn't figure it out. He was just SO upset. And then me and my Mom came to that common ground and we decided all this stuff…and like he's gone out there twice since that in the last three weeks, he's spent the night over there… He's just been happy, happy, happy. It's just really weird. I think he's just felt safer because I think he felt that me and my mom have our little arguments… And I think he'd pick up on the tension and be like: "Hey, why are you giving me to her?" And then I think just 'cause our relationship's gotten stronger he's like: "Hey, Gramma, Hi!"* (Little, June 2005, pp. 5-6)

Lindsay went on to describe how she had noticed the people around her were also adopting some of her new skills. For example, Lindsay began saying: "Hey Mom, I feel really upset when you say those things because I have a real need for respect in my house." She was surprised to find that her mother listened and often wanted to meet the request that followed. Lindsay was even more surprised to hear her mother begin to say: "Oh Lindsay, I'm feeling really tired, I just need to have a nap or something" instead of picking an argument (Little, June 2005, p. 9).

In June 2006, Lindsay recalled that these kinds of shifts had continued to occur throughout the year following the training:

> *"It was just really good to have those breakthroughs with my mom and then with my dad and my brother, just really get re-connected with my family because me and my family were always really close and then for those four years I was disconnected with my dad, you know, I saw my mom but I wasn't connected with her. And like my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, we've always been a close-knit family and now it's, like, back to that again…."* (Little, June 2006, p. 7)

According to Lindsay, each of these relationships had already been improving when she began the training sessions. She had set changes in motion when she began making different choices in her life and when she showed an interest in re-connecting with them. Lindsay makes it very clear that while she was already moving in this direction, she was stuck in a number of different places, and learning the conflict resolution and empathy skills set the stage for breakthroughs in each of those key relationships (Little, June 2006, p. 7). She told the story about how she reconnected with her Dad, August 2005, to illustrate the impact these skills have had in helping her express herself more clearly and listen more deeply:

> *"Well yah, 'cause you know, I was really stuck with my Dad. Like, you know, I didn't really wanna talk to him about those kinds of things. I didn't know how to go about it and how to discuss these kinds of things with him because we'd had such an absence in each others' life for so long and then, you know, it's kind of like 'Okay, your grandson's here and your gone wife's [ex-step-mother], this is gonna make it all better' but we still hadn't talked about the past, and I still didn't know a lot about my father's life. Like I knew when I was younger, like before I was born, that my dad was an alcoholic and had lots of problems and then, like, turned to God and, you know, switched his whole life around. And his whole 180, 360, whatever, and like, you know, we'd never talked about that…"* (Little, June 2006, p. 7)

> *"Yah, like, just after [the Nonviolent Communication training], and I hadn't seen him in a long time [since the pregnancy in 2004] and we were just driving up to Nanaimo, and we just started talking about things… just talking about life in general, and I don't know… and we just got onto the topic and he was like 'Well, what were you into, like, before you were pregnant?' And I was like 'Well, I was really into E and I was really into cocaine and da-da-da.' And he was like 'Well, I was into that MDNA' and I was like 'Oh that's E Dad, you did E!' and he was like 'OK.' And we just started talking about it and, you know, how he was proud that, you know, I'd totally changed my life around. And he was glad that I was in a relationship that was healthy and, you know, we just got into the topic of bad relationships, and if I had ever had them…and how he felt bad that he wasn't there when I needed him the most. Yah. <u>And I was able to hear it</u>…"* (Little, June 2006, p. 8)

Lindsay described it as an enormous breakthrough for her to be able to practice self-empathy so that she could hear her father's regret and extend empathy towards him as well. This

conversation served as the beginning of a renewed relationship with her father where Lindsay now feels secure calling her father on the phone for comfort when she is having a hard day with her son. Further, she finds this new-found emotional support from her father very satisfying to receive.

Impact on her Feelings about Conflict

Lindsay stated that she feels much better than she used to when she thinks about conflict now. Again, she referred to her relationship with her mother as an example, saying that they used to argue bitterly and regularly without resolving anything. She recalls that when they were together, or speaking on the phone, they would often end up angry with each other. After a while they would be too tired to fight, or one would walk out on the other, leaving the conflict unsettled. Since the training, Lindsay said she feels more relaxed and confidant in a conflict. She says that she is much more comfortable simply saying: "That really bothers me, can you not say that?" and talking things through calmly: "…I find, like, it just works a lot easier. I just think you get more places and it's less stressful on your body." She concluded by adding that "… it affects your mind body and your soul and I just find mine's a lot cleaner these days. So, you know, it's going really well" (Little, June 2005, p. 4). In June 2006, Lindsay reviewed this last comment and nodded, saying that she still feels the same way.

Lindsay's Concluding Remarks

When asked how she would describe the training to a friend, Lindsay offered the following:

> *"I would just basically say, we learned about communication and ways to work through everyday life problems or extremely hard problems or problems with feelings or friends or family, or whatever. I just thought it was really cool. I did."*
> (Little, June 2005, p. 9)

After reviewing her March 2005 transcripts and reading the definitions of violence and aggression that she had provided, she added that she now thinks violence can be verbal too, and that verbal violence can have a harmful impact on people (Little, June 2006, p. 1). When asked to reflect back again over the past year to summarize how things have changed in her relationship with her fiancé since taking the training, Lindsay responded with an emphatic "A LOT" (Little, June 2006, p. 6). She acknowledged that they still argue, but emphasized that it happens differently now:

> *"Just the way we communicate with each other and the way we communicate with other people. …before it was kind of: I'd do what I want and tell him about it later, and he'd do what he wants and he'd tell me about it later, then we'd argue about it… We ask each other a lot more about* [what we want to do]… *It's a lot more communication around what's going on in our household and what we're gonna do about things. And, not all of it we agree on… but we've tried more to split it all up fairly….it's just a lot more communicating."*
> (Little, June 2006, pp. 6-7)

She also reviewed and confirmed her off-tape comments from the June 2005 interview (one is included below); musing that she really had not known romantic relationships could include mutual understanding and peaceful conflict resolution, repeating that "It was just, like, WHOA" (Little, June 2006, p. 5). She also added that the training has given her more options, more choices, in her relationships and interactions generally.

> *"Thanks a lot. I just really appreciated this a lot. You know? Like, I didn't know guys and girls could talk like this. I thought only girls could and, you know, you just bitch and complain at home, but me and my fiancé it's just getting better and better, you know? Like, we're getting married next year. Now we're* <u>*REALLY*</u> *getting married. You have no idea what you've done. Just – thanks a lot."* (Little, June 2005, p. 12)

Findings Summary

Section I, the self-assessment, of the comprehension test tells very little about the training's impact except to say that in the training group two to three members assessed

themselves as having increased ease in a handful of areas. Of the little that can be said of the

self-assessment, it suggests that six of the seven participants experienced increased ease in

expressing themselves so they are understood.   The comparison group shows decreased ease in a

dozen areas, which is likely due to unevenly completed tests than to anything else. Section II,

the skills comprehension portion, of test shows a 43% test score increase for the participant

group while the comparison group showed a 16% decreased score. I suspect that the comparison

group's self-assessment and comprehension scores would have remained relatively stable if they

had all completed the post-training test.

The participants displayed increased competence in all test categories, whether or not

they received full marks, from differentiating key concepts to expressing self empathy and

empathy towards others, to translating their thoughts into feelings and needs. The comparison

group showed no increased competence in any category.

The collated participant interview findings indicate that the training was meaningful,

useful, and engaging for the participants whether they attended for three or nine hours. All of the

participants reported integrating the skills to varying degrees in their day-to-day conflicts and

interpersonal encounters, including one first-hand example of engaging the skills while

intoxicated. The two nine-hour participants displayed the greatest success integrating the

Nonviolent Communication skills and adapting them to their own language patterns.

A case illustration explored the training experience of one nine-hour participant at a

greater depth. It was developed by isolating Lindsay's comprehension test scores and June 2005

post-training interview responses. The study was enriched by drawing upon an interview she

had participated in prior to the training (Artz, March 2005) in addition to a follow-up interview

with me one year after the training date (Little, June 2006). Lindsay showed a 56% score

increase on her comprehension test, and like the other participants she displayed increased competence in all categories. Drawing on all three interview transcripts, it was possible to describe Lindsay's circumstances leading up to the training, and see that by March 2005 she had already made significant changes towards staying clean and sober and violence free. As a new mom, she was also highly motivated to learn new skills and behaviours so that she could be a good example for her baby. However, at the time of the pre-training interview, verbal aggression and intensely heated arguments continued to be a regular part of her life in all her key relationships except with her infant son.

Lindsay was the most reluctant participant initially, and in the end she was one of only two participants who had attended every training session. During her June 2005 post-training interview it became apparent that something had stimulated a considerable shift in her opinion of the training over the course of the first few sessions. Lindsay revealed that a hypothetical role-play, which we had worked through as a group, was based on a real-life situation and that she had mimicked the role-play at home that evening. She described the change that occurred for herself, and in relationship to her boyfriend, as a significant breakthrough. Lindsay provided a number of other examples illustrating how she had been able to engage her Nonviolent Communication skills with her mother, father, and baby, to both diffuse conflict and shift those relationships towards more amicable interactions.

Lindsay, and the rest of the participant group, emphasized that they saw their new skills as critical learning for adolescents. They suggested that developing these kinds of skills in students before the age of 14 might ameliorate a great deal of the drama, aggression, and violence that characterized the participants' middle school experiences.

Quotes from Lindsay:

What was meaningful?
"I think with the identifying, like, the needs and your feelings. That one really helped. 'Cause, like, usually it's just like, "Oh I'm just so fucking pissed off I don't even want to talk about it." (Little, June 2005, p.3)

Impact on feelings when you think about conflict now
"Yah, affects your mind body and your soul and I just find mine's a lot cleaner these days. So, you know, it's going really well." (Little, June 2005, p.4)

Feedback on training delivery
"I just think, like, after you brought out the dance floor and the feelings and needs and requests, like, not a lot of us had heard that before. We had just heard it in somebody else's language, the way they would use it, and we didn't have it broken down to like the bare basics of it so that we could put it into our own language. So I think we were trying to use somebody else's and then we were like: "Hey we can make it our own. Wow." (Little, June 2005, p.10)

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis addresses the Total Honesty/Total Heart training in relation to the five program evaluation domains outlined in Chapter Four: program relevance**;** program design**;** program delivery; program impact; and program efficiency (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). Chapters One and Two established program relevance through the introduction, and literature review, supported by definitions of key terms included in Appendix A. Chapter Three outlines program design as well as the logistical aspects of program delivery. Chapter Four presents the research methods for this study including the above listed program evaluation domains. The participants' experiential responses to program delivery and impact were documented through individual interviews as well as through pre-training and post-training comprehension test results. The collated interviews, test results, and a descriptive case illustration comprise the impact findings outlined in Chapter Five.

This chapter will discuss all five evaluation domains listed above. A series of questions posed by Owen and Rogers (1999) will structure the discussion about the last three domains (Delivery, Impact, and Efficiency):

Table 16: Program Evaluation Questions

Delivery	• Has the program been implemented as planned
Impact	• Have the stated program goals been achieved? • Do participants report that their needs were met by the program? • What are the unexpected outcomes?
Efficiency	• What are the benefits of the program given the costs

(Adapted from Owen & Rogers, 1999, p. 265)

Revisiting the Purpose

The central purpose of this thesis was to determine the impact of the Total Honesty/Total Heart Nonviolent Communication program on adolescent girls who are parenting and /or on probation. The study was undertaken at an alternative high school program, in a mid-sized Western Canadian city, with the intention to contribute to the participants' skills base for conflict resolution and empathic connection.

Conflict resolution, peace-building, and violence prevention programs can significantly decrease adolescent aggression and violence while supporting respectful considerate (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). The research reviewed in Chapters One and Two indicates that effective programs emphasize emotional, behavioural and cognitive competencies through interpersonal and conflict resolution skills training, as well as empathy development. Importantly, effective programs have also been identified as those which incorporate collaboration, adult role modeling, feed-back, and encouragement (Artz, 1998, 2004, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Hoskins & Artz, 2004; D. Johnson & R. Johnson, 2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Roberts, White, & Yeomans, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Wolfe et al., 2003, Wolfe et al. 2004). No research that I am aware of addresses how to effectively foster self-empathy skills.

The Total Honesty/Total Heart Nonviolent Communication program was intended to foster specific conflict resolution and empathy development skills. It aimed to expand

participants' vocabularies regarding feelings and needs; to support participants in distinguishing between observations and evaluations; and to facilitate the development of clear, concrete, realistic requests. It also aimed to support participants in applying these skill sets in a dynamic interplay between honesty and empathy. I anticipated that, if these skills were developed and applied, participants would be able to navigate conflict with greater honesty and empathy, towards both themselves and others. Ultimately, the hope was that participants would be able to generate more mutually satisfying outcomes, having begun a socio-linguistic transition from retributive to restorative social paradigms. The positive results, and straightforward application, reported by some participants after only five to nine hours of training suggest that this program achieved its aims and that it is a promising intervention and violence prevention strategy.

Program Relevance

The W.T. Grant Consortium for School-based Promotion of Social Competence (1994) evaluated violence prevention and peace-building programs across the United States to determine the qualities of effective programs. They provide a list of competencies which they determined are key components of the effective violence prevention programs, these include:

- Emotional competency skills (ex. identifying feelings in self or others, empathy, self-soothing, and frustration tolerance);
- Cognitive competency skills (ex. analytic thinking, creative problem-solving, decision-making, planning, and self-talk);
- Behavioural competency skills, including:
  - Nonverbal skills (ex. facial expressions, tone of voice, personal presentation, gesture or eye contact),
  - Verbal skills (ex. clear requests, responding to criticism, expressing feelings clearly), and
  - Proactive skills (helping others, walking away from negative situations, participating in positive activities)
    (W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994, p.136).

They claim that when learned, these competencies combine to convey emotional and cognitive social proficiency. Further, they state that these competencies coincide with decreased school violence, and increased prosocial behaviours (W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). Based on the comprehension test results, interview findings, and field notes the majority of these competencies were successfully addressed by the Nonviolent Communication model as presented through the Total Honesty/Total Heart training program.

Emotional competency skills were explicitly supported through the empathy component of the Nonviolent Communication model. The training expanded feelings and needs vocabularies, practicing identification of feelings and needs in oneself and others, developing a capacity for self-empathy, and learning to pause (and consider feelings and needs) before speaking in a conflict.

Cognitive competency skills were explicitly supported through learning to differentiate between observations and evaluations, thoughts and feelings, needs and strategies, requests and demands, as well as the restorative and retributive uses of power. Learning to identify the needs underlying a concern or conflicted position empowered participants to generate creative solutions that respect the common needs of each person; most importantly, they learned that solutions do not have to be dependent on the person they are in conflict with. The self-empathy process helped participants offer themselves a kind of compassionate self-talk and problem-solving support that said they often yearn for from friends and adult support people. Overall, cognitive skills are supported and developed through actively engaging in the dynamic interplay between honesty, empathy, and self-empathy.

Nonverbal, verbal, and proactive behavioural competency skills, were also supported by the training program. While nonverbal skills as identified by the W.T. Grant Consortium (1994)

were not overtly addressed, one participant reported that even a year after the training she found that one of the greatest changes she had experienced was in her tone of voice. Certainly, the practice of empathically receiving another person's feelings and needs is a highly focused nonverbal skill. That skill is not on the above list of competencies however it was an integral part of this training program.

Nonverbal behavioural competency, as described in the list above, was implicitly supported by the training. As the training facilitator, I modeled personal presentation that was both individually expressive and professional. All the participants commented on how my personal presentation had pleased them and inspired them to want to dress in ways that were more congruent with their own character. I also paid close attention to room set-up, ensuring garbage was removed, the couches were in a circle, fresh flowers were in the middle, and fresh fruits or pieces of chocolate were on a plate, these were all nonverbal gestures indicating care and respect for some of our shared needs which are often neglected (inclusion, beauty, harmony, nourishment). Along the same theme, I began each session with a Tibetan chime, a poem or story to help focus our intention and attention, and an opportunity for each participant to check-in, the purpose of all this was again to honour shared needs (for beauty, inspiration, meaning & purpose, inclusion, to be seen & heard). When asked during the interviews what had been most meaningful to them in the training program, every participant emphatically spoke of these nonverbal gestures as a particularly special part of their participation.

Verbal skills were explicitly and directly supported by the honesty and confirmation components of the Nonviolent Communication model. Participants were asked to distinguish between requests and demands, and to practice articulation clear requests. Participants learned to apply all the above skills dynamically, in combination with honesty, to deal with criticism,

diffuse conflict, and represent themselves (including their feelings) clearly and assertively. Finally, the five-hour and nine-hour participants reported that they were applying their new skills in combination to support each other, transform conflict, and engage more positively with their babies. Two participants even reported engaging their Nonviolent Communication skills with positive results during an evening of alcohol consumption. One participant empathized with the other, together they developed possible needs-based strategies, and finally after having given and received empathy they confronted and successfully solve a conflict with a boyfriend who had also been drinking alcohol through the evening.

The findings of this thesis suggest that the Total Honesty/Total Heart Nonviolent Communication training effectively facilitates the competencies identified by the W.T. Grant Consortium (1994) as integral to the most effective violence prevention programs in the United States.

(a) Program Relevance According to Participant Attendance

Participants chose to participate in the training for reasons like wanting to be more self-aware and wanting to solve conflict more effectively. One participant attended only to be with her friends and initially had no real interest in the training itself. The participants' choice to attend at all indicates training appeal, value, and relevance (to varying degrees), based on the title and training description alone. Their choice to continue attending further indicates training appeal, value, and relevance based on the training content itself.

(b) Program Relevance According to Participant Observations of Peers

As reported in the findings, the participants commented that they see other adolescent girls solving conflict predominantly through indirect aggression, verbal aggression, physical violence, avoidance, and occasionally by discussing the problem. They agreed that among the

girls they know outside their alternative school the above responses are the norm. It is important to note that this population of girls is a small portion of the Canadian adolescent female population more inclined to engage in violence and interact with others who regularly engage in violence (Artz, et al., 2000; Artz, 2004). Subsequently, tailored conflict resolution training is particularly relevant for this demographic.

Given the degree to which this demographic of young women tends to have been targeted by violence, particularly domestic violence and sexualized violence (Artz, et al., 2000; Artz, 2004), self-empathy might be a critical skill for survival, self-soothing, maintaining resilience, and fostering mental health.   The participants all demonstrated an increased capacity for self-empathy on their comprehension test, and all commented on frequently practicing self-empathy (sometimes repeating "what am I needing, what am I feeling?" to themselves as a mantra, by "hearing Marion's voice" empathizing with them in their head). They said the self-empathy component gave them a chance to not only pause and reflect on their own feelings and needs in the middle of a conflict, but to get to the point where they could safely express them as well, without attacking or slandering another person.

All the participants identified the Nonviolent Communication model in its entirety as highly relevant for their peers. Three participants indicated its usefulness for dealing with "bad" or abusive relationships, and one thought it would help keep her younger sister safer at parties. In particular, they recommended the inclusion of this kind of training prior to the middle school years which they said, in their experiences, marked the beginning of increasingly dramatic and violent relations between youth.

(c) Training Relevance Based on Pre-training Familiarity with the Skills

The interviews and pre-training comprehension test revealed participants had a very low pre-training understanding of the key concepts Nonviolent Communication uses to facilitate honesty and empathy. The pre-training test shows that, going into the training, the participants already had a strong handle on power dynamics and the differences between restorative and retributive paradigms. However, they did not have specific skills that supported them in engaging a restorative paradigm for communication.

The interviews showed that participants were familiar with making "I feel" statements prior to the trainings, but the pre-training comprehension test shows that their feelings vocabulary was relatively limited. The comprehension test also showed a limited needs vocabulary prior to the training, and the post training interviews reveal that consciously identifying needs was new to all the participants. Beyond that, the whole idea of linking feelings to needs, and formulating clear needs-based requests was completely novel to the participants. Translating the Nonviolent Communication skills into their own language patterns was repeatedly described by participants as not only useful and effective, but on a few occasions as transformative even.

All the participants emphasized that these kinds of skills require role-modeling, intentional learning, and practice. In their experience, these skills do not develop spontaneously and it can be hard to make them really work or sound natural without interesting exercises, practice and coaching.

Program Design

The Total Honesty/Total Heart training used the Nonviolent Communication model as a structural reference point for conflict resolution, empathy, and self-empathy. It invited the

participants to provide the relational context (either real or invented) and translate the formulaic language into the participant's colloquial speech patterns.

The program was designed around interactive exercises, which were interchangeable and easy to repeat if requested. The training also included some discussion topics about power dynamics and violence inspired by the Red Cross RespectEd programs (Fairholm 2002). However, the general feedback from the participants was that they would have preferred to skip the first session's discussion and instead begin directly with the Nonviolent Communication model. Overall, the participants preferred a program design with less "facilitated" discussion, more interactive exercises, and frequent opportunities to spontaneously ask questions or dialogue amongst themselves. The participant feed-back on the program design was positive.

Program Delivery

(a) Was the Training Implemented as Planned?

Overall, the training was implemented as planned in terms of material covered and responsiveness to the participants. The training intentions were to develop conflict resolution skills via the dynamic interplay of honest assertive expressions, empathic listening, and self-empathy. Based on the positive comprehension test findings and the positive interview findings, these intentions were met.

(b) Flexibility

Flexibility was necessary on a number of levels over the course of implementing the training. After the first session it was apparent that the participants were not interested in facilitated discussions as a mode of learning. They were also reluctant to participate in some of the interactive exercises. Consequently, the facilitated discussion aspect of the trainings was essentially dropped, explanations of concepts were reduced to a five minute limit, and some

exercises were repeated when others were rejected by the participants. During the interviews, the participants recommended even less time for explanations and more time for interactive practice.

The floor card exercise was modified during the first four sessions where it was used. The participants were interested in the exercise, but unwilling to engage in it themselves, so we adjusted its use and I became their puppet which they directed on the cards. During the last two sessions four different girls spontaneously engaged in the floor-card exercise, and coached each other through the model.

(c) Challenges

One of the main challenges occurred when a participant was upset by a check-in exercise during the second session where they were invited to connect feelings to needs in relation to that morning at school generally ("When you think back on this morning at school, how do you feel and what needs are met or unmet?"). Given the open-ended nature of the exercise and what I thought was a benign context, I was not expecting the concept of needs to be challenging or unsettling for the participants. I soon learned that many of the participants had been trained by punishing experiences that it is not safe to have needs, and that until now they have largely ignored or denied their own basic life impulse (needs) as a way to protect themselves. They made it clear that other people's needs were frequently met at their expense, and that they spent much of their time submitting to or rebelling from that reality. They were living in an ongoing state of retribution, frequently experiencing violence (verbal, social or physical) from others or committing violence (in thought or action) against themselves. In the past, many of the participants had also inflicted violence on others. It made sense that the concept of needs was

unsettling and painful to consider. It can be very painful to become aware of a great many

deeply unmet needs all at once.

Throughout the rest of the training series I was careful to check-in regularly with the

participants. I also chose to focus more on extending "demonstration" empathy towards them, as

well as demonstration self-empathy (aloud), when they had me role-playing in place of one of

them. My hope was that this kind of empathy and self-empathy would be satisfying even as a

role-play. This practice was positively received by the participants.

(d) Program Modifications

In response to the upset during that second session, I was asked by the school

administrator not to use any real-life scenarios as a context for applying the model. I adjusted

the curriculum and invented exercises using popular children's movies like Shrek and Wizard of

Oz (which the participants found funny). I also asked the participants to make up hypothetical

scenarios for us to practice with on the floor cards. The response to all of these modifications

was generally positive. However, during the interviews all the participants, including the one

who had been upset, said they would have preferred using real-life scenarios. When asked

whether or not she would really have been comfortable with that, the participant who had been

upset replied that she wished she could have seen the model applied to more real-life scenarios

even if it was upsetting because she had found it so useful and, in the end, both a relief and

satisfying. All of the participants emphasized that now that they could see applications for the

model, they preferred to get to the heart of things and risk feeling distressed.

(e) Was the Training Delivery Successful?

Overall, the participants reported finding the main training activities to be both engaging

and helpful. They noted that the activities and materials helped them to remember the concepts

easily and find ways to practice them in their own language. They identified the chime, poem or story, fruit or chocolate, and flowers as a very special aspect of the training for them; they appreciated the smell, colours, freshness, prettiness, and how the flowers helped them to relax.

Several found that it was easier to hear and physically move through the training concepts, rather than read about them in the Nonviolent Communication book (Rosenberg, 2003). Generally, they indicated that the sessions and course content supported each other and supported them in learning about the whole model. Two of the participants noted that they had not been interested initially and then continued to participate because they had found that the strategies they were learning actually worked for them. Most of the participants had found the practical applications both surprising and exciting. The five participants who are mothers also commented that the training had been unexpectedly fun for them.

Through the interviews, the participants asked for more spontaneous dialogue and more activities. While enough trust may have developed that they were interested in more interaction by the end of the nine hour training, they were explicitly unwilling to participate in any but the small scale two-person activities during the first few sessions. Trust takes time to develop, and because this group attended so inconsistently (except for two participants) it was difficult to foster trust within the group within the three to five hours most participants were willing to attend. It was only during the last two sessions that the participants independently tried the central exercise using floor cards for themselves, at which point they began coaching each other through it as previously mentioned. Lindsay, who was the source of the case illustration, clearly articulated the group's thoughts on how successful the training delivery had been in comparison to other trainings they receive at their school:

> "…But, you know what … we were having Mother's Group last week and everyone was just going around and having their own opinions on Marion's

group and, like, how it was. And me and Sarah were teaching, and like, just showing all of the different things you did and we were using all the diagrams and [the school counsellor] was like: You want to know something really funny? She's like: You guys are sitting here laughing, dinging your cup with felts [markers] – but do you realize that you guys are remembering the most stuff from this class than any other one that I think I've seen in all the time that I've been here [15+ years]?

So like, we took so much from that. Like, we knew word for word, like even the story, the first story you read about pulling the whiskers out of the chin [The Lion's Whiskers – a fable about patience told two months earlier during the 1st session]? Yah. I knew the whole story and I'm, like, sitting here telling [the school counsellor] and I'm pretending I'm reading from a book, and she's just like, and she just went around the room and she's like: Everyone tell me what you GOT from this class!

And everyone went around and it was just like: "Whoa, that's so weird!"

Program Impact

(a) Program Goals

As discussed in the Program Relevance section of this chapter, the training not only met its own goals, but also satisfied the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural competency development recommended by the W.T. Grant Consortium for Social Competence based on their research of violence prevention programs across the United States (W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). The specific training goals of the Total Honesty/Total Heart program were: to expand participants' vocabularies regarding feelings and needs; to support participants in distinguishing between observations and evaluations; to facilitate the development of clear, concrete, realistic requests; and to support participants in applying these skill sets in a dynamic interplay between honesty and empathy.

It was anticipated that, if the training intentions were met, participants would be able to navigate conflict with greater honesty and empathy, towards both themselves and others. Ultimately, the hope was participants would be able to generate more mutually satisfying

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outcomes, having begun a socio-linguistic transition from retributive to restorative social paradigms.

(b) Were the Program Goals Achieved?

All participants, whether they attended for three hours or the full nine hours demonstrated increased skill development and comprehension of the material taught. This was measured via seven page written skills assessment test based on content comprehension and application as well as through the individual interviews. The test was applied pre- and post-training. All students struggled similarly with the pre-training skills assessment test, and all students demonstrated learning through a substantial increase in correct answers during the post-test.   Feed-back on the training design and delivery, practical applications of the training material, and the training's value to the students was assessed through individual interviews.

Based on vocabulary charts created from the comprehension tests, it is apparent that participants had successfully and noticeably expanded their feelings and needs vocabularies over the course of the training (see Tables 7 and 8). On the post-training test, the participant group demonstrated a 36% increased comprehension of key differentiations, a 57% increase in self-empathy, and a 76% increase in empathy towards others (see Fig 5 and 6). The participants demonstrated a 65% overall score increase on the post-training test (see Fig. 9). Lindsay, who was the source of the case illustration, noted she had come to realize that "violence can be verbal too, and that verbal violence can have a harmful impact on people."

When the comprehension test findings are broken down into periods of attendance some patterns begin to emerge. The levels of increased skills and comprehension were moderate for the three hour participants, notable for the five hour participants, and substantial for the nine hour participants. The three hour participants demonstrated comprehension and memory of

some of the content, but either were not applying the Nonviolent Communication model at all, or were only applying segments of the model (such as the feeling vocabulary). During their interviews these students reported that the training had been enjoyable and interesting to them. They thought they might have found it easier to understand and use the model if they had attended more training sessions.

The five hour participants answered the majority of the post-training test questions correctly and were observed "playing" with the Nonviolent Communication model. This means that they were demonstrating conceptual understanding of the full model by applying it through sarcasm, playful correction of others, and in off-hand, joking ways. These participants, found the trainings enjoyable and useful as well as interesting. They only reported a few instances when they could recall using the model (including one instance when the model had been used to resolve a conflict while intoxicated); however I observed them using it on several occasions to advocate for themselves outside the workshop group.

The nine hour participants not only answered all the assessment questions correctly, but were also observed integrating the material into their regular communication with classmates. They said that the training had been fun, meaningful and useful for them. They used the Nonviolent Communication model both playfully and in banter with classmates as well as in problem-solving situations, or when a classmate was in distress. These participants reported that they had been integrating the model successfully into their daily communication and conflicts outside school as well. These students reported that regular verbal aggression with partners and parents had been transformed through their newfound capacity for honest expression (without labelling or blaming), self-empathy, and empathizing with another's needs. They also reported that they had been able to sustain these changes in their relationships during the four week break

between the end of the training and the beginning of the interviews. One of the challenges of most violence prevention and intervention programs is sustaining the skills beyond the training event. The fact that the nine hour students were able to do so is in itself significant.

Since participating in the training, the participants reported behaving in new ways. They identified a greater sense of self awareness generally, and broader choices in challenging or tense situations. They said that when they think about conflict now, they feel more hopeful, calm, relaxed, confidant, and more comfortable representing themselves, than they had before. They reported that when they become angry, they now filter their thoughts through feelings and needs and use new words as a result (rather than yelling, blaming, and name-calling). They also found that they routinely pause and consider feelings and needs (their own and the other's), when in the past they would have responded by raging or by avoidance. They have been surprised to note that others seem to be hearing and understanding them more easily. The mothers in the group have found they are better able to guess their child's feelings and needs, and their children respond positively to their efforts. The participants say that representing themselves more clearly, and listening to others' feelings and needs, has had a positive impact on their relationships with partners, parents, and friends.

While empathy is recognized as an important aspect of conflict resolution, these participants found that learning about self-empathy was a new and critical piece of the puzzle for them. Through self-empathy they reported a greater capacity to self-soothe, to generate a wider range of possible strategies for meeting their own needs, and a greater ease in expressing themselves honestly without slandering others. Learning and engaging self-empathy seemed to facilitate a stronger grasp of empathy towards others. This relationship between self-empathy and empathy is a connection worth researching further in the future. Lindsay, the subject of the

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case illustration, reported transformative experiences in several key relationships as a result of applying her newly developed skills for honesty, empathy, and self-empathy. Her examples demonstrate the beginnings of what I would call a shift towards a more restorative paradigm.

(c) Do Participants Report That Their Needs Were Met?

Through the test results and interview findings it is clear that participants needs were met on many levels by this training. They reported finding the training itself to be engaging, meaningful, and practical. According to the participants it met their needs for fun, information, inspiration, mutual respect, learning, support, and ease. The skills learned have afforded participants increased mutual understanding and respect in their relationships, more choices in their conflicts, and increased their experiences of being seen and heard.

(d) Unexpected Outcomes

All seven participants said the training has helped them to consistently pause in a conflict or whenever they are emotionally stimulated. They use that brief moment to consider their own and other people's feelings and needs, even if they do not choose to verbalize them. It was not expected that participants would internalize the model to that level after only five to nine hours of training; however, even the three hour participants noted that this had become a habit for them. It may be that the participants were reinforcing this behaviour with each other through (jokingly and regularly) role-playing as a Nonviolent Communication training facilitator. We did not discuss "pausing" to reflect on feelings and needs, so this seems to be an aspect of the model that the participants had translated for themselves and had claimed as their own.

Also, I had not expected the silent aspects of the training, such as room set-up, flowers, treats, story, Tibetan chime, my choice of clothing colours, etc. to have such a profound impact on the participants. They all expressed a deep and emphatic appreciation for each of these

aspects of the training. In fact, five of the non-participant girls at the school expressed

appreciation for the flowers, fruit, and chocolate, saying that it had meant a lot and made a real

difference to them, and that they were going to miss me (even though I had had no other contact

with them besides leaving the extras in a common area).

Another unexpected outcome was the report from two participants who had engaged their

Nonviolent Communication skills while under the influence of alcohol, first to empathize, then

to strategize, then to alternate between honesty and empathy while resolving a conflict with a

boyfriend, which would have otherwise ended as a heated argument. Peter Giancola (2003) from

the Department of Psychology at the University of Kentucky studied 204 healthy 21-35 year-old

social drinkers, and his findings support this unexpected outcome. Giancola (2003) found that

alcohol exacerbated aggression in drinkers with low levels of empathy, and that higher levels of

empathy mitigated aggression. This incident where the participants applied their skills while

drunk suggests a shift in levels of empathy if previous outcomes would have been aggression and

they were now able to extend empathy towards themselves and others as part of resolving a

conflict peacefully.

I suspect that the empathy received by the distressed participant, combined with any self-

empathy she gave herself, and her new capacity for assertive honest expression (without blaming

or name-calling) may have contributed significantly to the positive outcome, as well as towards

her capacity to empathize with her boyfriend.

One year after the training program ended, Lindsay (the source of the case illustration)

identified a change in her tone of voice as the main lasting impact on her parenting. I was

surprised to hear this because we had discussed tone of voice briefly during one of the first two

sessions, but it had not been a major focus of the training. Lindsay linked her shift in tone of

voice to becoming more aware of her intentions when she speaks to her son or fiancé. She also thinks her gentler tone of voice is related to choosing to make requests more often than demands; all of which were concepts addressed in depth during the training. This might indicate a subtler integration of the Nonviolent Communication process as a reference point for Lindsay.

Lindsay also noted that she consistently deals with feelings of frustration as a parent differently. She now sees frustration as an opportunity to take a minute and identify her own feelings and needs as well as her son's possible feelings and needs. Again, this seems to indicate a deeper integration and personal adaptation of the concepts. I had not expected Lindsay to report any long-lasting effects from a nine hour training period.

While only one participant had been upset about the second session, two participants had actually been involved in an internal group conflict that fed into the upset. Neither planned to return to the training afterwards. Unexpectedly, those two participants were the only two who chose to attend all the training sessions, and who also reported experiencing the most satisfying impacts from applying their new skills. Both described their experience learning and applying the Nonviolent Communication process as transformative. Lindsay was one of these two.

Program Efficiency

This pilot program carried very few costs in relation to the benefits. The participant benefits are extensive and are outlined in detail above and in the previous chapter. Generally, participant benefits included increased capacities for honest assertive expression (without blaming, shaming, or labeling others), empathy, self-empathy, and conflict resolution through a dynamic interplay of the first three capacities. Costs to the participants included the challenge of reflecting on personal experiences, feelings, needs, power dynamics, and language use.

Participants gave up anywhere from three to nine hours of their time over the course of six weeks in order to participate. Facilitator benefits include learning (through the process of teaching, and directly from the participants), inspiration, fun, the opportunity to contribute, and hope. Costs to the facilitator include the financial expenses detailed below costs and 21 hours of time (2 hours in the classroom for each training session to accommodate set-up and clean-up, as well as 1.5 hour of preparation prior to each training session), plus commitment to developing the training skills oneself. Community benefits include increased peace, harmony, and well-being among its members. There were no costs to the community for this training.

The financial cost for the Total Honesty/Total Heart training program, not including research costs, was $150 ($15 per week for flowers and $10 per week for snacks). This training was offered for free, however trainer fees typically range from $75-$100 per session for a group of six to twelve participants. Training fees for a future training might cost $450 to $600 for six trainings.

Given the relatively low costs and the potentially high impact, Total Honesty/Total Heart appears to be an efficient program for fostering conflict resolution, empathy, and self empathy, skills.

The Findings in Relation to Other Research

The research demonstrates that intervention programs focusing on conflict resolution and interpersonal skills, particularly empathy, can significantly decrease adolescent aggression and violence (APA, 1993; Committee for Children, 2001; Davidson and Wood, 2004; Fairholm, 2002, 2004a, 2005; Frey et al., 2005; Frydenberg, Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, & Luscombe-Smith, 2004; Gini, 2004; Goleman, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 1992; Hoffman, Cummings, & Leschied, 2004; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 1997; D. Johnson and R. Johnson,

2004, 2005; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Olweus, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Stevahn, 2004; Stevahn, D. Johnson, R. Johnson, & Shultz, 2002; W.T. Grant Consortium, 1994). Further, it appears that fostering these capacities is a key factor in supporting interpersonal respect and consideration – what some refer to as "A Culture of Civility" (Kahn & Lawhorne 2003; Lantieri & Patti 1996; W.T. Grant Consortium 1994).

As discussed during the introductory chapter of this thesis, the literature addressing peace-building/violence prevention/conflict resolution training for youth appears to suggest that empathy is a key factor in reducing aggressive behaviours (Committee for Children, 2001; Almeida & Denham, 1984; Deutsch, 1993; Giancola, 2003; Goleman, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Gordon, 2005; Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, and Miller, 2006; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; Schonert-Reichl, 1993, 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Hymel, 2007; Seligman, 2002, 2006, 2007). The participants in this study demonstrated a notable increase in self-empathic response on their post-training comprehension test; they also referred to the concept as a significant part of their learning. Based on the strong positive response to the concept and practice of self-empathy from this study's participants, it is possible to speculate that self-empathy may be a critical factor for supporting youth who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexualized violence, who are more likely to inflict violence on themselves and others and enter into abusive relationships (Artz, 2004; Artz, et. al, 2000). This possible connection requires further study.

Significance & Limitations

(a) Limitations

This study is restricted in its scope and validity by a number of limitations. Due to the small size of the study the findings are specific to this group and cannot be generalized to other contexts or populations using statistics. Consequently, readers must establish their own

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conclusions regarding the relevance of this study to their own contextual situations. The small size was also a strength to some degree because it allowed a group experience to be articulated through the collated interviews. Another challenge was the demographic itself. The participants were difficult to retain in the program, and even if they are committed to a program their day-to-day challenges are so great that attendance can be sporadic. The school administrators said this was common of the demographic served by this alternative school. Unfortunately, it meant that only two completed the full training, so the impact of the full training can only be measured against one or both of those two.

The field of conflict resolution program evaluation research is still developmental, meaning that while there are increasing studies to draw upon, the research and methodological resources are limited (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). This study can still be counted among the many early efforts in this area where there is much room to refine and develop further.

(b) Significance

This study is significant for a number of reasons. It demonstrates the possibility that quasi-experimental research can be undertaken using a conflict resolution process as a methodological touchstone. Orienting this study to the Nonviolent Communication model ensured that the feelings, needs, and requests of the researcher, participants and their community were being held in the forefront throughout the training and study. The model also provided an overarching framework for the whole project. It is possible that this approach offers the beginnings of a methodological structure for future conflict resolution program evaluations. Since it is still an emerging field of research, there is a need for clarity, structure, and support for developing studies that balance rigour with consideration for all involved; essentially, balancing honesty with empathy.

The Nonviolent Communication training curriculum and a comprehension test are both based on the key differentiations specified by the International Centre for Nonviolent Communication as an integral part of their trainer certification program. There are few training curricula available to support teachers and facilitators in offering Nonviolent Communication training to youth (or adults). As far as I know, the comprehension test created for this study is the first Nonviolent Communication specific assessment tool. The comprehension test may be useful for trainers to assess their training participants' levels of comprehension, and discern learning areas that require further support.

In terms of findings, this research is significant because of its emphasis on assertive honesty, empathy and self-empathy as integral parts of effective conflict resolution. Even though the study is small, the findings suggests that Nonviolent Communication is an effective meaningful, practical, adaptable, model for fostering honesty, empathy, and self-empathy, as dynamic components of effective communication and conflict resolution. Unexpectedly, this study points towards the potential importance of self-empathy training for youth who have experienced domestic or sexualized violence.

Recommendations for Future Research

One participant expressed concern about realistically using the Nonviolent Communication skills in the face of physical violence. She also wondered if a person would be able to remember and use the skills while high or drunk, stating that in her experience most violence happens when people are under the influence of a mind-altering substance. Giancola's (2003) research offers a beginning look at the effects of empathy on alcohol-related aggression. It would be valuable to look at the impacts of skill specific training such as Nonviolent

Communication on empathy and alcohol-related aggression. Studying the practicality of Nonviolent Communication skills in the face of threatened physical violence would be more challenging to study, but again valuable. The value in both these potential studies is in putting the skills described in this thesis to the test in situations where we most hope those skills would be accessible, practical and useful.

Finally, given the participants' positive response to the concept of their own range of needs and their ready application of self-empathy, it would be worth investigating further the possibilities for this kind of training to support increased healing and well-being among similar demographics. Certainly, two of the participants found the combination of self-empathy, assertive honesty, and empathy, to be transformative for them.

I suspect a longer training would be necessary to develop the skills so that participants could effectively apply them in the face of threatened violence, or while intoxicated. A longer study of a much larger group would be necessary to establish statistically relevant results. Program implementation effectiveness is marked by long-term planning, complementary administrative policies and practice, a systemic approach, cultural sensitivity, collaboration with the community, and interactive developmentally tailored workshops, in addition to adult role modeling, feed-back, and encouragement (Artz, 2004; Artz, et al., 1999; Frey, et al. 2005; Johnson and Johnson, 2004; Kahn and Lawhorne, 2003; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Roberts, White, and Yeomans, 2004; Schonert-Reichl, et al., 2003; Wolfe, et al., 2003). A whole-school implementation approach accompanied by administrative policies and practices would be a next step for further research assessing Nonviolent Communication training.

Final Thoughts

   The Total Honesty/Total Heart program for violence prevention, conflict resolution, and empathy development, focuses on two components as key factors in solving conflicts, reducing violence, and maintaining harmony. That is, the dynamic interplay between increasing honest expression and facilitating empathy development skills, both directed towards oneself as well as towards others. Currently, very little research assesses the reliable facilitation of empathy as a component of conflict resolution training for youth (Schonert-Reichl, 2005; Kahn and Lawhorne, 2003). I am unaware of any research addressing either the value of self-empathy skills among youth or the development of self-empathy skills.

   The research has more or less established that empathy plays a crucial role in conflict resolution and violence prevention. In view of that, assessing methods for effective empathy and conflict resolution skills development is an important step towards determining what is working and what can be expected from various programs. Tracking and assessing the impacts of a Nonviolent Communication training contributes to this small but growing pool of knowledge. Hopefully, a deeper understanding of this particular training (which focuses on both empathy and self-empathy development as integral to effective conflict resolution) will support more responsive violence prevention, conflict resolution, and peace-building efforts.

   In addition to its academic value, this topic is also socially relevant. Pregnant adolescent girls, teen mothers, and other young people labelled "at risk," are perhaps some of the most stigmatized and alienated individuals in Canada. These young people are often caught in a repetitive, frequently inter-generational, cycle of physical and/or emotional pain and violence (Artz 1998; Artz, 2004; Artz et al, 2000; Reitsma-Street, 2004; Reitsma-Street et al. 2005). I believe that developing honest expression of, and empathic connection with, basic human needs

(both one's own and another's) has incredible potential for ending these cycles of violence and facilitating greater individual and social well-being.

Many adolescent mothers and many girls on probation have not had the benefit of a childhood shaped predominantly by comfort, unconditional love, open affection, mutual respect, and fully engaged parents that consistently role-model mindfulness, assertiveness, and empathic connection (Artz 1998; Artz, 2004; Artz et al, 2000; Reitsma-Street, 2004; Reitsma-Street et al. 2005). These dynamics, however, are generally recognized as fundamental to the well-being of oneself and one's children, particularly during times of distress. I suspect they also tend to immunize against destructiveness, and support the ability to search out resources needed to sustain well-being. It is often the case that adolescent mothers and girls on probation are not only inexperienced with this kind of supportive childhood dynamic and role-modeling, but they are likely to have experienced the opposite: retributive, authoritarian parenting, and domestic violence (Artz 1995; Artz, 2004; Reitsma-Street et al. 2005).

During the Total Honesty/Total Heart workshop sessions, and some of the follow-up interviews, the five teen mothers spoke about how fiercely they love their children. They mentioned how they came to their mothering unexpectedly and unprepared. They revealed their struggle to seek information that will support their own and their children's well-being. They spoke of their focused efforts to change their behaviour; to behave towards themselves and their babies in ways that model mutual respect and consideration. They expressed fear that someone might judge them unworthy or unsafe mothers, and take their babies away. This last is a very real risk for these mothers; themselves still minors, whose mothering is consistently under the formal scrutiny of government officers. I have heard these young mothers talk about breaking

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the cycle of violence, and about how they strive to provide their babies with a gentler more supportive environment than their own childhoods offered.

For me, the greatest significance of this research project lies in the experiences of the adolescent girls who participated: every one of them identifying it as valuable, most appreciating it as very useful, and a few declaring it deeply meaningful, even transformative. Over and above all other reasons, it was the hope for this very outcome, and my desire to engage a useful practice, that most powerfully informed this thesis.

> *Lindsay: "I just think, like, after you brought out the dance floor and the feelings and needs and requests, like, not a lot of us had heard that before. We had just heard it in somebody else's language, the way they would use it, and we didn't have it broken down to like the bare basics of it so that we could put it into our own language. So I think we were trying to use somebody else's and then we were like: "Hey we can make it our own. Wow!"*

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Appendix A: Definition of Key Terms

This appendix clarifies key terms: empathy (including self-empathy), thought/think, feeling, need, and honesty. These concepts will be defined and discussed within the context of Nonviolent Communication and within the context of this thesis. Needs theory is not specifically referenced by Rosenberg in any of his writing; however, since the concept of needs has become pivotal to the Nonviolent Communication model, needs theory is also briefly addressed here.

Empathy & Self-empathy

The Nonviolent Communication model espoused by Marshall Rosenberg (2003) is intended to facilitate conflict resolution and effective communication skill development. This model focuses on skills related to receiving the feelings and needs of others (empathy), compassionately reflecting on one's own feelings and needs (self-empathy), and clearly expressing one's own feelings, needs and requests (honesty).

Empathy as Defined by Nonviolent Communication

Rosenberg insists that empathy is easier to cultivate when people have developed a capacity to suspend many of their preconceived ideas and judgments about another person, and about themselves. He further explains that empathy requires focusing full attention on the other person's message: "The key ingredient of empathy is presence: we are wholly present with the other party and what they are experiencing. This quality of presence distinguishes empathy from either mental understanding or sympathy. While we may choose to sympathize with others by

feeling [the same or similar] feelings, it's helpful to be aware that during the moment we are [sympathizing], we are not empathizing" (Rosenberg, 2003, pp. 91-94).

According to Rosenberg, empathy extends beyond recognition and understanding of another's feelings and experience: true empathy recognizes, respects, and considers the fundamental human needs (met or unmet), that trigger the feelings in any given situation (Rosenberg, 2003). Unconventionally, Rosenberg proposes that one can extend this quality of care and attention towards oneself as well as towards others. In fact, he suggests that unless people learn to address themselves empathically, it is difficult for them to extend empathy beyond themselves (Rosenberg, 2003).

Rosenberg also maintains that one can connect empathically with another whether that person is experiencing painful or pleasant emotions, whether their underlying needs are met or unmet. In other words, he advocates that true empathy brings a quality of presence and attention which facilitates and supports the other's experience, whether that experience is one of celebration or mourning. Seemingly ambiguous, this quality of presence, or mindfulness of self and other, that Rosenberg refers to, parallels Thich Naht Han's concept of *Being Peace* (Han, 1987). It reflects a way of engaging empathy that extends beyond psychotherapy techniques or conflict management tools, a way of engaging which becomes a practice of actually "*being* empathy*" – in terms of receiving oneself, receiving the other, and in expressing oneself or responding to the other.

Empathy as Defined by this Thesis

Empathy, within this research, is understood as a basic human capacity; although the various ways that empathy is expressed appear to be learned (Clark, 2002; Kahn & Lawhorne, 2003; LeBaron, 2004; Rosenberg, 2003). It will be accepted, for the purposes of this paper, that

through socialization we assimilate ways within our cultural contexts to extend empathy so that others in our community recognize it, and receive it as such. Empathic listening and expression, then, are addressed as a combination of both innate human capacity and learned skills which vary from culture to culture (Clark, 2002; LeBaron, 2004). Rosenberg (2003) notes that, regardless of how empathy is expressed culturally, the capacity for empathy itself appears to be developed through practice in paying attention and fostering a high quality of heartfelt connection with oneself and with others.

According to both Rosenberg (2003) and Michele Le Baron (2004), Institute for Dispute Resolution director at the University of British Columbia, mindfulness and heartfelt connection are not just esoteric concepts, but practical as well. Empathy in the context of this research also refers to a pragmatic awareness of when, and which, empathetic responses suit the people present and the social context (Clark, 2003; Le Baron, 2004; Rosenberg, 2003). Moreover, as LeBaron emphasizes, culturally appropriate communicative competence and skill development are recognized as central to the successful extension of behaviours such as empathic paraphrasing and nonverbal social cues indicating empathic listening or empathic presence.

Paraphrasing and Reflecting are not Empathy

When engaging Nonviolent Communication, Rosenberg suggests reflecting back messages that are emotionally charged, or paraphrasing, only when it contributes to greater understanding. He emphasizes that paraphrasing is not empathy, but it is something one might choose to do after listening empathically (attention focused on what the other is observing, feeling, needing and requesting) in order to confirm whether or not the other has been understood, or if sensing that the other wants confirmation that their message has been accurately received. Rosenberg states that when a speaker asks, "do you know what I mean?" often

paraphrasing can convey empathy and understanding more fully than simply replying "I understand." Rosenberg goes on to specify that "…the tone of voice we use is highly important... If we are consciously listening for other people's feelings and need…our tone communicates that we're asking whether we have understood – not claiming that we have understood." (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 99). I would like to add, that these kinds of responses (reflecting what has been said, paraphrasing, etc.) may be more pragmatically appropriate in some cultures than in others. Rosenberg clarifies that ultimately "we know the speaker has received adequate empathy when: a) we sense a release of tension, or b) the flow of words comes to a halt" (Rosenberg, 2003, p.102).

The Differences Between Sympathy and Empathy

It is important to distinguish between sympathy and empathy. For the purposes of this research sympathy will be understood as emphasizing one's own emotional experience in response to another's, where empathy focuses one's care and attention on the other's distinct individual experience. Further, empathy will be defined as encompassing a basic human capacity for cognitive perspective-taking (regarding both feelings and needs), an affective response of care and consideration for another's emotional experience, and social behaviour that facilitates heartful interpersonal connection. As Rosenberg explains, empathy extends beyond recognition and understanding of another's feelings and experience: *it acknowledges and values the fundamental human needs* (met or unmet), that stimulate the feelings in any given situation (Rosenberg, 2003). Self-empathy requires extending this same perspective-taking, care, and heartful connection towards oneself. The development of this basic capacity for empathy (and self-empathy) into socially recognized behaviours is assumed to require role-modeled examples, encouragement, and direct personal experience.

When fostered and exemplified, I believe that the innate capacity for empathy eventually develops into: a conscious appreciation of other people's feelings, and underlying needs, without sharing their experiences; fellow-feeling, the recognition of another's experience of met or unmet needs as the stimulus for similar feelings in oneself; understanding and respect for another's experiences, feelings and needs that inspire altruism; and awareness that the well-being of each individual is interconnected to the well-being of the whole. Further, as it is defined here, empathic competence is evidenced by social behaviours (towards oneself and others) that successfully communicate it.

Feelings

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term 'feeling' (a verbal noun) is characterized both physically and emotionally. Written records dating from the 14th century demonstrate that originally the term referred only to "physical sensation or perception through the sense of touch or the general sensibility of the body" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2003). While this usage continues today, the 15th century saw movement towards the inclusion of emotional states. Over the next 200 years, depression came to mean more than a concave surface, humour came to mean more than bodily fluid, and excitement more than physical agitation. By the 17th century, the definition of 'feeling' firmly included a "capacity or readiness to feel; susceptibility to the higher and more refined emotions; esp. sensibility or tenderness for the sufferings of others…; Pleasurable or painful consciousness, emotional appreciation or sense of one's own condition or some external fact" (OED, 2003). The term was used increasingly in this way by the developing field of European psychology as well in literary circles. During the mid-18th century Emmanuel Kant made use of the German term 'gefühl,' restricted to the

element of pleasure or pain in any mental state (OED, 2003). This application continued to

develop into the 19th & 20th centuries, and has since become a central concept within modern

Western psychology, literature, philosophy, and many other studies within the humanities and

social sciences, as well as popular culture.

Feeling as Defined by Nonviolent Communication and by this Thesis

This thesis recognizes the following definition for the concept of 'feeling' which includes

physical sensations as external feelings, and emotions as internal feelings:

> 1836-7 HAMILTON *Lect. Metaph.* (1859) I. xi. 186 This division of the
> phænomena of mind into…the Cognitive faculties – the Feelings, or capacities of
> Pleasure and Pain – and the Exertive or Conative Powers…was first promulgated
> by Kant… The first grand distribution of our feelings will, therefore, be into the
> Sensations – that is, the Sensitive or External Feelings; and into the Sentiments –
> that is, the…Internal Feelings. (OED, 2003)

Feelings describe an emotional or physical sensory state that we can experience

independent of other people. According to Nonviolent Communication, feelings are indicators

referring to the state of our needs rather than reflections on the behaviour of others. We can

experience the full range of human emotions whether we are alone or in the company of others.

In addition to the above quoted definition, the Oxford English Dictionary goes on to add

another application of the word 'feeling' which refers to: "what one feels in regard to something;

…attitude or opinion…An intuitive cognition or belief neither requiring nor admitting of proof"

(OED, 2003). Rosenberg suggests that this last application of 'feeling' is both inaccurate and the

cause of considerable confusion, particularly when the actual intent is to express a thought/

opinion/ belief. He emphasizes the importance of differentiating between thoughts and feelings.

Thought/ Think

A thought, as defined by the dictionary, is "An act of (continued) thinking; a meditation… An idea… What one thinks about something; an opinion" (OED, 2003). The verb 'to think' has cognates in Old English, Old Frisian, Old Saxon, Old High German, Middle High German, German, Old Norwegian, and Gothic. The original term is believed to have been "to cause (something) to seem or appear (to oneself)" (2003). Similarly, in modern usage, 'to think' means "to conceive in the mind, exercise the mind… I. To form or have an idea of (a thing, action, or circumstance, real or imaginary) in one's mind; to imagine… II. To call to mind, take into consideration. III. To be of opinion, deem, judge, etc." (2003).

While recognized as integral to human interaction and meaning-making, in this paper the terms thought and think are also clearly distinguished from "feeling," which refers to one's emotional state, not one's opinions, analysis, assessments, evaluations, judgements, or interpretations of an experience.

According to Rosenberg, thoughts and not feelings are being expressed when the word "feel" is followed by:

(a) Words such as: *that*, *like*, and *as if,* when used to introduce a noun, pronoun, or simile (e.g. I feel *that* you should know better; I feel *like* a failure; I feel *as if* I'm living with a wall),

(b) Pronouns such as: *I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *they*, and *it* (e.g. I feel *I am* constantly on call; I feel *it* is useless), and

(c) Names or nouns referring to people (e.g. I feel *Amy* has been pretty responsible; I feel *my boss* is being manipulative)
(Rosenberg, 2003, pp. 41-43)

These sample statements all express thoughts, which could be more accurately expressed by replacing the words "I feel" with the words "I think", "I believe", or "in my opinion". This thesis similarly distinguishes between feelings and thoughts. A reference list of thought words

frequently confused as feelings is provided below followed by reference lists of feelings

vocabularies on pages 210 and 211.

Table 17: Thought Words Often Used As Feelings

Abandoned	Criticized	Misunderstood	Tricked
Abused	Diminished	Neglected	Unheard
Attacked	Distrusted	Overworked	Unseen
Belittled	Ignored	Patronized	Unappreciated
Betrayed	Inadequate	Pressured	Unimportant
Boxed-in	Insulted	Provoked	Unsupported
Bullied	Interrupted	Put down	Unwanted
Cheated	Intimidated	Rejected	Used
Coerced	Invalidated	Ripped-off	Victimized
Co-opted	Let down	Taken for-granted	Violated
Cornered	Manipulated	Threatened	Wronged
Controlled			

(Lamb, 2005b; Rosenberg, 2003; Skye, 2000b)

Rosenberg (2003) offers the following example. If one says, "I feel ignored," he/she might be:
- Observing that the other person has turned away and has remained silent.
- Interpreting/evaluating that behaviour as ignoring behaviour.
- Feeling sad if the current need is attention, or
- Feeling relieved if the current need is rest and solitude.

In both instances, the observed behaviour is being interpreted as "ignoring." This is an

evaluation of someone's behaviour, not a feeling. Rosenberg (2003) clarifies that a thought is

generally being expressed when the word "feel" is immediately followed by:

Table 18: Indicators that Distinguish A Thought from a Feeling

(a) Prepositions and conjunctions (that, like, as if…): "I feel that you should know better"; "I feel like a failure"
(b) Pronouns (I, you, he, she, they, it): "I feel it is useless"; "I feel I am being used"
(c) Names or nouns referring to specific people: "I feel Amy is responsible"; "I feel my boss is being manipulative"

(Rosenberg, 2003)

Rosenberg and his trainers insist that words which refer to specific emotional or physical states increase clarity and connection with others. Inventories of some specific feelings follow:

Table 19: Feelings When Needs Are Met

AFFECTIONATE	EXCITED	HOPEFUL	PEACEFUL
compassionate	adventurous	buoyant	calm
friendly	amazed	eager	clear headed
loving	animated	expectant	comfortable
open hearted	ardent	encouraged	centered
empathetic	aroused	optimistic	content
tender	astonished		equanimity
warm	dazzled	**INSPIRED**	fulfilled
	energetic	amazed	mellow
CONFIDENT	enthusiastic	awed	quiet
assertive	giddy	moved	relaxed
composed	invigorated	rapturous	relieved
cool	lively	sensitive	satisfied
focussed	passionate	touched	serene
fulfilled	surprised	wonder	still
open	vibrant		tranquil
pleased		**JOYFUL**	trusting
proud	**EXHILARATED**	amused	
safe	blissful	bright	**REFRESHED**
satisfied	ecstatic	cheerful	enlivened
secure	elated	delighted	glorious
strong	enthralled	effervescent	glowing
	expansive	exultant	perky
ENGAGED	exuberant	glad	radiant
absorbed	invigorated	gleeful	rejuvenated
alert	thrilled	happy	renewed
curious		jubilant	rested
engrossed	**GRATEFUL**	playful	restored
enchanted	appreciative	pleased	revived
entranced	moved	merry	wide-awake
fascinated	thankful	mirthful	zestful
inquisitive	touched	tickled	
interested			
intrigued			
involved			
spellbound			
stimulated			
surprised			

(Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2005; Rosenberg, 2003)

Table 20: Feelings When Needs Are Not Met

AFRAID	AVERSION	EMBARRASSED	SHOCKED	VULNERABLE
anxious	animosity	aghast	alarmed	achey
concerned	appalled	dismayed	astounded	fragile
dread	contempt	chagrin	startled	guarded
foreboding	disdain	flustered	stunned	helpless
frightened	disgusted	mortified	surprised	lost
panicky	dislike		unnerved	reserved
scared	grossed-out	**PAIN**	unsettled	sensitive
suspicious	hate	anguish	upset	shaky
terrified	horrified	devastated		
wary	hostile	hurt	**TIRED**	**WITHDRAWN**
worried	repulsed	miserable	beat	aloof
		regretful	burned out	apathetic
ANNOYED	**DOUBT**	remorseful	depleted	bored
aggravated	apprehensive		exhausted	cold
bothered	cautious	**RESTLESS**	fatigue	detached
dismayed	hesitant	agitated	fried	disenchanted
disgruntled	leery	disconcerted	heavy	distant
displeased	pessimistic	disturbed	lethargic	distracted
exasperated	resistant	disquiet	listless	indifferent
frazzled	reluctant	perturbed	overwhelmed	lonely
frustrated	sceptical	rattled	sleepy	numb
harried	uncertain	troubled	tired	passive
impatient	wary	uncomfortable	weary	tentative
irritated		uneasy	worn out	tepid
irked	**CONFUSED**			uninterested
nettled	ambivalent	**SADNESS**	**TENSE**	withdrawn
	baffled	blue	cranky	
ANGRY	bewildered	despair	distressed	**YEARNING**
aggressive	dazed	despondent	distraught	desire
bitter	mystified	forlorn	edgy	craving
cross	perplexed	grief	fidgety	envious
enraged	puzzled	gloomy	frazzled	hunger
furious	torn	heart-broken	irritable	jealousy
hostile	turmoil	heavy hearted	jittery	longing
indignant		hopeless	nervous	nostalgic
irate	**DISCOURAGED**	melancholy	restless	pining
livid	dejected	mopey	stressed out	wistful
outraged	disheartened	morose		
rancorous	disappointed	mournful		
resentful	displeased	sorrowful		
vexed	downcast	unhappy		
		wretched		

(Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2005; Rosenberg, 2003)

Needs and Needs Theory

In addition to thoughts and feelings, the concept of human needs is central to Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication model. According to Rosenberg (2003), all human behaviour is motivated by needs and our feelings are directly linked to whether or not needs are being met or going unmet. He claims that at every moment people are attempting to meet their needs the best way they know how, using the strategies they have learned from their families, communities, and culture. Met or unmet needs, and thoughts or beliefs regarding whether or not needs will be met, are seen as the main stimulant for human feelings (Rosenberg, 2003).

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Defining Needs

The Oxford English Dictionary (2003) offers a lengthy definition of 'need' in both its nominal and verbal forms. The noun 'need' retains cognates with Old Frisian, Middle Dutch, Saxon, Old High German, Middle High German, German, Old Swedish, Swedish, Old Danish, Danish, Gothic, and further with Old Prussian *nautin*, accusative singular. Interestingly, the Old Prussian *nautin* is a variant of the same Indo-European base as the Old English, Old Icelandic, and Gothic words which mean death or dead person. Perhaps this indicates an ancient usage of the term referring to a 'life-or-death' requirement, or something essential to life that if unmet resulted in death. The following excerpts from the Oxford English Dictionary (2003) definition of the noun 'need' will be employed for this research:

> 1. …force, constraint, or compulsion, exercised by or upon a person… 12. a.) A particular point or respect in which some necessity…is present or felt; …a requirement…; b.)…provides a basis for behaviour or action; (*Psychol.*) a motivational state resulting from such a…drive. 1929 J. B. MINER tr. H. Piéron *Princ. Exper. Psychol.* iii. 54 These instincts are generally designated by a special name…which expresses in a measure the imperious character of the tendencies; we say that they are needs. 1935 K. KOFFKA *Princ. Gestalt Psychol.* viii. 329 But needs are…states of tension which persist until they are relieved… (2003)

The verbal form of this term is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (2003) as expressing simple necessity, as requiring something essential or very important (rather than merely desirable), or as indicating obligation. It also refers to a state of being in need or lacking in some respect. The verbal form is a cognate with Old Frisian, Middle Dutch, Middle Low German, Old High German, Middle High German, German, Old Icelandic, Danish, and Gothic nauþjan to exert compulsion upon – the same Germanic base as the nominal form of 'need.' The various cognates all refer to life-force or compulsion. This early usage of the verbal form fits neatly with current usage addressing needs as essential human compulsions or life-forces. Rosenberg (2003) describes the following as characteristic of human needs.

Table 21: Characteristics of Needs

Needs are at the heart of Nonviolent Communication, which holds that:
- Needs are universal   - Needs activate/stimulate feelings and motivate behaviour   - Needs are mutually supportive (while strategies, which are often culturally informed, may conflict)   - Needs are not dependent on any specific person or place   - Needs connect us to what fosters both surviving & thriving   - People are responsible for expressing and meeting their own needs   - People engage life most fully, and with the most joy, when meeting their own needs while honouring the needs of others

(Summarized from Rosenberg, 2003)

A need, in both its nominal and verbal forms, is defined for the purpose of this research as an internal human life-force or necessity which motivates behaviour to sustain physical, social, and psychological well-being. I like to describe needs more poetically as: the persistence of life in sustaining itself. Needs are also recognized as socially constructed and culturally emphasized. This definition falls somewhere along the midpoint between essentialist and social

constructionist thinking regarding the concept. A reference list of needs perceived to support

human well-being is provided below:

Table 22: An Inventory of Human Needs (this list is not definitive)

CONNECTION	PLAY	MEANING
acceptance	creative expression	awareness
accountability	delight	celebration
affection	fun	challenge
appreciation	humour	competence
belonging	joy	consciousness
cooperation	laughter	contribution
communication	spontaneity	creativity
closeness	stimulation	discovery
community		efficacy
companionship	**PEACE**	effectiveness
compassion	beauty	growth
consideration	balance	hope
consistency	communion	inspiration
empathy	ease	knowledge
inclusion	harmony	learning
intimacy	order	mourning
love	reassurance	participation
mutuality	serenity	purpose
mutual-respect	stability	to matter
nurturing	tolerance	understanding
reliability		wisdom
support	**PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**	
trust	affectionate touch	**AUTONOMY**
to know/be known	clean air	choice
to see/be seen	food/nourishment	equality
to understand/be understood	healing	freedom
	movement/exercise	independence
HONESTY	rest/sleep	self-expression
authenticity	sexual expression	self-respect
clarity	safety (physical & emotional)	space
integrity	shelter/warmth	
justice	water	

(Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2005; Rosenberg, 2003)

Discussing Needs Theory

Current Western needs theories are based in Humanist philosophy which focuses on human potentials, and strivings towards creativity, consciousness and wisdom. Summaries of the historical development of basic human needs as a concept usually begin with Abraham Maslow. Maslow identified the sequential satisfaction of basic needs as integral to human development, grouping basic needs under five hierarchical headings: physiological, safety, belonging/love, esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954; Rubenstein, 2001). According to Maslow, physiological needs must be met before it is possible to meet other needs in the hierarchy. Maslow asserted that it is both good and necessary to pursue satisfaction of these needs and that violence is the extreme result of extremely frustrated needs. Paul Sites further developed the concept of basic needs in his seminal work *Control: The Basis of Social Order* (Sites, 1973). Sites defined eight essential needs that must be met in order to produce non-deviant, non-violent individual behaviour; these included the primary needs for consistency of response, stimulation, security, and recognition, and derivative needs for justice, meaning, rationality, and control (Sites, 1973).

Although the concept of needs has persisted, the hierarchy Maslow proposed is no longer supported by modern theorists. Instead, current thinking tends to put forward ideas of fundamental needs and general needs, or primary and secondary needs, or simply a broad range of needs, where the needs support each other and are not mutually exclusive (Burton 1990a, 1990b; Clark 2003; Gordon, 2008; Rosenberg 2003). Theorists have come to recognize that Maslow's original hierarchy has been confounded by, for example, communities and individuals who have scarce physiological resources yet still engage in practices that deeply meet self-actualization needs (such as artistic expression, divine connection, or life-purpose).

John W. Burton, considered among the originators of modern conflict resolution and one

of the leading needs theorists, acknowledges the work of Maslow and Sites in his text *Deviance,*

Terrorism and War (Burton, 1979). Burton drew on his experiences as an Austrian diplomat, an

educator, and a mediator to develop and promote the idea that non-negotiable human needs were

the root of most intractable conflicts (Clark, 2003).

> For Burton, the concept of basic human needs offered a possible method
> of grounding the field of conflict analysis and resolution (which he and a few
> other pioneers had essentially improvised during the 1960s) in a defensible theory
> of the person. Together with other peace researchers (see Lederer and Galtung,
> 1980; Coate and Rosati, 1988; and the writers represented in Burton, 1990), he set
> out to reframe the concept in order to provide the new field with a convincing
> alternative to the prevailing paradigms of postwar social science: mechanistic
> utilitarianism, behaviourism, cultural relativism, and Hobbesian Realism. In
> Burton's view, the needs most salient to an understanding of destructive social
> conflicts were those for identity, recognition, security, and personal development.
> (Rubenstein, 2001)

While Burton was relatively general in his references to these needs, others have

continued to refine the thinking on this subject and have identified more specific needs or ranges

of needs. These include Mary Clark, former George Mason University Conflict Resolution

Chair, who identifies belonging/community, autonomy, and meaning, as the most fundamental of

human needs (Clark, 2003). She also maintains that coercion and punitive measures are

unnecessary in societies that effectively meet these three basic needs for their members. Several

scholars also conclude that need fulfillment is so central to human behaviour that each person

will strive to meet their needs regardless of whether social systems are responsive and supportive

of those needs or not (Coate & Rosati, 1988). Coate and Rosati (1988) observe that when social

systems are unresponsive to the needs of community members, the results range from social

instability to broad-scale violence. In keeping with Burton's original work, modern needs

theorists still contend that most intractable conflicts are the result of individuals or groups

pursuing what Burton calls "non-negotiable basic needs" (Burton, 1990a, 1990b)

Needs theory offers a fresh possibility for conflict resolution practitioners who in the

short history of modern conflict resolution practice have tended to focus on the interest-based

approaches put forward in 1981 by the Harvard Business School (Fisher, Ury and Patton, 1991)

to predominantly address commerce and trade related conflicts (Caroll, Rosati, & Coate, 1988).

Sandra Marker (2003), a researcher at the University of Colorado Conflict Research Consortium,

describes the interest-based approach as still constructing conflict along factual and 'zero-sum

game' lines where interests can be "traded, suppressed or bargained for." She says that needs

theory, on the other hand, accounts for the complexity of human life and relationships as well as

the persistence of individual and group needs (2003). Strategies based in needs theory focus on

meeting the needs of each conflicted participant. Because conflicts can often involve needs as

well as interests (that is: cultural strategies for pursuing needs), it is important for conflict

resolution methods to take both into account. Burton proposes that while needs may be non-

negotiable, they are usually mutually supportive due to their universal nature, unlike interests

and values which are typically culturally embedded and often mutually exclusive (Burton, 1990a,

1990b; Rosenberg, 2003, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 2, Thomas Gordon is recognized as the

first theorist-practitioner to articulate a needs-based model for conflict resolution in the context

of relational practices like empathy and "I-messages" (Davidson & Wood, 2004; Gordon, 2008).

The needs-based empathy development process put forward by Marshall Rosenberg as a

basis for conflict resolution, peace work, and community building provides a practical approach

to engaging the needs recognized as so critical to human well-being. Nonviolent

Communication supports disputants in personally developing the skills to identify needs that

underlie their culturally embedded interests and strategies (Rosenberg, 2003). Rosenberg says it has been his experience that, "from the moment people begin talking about what they need rather than what's wrong with one another, the possibility of finding ways to meet everybody's needs is greatly increased" (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 54). Nonviolent Communication facilitates self-directed needs-based empathic connections, between disputants, which are critical to resolving conflicts and to sustaining relationships beyond the moment of conflict (Rosenberg, 2003). Rosenberg's work makes the critical connection between needs and emotional states. He identifies needs as the root of feelings, claiming that feelings are stimulated by needs which have either been met or which are going unmet. Accordingly, what a person thinks or imagines about needs being met or unmet can also trigger feelings (Rosenberg, 2003).

Selinde Krayenhoff (2004), a Nonviolent Communication facilitator on Vancouver Island, neatly outlines how feelings guide individuals, indicating when needs are met or unmet: "Whenever people speak to me, they are expressing *their own needs*, even if they say: You should… or You are… Nonviolent Communication helps translate language what might upset me (blame, shame, etc.) into a language of compassion: I can express my feelings and needs honestly, *or* listen for the other person's feelings and needs with empathy" (Krayenhoff, 2004)

If other people are only ever trying to meet their own needs, *one can stop taking others' behaviour personally*. From this perspective, interactions become opportunities to connect with others and better understand the needs they are trying to meet. They also become opportunities to enrich one's own self-connection and better understand one's own needs. Further, each interaction becomes an opportunity to engage in dialogue about how each individual experiences the other's behaviour and invite mutually supportive strategies to meet each others' needs.

> RESPONDING to oneself or others with EMPATHY is most
> likely to inspire a compassionate reply. Others are more likely to

value my needs if I value theirs. REACTING to oneself or others
with JUDGMENT and BLAME is most likely to inspire
depressions, defensiveness, or an attack. (Krayenhoff, 2004)

Along with Rosenberg and other needs theorists, this paper identifies needs as internally located human life-forces, or essentials, necessary for the physical, social, psychological, and spiritual sustenance of all people in all places across history (Burton, 1990a, 1990b; Coate and Rosati, 1988; Clark, 2003; Gordon, 1970, 2008; Rosenberg, 2003, 2005). Michele LeBaron, Director for the University of British Columbia Dispute Resolution Department, counsels cultural sensitivity when conceptualizing or identifying needs (LeBaron, 2003). She emphasizes the importance of maintaining awareness about the socially and culturally constructed aspects of needs (LeBaron, 2004). For example, according to social psychologists, a Mexican culture traditionally focuses on community, while a Swedish culture traditionally focus on individuality; even though the members of both groups experience both community and autonomy as needs, each need is articulated, developed, and realized according to the cultural environment (Smith, Bond, & Kagitcibasi, 2006).

In keeping with needs theorists discussed earlier (Burton, 1990a, 1990b; Coate and Rosati, 1988; Sites, 1973), Rosenberg (2003) also makes a claim about the connection between needs and human behaviour. He asserts that all violence is an expression of tragically unmet needs, and subsequently suggests that it is through identifying and addressing needs that harmonious relationships and communities can be fostered and sustained. Rosenberg notes that, "unfortunately, most of us have never been taught to think in terms of needs. We are accustomed to thinking about what is wrong with other people when our needs aren't being fulfilled" (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 53). He insists that judgments, criticism, diagnoses, and interpretations of others are all alienated expressions of our own unmet needs. He goes on to

explain: "when others hear criticism, they tend to invest their energy in self-defence or counterattack. The more directly we can connect our feelings to our needs, the easier it is for others to respond compassionately" (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 61).

Needs theory generally, and the Nonviolent Communication process specifically, have made a substantial contribution towards increasing understanding of how human nature and conflict intersect. Exploration into this area of thought and practice has stimulated a range of responses from the theoretical work listed above to the conflict resolution methods engaged by those theoreticians, to the violence prevention and intervention work being undertaken in communities, schools, and jails (Gordon, 2008; Hart and Kindle Hodson, 2003; Leu, 2002; Rosenberg, 2003). The Total Honesty/Total Heart program is one such intervention.

Honesty

Throughout this thesis, the term honesty is used as described by Rosenberg (2003, 2005). According to the Nonviolent Communication model, it means expressing oneself using clear observations (free from evaluations, labeling, shame, or blame), identifying the feelings that arise in response, linking these to the underlying needs and making clear specific, present-time requests. The referential steps (observation, feeling, need, and request), which facilitate honest expression, are described in detail in Chapter 2. Honesty as it is engaged here embodies assertive, clear, candid, compassionate, self-expression.

Appendix B: Key Differentiations

The following concepts are specified by Nonviolent Communication as distinct from each other. The left-hand concepts embody the kind of consciousness practice is intended to inspire:

1. "Being" vs. "doing"

2. Restorative honesty vs. Retributive honesty

3. Empathy vs. sympathy and other forms of response (fixing, reassuring, storytelling, etc.)

4. Protective vs. punitive use of force

5. Power with vs. power over

6. Appreciation vs. approval, compliments or praise

7. Choice vs. submission or rebellion

8. Observation vs. observation mixed with evaluation

9. Feeling vs. feeling mixed with thoughts

10. Need vs. request

11. Request vs. demand

12. Stimulus vs. cause

13. Value judgment vs. moralistic judgment

14. Interdependence vs. dependence or independence

15. Life-connected vs. life-alienated

16. Shift vs. compromise

17. Persisting vs. demanding

18. Self-discipline vs. obedience

19. Respect for authority vs. fear of authority

20. Vulnerability vs. weakness

21. Love as a need vs. love as a feeling

22. Self-empathy vs. acting out, repressing, or wallowing in feelings

23. Idiomatic vs. classical (formal) Nonviolent Communication

24. Guessing vs. knowing

25. Empathic sensing vs. intellectual guessing

(Center for Nonviolent Communication, 2005)

Appendix C: Paradigms of Engagement

Table 21: Paradigms of Engagement (adapted from Skye, 2000)

Dominator Paradigm	Partnership Paradigm
Zero-sum game: Win/lose, lose/lose, & interest-based win/win	**Mutual consideration**: Needs-based win/win
Dependence or independence: Abnegation of personal power, or exertion of personal power at the expense of others, (often over-identification with one or both)	**Interdependence:** Acts from authentic self-empowerment, in concert with others, honouring both community needs and individual needs
Values **conceptual abstract systems** over all other systems.	Values **integrated systems**, both abstract quantitative & practical, qualitative systems
Personal & social focus on scarcity: Scarcity, pain & deficiencies (fear of/ avoidance of/ diagnosis of/ prevention of/ amelioration of)	**Personal & social focus on abundance:** Abundance, vitality & strengths (acknowledging/ fostering/ expanding/ facilitating/ inspiring / inviting)
Motivation: Driven by punishment/ reward, coercion, and duty/ obligation	**Motivation:** Inspired by free choice, joyful giving, desire to contribute, mutual respect & mutual consideration
Needs are located extrinsically: External validation, self-perception based in labels and judgments, respect is maintained by structures and demands, creativity is modulated by external approval, and preferred strategies are rigidly adhered to.	**Needs are located intrinsically:** Self-respect, spontaneous creativity , clear sense of self in context with community, integrity between values and actions, respect is developed through mutual consideration, and preferred strategies are held passionately but lightly
Punitive Force: **Retributive Justice** Purpose – to deter unwanted behaviour via labels, exclusion and punishment; to meet community needs for safety, order, and justice at any expense without regard for the impacts of perpetuating social/ emotional harm; violence (punishment) is used to control violence.	**Protective Force: Restorative Justice** Purpose – to safeguard the needs of all concerned; to develop strategies that support the well-being of both individuals and the broader community; when violence occurs, the focus is on establishing the physical safety required to foster social/ emotional healing & sustainable harmony.

Appendix D: Total Honesty/Total Heart Curriculum Outline

Due to scheduling changes, sessions one and two were combined, sessions three and four were combined, sessions six and seven combined, and sessions eight and nine were also combined. These combinations resulted in six 1.5-hour sessions rather than ten 1-hour sessions between May 3 and June 1, 2005. The full curriculum as it was originally intended is offered in Appendix G.

Session 1 – Introduction

Original Session 1 – Introduction

Participant areas of interest, an overview of the course, develop a code of conduct together, and define violence together as a group.

Original Session 2 – What is Violence?

Discuss needs theories, begin building a feelings and needs vocabulary.

Session 2 – Power Paradigms and An Overview of Nonviolent Communication

Original Session 3 – Power "over" vs. Power "with" paradigms

Critically explore concepts of power, discuss restorative and retributive power, and discuss restorative and retributive language use.

Original Session 4 – Language of the Heart

Introduction to the Nonviolent Communication model (Rosenberg 2003) for empathy development and conflict resolution. Overview and exploration of the basic steps (clear observations, feelings, needs, clear requests; receiving others feelings and needs empathically).

Session 3 – Integration of Skills through Practice

Original Session 5 – Integration

Integration exercises to help make the basic skills more accessible, discuss the two different kinds of requests in the model (connecting requests and action requests), explore the three modes of communication in the model (self-empathy, honest expression, and empathy for other)

Session 4 – Translating the Model and Practicing Self-empathy

Original Session 6 – Fluency

Continued exercises to develop fluency in the model, building colloquial translations of the model, support for empathic listening.

Original Session 7 – Self-empathy

Exercises and discussion to support increased participant self-connection, and increased participant capacity for self-empathy.

Session 5 - Anger

Original Session 8 – Anger

Exercises and discussion around expressing anger honestly (without resorting to name-calling, blaming or shaming), receiving anger (self-empathy first, then honesty or empathy towards others) and translating angry messages into the language of feelings, needs and clear requests.

Session 9 – Regret and Appreciation

Exercises and discussion to support and explore heartfelt expressions based on specific observations and their personal impact on feelings and needs.

Session 6 – Addressing Questions about Improvising with the model

Original Session 10 – Taking it out there

Summary exercises and discussion to support matching skills with participant experiences of violence and conflict, supporting participants in developing strategies for addressing potentially violent situations, working through questions and concerns together through peer-coaching.

Appendix E: Written Comprehension Test & Interviews

Total Honesty/Total Heart – Questions to assess presentation and workshop effectiveness
All responses will be anonymous, please remove your name sticker from the top of this survey and discard it. The code number under your name will be used to protect your anonymity.

SECTION I: Content Ease Assessment

First, Marion would like you to answer questions about what kinds of situations are easy for you right now. Different people have a hard time with different things. This will help her plan the workshops, and know how useful they were afterwards.

It is easy for me to:	Never	Some-times	Often	Almost always
1. Be honest without insulting people.				
2. Say things to myself that make me feel safe and strong.				
3. Stop from saying things to myself that feel bad.				
4. Be angry without scaring or hurting people.				
5. Feel strong and safe when people are arguing				
6. Tell people what I don't like, and have them still respect me and be nice to me.				
7. Enjoy other people				
8. Tell people when I really like what they do.				
9. Express myself so I am understood.				
10. Tell people when I really like them.				
11. Say "sorry" in a way I really mean it, without sounding stupid or weak.				
12. Be with people who are angry with me, without getting scared or hurt (staying safe and calm).				
13. Feel okay when people complain about me.				
14. Realize it when people really like me.				
15. Be caring to my friends and family when they are hurting inside or upset.				
16. Realize when people really like what I do.				
17. Communicate when people say "no" so that I still get what I want and they still like me.				
18. Say "no" without getting into trouble, or an argument.				
19. Protect myself without punishing someone else, or coming down on them.				
20. Protect others without punishing them or coming down on them.				

SECTION II: Content Application Assessment

This next series of questions are designed to find out how effective Marion's presentation skills and workshops are. This is done by finding out what you already know before the workshops and comparing that with what you know after the workshops. The questions have to do with skills and ideas that will be covered during the workshops. Many of the questions may not make much sense until after the workshops, and just as many may seem like common sense to you. Just answer whatever makes the most sense to you now. Remember, this is a way of testing Marion and the workshops, not you.

A. Key Differentiations
For this section, please match each phrase on the left with one of the categories on the right. Make a clear mark in the category that best describes the phrase for you. Just pick whatever makes the most sense to you. Your answers are anonymous.

1. Observation or Evaluation?	Observation	Evaluation	Not Sure
This place is a mess.			
He phoned me three times in the last hour.			
What an incredible day.			
She is standing with her back to me.			

2. Feeling or Thought?	Feeling	Thought	Not Sure
I am so stressed out right now.			
I feel that she is ignoring me.			
I am so excited.			
I am so insulted			

3. Need or Strategy?	Need	Strategy	Not Sure
I need you to stay here with me			
I'm really needing some company			
I need some consideration.			
I need you to be on time.			

4. Request or Demand?	Request	Demand	Not Sure
Please do as I say.			
Would you lend a hand?			
Aw, come on, can't I borrow it a bit longer?			
Would you let me know where you're at with all this?			
Would you tell me what you just heard?			

5. Protecting or Punishing?

5. Protecting or Punishing?	Protecting	Punishing	Not Sure
That was a dangerous thing to do. How could you be so thoughtless!!!			
I'm so frigging hurt and confused!!! I just need some straight information and consideration!!!			
I should've known better, I always get into these situations, I'm such an idiot!!!			
I am so furious. You could've been hurt and I want to keep you safe!!!			

6. "Power-with" or "Power-over" *Which situations describe times you might experience power-with someone, power-over someone, or them having power-over you.*

	Power-with	Power-over	Not Sure
There will be serious consequences if you don't follow the rules.			
In this place, I can count on people to show consideration and respect for each other.			
Sometimes I come down on people so hard - guilt-tripping and blaming and the whole deal.			
If you do what I say, I'll buy you that thing you always wanted.			
I often don't like making dinner, but I keep choosing to because it's important to me to take care of myself and the people I care about.			

7. Guessing or Telling?

7. Guessing or Telling?	Guessing	Telling	Not sure
Are you frustrated?			
You just need some exercise.			
Do you need some peace and quiet?			
Oh, you're pissed-off.			

8. Need Judgment or Right/Wrong Judgment? *Some judgments are based on our needs and some on what we think is right or wrong. Identify which are needs based, and which are right/wrong based. Feel free to write in any needs that you think fit.*

	Need judgment	Right/Wrong judgment	Not Sure
All children are entitled to fresh food and water, shelter, rest, play, and caring adults.			
Birth control is a sin.			
She is such a good girl.			
Everyone deserves equal pay for equal work.			

B. Situational Application

In the first column, try to imagine what your own feelings and needs might be if you were in the following situations. In the second column, try to imagine what the other person's feelings and needs might be.

The situation:	1. My Feelings / Needs		2. The other person's Feelings / Needs	
My sweetheart has plans to go out with friends, but I want to spend the evening together – just the two of us. *(What are my feelings and needs, what are his/hers?)*				
Another girl sees me talking to her boyfriend and then "tells me off" after he's left. *(What are my feelings and needs, what are hers?)*				
The clerk at the store kept asking if I wanted help finding things and then basically followed me around pretending to arrange the shelves. *(What are my feelings and needs, what are the clerk's?)*				

C. Translation

Imagine what feelings and needs you might be having if you were thinking the words in the left-hand column *(example: 1. "I'm being betrayed")*. Just write the feelings and needs that come easily to you and leave it blank if nothing comes to mind.

Thought: "I'm being…"	Feelings	Needs
1. Betrayed		
2. Blamed		
3. Criticized		
4. Ignored		
5. Manipulated		
6. Misunderstood		
7. Pressured		
8. Rejected		
9. Taken for granted		
10. Tricked		
11. Used		

Interview Orientation and Questions

Interview orientation

I, *(researcher name)*, am very interested in learning about the experiences of youth who have participated in the *Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills* workshops. I am curious to know what you have to say about the workshops, and what needs of yours were met or unmet by the workshops. I have a number of questions I'd like to ask you, and I would like to audio record your remarks on this subject. Within 48 hours of recording our conversation, I will go through the recording and edit out any names or identifying information. After I have edited the recording, our conversation will be transcribed. My supervisor, Dr. Sibylle Artz, and her research team will have the opportunity to read the transcripts, but your identity will not be known to any reader because your name will not be attached to any documents shared with other researchers. All the transcripts will have only a code number attached to them for filing purposes. The code numbers and names will be kept separately under lock and key, and only Dr. Artz will have access to that key.

Your participation in this project is very important to me, but I want you to have full control over your involvement. You are free to stop the interview at any time, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you are free to end the interview and leave at any time. You are also free to ask any questions you may have during the interview.

Interview questions

1. Before we start talking about your experiences of the workshops, can you tell me a little about why you chose to participate in the beginning?"

2. Would you also tell me what you notice about how other young women tend to solve conflicts? Any observations?

3. Have you ever noticed other young women resolving conflict using something like the ideas we discussed in the workshops? (at [school], and outside [school])"

4. What about these workshops would attract your friends or people you know? Out of all the things we covered could you pare it down to the bits that would be appealing?

5. What do you think would be most useful or appealing to your friends and the young people you know?

6. How have these workshops affected the way you think about conflict, violence, empathy, or solving problems? Can you think of an example?

7. How have these workshops affected the way you feel about aggression, violence, empathy, or conflict resolution? Can you think of an example?

8. How have these workshops affected the way you respond to aggression, violence, empathy, or conflict resolution? Can you think of an example?

9. Would you give an example of a time you applied some ideas or skills from the workshops? How was that for you? What would have normally happened in that situation? How do you think applying those skills or ideas affected the situation? Would you do anything differently if you could go through that situation again?

10. When you reflect back over the workshops, what 2 or 3 things stand out for you? What discussions, exercises, or ideas, were most meaningful?

11. What discussions, ideas, or exercises, just didn't work for you? What was okay, but could use improvement?

12. What are some factors that lead you to continue attending, or to miss sessions if you missed some?

13. What do you think I need to know to make these workshops more useful or meaningful for you and other young people?

14. In a couple of sentences, how would you describe these workshops to a friend?

15. Is there anything else you'd like me to know about how it's been for you participating in these workshops, or where you're at just now?

Examples of spontaneous questions that occurred over the course of an interview:

So, what do you mean by that? Would you describe it?
Can you give any examples of other young women using these kinds of behaviours?
So that's and example of…of um, that's an example of people just…
Hmh.
No way?
Can you, can you give an example around that? You don't have to go into specifics.
I know you've pretty much already addressed this one. Is there anything else you'd like to add?
Just out of curiosity, is this something that your finding useful with your son (mom/ friend…)?

Appendix F: Demographics, Recruitment and Consent

Table 23: Participant Group & Comparison Group Demographics

Participant	Age	Age of child	First Language	Ethnicity	Income[1] (weekly)
G0001m	19	2 ½ yrs.	English	Caucasian	No
G0003	15	No	English	Caucasian	No
G0006p	18	Due May '05	English	Caucasian	No
G0007m	19	2 ½ yrs.	English	Caucasian	No
G0008	17	No	English	Caucasian	No
G0009	15	No	English	Caucasian	n/av
G0011m	17	1 yr.	English	Caucasian	No
G0013m	18	7 mos.	English	Caucasian	No
G0014m	19	1 ½ yrs.	English	Caucasian	No
G0018p	17	Due June '05	English	Caucasian	Job: 15+ hrs/wk @ $5-6/hr. Allowance: $11-25/wk.
G0019m	18	8 mos.	English	Caucasian	No
G0020	16	No	English	Caucasian	Allowance: $11-25/wk.
* G0021	16	No	English	n/av	n/av
* G0022m	19	3 mos.	English	Caucasian	n/av

As collected by Artz', March 2005 surveys at the alternative school research site.

m = Mother
p = Pregnant
* = not listed in Artz demographics, entered [school] after Artz survey was completed.
bold = Training participant

- Training participants (pre- & post- comprehension test, plus post- interview):
  G0001m, G0007m, G0008, G0013m, G0014m, G0019m, G0020
- Comparison group (pre- & post- comprehension test):
  G0003, G0006p, G0009, G0011m, G0018p, G0021*, G0022m *

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[1] Income reported is for work and/or allowance. Other income sources might apply, but were not part of the data obtained in surveys and interviews.

Information Sheet, Recruitment
TOTAL HONESTY/TOTAL HEART
10 hours of workshop time, 3 surveys, 1 interview with Marion Little, Master's Student

Would you like more clarity about your own needs?
Would you like to **really** express yourself honestly?
Do you want to understand others better?

These workshops will introduce you to a simple, yet powerful, four-step communication model that many people have found facilitates harmonious and authentic relationships. We will discuss communication patterns that contribute to understanding and compassion. We will practice honouring other people's needs, while fully expressing and honouring our own needs. We will practice connecting with ourselves and others in times of conflict. We will explore our own power to positively transform relationships. We will also work towards identifying the choices available to us in each moment, even when faced with challenging situations.

These workshops are for those interested in enabling themselves and others to clearly and safely reveal more of what is in their hearts, share power in relationships, and translate "hard to hear" messages.

We will explore communication, conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills, through group discussions, brainstorms, movement, role plays, collage art, and other activities. Skills will be applied to areas of interest, general scenarios and specific issues raised by workshop participants. Participants will be supported in modifying workshop material as it suits them.

Skills learned in these workshops focus on:

- Dealing with power dynamics.
- Awareness of restorative and retributive language.
- Negotiation and conflict resolution.
- Making assertive requests based on what you really want.
- Receiving the feelings and needs of others, even when messages are hard to hear.
- Addressing your own unmet needs in difficult situations.
- Transforming self-destructive messages into self-empathy.
- Translating angry messages (yours and theirs).
- Expressing heartfelt regret and appreciation.

The Details:
You are invited to participate in a project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project is being conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's

student at the University of Victoria, as part of her Master's program. It is also part of Dr. Sibylle Artz's larger research project studying aggression and violence among adolescent girls.

This project focuses on a series of workshops called **"Total Honesty/Total Heart"** designed to increase empathy (fully understanding another person) and conflict resolution skills. Marion is offering these workshops to determine whether or not they are helpful or useful for those who participate. Participation is completely voluntary and is not tied to your status in the [school] program. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Participation includes 10 hours of workshop time throughout May and the beginning of June, plus two assessments of the program (1 hour at the start and 1 hour at the end). You will also be asked to complete Dr. Artz's 1 hour survey again when the program is finished, as well as a 1.5 hour interview with Marion Little to describe your experience of the program. Altogether, that totals 14.5 hours for participation. Workshops, surveys, and the interview will all take place at the [school] building during regular hours.

All of your personally identifying information will be removed from any data gathered during this study. Your information will be used to help develop violence prevention activities, journal articles, reports, student theses and dissertations. Project findings may be shared at public workshops and conferences and may contribute to a book.

Questions?

Contact Marion anytime at (250) 370-5522, or her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz at (250) 721-6472.

To verify the ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns:
Contact the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

"Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence,
but also internal violence of spirit.
You not only refuse to shoot a man,
but you refuse to hate him."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Participant Consent Form

I understand that I am invited to participate in a project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project is being conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's student at the University of Victoria. This project is part of her Master's program, it is also part of Dr. Sibylle Artz's larger research project studying aggression and violence among adolescent girls. I know that I can contact Marion at 370-5522 with any questions. I can also contact her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, who is an associate professor in the School of Child and Youth care at the University of Victoria, at 721-6472.

I understand that this project focuses on several workshops designed to increase empathy (fully understanding another person) and conflict resolution skills. Marion wants to learn about whether these workshops are helpful or useful for those who participate in the workshops. In order to allow Marion to learn about the usefulness of this program, I agree to participate in her study.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and is not tied to my status in the [school] program in any way. I understand that any time, without explanation, I can withdraw from the study. Withdrawing from the project will not impact my status at [school] either. If I withdraw from the study, any information that has to do with me will be destroyed, unless I give written permission for my information to be used.

I understand that participation involves a 10 hour Empathy and Conflict Resolution program (stretched over several weeks), plus two assessments of the program: 1 hour at the start and 1 hour at the end. I will be asked to complete Dr. Artz's 1 hour survey again when the program is finished, as well as a 1.5 hour interview with Marion Little to describe what I think of the program. Altogether, that totals 14.5 hours for participation. I understand that the program workshops, surveys, and interview will all take place at the [school] building during regular hours. I understand that I can ask Marion questions at any time. In order to ensure that I consent to participating over time, I understand that Marion will ask me to sign this form before the workshops begin, before the survey, and before the interview.

I understand that if I choose to participate in the individual interview following the workshops, I will be offered $20 to thank me for my time and encourage me to continue to participate in Dr. Artz's larger project (which the Empathy and Conflict Resolution program is part of). The money being offered to me has not coerced me to participate in the project, and if I am doing it just for the money, I should not sign this consent form nor participate in this study.

I understand that talking about and reflecting on past or present conflicts may upset me. I also understand that I don't have to answer any questions I feel uncomfortable answering, and that I can leave the room, or withdraw my participation at any time without explanation. I am aware that I have access to the counsellors at [school] to address any upset or concerns I experience, and that if I appear upset Marion will suggest that I meet with one of them.

I understand that the **workshop sessions** will be audio-taped if all the participants give their permission. I understand that my **interview session** may be audio-taped with my permission. Marion will edit all audio-tapes to remove names and identifying information within 48 hours of any audio recording. I understand that a secretary may transcribe the audio-tapes after all the identifying information has been edited out. I can ask for my parts of any recordings to be deleted at any time, even after the workshop sessions and interview are finished. I understand that all of my data (written or recorded) will be destroyed within 6 months of Marion finishing her thesis, unless I give written permission for it to be kept.

I understand that I can refuse any audio recordings and still participate in the program. If I choose to withdraw my participation mid-stream, I understand that my data will be destroyed unless I give my explicit permission for it to be kept. I understand that I can contact Marion Little after any workshop or after my interview, to delete any information I shared, change how I expressed myself, or add anything I didn't share.

I understand that there are limitations to anonymity and confidentiality, given that the other participants will know who takes part in the study, and will hear what each other says in the workshops. I understand that the information I offer through the workshops, survey, and interview, will remain confidential (it won't be shared with other people); and will be kept in a filing cabinet locked by both key and padlock. All the workshop participants will be asked to agree to maintain this confidentiality too (ex. "What's said in the room stays in the room"). However, I understand that Marion is required to tell a [school] counsellor if I say that I am planning to hurt myself or others, or if I say I am being abused by someone. I also understand that Marion could be asked by a court of law to report things that I have shared in my interview. I understand that my name will not be attached to any research documents or published results, and that my anonymity will be protected by using a code number to identify my information.

I understand that Marion's supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, and Dr. Artz's research team, will have access to my anonymous information in order to compare and contrast it with other information that is being collected for a larger research project on aggression and violence among adolescent girls. My information will be used to help develop violence prevention activities, journal articles, reports, student theses and dissertations. I understand that the project findings may be shared at public workshops and conferences and may contribute to a book.

I may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545). If I have any questions or concerns, I understand that I can also call Marion Little (250-370-5522), or her supervisor Dr. Artz (250-472-4131).

I have received a copy of this consent form, and Marion Little has kept a copy of this consent form. I know how to contact the researcher, Marion Little, and her supervisor if I have questions or concerns.

NAME:_____ SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____ Researcher: _Marion Little_____

Consent for Audio Recording

I have agreed to participate in a project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project is being conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's student at the University of Victoria. This project is part of her Master's program. I have signed a consent form in order to participate and I know that I can contact Marion at 370-5522 with any questions. I can also contact her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, who is an associate professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, at 721-6472.

I am aware that the project includes a 10 hour (2 hours per week for 5 weeks) Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution workshop series, a 1 hour survey, and a 1 hour interview.

I understand that Marion would like to make audio recordings of **the workshops** to ensure she represents the participants, and the workshop content, as accurately as possible in her research and writing. Recordings will also enable her to recall and reflect on workshop discussions to ensure she is attending to issues and questions raised by me and other participants. I understand that Marion would also like to make these recordings to help her learn about the ways people use language related to empathy and conflict resolution. The recordings will help her to track language-use over the course of the workshops so she can identify patterns.

I understand that I may participate in the project whether or not I allow any recordings. If I refuse the use of audio recording, then it will not be used when I am present.

I understand that **the workshop sessions will be *audio-taped* only if all the participants give their permission**. I can ask for my parts of recordings to be deleted at any time, even after the workshop sessions and interview are finished. I understand that **my interview session may also be *audio-taped* with my permission**. Marion will edit all audio-tapes to remove names and identifying information within 48 hours of making any audio recording. I understand that a secretary may transcribe the audio-tapes *after* all the identifying information has been edited out.

If I choose to withdraw, I understand that my data will be destroyed unless I give my explicit permission for it to be kept. I understand that I can contact Marion Little after any workshop or after my interview, to delete any information I shared, change how I expressed myself, or add anything I didn't share.

If I specify that my audio recordings may *only* be used for Marion Little's research analysis of this program, then all recording that includes my voice will be destroyed when Marion's thesis is completed.

1. Workshop Recordings (These will be edited to preserve anonymity, and then transcribed)

During the Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution **workshops**, I agree to allow the following recording for Marion Little's thesis research:
(I will circle YES to allow it and NO to refuse it)

a) Audio recordings of my voice **during the workshops**.   YES   NO

c) The hard-copy edited audio tapes of **workshop recordings** may also be used for:

Illustrating future public presentations with anonymous audio clips	YES	NO
For future listening analysis by Marion Little	YES	NO
For future listening analysis by Sibylle Artz and her research team	YES	NO

d) All versions of edited audio tapes of **workshop recordings** must be destroyed:

Immediately after they have been transcribed (written down)	YES	NO
Immediately after Marion Little's thesis is complete	YES	NO
Within five years (by March 2010)	YES	NO
Marion Little may keep copies of edited recordings as long as she wants, but only for uses related to violence prevention/intervention	YES	NO

2. Interview Recording (this will be edited to preserve anonimity, and then transcribed)

I agree to allow the following recording of my **interview** with Marion Little for her thesis research: *(I will circle YES to allow it and NO to refuse it.)*

a) Audio recording of my **interview**.   YES   NO

c) The hard-copy edited audio tapes of **interview recordings** may also be used for:

Illustrating future public presentations with anonymous audio clips	YES	NO
For future listening analysis by Marion Little	YES	NO
For future listening analysis by Sibylle Artz and her research team	YES	NO

c) All versions of the edited audio tape of my **interview recording** must be destroyed:

Immediately after it has been transcribed	YES	NO
Immediately after Marion Little's thesis is complete	YES	NO
Within five years (by March 2010)	YES	NO
Marion Little may keep a copy of the edited recording as long as she wants, but only for uses related to violence prevention/intervention	YES	NO

I understand that I will see this form again before the interview and can change my mind at any time.

I understand that Marion's supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, and Dr. Artz's research team, will have access to the anonymous transcripts of my audio recordings in order to compare and contrast with other information being collected for a larger research project on aggression and violence among adolescent girls. My information will be used to help develop violence prevention activities, journal articles, reports, student theses and dissertations. I understand that the project findings may be shared at public workshops and conferences and may contribute to a book.

If I have any questions or concerns I can call Marion Little, or her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, or the Associate Vice-President Academic Research office at the University of Victoria (see bottom of page).

I have received a copy of this consent form, and Marion Little has kept a copy of this consent form. I know how to contact Marion and her supervisor if I have any questions.

NAME: _____   SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____   Researcher: _____

Contacts: Marion Little,   phone: 250-370-5522
                  Sibylle Artz,   phone: 250-472-41

Office of the Vice-President Research University of Victoria, phone: 250-472-4362

Consent for Future Analysis of Data

I participated in a project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project was conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's student at the University of Victoria as part of her Master's program. I know that I can contact Marion at 370-5522 with any questions, or her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, an associate professor in the School of Child and Youth care at the University of Victoria, at 721-6472.

I understand that all data referred to in the research analysis will be made anonymous. Audio recordings will be edited to remove names and identifying information, all transcripts will be anonymous as a result. I understand that all my data will be destroyed, within 6 months of Marion Little's thesis completion, unless I give my written permission for it to be kept. I understand that I can contact Marion Little after any workshop, or after my interview, to delete any information I shared, change how I expressed myself, or add anything I didn't share. I understand that I may have access to my data in order to review it at any time.

I understand that my data may be analyzed by Marion Little again in the future to further develop her understanding of violence prevention and intervention programs, the role of empathy, the role of conflict resolution skills, and the role of language-use as it impacts all three.

a) The following data **may be kept by Marion Little** and used for **future** research analysis.
Written notes that keep me anonymous   YES   NO
Anonymous survey results   YES   NO
Anonymous audio transcripts   YES   NO
Anonymous audio tapes (no names or identifying info.)   YES   NO

b) All of the data related to me must be destroyed within 6 months of Marion Little's thesis completion, and may not be used in future research analysis.   YES   NO

I understand that my data may be analyzed by Dr. Sibylle Artz, and her research team since it is also contributing to Dr. Artz larger research project. Dr. Artz is working to develop gender-specific understandings of aggression and violent behaviour that can be used to develop gender-specific intervention strategies, improving our understanding of, and support for, at-risk youth.

a) The following data **may be used by Dr. Artz and her team** for **future** research analysis.
Written notes that keep me anonymous   YES   NO
Anonymous survey results   YES   NO
Anonymous audio transcripts   YES   NO
Anonymous audio tapes (no names or identifying info.)   YES   NO

b) All of the data related to me must be destroyed within 6 months of Marion Little's thesis completion, and may not be used in future research analysis.   YES   NO

I understand that Marion's supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, and Dr. Artz's research team, will have access to my anonymous information in order to compare and contrast it with other information that is being collected for a larger research project on aggression and violence among adolescent girls. My information will be used to help develop violence prevention activities, journal articles, reports, student theses and dissertations. I understand that the project findings may be shared at public workshops and conferences and may contribute to a book.

If I have any questions or concerns, I understand that I can call Marion Little, her supervisor Dr. Artz, or the Associate Vice-President Academic Research office at the University of Victoria. (See below)

I have received a copy of this consent form, and Marion Little has kept a copy of this consent form. I know how to contact the researcher, Marion Little, and her supervisor if I have questions or concerns.

NAME: _____   SIGNATURE: _____
DATE: _____   Researcher: _____

CONTACTS: Marion Little   phone: 250-370-5522
                    Sibylle Artz   phone: 250-472-4131

Office of the Vice-President Research, University of Victoria phone: 250-472-4362

Participant Withdrawal Form

        I am withdrawing my participation from the project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project is being conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's student at the University of Victoria, as part of her Master's program.

        I understand that all data referred to in the research analysis will be made anonymous. Audio recordings will be edited to remove names and identifying information, all transcripts will be anonymous as a result. I understand that all my data will be destroyed unless I give my written permission for it to be kept. I understand that I can contact Marion Little after any workshop, or after my interview, to delete any information I shared, change how I expressed myself, or add anything I didn't share.

        I understand that I may have access to the data collected that relates to me in order to review it at any time, including during the process of withdrawing, and after withdrawing (if I permit my data to be retained).

I want the following instructions followed regarding my data:
a) The following data **may be kept** by Marion Little and used in the research analysis.
*(I will circle **YES** to allow it and **NO** to refuse it)*
Written notes that keep me anonymous	YES	NO
Anonymous survey results	YES	NO
Anonymous audio transcripts	YES	NO
Anonymous audio tapes (no names or identifying info.)	YES	NO

b) All of the data related to me must be destroyed within the next 24 hours and may not be used in the research analysis.   YES
        NO

        I understand that if any of my data is kept, it will remain confidential (it won't be shared with other people); and will be kept in a filing cabinet locked by both key and padlock. I understand that Marion is required to tell a [school] counsellor if I say that I am planning to hurt myself or others, or if I say I am being abused by someone. I also understand that Marion could be asked by a court of law to tell things that I have shared in my interview. I understand that my name will not be attached to any research documents or published results, and that my anonymity will be protected by using a code number to identify my information.

        I understand that Marion's supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, and Dr. Artz's research team, will have access to my anonymous information in order to compare and contrast it with other information that is being collected for a larger research project on aggression and violence among adolescent girls. My information will be used to help develop violence prevention activities, journal articles, reports, student theses and dissertations. I understand that the project findings may be shared at public workshops and conferences and may contribute to a book

If I have any questions or concerns I can call Marion Little, or her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, or the Associate Vice-President Academic Research office at the University of Victoria (see bottom of page).

I have received a copy of this consent form, and Marion Little has kept a copy of this consent form. I know how to contact the researchers if I have questions.

NAME: _____   SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____   Researcher: _____

Contacts: Marion Little,   phone: 250-370-5522
                  Sibylle Artz,   phone: 250-472-41

Office of the Vice-President Research University of Victoria, phone: 250-472-4362

Parent Information Sheet

This information is being provided to inform you that your daughter, being of age to consent on her own behalf, is invited to participate in a project called Total Honesty/Total Heart: *Fostering Empathy Development and Conflict Resolution Skills, A violence prevention and intervention strategy*. This project is being conducted by Marion Little, a Dispute Resolution Master's student at the University of Victoria, as part of her Master's program. Please feel free to contact Marion at 370-5522 with any questions. You may also contact her supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, a professor of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria, at 721-6472.

This project centres around 5 workshops designed to increase empathy (fully understanding another person) and conflict resolution skills. The purpose is to determine whether these workshops are helpful or useful for those who participate. Your daughter will be asked to attend the Empathy and Conflict Resolution program, a survey following the program, and an interview to describe what she thinks of the program after it is finished. The project will take place at [school] during regular hours.

Your daughter's participation is completely free and voluntary. She has been informed that she does not have to answer any questions she feels uncomfortable answering, and that she can leave the room, or withdraw her participation at any time without explanation. She will be referred to the counsellors at [school] to address any upset she may experience during participation in the study.

The information your daughter offers through the workshops, survey, and interview will remain confidential; and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. However, Marion is required to disclose to authorities any information your daughter shares regarding plans to hurt herself or others, or if she reports that she is being abused. Further, Marion could be asked by a court of law to disclose information shared in the interview. Your daughter's name will not be attached to any research documents or published results, and her anonymity will be protected by using a code number to identify her information. A secretary may transcribe the workshops and interviews after Marion has edited out all names and identifying information (if your daughter consents to being audio-taped, otherwise Marion will take written notes). Information will be shared with Marion's supervisor Dr. Sibylle Artz, and Dr. Artz's research team, but they will work under the same code of ethics for confidentiality and anonymity. If your daughter chooses to withdraw part way through the project, the information she has provided will be destroyed unless she provides signed consent for it to be retained.

Your daughter has contact numbers where she can reach the researchers and also knows that she can contact the Associate Vice-President Academic Research office at the University of Victoria if she has any questions or concerns.

Contacts: Marion Little,   phone: 250-370-5522
Sibylle Artz,   phone: 250-472-41
Office of the Vice-President Research University of Victoria, phone: 250-472-4362

Appendix G: Training Curriculum

Total Honesty/Total Heart: Overview of Sessions

Conflict Resolution and Empathy Skills Development Workshop – In 10-sessions

Session 1 – Introduction
Areas of interest, overview of course, defining violence

Session 2 – What is Violence?
Needs theories, feeling and needs vocabulary, develop code of conduct with group

Session 3 – Power "Over" vs. Power "With" Paradigms
Critical analysis of power, restorative/ retributive power, restorative/ retributive language

Session 4 – Language of the Heart
Introduction to Nonviolent Communication

Session 5 – Integration
Integrating the basic skills, two kinds of requests, 3 modes of communication

Session 6 – Fluency
Fluency in (and colloquial usage of) the basic model, support for empathic listening

Session 7 – Self-Empathy
Increase participant self-connection and capacity for self-empathy

Session 8 – Anger
Translating angry messages

Session 9 – Regret and Appreciation
Heartfelt expressions based on specific observations and their personal impact

Session 10 – Taking it out there
Matching skills with experiences of violence and conflict, developing strategies

Room set-up

- Circle of chairs

- Bouquet of fresh flowers, or stems of fresh flowers for the centre of the circle, and a low table for them to sit on.

- Flipchart stand (with paper and markers) set up as part of the circle

- Extra flipchart paper, and painter's tape for the walls

- Mat board fixed to one of the room walls for collaging key learnings throughout the series (along with magazines and markers and pastels and other things to collage with)

- A sheet of heavy paper divided into 2" squares (enough for each participant and facilitator to have one) for making a paper quilt poster. Over the course of the 10 weeks, participants and facilitators are invited to make a mark (symbol/ picture/ words…) in a square to represent themselves in relation to this training.

- Small box on a table near the door for anonymous questions students would like addressed at a future session.

- CD/ Tape player in case anyone brings music to share

- TV/VCR

Session 1 - Introduction

Aims
- Overview of the 10 sessions
- Defining listening and consideration
- Establishing areas of interest for focusing the course
- Defining violence and identifying it in our society

Skill Development
- Working definitions of listening and consideration, and clear descriptions of how this group will honour both (or respond to the absence of either)
- Clear intentions for individual participation
- Clear working definition of violence and a sense of how violence affects both workshop participants and broader society

Preparation
- Story or poem regarding the value of developing these skills
- A set of "reasons for attending" slips for participants to choose from (Belgrave, 2000)

Remembering – Story/poem/music, to focus our attention on the value of developing these skills. Students are invited to bring one for a future session if they would like)

Facilitator introduction and discussion

Introduce self, and intentions in offering the program. Using flip-chart paper, brainstorm as a group to define listening and consideration and how that will look for us. How will the group honour both or respond to the absence of either? Discuss previous experiences of adults facilitating sessions on hot topics such as violence, drugs, sexuality etc. What stands out from those experiences? What was useful? What was not? (Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 29)

Exercise in pairs

Individuals identify their reasons for attending and engage in a brief discussion with a partner. To assist with identifying intentions, participants will each be given a selection of common reasons for attending this type of workshop, each reason on a separate slip of paper. They can also add their own individual reason if they want. Each pair of participants distributes the slips of paper between three piles (yes/no/maybe). Each pair selects their top four reasons for attending, and each individual selects one of these to put in a hat at the front of the room. The selected reasons are mixed in a hat and randomly selected by participants as they introduce

themselves using someone else's reason for attending. Use the "I'd like to know more about…" worksheet (Belgrave, 2000).

Overview of Sessions (listed above on p. 245)

Assure the participants that I will hold onto their inquiries and will identify when we are addressing them as we go through the sessions. Provide an overview of the sessions, as well as a general outline for each day (remembering, check-in, discussion, activity, discussion, check-out)

Small Group Discussion
- Define violence and discuss in groups of three or four how violence affects them/ others.
- Refer to Martin Luther King Jr. quote: *"Violence is anything that denies human integrity, and leads to hopelessness and helplessness."* (quoted in Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 39)
- Briefly point to aspects of the overview, identify how issues will be addressed in the sessions through skills development for creating more choices in the face of violent behaviour or potentially violent behaviour.

Take it home

Referring to Martin Luther King Jr. quote, ask participants to write down anything they think counts as violence according to this definition. Identify one or two events in the media that fit this description. What would it be like for you in those situations, how would you feel and what would you need?

Session 2 – What is Violence?

Aims
- To introduce needs theory (Burton, 1990; Rosenberg, 1998; Clark, 2003…)
- To begin building feelings and needs vocabulary
- To distinguish between thoughts and feelings, needs and strategies
- To establish ground rules for future sessions

Skill Development
- Cursory understanding of needs theories, their usefulness and their drawbacks
- Developing a feelings and needs vocabulary that fits with their experiences
- Beginning to understand the connections between feelings, unmet needs and violence
- Development of a shared code of conduct for the group

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- Laminated "Feelings and Needs" reference sheet with illustrations (Little, 2001)
- A fridge magnet for each participant
- News clippings/video clips with examples of violence (what are my feelings and needs?)
- Large poster board Medicine Wheel

Remembering - Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap - Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Code of Conduct (adapted from Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 43-49)

Ask group to break into pairs or threes to discuss what is important for them to have a sense of safety when addressing hot topics, and how they would like to keep peace in the group when individuals disagree or are disinterested in the discussion. Translate this into a language of shared needs valued by the group when collecting the information in the large group.

Acknowledge that we may not be able to keep these agreements all the time, but the intention is to remind ourselves of the way we aim to be in a group together. If any of us is having a hard time honouring our group agreement, what might others do (gentle, respectful reminders, listening to what the person is struggling with, revisit the agreement if that piece is something that isn't working for several others as well)? Also acknowledge that there are lots of nonverbal ways we have learned to put people down (facial expressions, noises, sarcastic comments, hand gestures, distractions, side conversations, listening to a headset…), part of keeping the agreements is keeping aware of the subtle ways we and others may be disrespectful and gently reminding each other that this kind of subtle disrespect, like verbal forms of disrespect, does not meet individual or group needs for trust, safety, and consideration.

Violence discussion (adapted from Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 43-49)

Refer to recent conflicts in the community or in the media (if participants are willing they could refer to the incidents they tracked on their own). Question the apparent prevalence of violent conflicts in the world as portrayed by the media - how does this affect them (thoughts and

feelings). Reflect on the actual prevalence of violent conflicts they are aware of in their own city or neighbourhoods – how does this affect them (thoughts and feelings). What's behind all this? What generates this behaviour? What are the impacts of this behaviour on other members of the community – such as children, the elderly, young women, young men…?

The Heart Exercise (adapted from Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 43-49)

Each participant receives a heart on a page of paper. The heart symbolizes a newborn baby. Facilitator does the activity on a large sheet on the board.

Participants are asked to call out words that describe a newborn ("innocent," "sweet," "dependent," "noisy"…) and write these in the middle of the heart.

Next, they call out what they have heard irritated or angry adults say to children ("shut up," "do what you're told," "you'll never learn,"…). For every "violent" remark, make a slash mark on the paper heart

Explain that humans are highly dependent on social networks, and have basic needs for belonging/community and autonomy/free choice. These words and remarks threaten a child's sense of both belonging and independence and are particularly painful to receive. They are like cuts that develop scar tissue around them. "Sticks and stones can break your bones and words can break your heart" (Little, 2001). Define Retributive language.

Draw three or four concentric arcs over the scarred heart. Ask what else happens when a person is injured repeatedly? That person tries to keep herself from being hurt again – she puts up a shield to protect herself: a shield for every scar. When a person puts up many shields, it becomes very hard for the heart to grow. It gets frozen in place holding up all of its shields

Referring to the examples above of the way angry/irritated adults can speak to children, have participants call out behaviors – shields – a young person learns to use in order to protect against future scars (ex. submission, rebellion, take it out on someone smaller, withdrawal…). Ask what a child might feel, and what that child might need?

Draw a second heart with the same words, scars and shields, beside the first heart. Explain that when two people meet, it is very difficult to really see one another through all of the shields, or let oneself be seen. When you say something to me, it has to filter through all your shields before it even gets out, so it may not sound exactly as you intended. Then your message has to get through all of my shields, so I may hear something different yet again and not at all

what you intended. We often start fighting just because we have both been bruised so much that we don't know how to hear ourselves, or each other. Remember, the shields restrict our heart's growth, they may be useful as protection sometimes, but we need to have choice and freedom about when to use them or set them aside. Every time we can safely put a shield down, there's more room for the heart to stretch and grow.

Ask participants to write on their papers the kinds of shields they regularly use and to identify which ones they would like to let go.

Needs Theories

Explain and discuss three or four needs theories focusing on Rosenberg's (1998) Nonviolent Communication model. Facilitate a group discussion about feelings and needs in relation to the heart exercise, if that exercise has been used.

Medicine Wheel Exercise

Describe the presence of medicine wheels throughout North America, which appear to be most widely used by First Nations peoples living in Alberta, Saskatchewan, N. & S. Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. Some of these circles date back 5000 years, the time the Egyptian pyramids were being built. Refer to similar ancient stone circles used by indigenous peoples in Europe: Wales, Scotland, Ireland, England, France and Italy. Stone circles were also built and used by ancient peoples in Israel/Palestine: concentrated in the Negev and Sinai deserts. There is also a concentration of ancient stone circles that in Ghana, Gambia, and Senegal.

The Medicine Wheel is one of the oldest symbols retained by First Nations people on the plains of North America. Although many of the traditional ceremonies used with the wheels have been lost or changed over the millennia, it is still a powerful symbol and it continues to be used among the plains First Nations. Those wheels are said to represent the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things. 4 colours are often represent the 4 directions and the different peoples of the earth (Red-South, Black-West, White-North, Yellow-East). These also represent the four aspects of the self: Emotional, Physical, Mental, and Spiritual respectively.

Post the Medicine Wheel on the wall identifying one quarter for each aspect of the self. Participants will be invited to work in small groups to consider what a person needs to support

the growth and development of each aspect of self. They will have several slips of paper to write down each need, they can then stick the needs where they belong on the wheel.

Hand out 'Feelings and Needs' reference sheet with illustrations (Little, 2003).

Facilitate a large group discussion about these needs, and add any new ones generated by this discussion. Continue the discussion by exploring the feelings that come up when various needs go unmet, and what might happen when those needs are deeply unmet or threatened.

Check-out
Each participant is invited to identify one feeling she is experiencing at the end of the session, and attach to it a need that has recently been met or that is going unmet.

Take it Home
Participants are invited to post the "Feelings and Needs" reference sheet on their refrigerators with the magnets they are given. They are asked to notice the emotional states of the people they encounter over the next week and to silently guess at the feelings and needs that person might have at that moment (for example: a 'rude' sales clerk, 'fighting' kids, a 'rushing' business man, a 'bossy' relative…). They are also invited to notice what they themselves are feeling at the end of each day and to try to identify a need that might be linked to that feeling (referring to the illustrated sheet if it helps).

Feelings & Needs

I take responsibility for my feelings by identifying and caring for my underlying needs.
I show compassion for others by connecting with what their feelings & needs might be.

Co-occurring Needs (first identified in Maslow's 1943 paper: *A Theory of Human Motivation*)

Physical Survival: touch, food, water, shelter, air, exercise, stimulation, rest, trust
Safety: stability, justice, protection from physical/emotional violence, reassurance, healing, play
Belonging: mutual-respect, love, affection, appreciation, tolerance, contribution, celebration/ mourning
Self-esteem: choice, purpose, competence, clarity, creative expression, self-respect, knowledge
Self-actualization: autonomy, harmony, beauty, serenity, inspiration, meaning, authenticity, integrity

FEELINGS WHEN BASIC NEEDS ARE MET

Amused	Excited	Calm	Amazed	Thankful	Hopeful	Jubilant	Playful	Mellow
Delighted	Ecstatic	Serene	Astounded	Grateful	Expectant	Elated	Adventurous	Relaxed

Blissful	Interested	Inspired	Focused	Curious	Compassion	Confident	Relieved	Happy
Radiant	Alert	Open	Assertive	Inquisitive	Empathy	Comfortable	Safe	Content
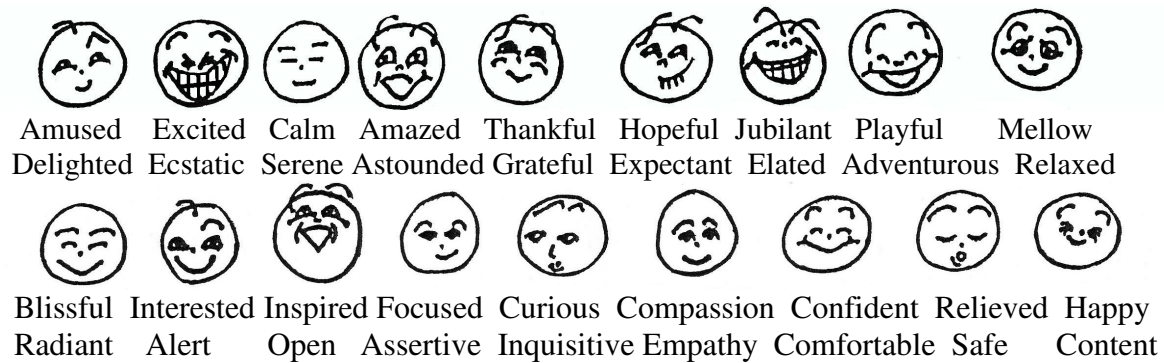
FEELINGS WHEN BASIC NEEDS ARE *NOT* MET

Frustrated	Lonely	Jealous	Resentful	Hurt	Furious	Frightened	Disappointed
Irritated	Forlorn	Envious	Bitter	Upset	Exasperated		

Nervous	Apathetic	Confused	Critical	Embarrassed	Sad	Mischievous	Regret
Anxious	Numb	Uncertain	Contempt	Mortified	Heart-broken		
Worried	Detached	Perplexed	Disdain		Sorrowful		

Enraged	Shocked	Exhausted	Cranky	Skeptical	Gloomy	Withdrawn	Disgusted
Hostile	Alarmed	Overwhelmed	Annoyed	Hesitant	Hopeless	Tentative	Repulsed
Rancorous	Surprised	Fried	Tense	Wary	Blah	Reluctant	Grossed-out

Marion Little, 2003 (*How Does Your Cat Feel Today*, 1979; Maslow, 1954; Rosenberg, 2003)

Session 3 – Power "Over" vs. Power "With" Paradigms

Aims:
- To define power
- Introduce different ways of looking at power
- Look at how "power over" systems/thinking contribute to violence and social imbalance.
- Look at distinctions between retributive processes (power over) and restorative processes (power with) for addressing disruption in a community.
- Distinguish between the language used in retributive settings and in restorative settings.

Skill Development:
- The ability to critically analyze the concept of power
- Familiarity with different power paradigms
- Awareness of the impact of retributive processes and restorative processes in day-to-day life, as well as within social and legal structures
- Increased awareness of the impact of language use on conflict resolutions.

Preparation:
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- A 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- "A Privileged Few" Exercise – identity cards specifying characteristics and a list of questions to ask about social accessibility for each person in various situations.
- Large piece of heavy paper and collage supplies (scissors, glue, pastels, string, markers, glitter, magazines, brochures…)

Remembering – Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

A Privileged Few Exercise (Canadian Red Cross, Instructor's Resource, 2002)

Power Exercise

Write "Power" at the top of a flip-chart page. Ask participants to brainstorm one-word descriptions of "power" in modern North American society. Tape this page to the wall.

Divide another page in half with a line, and label two categories "Powerful / Powerless" at the top. Ask participants to quickly brainstorm who is perceived to be powerful or powerless

in modern North American society. Students mark each category they identify with (Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 52). Discuss how this affects various relationships.

Retributive use of power and violence
Link these concepts of power "over" with retributive processes, systems and language.

Figure 11: Cycle of Violence (Kivel & Creighton 1997, p 58)

Power group
violence

Oppression of
nonpower group

Self-destructive
violence
(cutting, unsafe
sex, drug abuse,
suicide)

Retaliatory
violence
(rebellion, riots,
individual
retaliation)

Peer violence
(gang violence,
bullying)
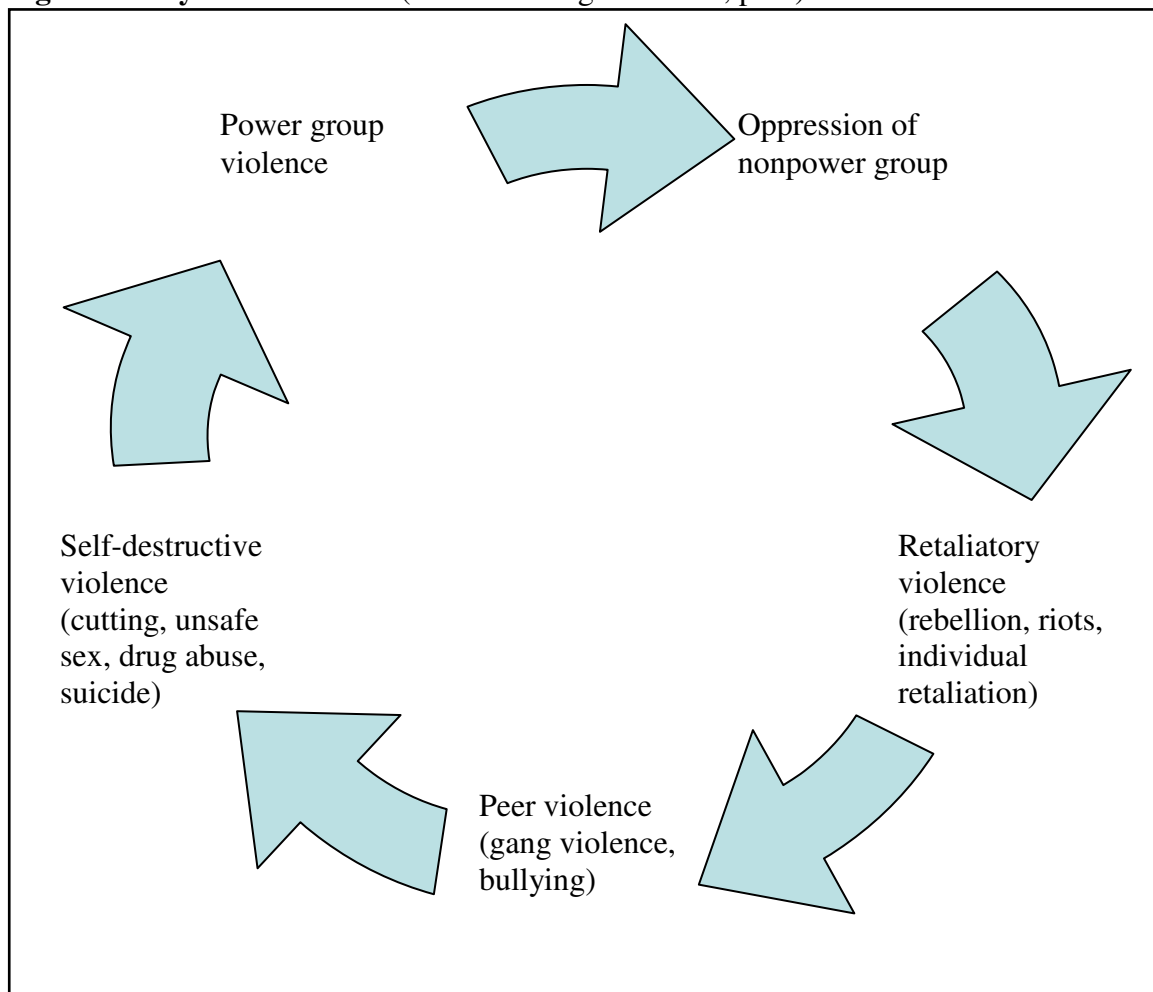
The cycle is often used to justify further violence and retribution by the power group.

Collage Exercise
- Set out a large piece of heavy paper and collage supplies and invite participants to collage about restorative power during a discussion about other kinds of power, power "with" or restorative power, talk about times participants can recall when they/others have used their "power" well. When it felt good and supported other people as well as themselves.

Discuss how our use of language frames power dynamics and influences whether we use power retributively or restoratively. Language also frames the way we perceive and respond to other people's use of power.

Take it Home

Participants are invited to notice when they exercise power. How do you feel after exercising your power, what needs were met or unmet, how might others be affected/feel and what needs of theirs might have been met or unmet? Notice when other people (on TV, at home, on the street, at school) exercise power, what might they feel and what needs might be met?

Session 4 – A Language of the Heart

Aims
- To introduce Nonviolent Communication (NVC), honest expression and empathic listening

Skills
- Making clear observations (expressing oneself)
- Expanding the feelings and needs vocabularies
- Making clear, do-able, present-time requests (expressing oneself)
- Listening empathically (receiving others)
- Listening empathically to oneself (connecting with self)

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- 1st Dance Floor in the series developed by Belgrave & Lawrie (2004)

Remembering - Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Inner-Outer Dance, Stage 1: NVC Floor Cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)

Using conflict examples offered by the participants, facilitator role-modeling, and participant role-play, participants will physically practice the basic steps of Nonviolent Communication (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests). Facilitator will support participants' developing awareness of the three modes of communication they may be choosing to engage in: 'expressing myself', 'receiving others' or 'connecting with myself'. Facilitator will support participants in learning how to transform their inner judgments with self-empathy.

Sample Dance floor #1(Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004):

	Request

Outer dialogue

Need	Need

Feeling	Feeling

	Observation

Receiving other empathically   Expressing myself honestly

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Inner dialogue

Requests to make of myself

Need

Feeling

Observation

Connecting with myself

Thoughts

258

Session 5 – Integration

Aims
- To further integrate participant use of the 'observations, feelings & needs' skills
- To introduce two different kinds of requests used in the NVC model
- To promote greater awareness of the three modes of communication.

Skills
- Increased awareness of which is being engaged: expressing, receiving, or self-connection
- Increased integration of the observations, feelings & needs skills
- Distinguishing between connection requests and action requests,
- Learning when to express 'connection requests' before going on to an 'action request'

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- 2nd Dance Floor in the series developed by Belgrave & Lawrie (2004)

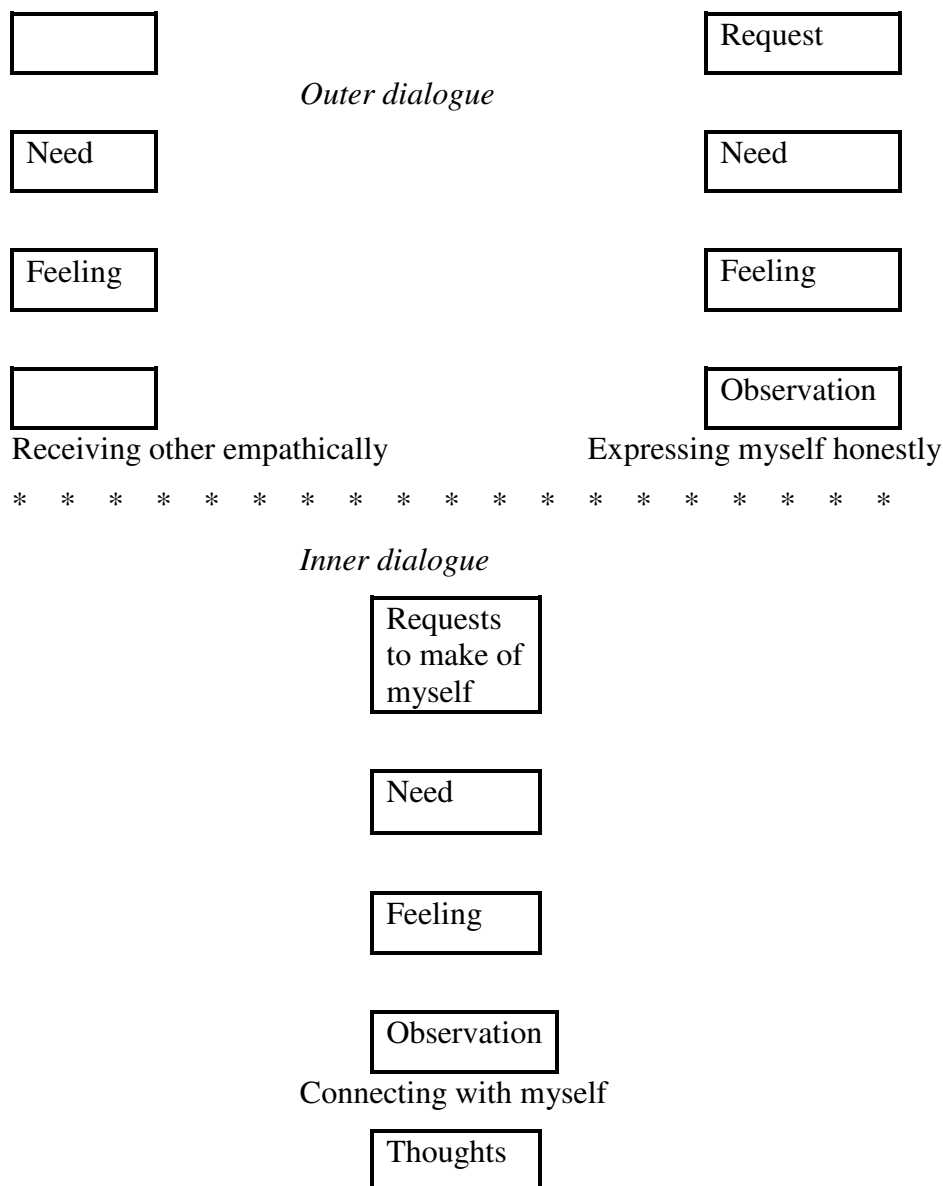**Remembering –** Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Inner-Outer Dance, Stage 2: NVC Floor Cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)

Using conflict examples offered by the participants, facilitator role-modeling, and participant role-play, participants will practice the basic steps of Nonviolent Communication (Observation, Feelings, Needs, Requests). Facilitator will support participants' developing awareness of which mode they are in: expressing myself, receiving others or self-connection. Facilitator will support participants in learning to distinguish between connecting requests and action requests and in the practical application of both.

Sample Dance floor #2 – Integration & Connection (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004):

Request		Request

Outer dialogue

Need		Need

Feeling		Feeling

Observation		Observation

Receiving other empathically   Expressing myself honestly

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Inner dialogue

Request

Need

Feeling

Observation

Connecting with myself

Thoughts
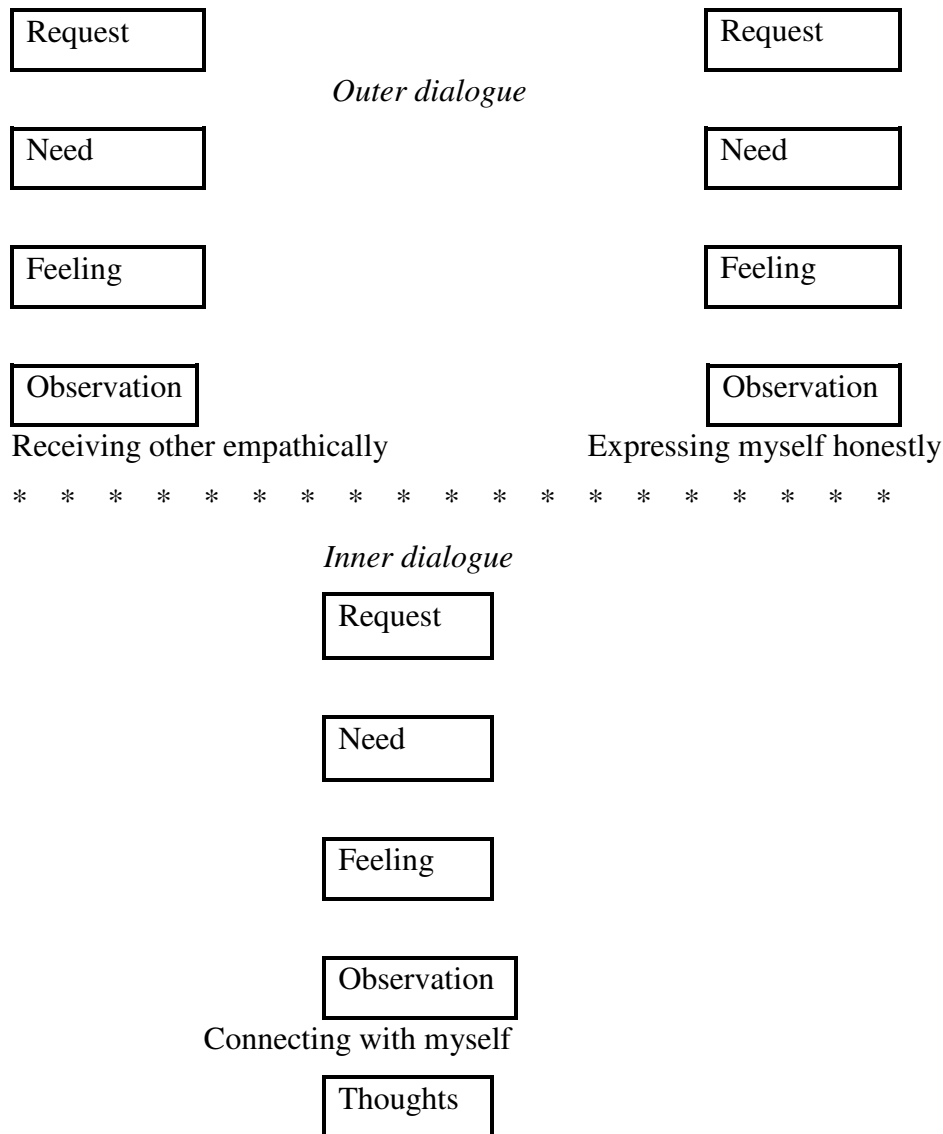
Session 6 – Fluency

Aims

- To support increased fluency with the basic skills
- To encourage clear requests and honest expression
- To support empathic listening

- To colloquialize the skills so they translate into comfortable, meaningful language

Skills
- Continued practice of stages 1 & 2
- Increased courage about asking for what you really want
- Further hone skills for staying in heart connection
- Learning how to receive another person's 'connection requests'
- Fully fluent NVC dialogue, some colloquial use of the model

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- 3rd Dance Floor in the series developed by Belgrave & Lawrie (2004)

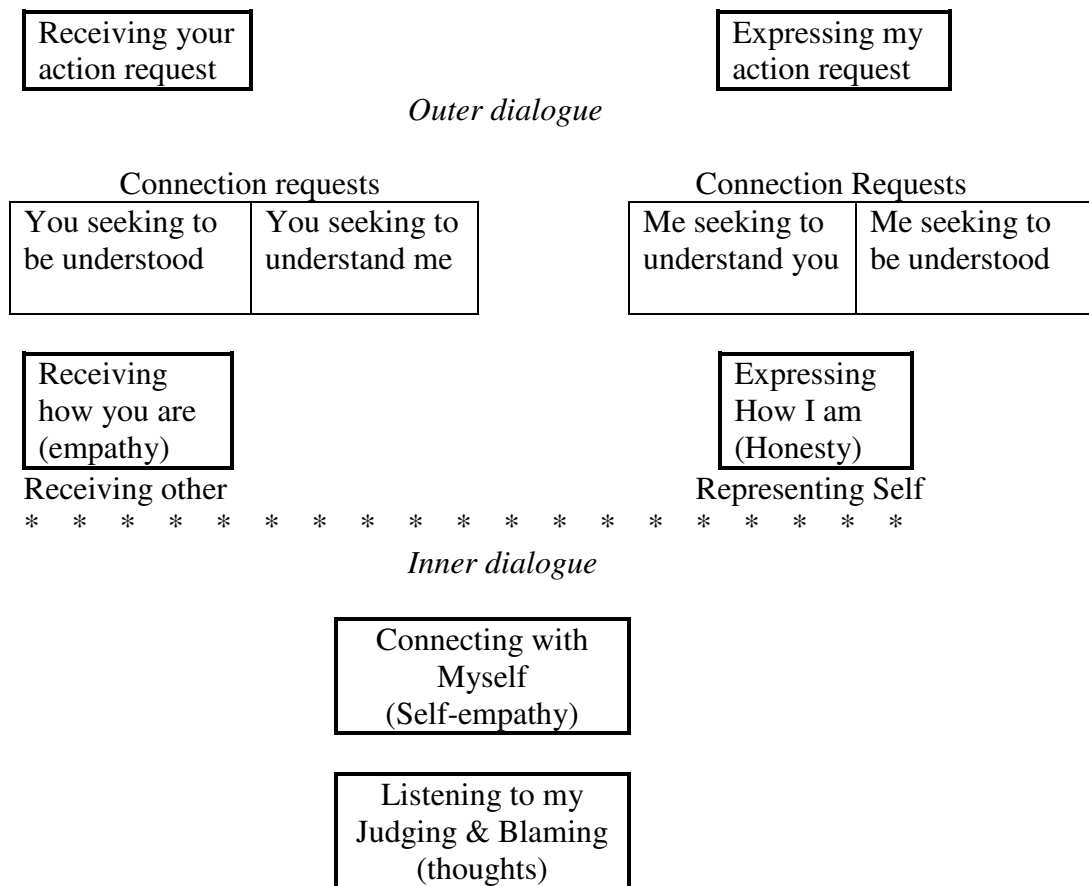**Remembering –** Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Inner-Outer Dance, Stage 3: NVC Floor Cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)

Using conflict examples offered by the participants, facilitator role modeling, and participant role-play, participants will develop greater fluency in the basic steps. Facilitator will elicit and guess at colloquial translations of the model to support increased participant fluency. Facilitator will coach participants through role-plays where they express themselves honestly - identifying specifically what they need and articulating clear requests, where they receive someone else's 'connecting request', and where they maintain an empathic connection with that person.

Sample Dance floor #3 – Fluency (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004):

Receiving your action request					Expressing my action request

Outer dialogue

Connection requests   Connection Requests

You seeking to be understood	You seeking to understand me		Me seeking to understand you	Me seeking to be understood

Receiving how you are (empathy)			Expressing How I am (Honesty)

Receiving other   Representing Self

*   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *   *

Inner dialogue

Connecting with Myself (Self-empathy)

Listening to my Judging & Blaming (thoughts)

Session 7 – Self-empathy

Aims
- Increase participant self-connection and capacity for self-empathy

Skills
- Deepen the process of self-empathy
- Translate judgments into useful, mutually supportive information
- Clearly identify personal triggers, and personal core values
- Learn more about fully experiencing feelings (both met and unmet) and fully connecting with needs

- Practice developing creative ideas for do-able action requests to meet needs
- Identification of one step to take now, as a 'next step' towards meeting needs

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- 4th Dance Floor in the series developed by Belgrave & Lawrie (2004)
- Markers/ pencils/ pencil crayons for personal Medicine Wheels

Remembering – Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Personal Medicine Wheel

Refer to the "needs" Wheel from session 2. Revisit the purpose of the Medicine Wheel: to remind us of the interdependence of all things. Referring to the four aspects of self, Give each person a blank Wheel to explore the interdependence of our various aspecct.

```
          7     8
   6                 1
   5                 2
          4     3
```
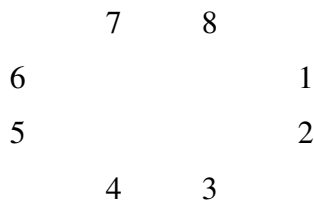
The Medicine Wheel follows this key:

1. Symbols of maternal heritage

2. Symbols of paternal heritage

3. Symbols that represent myself

4. 3 words I want to live by

5. One of my strongest values

6. 3 things I hope will be said about my life

7. Symbols of great influenced to me

8. My hopes for the future

Sample Medicine Wheel:
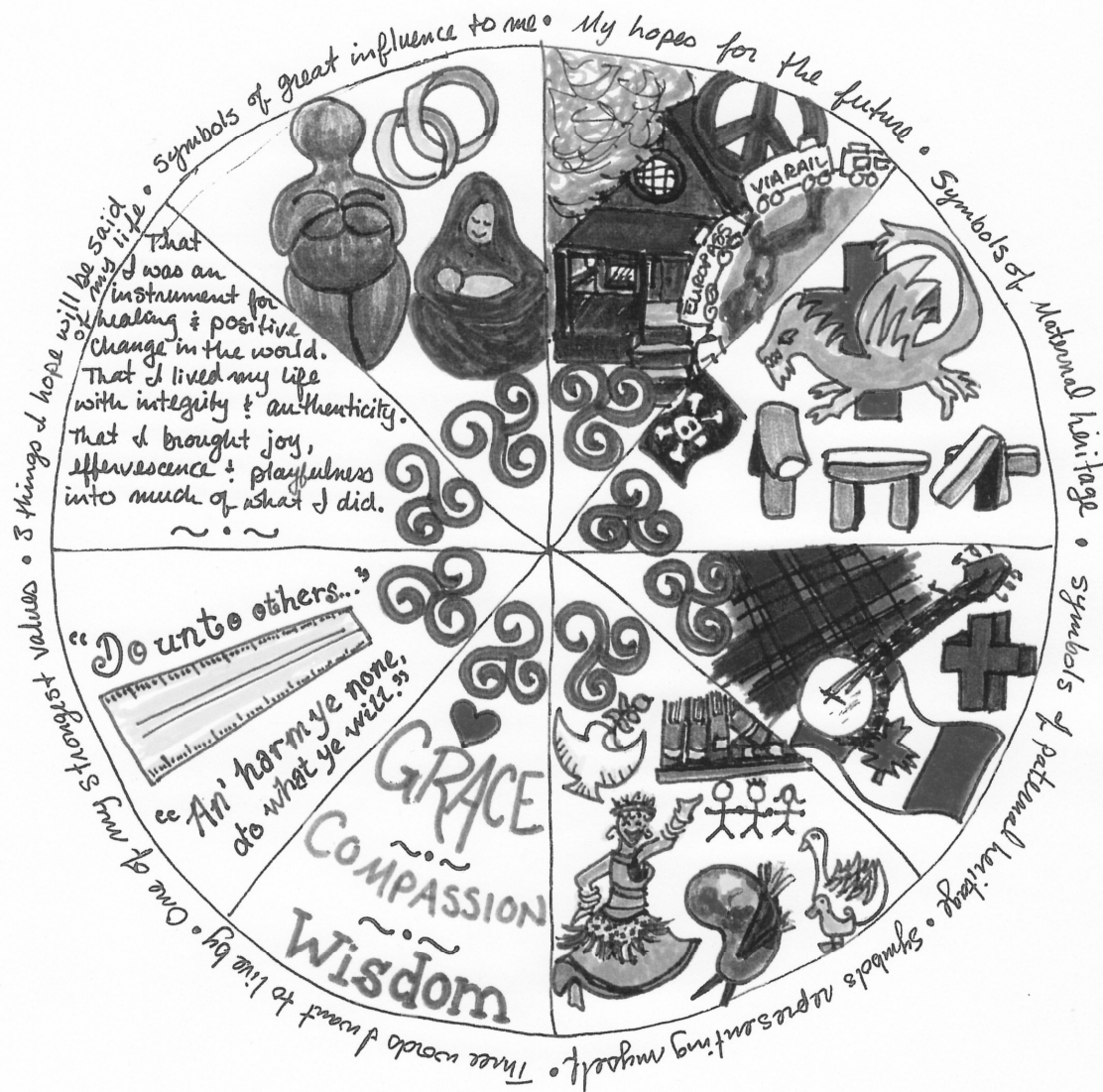
Self-Empathy Dance

An in-depth focus on the inner dialogue from the first three dance floors. Coaching participants through the identification of personal core beliefs/core values and observations/thoughts/memories that tend to regularly trigger painful feelings. Participants can physically practice moving through these triggers on the floor cards if they would like.

Session 8 - Anger

Aims
- Integration of basic skills in the face of anger (or guilt/ shame/ depression)
- To be able to hear someone else's pain in the face of that anger
- To translate someone else's anger into information that's mutually supportive

Skills
- Transforming anger into mutually supportive information within a dialogue
- Practice receiving others empathically after expressing my unmet needs
- Application of this dance to also transform guilt, shame and depression

Preparation
- Story/poem/music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- 5th Dance Floor in the series developed by Belgrave & Lawrie (2004)

Remembering – Story/poem/music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Anger, Guilt, Shame, Depression: NVC Floor Cards (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)

The Anger Dance is a practice in engaging self-empathy under duress. It is often a circular process at first because angry or depressed thoughts seem to feed on each other before one can solidly settle on the needs. This dance floor can be done before any of the outer dialogues.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Inner dialogue

| A Self-request |
| for right now |

| Having compassion for how |
| precious the needs are |
| – allowing the feeling to |
| transform |

ANGER   GUILT/ SHAME/ DEPRESSION

| Identify my |
| unmet need |
| or needs |

| Listen to my |
| judging & blaming |

Session 9 – Regret and Appreciation

Aims
- Distinguish between retributive guilt/ shame/ blame and restorative regret
- To support participants in creating a rich basis for forgiveness and reconciliation
- To distinguish between retributive praise/ rewards, and restorative appreciation

Skills
- A process for mourning/ learning/ growing when dissatisfied with own actions
- In-depth preparation for forgiveness & reconciliation processes
- Practice offering appreciation based on observations, feelings, and needs met.

Preparation
- Story/ poem/ music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- All Dance Floor cards in the series (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)

Remembering – Story/ poem/ music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (select focus for the check-in so participants are reflecting on feelings and needs in relation to their real life)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Improvising with the NVC Floor Cards

Open use of floor cards and other learning tools, open discussion about appreciation. Generate a series of hypothetical scenarios and participants practice expressing and receiving regret after behaving in a way that did not serve themselves or others as fully as they would have liked. Do same thing with expressing/ receiving appreciation towards others who have met our needs (clear observation, needs met and feelings that result).

Reflective exercise where participants imagine going back in time and offer empathy to their younger selves, receive younger self's regret, offer forgiveness based on an awareness of unmet needs then and now and choices to compassionately meet those needs for self and within community.

Conclude with more open play with the floor cards and open discussion.

Session 10 – Taking It Out There

Aims
- Summary discussion
- Peer-coaching on the floor cards
- Match skills with participant experiences of violence and conflict
- Work through questions and concerns together
- Develop strategies for addressing potentially violent situations (ensure safety of own needs and individual rights as well as those of any dependents).

Skills
- Solid grasp of the Nonviolent Communication model
- Integration through peer-coaching
- Practical applications
- Ability to improvise and colloquialize the model
- Develop a safety plan to cope with immediate violence if and when it occurs

Preparation
- Story/poem/music for the remembering
- 20" piece of string or yarn that is appealing to touch
- All Dance Floor cards in the series (Belgrave & Lawrie, 2004)
- Collage stuff (glue, magazines, coloured pencils…)

Remembering – Story/poem/music to focus attention on our intentions.

Check-in – Each person may choose to check-in with the group in 30 words or less (running a 20" piece of string through their fingers when speaking as way to mark speaking/listening time)

Recap – Briefly recap the last session (reviewing a section of the video taped discussion if available) and ask for any reflections on last session's material.

Improvisational use of the NVC Floor Cards

Lay out floor cards at beginning of session so they are available for spontaneous use. Ask the group to summarize what we've done and what the highlights were for them (what have they actually found useful and what was fun?).

Ask for series of hypothetical dangerous/violent situations. Invite the group to take turns coaching each other through the situation either on the floor cards or with another learning tool. End each scenario with a quick brainstorm for a safety plan before-during-after.

Open the floor for discussion of any questions or concerns that have come up while practicing the Nonviolent Communication model.

Collaging feelings and needs

Make a collage of feelings and needs during the discussion.

A note about why I chose to use the Dance Floors in this curriculum

- Besides being an engaging and fun way to learn, the dance floors offer participants a clear conceptual and practical structure for learning communication and empathy development skills. They also meet a range of learning needs & styles, integrating auditory, kinaesthetic and visual ways of learning.

- Learning through sensation/movement/body met by moving and/or watching the role player moving

- Learning through visual intelligence met by seeing the text and colour of the cards

- Learning through auditory intelligence met by hearing the dialogue between the dancer, role player and trainer

- Learning through spatial intelligence met by layout of cards

- Learning through reflection met by watching another participant doing the dance and by group discussion after the dance

- The learning seems to transfer well to real life, as communicating often takes place while standing and moving around.

Appendix H: Creative Writing Reflections on Honesty, Empathy, and Self-empathy

Unravelling Anxiety

Driving, travelling, between one commitment and another, my breath catches, my heart beats (a frightened rabbit), tension grips my shoulders…

Standing in the library, breathing the scent of knowledge, pages flutter past my fingers, ideas float across my eyes. I'm light-headed, my breathing too shallow, my throat too tight, my stomach too twisted in aching, nauseating knots…

I berate myself.
Frantic wild dogs howl in my mind, chew on my guts, leave me gripping the edge of my chair. If I could breathe deeply enough they'd all just go away.

My mind and body scream at me. The face of anxiety is twisted and warped, its message so garbled. How can I bear to look at it? Listen to it?

Begin with my shoulders: tension. My rapid heart? Fear. My shallow breath? Distress. My closing throat? Desperation. My light head. Exhaustion. My knotted stomach. Overwhelm. I untwist this anxious face, and breathe.

Tension needs release, fear needs reassurance, distress needs support, desperation needs hope, exhaustion needs rest, overwhelm needs clarity and order. Tears of relief spill from my eyes – I recognize this untwisted face for my own. I am filled with compassion for these precious, precious needs.

I hold out requests with cautious anticipation. As needs are filled, by myself and by others, hope blossoms. Balance is restored. I cradle a new and deep understanding of the power of my needs. For the first time in a month my mind and body are at peace. I am filled with wonder. I feel alive again.

Trailer Park Boys

Made-up stories, about made-up people, in a made-up place.
Dumb obnoxious stories, about dumb obnoxious people, in a dumb obnoxious place.

"There was a crooked man, who went a crooked mile,
He found a crooked sixpence beside a crooked stile;
He bought a crooked cat, which caught a crooked mouse…"
And they all lived together in a little crooked trailer

Real people don't live like that.
Real people don't treat each other that crooked way,
Talk that crooked way,
Earn that crooked way,
Struggle that crooked way.

A crooked story about crooked people;
Not real, not like me.

 But there they are.
All dumb and obnoxious.
All crooked and wrong.
Wanting
To be safe: like me,
To belong: like me,
To play: like me,
To be understood: like me,
To be comfortable: like me,
To relax: like me,
To be independent: like me,
To take care of each other: like us.

I hear it's really like that in a trailer park.

A Question About Being Seen and Heard

"Children are to be seen but ***not*** heard"

Seen but not heard?
Like a silent, black and white film?
Like a muted TV commercial?
Like the view from an air-conditioned, hermetically sealed Cadillac,
In the wrong neighbourhood?

Or maybe like a terrified fourteen-year-old turning tricks via pager and cell-phone
In the mall?
Or the kids living in the streets downtown?
Or the kid on the face of a World Vision 'Feed-The-Children' pamphlet?

Or how about the ones going home to empty houses and frozen dinners in the burbs?
Oh, but I forgot - they're neither seen nor heard.
Unless someone's tricked out the house with internet cameras,
And then I wonder who's seeing what in those unheard kids.

Seen and not heard.
Can someone be seen if no-one has heard?
Or heard if no-one has really seen?
It's not a "tree falls in the forest" question,
It's a human being in human nature question.

It's a question of being fully seen and heard:
With surround sound,
And technicolour vision,
And an attention span longer than a media sound bite.

It's a question about humanity and whose got some.
Who gets to be seen and heard?

It's a question about
Who
Chooses
To see and hear
Whom?

Empatheia

Listening

Ears open
Eyes open
Mind open
Listening with my whole body
My whole heart

Listening to you
Listening to me

Not to fix
Or judge
Or pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey
Not to find any answers
Or solve any riddles
Just listening

Ears open
Eyes open
Whole body
Whole heart

To bear witness
To bear presence
To bear the fullness and richness
Of this moment of your experience
My experience

Fully present

Ears open
Eyes open

Whole body
Whole heart

Honestly

These thoughts, these words
That I'm saying,
Seem to tie your eyebrows in knots,
And fill your eyes with tears,
And tighten the muscles of your jaw.

I see your whole body tense
As you try to understand what you have heard.
What you say I've said.

You are trying so hard
To understand
These things I did not say,
Or mean,
Or even think.

You point your finger at me,
And hiss through your teeth:
Like a wildcat defending its space,
Keeping its place,
Saving its face.

I would like to be heard differently.

I want to speak to you with honesty and clarity and tenderness.
I want you to know what is so alive in me.
I want you to hear the tenderness I feel
When I think of you,
Or me.

The tenderness of a purple bruise pressed firmly with a thumb.
The tenderness of a skinned knee.
The tenderness of fingertips;
Of a squalling newborn overwhelmed by the first breath;
Of a family curled up together under Nana's quilt,
On a golden Saturday morning.

The tenderness of my aching middle.
Aching to be understood,
Aching to understand.

Would you tell me what you're hearing me say now?

Reading the Dance of a Honeybee

Excitement buzzes under your words
A honeybee bouncing against my window

Can't wait
Can't hold still
Sit still
Stand still

It dances around your eyes
Your hands fluttering like little birds
Your mouth dripping with rich golden delight
Laughter rises from your belly
Trembling in your throat

I gently open this window

And dancing, buzzing, pleasure tumbles out
Into the blue
Humming
Into the colour and fragrance
Mapping every blossom
Erratic, ecstatic flight

Traced by my winged heart.