

GBV Prevention with a Benefits-Based Approach

(1 hour 30 minutes)

16 Days of Activism against Violence Against Women

Intended Participants

This session is intended to help staff of participating organizations and their partners to talk about the benefits of non violence in communities.

Objectives

- Participants practice skills in articulating benefits of nonviolence to different groups in the community

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- List a few of the benefits of nonviolence to the individual, family, community and society as a whole
- Demonstrate how to frame VAW issues in a benefits-based way to the interests of a particular group

Preparations

- 4 flip charts posted around the room, with the titles “individual benefits of nonviolence”, “family benefits of nonviolence”, “community benefits of nonviolence”, and “societal benefits of nonviolence”.

Steps

Don't Think of an Elephant! ¹

1. Explain: *This session is to practice the skill of talking about violence against women and the benefits of nonviolence in ways that help different groups we work with see the benefits of non violence. Different reasons will work better to get different people thinking. First, we are going to do a visualization exercise.*
2. Ask everyone to close their eyes.
3. Explain: *Now, you can think of anything you want to think about, but—whatever you do—do NOT think of an elephant!*
4. Wait a few seconds and ask people what they visualized.
5. Was anyone successful at NOT visualizing an elephant?
6. If so, ask how they managed.
7. Explain:
 - *Usually, if people managed to not think of an elephant, it was because they switched their focus to something else.*

¹Concept adapted from Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.

- *At first, in violence against women work, we only ever talked about what we didn't want to see: violence! We spent all of our time talking about violence and the consequences of violence—this, for us, is the elephant that we kept asking people not to visualize, even though that is all we were talking about.*
 - *Over time, we have learned that people cannot just not do something—they have to know what to do, positively. They have to actively think of something different and work toward that. This means talking about what we DO want to see.*
 - *For those who did not visualize an elephant, usually it is because we are able to visualize a giraffe or a hippo or anything else in its place—with VAW work, we need to be able to visualize nonviolence and its benefits.*
8. Ask: *When we only talk to people about the violence around us, how do people end up feeling? (Angry, frustrated etc)*
 9. Ask: *Does anyone have a life example of this they can share? Have you ever seen someone raise awareness or talk to you, on and on, about violence in the community?*
 10. Invite 1-2 people to tell their stories and ask how they felt.
 11. Summarize: *So, only talking about violence itself does not help people imagine how to be different, does it?*

Talking About the Benefits of Nonviolence

1. Explain: *We are going to spend just a few minutes discussing what some of the benefits are of living a life free from violence, to the individual, family, community and society.*
2. Ask participants to brainstorm a few benefits of non violence to each group. Let them know, if they feel stuck, to think about the consequences of violence to this group and try to shift the concept into the positive benefit of nonviolence.
3. Write responses on four different prepared flip charts hanging around the room.
4. Explain:
 - *We could continue listing benefits, because there are so many benefits to nonviolence.*
 - *We will use the rest of this session to practice talking about these benefits, and about our vision of healthy and safe families and communities, to different groups that are important to engage.*
 - *This is called “issue framing”. It is kind of like framing a picture. The frame you put around a picture can make it look very different. In the same way, the way you talk about (frame) an issue can make the issue look engaging and relevant, boring, threatening and offensive to the people you are talking with.*
5. In a quick brainstorm, ask participants to think about all the groups (e.g., young mothers, policy makers, religious leaders, etc) that they are likely to reach during their 16 Days of Activism campaign. Write responses on a flipchart.
6. Ask participants to split into pairs. Ask each pair to pick one group from those listed and create a role play that explains the positive benefits of having nonviolent and safe communities to that person or group. One of the pair will do the explaining while the other will try to think like the community member, policymaker, religious leader, etc being engaged—and see whether the person is convincing.
7. After 10 minutes, call “Stop!”
8. Ask a few of the pairs who felt they were successful to demonstrate to the whole group in a role play how they would talk about the benefits of nonviolence to their chosen group.
9. The rest of the participants become the group of religious leaders, elders, etc that the group wants to convince about the benefits of non-violence. Ask them to try to really think like the group they are representing and be sure the arguments are tailored toward the interests of that person/ group.
10. List the benefits that were covered in each group’s role play. Discuss any challenges as a group, and ask the group for other suggestions about how to frame the issue.
11. Summarize: *This year's 16 Days of Activism campaign, the theme is Violence-free Relationships: It's in our hands! All the campaign materials and activities will be geared around helping community members and other stakeholders reflect on the benefits of non-violence – for themselves, their families and community. Opening new discussions about how preventing violence will benefit us all and that change is possible can foster hope, optimism and a new or renewed commitment toward creating happier, healthier families.*

