



Course 1: Health workers, conflict and peace

Chapter 1: Peace and conflict theory

Participants are asked to work together in pairs or in groups of 3 people. (Smaller groups are good for discussion, but if there are many students make the groups larger or else it will take too long, and become repetitive, to feed back in plenary).

Exercise 1: Peace brainstorming - 15 mins

In groups: the participants are asked to write down (at least) ten words or phrases which are associated with the term “peace”.

In plenary: ask the participants to put forward their answers until all options are exhausted. Write them down on a flip chart.

Exercise 2: Three types of violence - 30 mins

Facilitator’s introduction: The peace researcher Johan Galtung conceived violence as the opposite of peace (“As there are many different forms of diseases, there are many different forms of violence.”). Galtung distinguishes between violent acts (direct violence), violent structures (structural violence) and violent aspects of our cultures (cultural violence).

In groups: the participants are asked to think of several examples for each of the three types of violence, both on the micro- and macro- levels.

In plenary: Each group presents the examples from exercise 2. The examples are listed up in a table on the wall or flip chart. The trainer and participants reflect on the differences in the answers.

Clues: “Violence is the unnecessary insult of basic needs” (J. Galtung). Violent acts: Intentional use of physical force or power. Violent structures: Socio-economic or political structures which discriminate and harm. Cultural violence: Aspects of our cosmology or worldview which are used to legitimize or justify the use of direct and structural violence.

Exercise 3: Positive peace description - 30 mins

In groups: the participants are asked to come up with a description of a state of positive peace which is more than the absence of war and violence, and write this description on a flip chart.

In plenary: Each group presents their descriptions. The trainer and participants reflect on the differences in the answers.

Clues: Peace can be the absence of negative forms of conflict or the presence of a positive state or capacity. Peace exists from micro (individual or small community) to macro (institutional, national, international) level. Positive peace can be in the form of acts, fair socio-economic and political structures or respect for cultural identity.



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Exercise 4: Differences between violence, accidents, war, conflict - 15 mins

In plenary: Discuss in plenary the difference between violence and accidents, and the difference between war and conflict. Discuss why it is important to differentiate between these notions.

Clues: Violence contains a notion of intentionality or, at least, the awareness/acceptance of harming people. War is one of many strategies (behaviours) which can be used to handle a conflict. Every conflict consists of sets of attitudes, behaviours and content/contradiction (clash of incompatible values) (ABC triangle); each corner gives opportunities to intervene. Wars can be abolished, conflicts not. Conflict prevention (unnecessary) is often confused with war/violence prevention (what really matters).



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Chapter 2: Medical Peace Work - a response to violent conflict

Exercise 5: Why health professionals engage in peace work - 30 mins

In groups: the participants are asked to a) reflect why health professionals should be involved with peace issues and write down three reasons they come up with b) discuss for which group of health professionals each of the reasons is valid.

In plenary: Each group presents a reason, if possible a different one, and explains what type of situation and which groups of health professionals it is relevant for. Discussion.

Clues: Peace and health overlap, violence is a public health problem, health professionals are at risk of committing violence, health work can worsen a conflict situation. Peace work can be done everywhere, in areas of violent conflict, in European countries, in health facilities and organizations etc. All types of health worker can contribute to peace work in whatever situation they find themselves in.

Exercise 6: Peace-through-Health mechanism - 30 mins

Preparation: The trainer prepares ten cards, each with one Peace-through-Health mechanism written on it (Redefinition of the situation, Superordinate goals, Mediation and conflict transformation, Dissent and non-cooperation, Discovery and dissemination of knowledge, Rebuilding the fabric of society, Solidarity and support, Social healing, Evocation and extension of altruism, Limiting the destructiveness of war).

The trainer creates a table on the blackboard or flip chart with three columns headed “primary”, “secondary”, and “tertiary prevention” respectively.

In groups: Each group receives/chooses one of the cards. They then discuss the respective mechanism and find practical examples for this mechanism.

In plenary: Discuss what the three public health terms written on the table mean and how they can be applied to violence. Finally, each group presents its Peace-through-Health mechanism and allocates its example(s) to one or more of the columns.

Clues: are found in PPP slides 27 and 29. The 10 mechanisms are explained in Lesson 2.3.

Exercise 7: Risks and limitations for medical peace work - 30 mins

In plenary: Reflect what the risks and limitations for the participants are when engaging in peace work, and how such risks and limitations could be overcome.

Clues: Peace work can be a divider (a divisive force) and alienate people from those undertaking it. Peace work can be dangerous for those who get involved in it. Possible limitations due to lack of certain (peace) competencies. Important: awareness, support and interdisciplinary collaboration.



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Chapter 3: Peace skills for health workers

Exercise 8: Conflict analysis - 30 mins

Preparation: Participants are asked to work together in pairs or in groups of 3 people. Each group needs a paper copy of Lesson 3.1 on conflict analysis or free internet access during the group work, as well as a large piece of paper and different coloured pens.

The trainer or the participants together select one well known conflict, either on international, national or local level.

In groups: Each group chooses one of the six conflict analysis tools presented in Lesson 3.1 (conflict timeline, conflict mapping, pyramid tool, pillars tool, onion tool, ABC Triangle) and reads about how to use it. The tool is then applied to the selected conflict.

In plenary: Each group presents their results. Discussion.

Clues: are found in Lesson 3.1 and PPP slide 35. Before feedback ask which groups have chosen which tools and which conflicts. If two groups have used the same conflict, let them present one after the other.

Exercise 9: Nonviolent social change - 30 mins

The trainer presents the pillars of power model (see figure 2 in Lesson 3.2 or PPP slide 36).

In groups: Each group chooses one pillar of the model and finds different examples of strategies/campaigns to weaken the pillar. The groups then discuss what these strategies would look like in the conflict analyzed during exercise 8.

In plenary: Each group presents their results. Discussion.

Clues: The pillars depict different kinds of support which political power depends on (taxpaying, working, military service, police doing their job, civil obedience, bureaucracy). Nonviolent social movements use different strategies to withdraw their support. See lesson 3.2 and PPP slide 36.

Exercise 10: Nonviolent communication - 30 mins

A list of basic human needs (“needs inventory”) is collected on the black board / flip chart, or distributed in a paper copy. The trainer then presents typical forms of communication which hurt, and which violate basic needs.

In groups: Participants are asked to think about what forms of communication have contributed to create/escalate the conflict discussed in exercises 8 and 9. The participants then try to identify the underlying needs of the (two) main parties to the conflict, and identify possible strategies which could meet these needs.



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Clues: Failed communication can create conflict or escalate an existing one. Typical forms of such communication are judgements, labelling, stereotyping, dehumanization, moralizing, critique, generalizing, denial of responsibility, blaming, demand, order, or threat.

On the other hand, communication can de-escalate and even solve a conflict. Nonviolent communication is a tool for human connection; it puts empathy at the centre of thinking and communicating. Through empathically connecting to each other's feelings and needs, it is possible to handle conflicts in a non-violent way. Basic human needs are not only survival needs, but also well-being, identity and freedom needs. There are thousands of strategies to fulfil the same basic need. Some of these strategies will be acceptable to each side in a conflict. See lesson 3.3.