



Medical Peace Work Online Course 1

Health professionals, conflicts
and peace



MEDICAL PEACE WORK



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

An introduction to Medical Peace Work



Chapter 1: Peace and conflict theory

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

Chapter 3: Peace skills for health workers

What is peace?



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Notions of peace

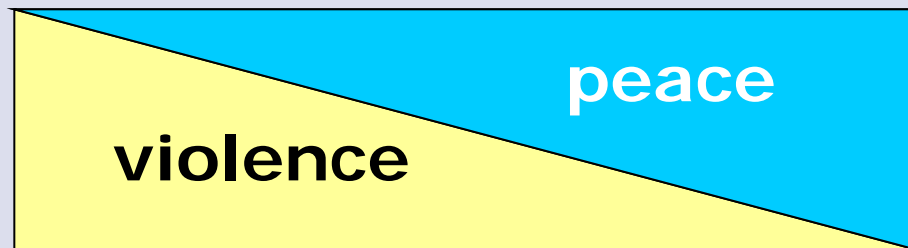
- **State of tranquillity or quiet within a community**
 - Freedom from civil disturbance
 - State of security or order provided for by law or custom
- **Freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions**
- **Harmony in personal relations**
- **State or period of mutual concord between governments**
- **Pact or agreement to end hostilities** between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity

(Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

A holistic concept of peace

1. Peace as the negation of violence

- Health ↔ disease = peace ↔ violence
- Peace is relative
- Peace is subjective
- Peace grows as violence diminishes



What is violence?

Definition by World Health Organization:

Violence is the **intentional** use of **physical force or power, threatened or actual**, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation.

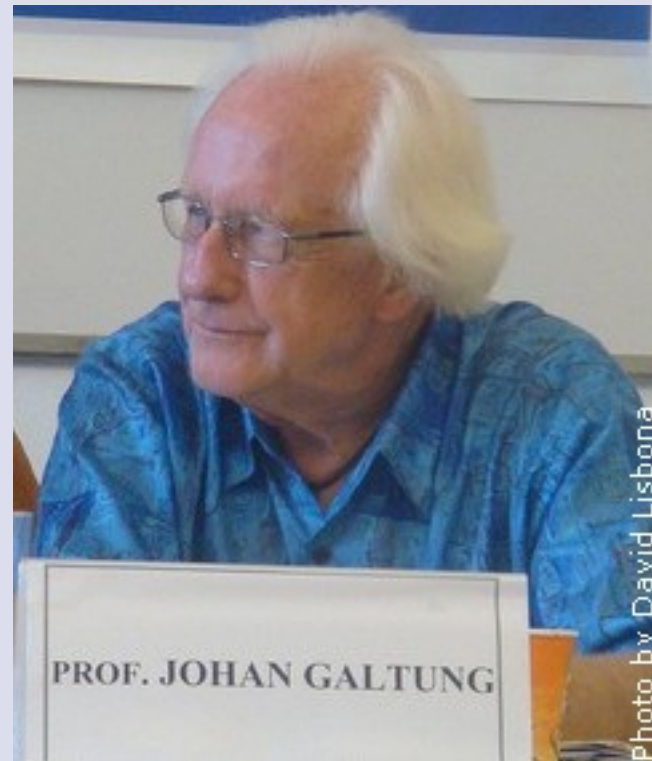
(WHO, 2002:5)

A holistic concept of violence

Violence is the unnecessary insult of basic needs.

(Galtung 1996)

- Survival needs
- Well-being needs
- Identity needs
- Freedom needs



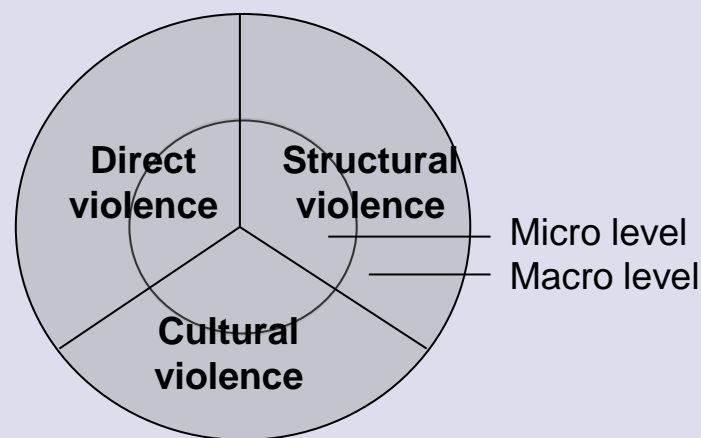
A holistic concept of violence

- **Different forms of violence**

- **Direct:** use of physical or mental power
- **Structural:** socioeconomic or political system
- **Cultural:** justifying parts in religion, ideology, art, science and language

- **Different levels**

- Collective, interpersonal, and self-induced (WHO)
- Mega, macro, meso, and micro (Galtung)



A holistic concept of peace

- Absence of war
- Absence of terror
- Absence of human rights violations
- Absence of interpersonal violence and suicide
- Individual and social harmony
 - Development and justice
 - Fulfilment of basic needs
 - Human security

**Negative
peace**

**Positive
peace**

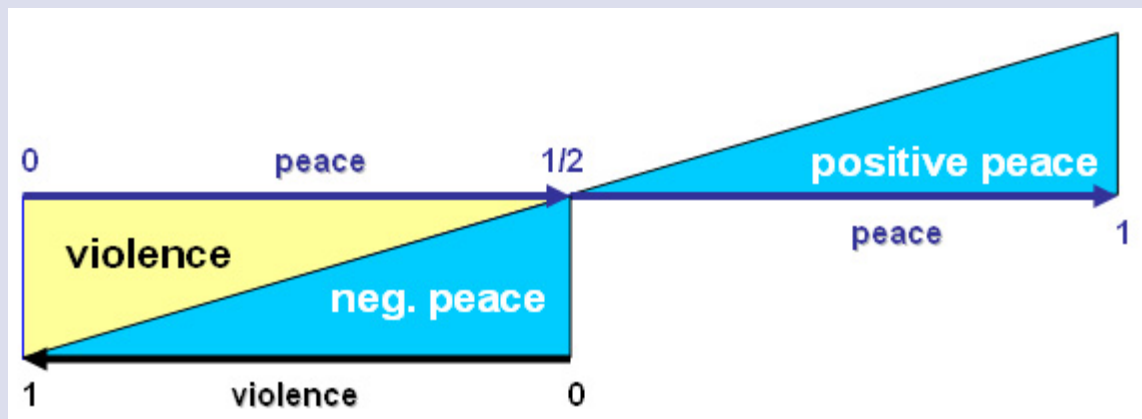


A holistic concept of peace

2. PEACE as a state of complete harmony

HEALTH is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. (WHO)

PEACE is not merely the absence of violence, but ...



A holistic concept of peace

Typology of positive peace

- **Direct peace**
 - loving, harmonious acts to elicit the good in each other
- **Structural peace**
 - equitable, horizontal relations
- **Cultural peace**
 - religion, ideology, science, art, language promoting direct and structural peace

(adapted from Galtung, 1996:33)

A holistic concept of peace

3. Peace as the capacity to handle conflict

Good health: strong immune system
and quick recovery

Peace: capacity to handle conflicts with
empathy, creativity and by non-violent
means

(Galtung 2002:8)



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A holistic concept of peace

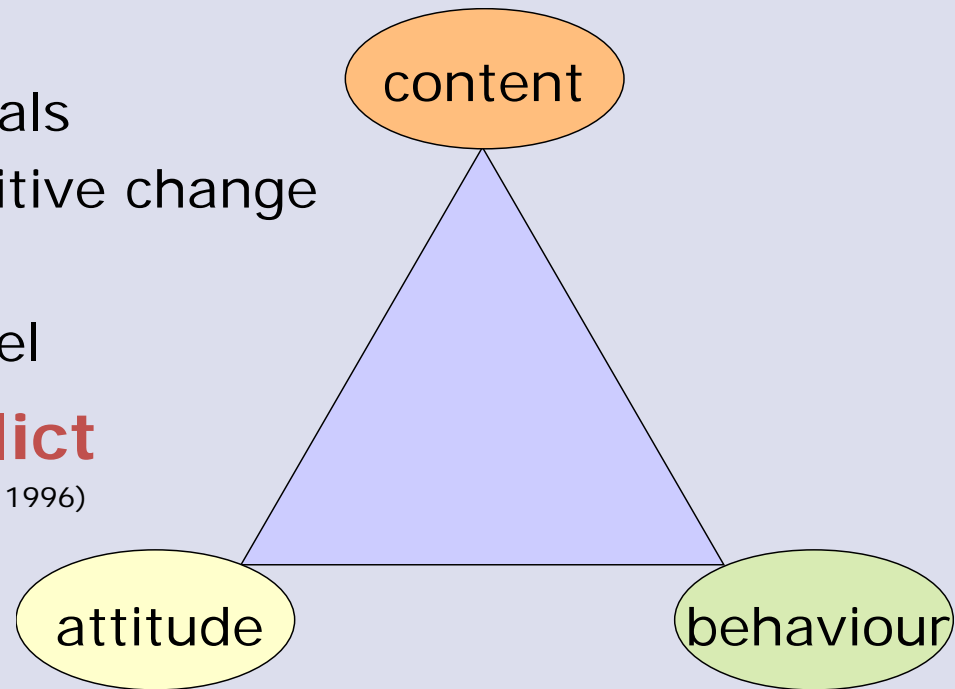
3. Peace as the capacity to handle conflict

- **What is conflict?**

- clash of incompatible goals
- neutral, potential to positive change
- always and everywhere
- from micro to macro level

- **ABC-triangle of conflict**

(Galtung 1996)



A holistic concept of peace

3. Peace as the capacity to handle conflict

- **Four stages of conflict** (Mitchell, in Large 1997:5-6)

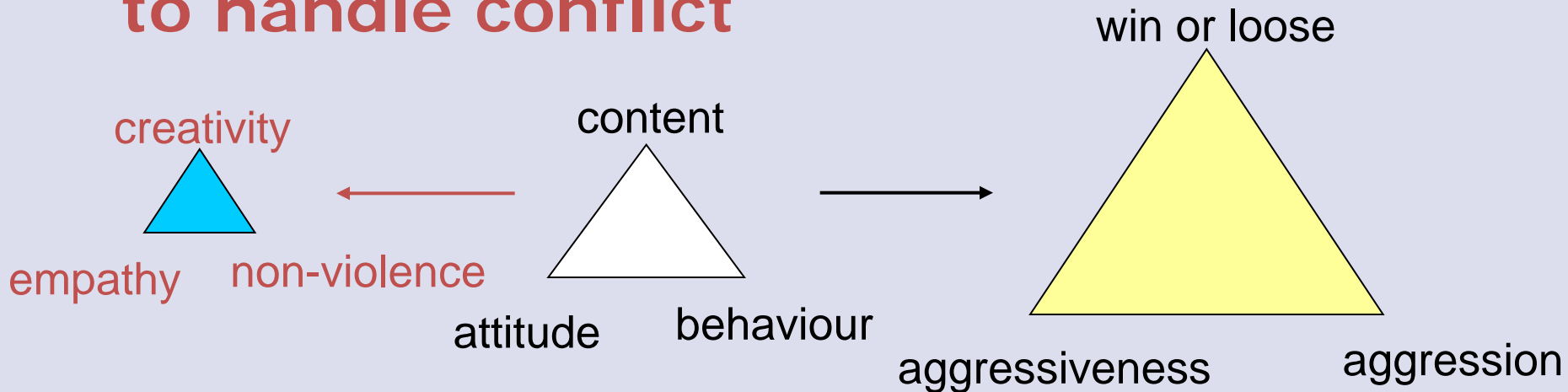
Isolation or cooperation	Beginning of conflict	Latent (hidden) conflict	Manifest (open) conflict
no contact, no interaction, complementary goals	existence of incompatible goals	recognition of incompatible goals	conflict behaviour to achieve goals

– Conflict

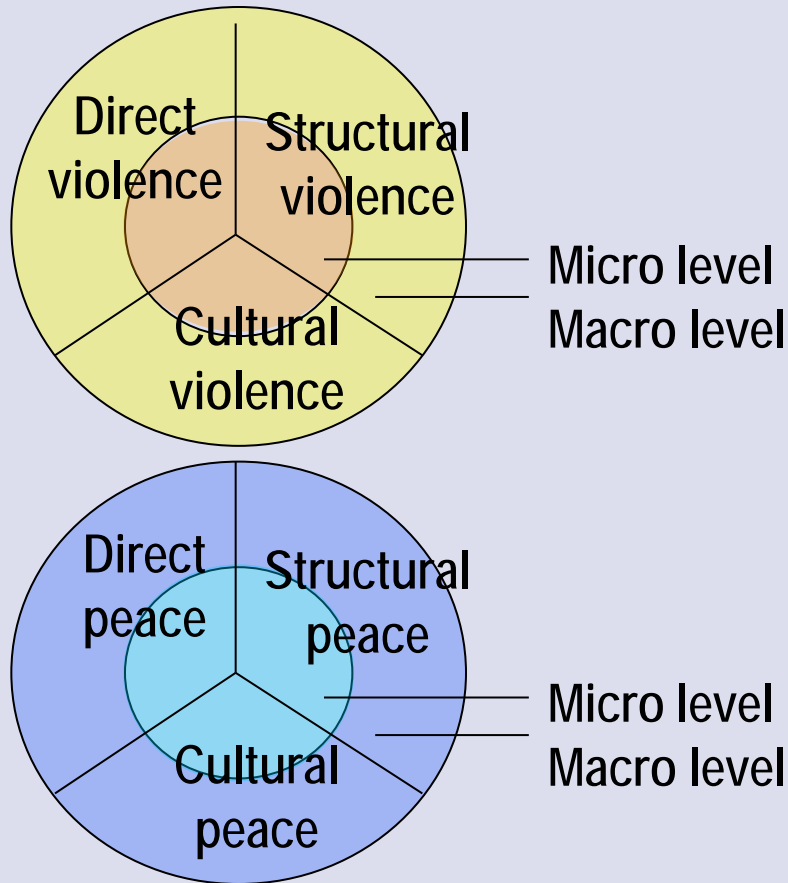
- can move towards escalation or de-escalation
- be handled by peaceful or violent means

A holistic concept of peace

- Violence
 - turns conflicts into “big problems”
 - does not lead to just and sustainable peace
- **Peace - the capacity to handle conflict**



What is peace work ?



Peaceful interventions

- to reduce or abolish direct, structural or cultural violence
- to build harmonious, mutual beneficial relations and structures
- to strengthen the peace capacity of individuals and societies



Peaceful means for social change

- **Non-violent protest and persuasion**
 - a picket line or a peaceful demonstration
- **Social non-cooperation**
 - students on strike
- **Economic non-cooperation**
 - disinvestment, sanctions and boycotts
 - workers taking strike action
- **Political non-cooperation**
 - Gandhi's call on civil servants in the British administration of India to stop working
- **Non-violent intervention**
 - the Freedom Flotilla that took medical equipment, food, building material, and other necessities to Gaza



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Framework and definitions

- What is Medical Peace Work?



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What Medical Peace Work is NOT:



Photo: Jose Luis Pelaez/Corbis/Sca.npix



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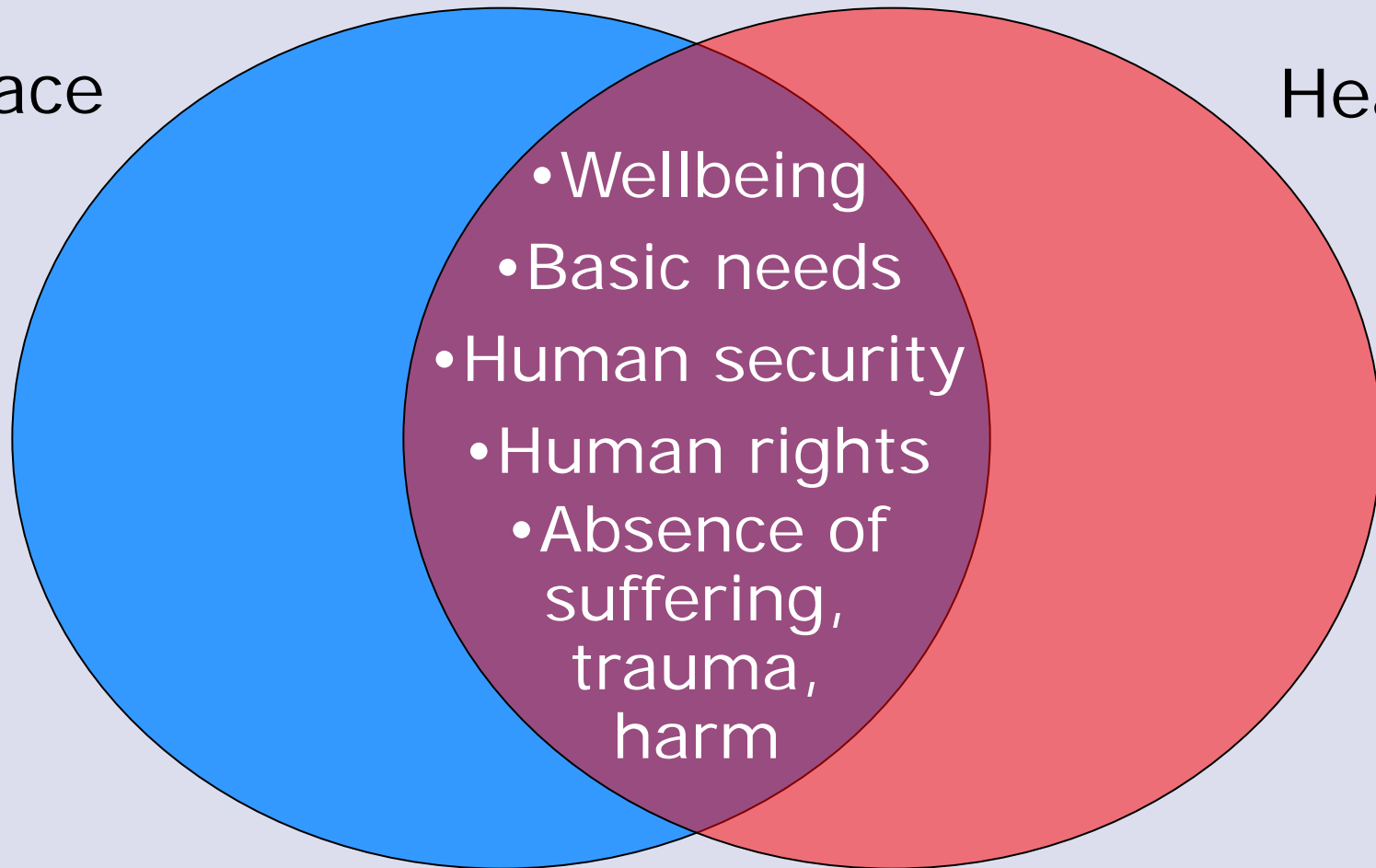
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Holistic concepts of peace and health overlap

Peace

Health



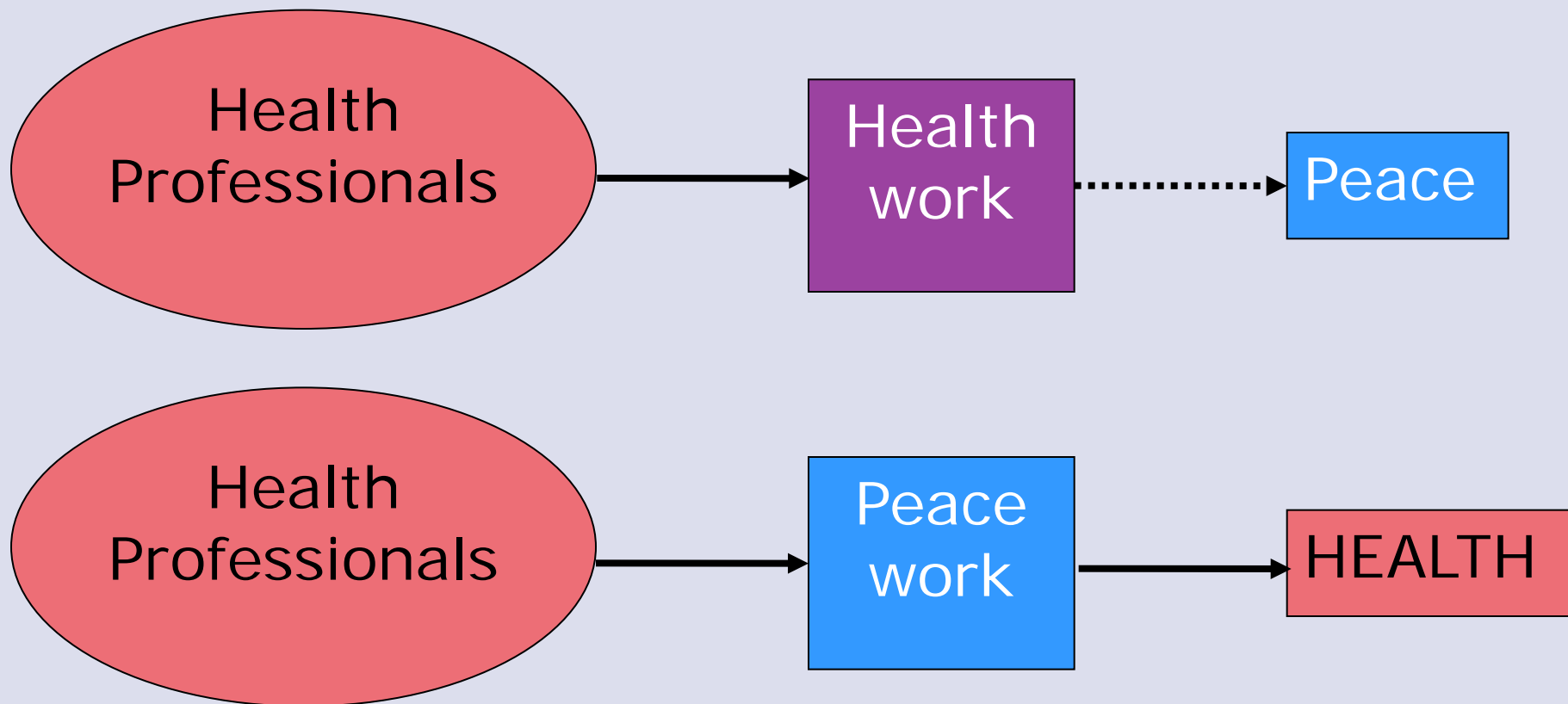
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Implicit & explicit medical peace work



Why do health professionals deal with peace issues?

1. Violence as a public health problem
2. Health professionals at risk of committing violence
3. Health work can worsen a conflict situation

Estimated global deaths by direct violence in year 2000	
Homicide	520 000
Suicide	815 000
War-related	310 000
Total	1 659 000

(WHO 2002: 10)



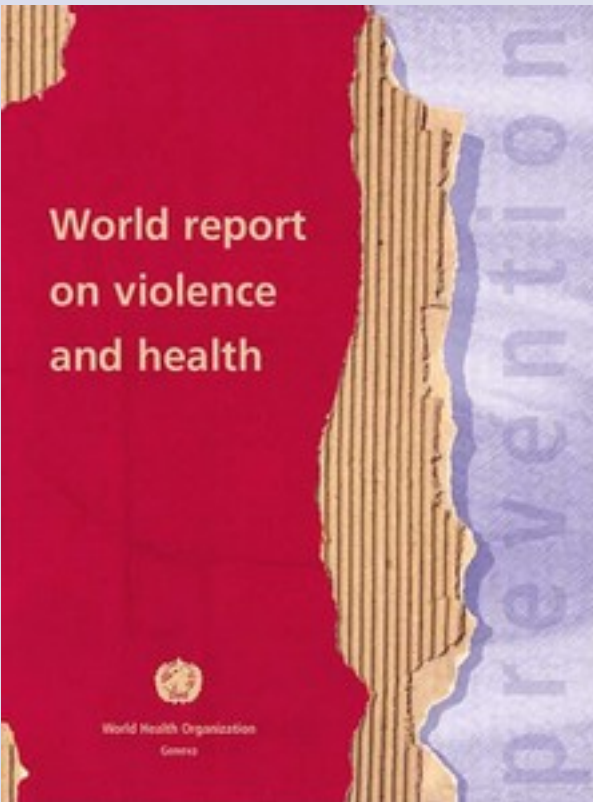
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Violence – a public health problem



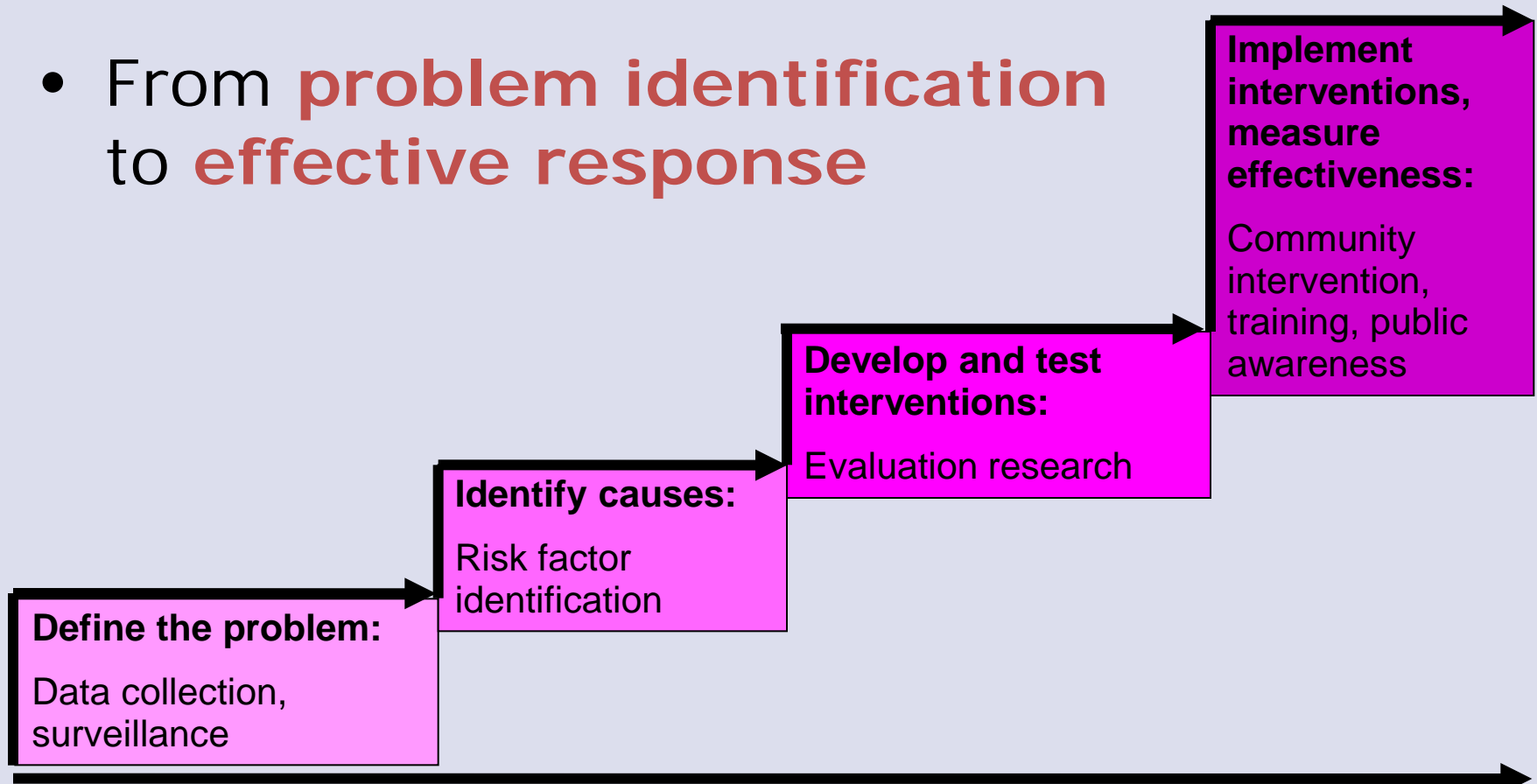
“Violence is often predictable and preventable. Like other health problems, it is not distributed evenly across population groups or settings.

Many of the factors that increase the risk of violence are shared across the different types of violence and are modifiable.”

Gro Harlem Brundtland
(WHO 2002)

A public health approach to violence

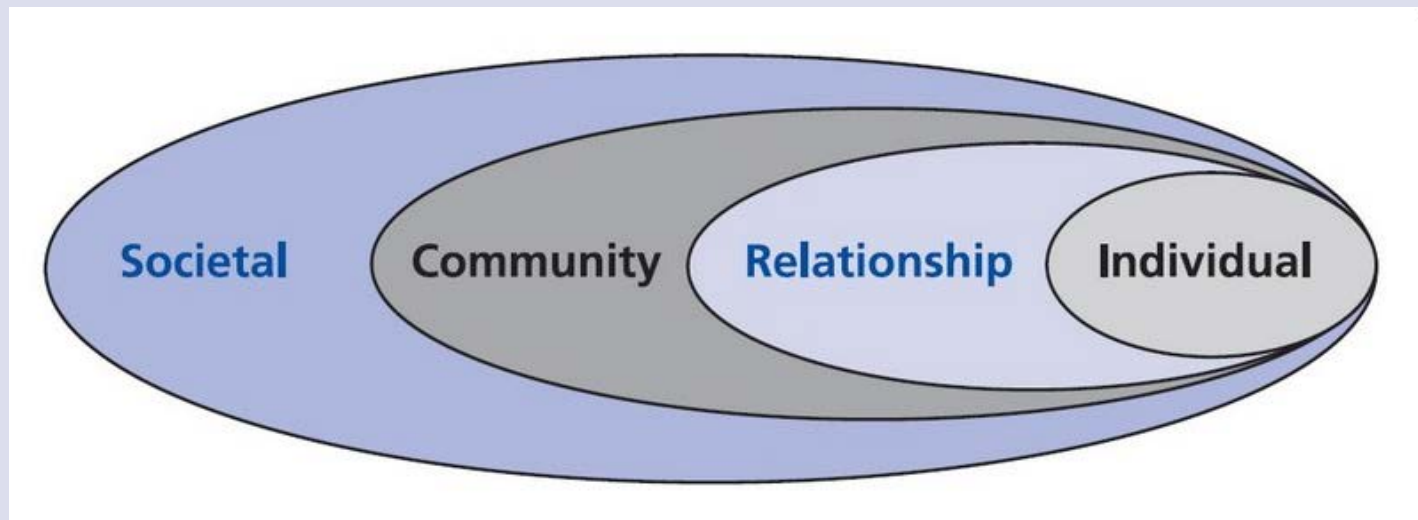
- From **problem identification** to **effective response**



(Adapted from: Mercy et al. 1993)

Identification of risk factors

- Violence as the result of a complex interplay of risk and protective factors on many levels
- An ecological model (WHO 2002)



Timing of peace work

- Primary prevention
 - Risk factors ↓
 - Protective factors ↑
- Secondary prevention
 - Early warning
 - De-escalation
 - Conflict handling
- Tertiary prevention
 - Reconstruction
 - Resolution
 - Reconciliation





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Mechanisms of medical peace work

1. Redefinition of the situation
2. Superordinate goals
3. Mediation and conflict transformation
4. Dissent and non-cooperation
5. Discovery and dissemination of knowledge
6. Rebuilding the fabric of society
7. Solidarity and support
8. Social healing
9. Evocation and extension of altruism
10. Limiting the destructiveness of war

(Santa Barbara and MacQueen 2004)



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Risks and limitations of medical peace work

- (Mis)perceptions when engaging in peace work
 - Risk of being labelled as ideological, extreme, divisive or confrontational
 - Potential divider between health worker and patient, employer or funder
 - Work for peace, human rights, justice, conflict mediation, etc.: sensitive and dangerous
- Deficits in skills, knowledge and attitudes
- No quick and easy solutions in peace work

MPW training material

- Web-based teaching resource centre
- Seven MPW online courses
 - textbook lessons
 - test questions
 - problem-based e-learning cases

→ www.medicalpeacework.org

Goals of MPW training material

- **Prevent** war, terror, human rights violations, and other abuses of power.
- **Promote** compassion, caring relationships, fair structures, and a culture of peace.
- **Improve** health outcomes for patients and communities in violent settings.
- **Strengthen** the health professionals' competencies in peace and conflict work.



Characteristics of MPW-framework

- Holistic peace concept
 - Peace work NOT only at the top level
 - Peace work NOT only in war zones
 - Peace work NOT only for peace activists
- Public health approach to violence and peace
- Explicit peace work – for the sake of HEALTH

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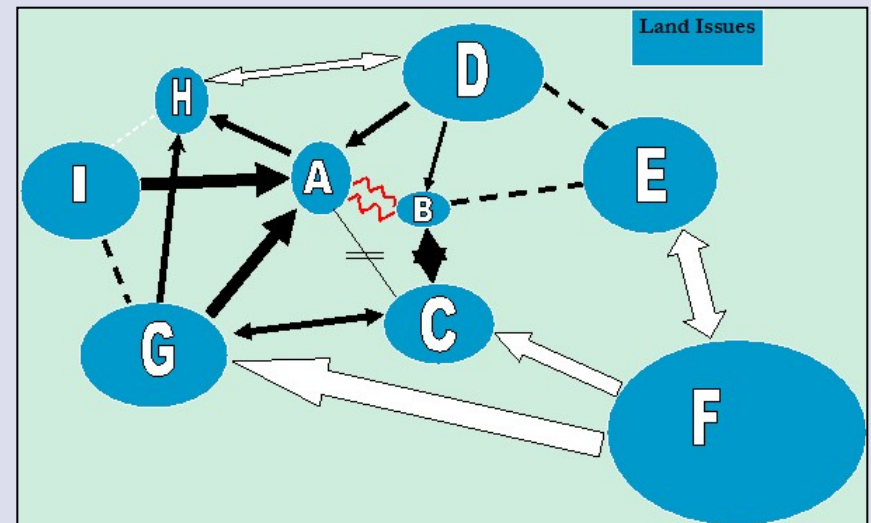
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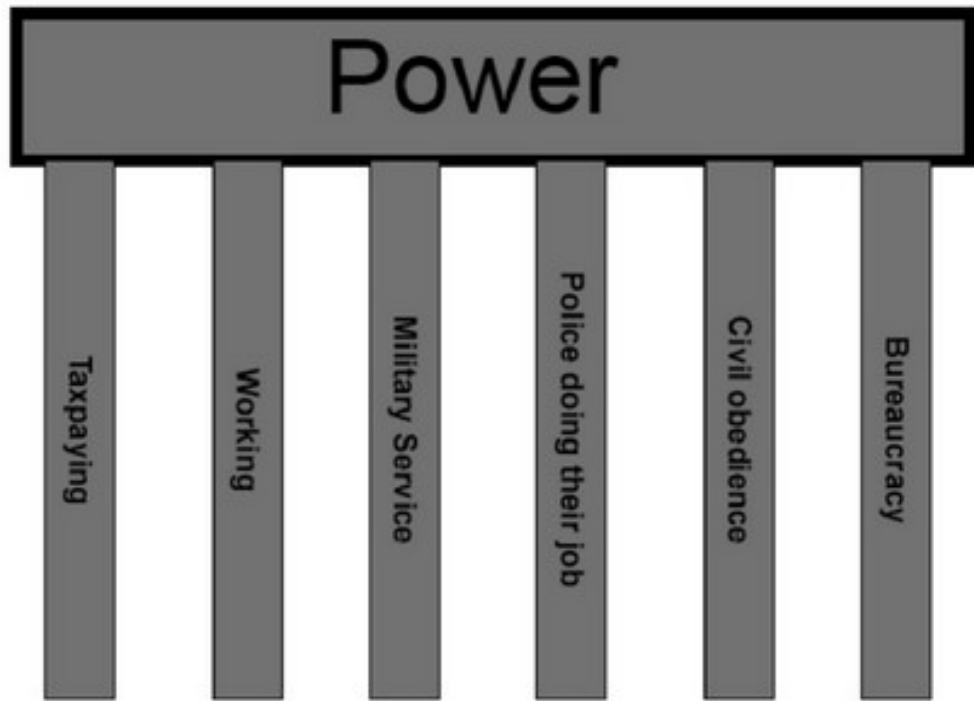
Conflict analysis - a learning process

- constructing a detailed picture of the situation
- identifying the factors that can contribute to peace
- Many approaches and tools:
 - conflict timeline
 - conflict mapping
 - ABC triangle
 - etc.



Nonviolent social change

Most social movements use nonviolent means.



Removing pillars
of power through:

- blockades
- boycotts
- protests, strikes
- demonstrations
- civil disobedience
- street theatre, etc.



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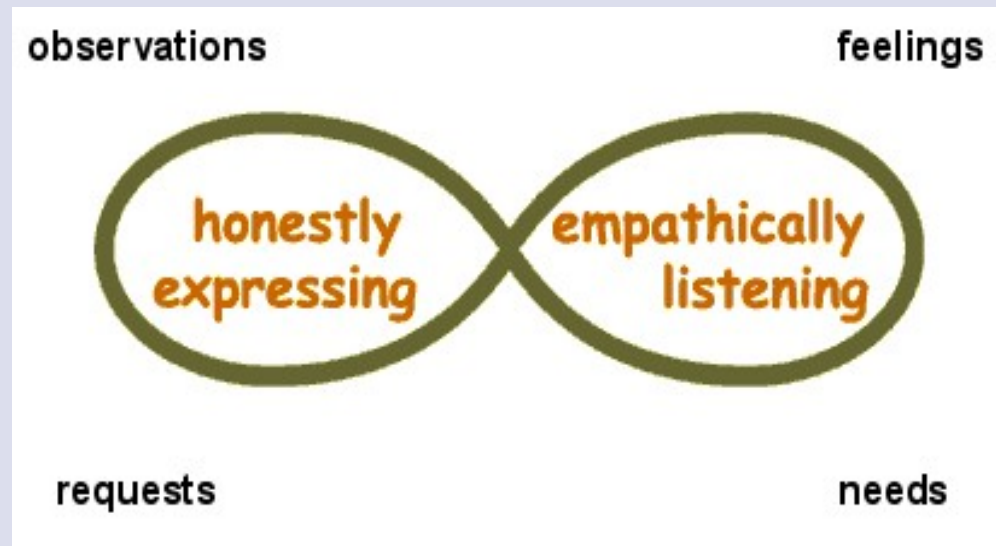
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Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- a philosophical and educational tool for human connection
- Putting empathy at the centre of thinking and communicating
- Four elements for honestly expressing and empathically listening:

(Model adapted from the Centre for Nonviolent Communication)



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