

NON-VIOLENCE, PEACE AND KINDNESS: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is a list of frequently used terms which can be incorporated into classroom activities. The simple definitions and examples are designed to clarify important concepts of peace, non-violence and kindness. The words that appear in bold italics are also defined in the glossary.



Aggression

A set of emotions and behaviours which are considered hostile or threatening to others. Aggression can be 'low-level' (bad humour) but can also reach levels of extreme **violence** (crimes). In many cases, aggression is a reaction to unpleasant feelings we are unable to control, such as **anger**, fear, frustration or sadness. To prevent and control this type of aggression, it is important to develop **emotional honesty, empathy** and social skills. Aggression may also be instrumental, where it is used as a means of achieving an end. Thus, it is important that the students are educated in ethics-based values, are made aware of the rights of others, and acquire negotiation and **peaceful conflict resolution** skills.

Anger

Anger is a human emotion. We feel angry when something frustrates, irritates or frightens us, or when we don't understand something. Feeling angry is normal, but not being able to control it, or letting it turn into **violence** is harmful both to ourselves and to others.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness refers to our ability to defend our rights, interests and opinions without being aggressive. When we are assertive, we are neither led by nor attempt to impose our wishes on others: assertiveness falls half-way between submission and **aggression**. For example: Louis asks to use my marker. I explain that I cannot lend it to him as I need it myself, and suggest he asks me again later. A submissive reaction would be to let him have it even though it would prevent me from finishing the task I am engaged in. An aggressive reaction would be to tell him he's 'a pain', to 'get lost' and 'buy his own markers'.

Being nice to each other/Kindness

Being nice or kind to each other is not just the opposite of being abusive, mean or hurtful. Being nice to each other involves making an effort to respect each other, to be kind to each other and to support each other when necessary.



Caring

Caring refers to the interested, attentive way people act when they are looking to find the best possible outcome to a situation. We can be caring to ourselves, others, living beings, and objects. When we are caring to others, we want them to feel good and not to suffer. Caring is a part of a child's right to **protection**.

Coexistence

Coexistence is the ability of human beings to live with each other (and other living creatures) in peace and harmony. To be able to live with others, we need to take into account the environment, the needs of others and our own expectations. Other words related to this term are "social cohesion" and "social tolerance".

Conflict

A conflict is a situation in which the interests of two or more individuals or groups are at odds. Conflict is a normal, inevitable part of life: we can all experience conflicts with friends (I want to go to the park but my friend wants to go to the pool), within ourselves (I want to go to the park but I want to go to the pool too). Conflict is not the same as **violence**: Conflicts can be resolved peacefully by analysing the situation, talking about it and using negotiation and **cooperation** skills.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

It is an international agreement that sets out a list of obligations to be adopted by states regarding the rights of children all over the world. Once the convention has been ratified by a country, it becomes legally binding and implicates all the country's citizens and institutions, including schools, teachers and children. The Convention specifically refers to the right of children to **protection** from all forms of violence which, apart from cruel, degrading or inhumane treatment, also includes mental or physical harm or abuse, neglect, corporal punishment and intimidation.

Cooperation

Cooperation is a strategy for obtaining results and goals that favour two or more people or groups. For cooperation to take place, people need to collaborate with each other, assume responsibility for achieving common objectives and seek solutions that benefit both parties.

Culture of peace

A culture of peace refers to the way people live together and perceive the world and the human relationships within a group based on **non-violence** and the prevention of **conflicts**. It seeks to understand the causes behind the problem and to solve issues through dialogue and negotiation. A culture of peace promotes the values, attitudes and behaviour that need to be shared by the majority in order to achieve non-violent **coexistence**.

Culture of violence

It is the opposite of a **culture of peace**. When a culture of **violence** exists in a group or society, violent responses to **conflicts** are considered natural, normal and even the only way of addressing issues. As a result, the level of violence can escalate, either making the situation worse or resolving it to the detriment of the weakest members of the group. A culture of violence can either be reinforced or counteracted through education, the media, language, ideology, art, the legal system and other social intervention.

Cyber violence

Cyber violence refers to all the forms of **aggression** perpetrated or posted online. The most common forums for this kind of violence are social media sites, webpages and blogs, where groups or individuals, acting as instigators or abettors, attack, threaten, abuse, insult, or intimidate their victims, i.e. other individuals or groups. Cyber violence sometimes persists among children and adolescents because the aggressors do not fully appreciate the negative impact their actions have on the victims because they are far away or the incident happened a long time ago. Cyber violence includes cyber harassment, stalking, cyberbullying, grooming and sextorsion.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the behaviour of a person, group or institution against another which restricts the latter's access to certain rights, such as education, work, legal assistance, health care, etc. Many types of discrimination exist based on age, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, religion, colour, economic status. According to Allport's scale, the degrees of discrimination range from mild to more serious: Antilocution (speaking ill of others), avoidance, exclusion, physical attack and extermination. Even the mildest forms of discrimination are an attack on human rights.

Emotional honesty

Emotional honesty is the ability to recognize our own emotions. We are free to share these emotions with others or choose not to express them in public if we so wish, but we still need to be able to recognize them internally in order to prevent ***misunderstandings***, develop ***empathy*** and avert potentially violent situations. Emotional honesty develops and grows over time but needs to be nurtured from early childhood. An example of this could be: my best friend has spent the afternoon talking to a new classmate and I am not happy about it. I know I feel annoyed and unhappy because she doesn't seem to care about me. I decide not to show my anger because it's not the new girl's fault that I am feeling like this, and I don't want my friend to know that I am jealous either. Since I'm not in a good mood now, I'll wait for a while before asking my friend if she wants to play with me and then we can have some fun.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to put ourselves in the place of others and view a situation from their perspective. Empathy helps build ***trust*** and is important for ***peaceful conflict resolution***.

Escalation of violence

This refers to situations where a ***misunderstanding*** or act of ***aggression*** leads to a spiral of ***violence*** which is much more serious than the initial incident. Escalations of violence are often fuelled by emotions –such as ***anger***,

frustration or fear– which have spun out of control. An extreme case of an escalation of violence would be an all-out war. When confronting an escalation of violence, it is important to be able to use strategies of ***peaceful conflict resolution*** and ***empathy*** to calm the situation.

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to ***coexistence*** based on the understanding that all the people in a group have the same rights and that everyone has something valuable to offer, irrespective of differences in ability, ideas, race, or personal characteristics. It is the opposite of exclusion or ***discrimination*** and while it is similar to integration, it is not the same. In integration, there is a dominant group or system to which others must adapt and fit in, while in inclusion, the group is defined by the characteristics of all its members and develops and grows according to everyone's contributions.

Mediation

Mediation is a strategy for peaceful ***conflict resolution*** in which a person or group intervenes and facilitates a solution in a conflict between two other individuals or groups. The mediator adopts a neutral position in the conflict and uses a series of strategies and tools aimed at getting the conflicting parties to cooperate, reach consensus and achieve a lasting solution.

Misunderstanding

Misunderstandings arise when we misinterpret a situation or the words, behaviour, feelings or intentions of others. One misunderstanding can often lead to another, causing unpleasant or potentially harmful situations such as ***escalations of violence***.

Non-violence

Non-violence is a form of coexistence where violence in any form, as a means or as an end, is rejected. Non-violence acknowledges conflicts and works to prevent and resolve them peacefully, seeking to redress the injustice. A ***culture of peace*** is based on non-violence.

Peace

Peace is usually understood as the absence of war (negative peace). However, this interpretation is flawed and causes a vicious circle of **violence** because it focuses only on the outward appearance, without addressing the injustice and inequities which may be lying behind apparent peace. An alternative definition of peace is “positive peace”, which focuses on the day-to-day commitment of all the institutions and members of a society to build non-violent **coexistence**. Positive peace is based on equity and respect for human rights.

Peaceful conflict resolution

In peaceful conflict resolution, non-violent solutions are found to everyday problems. There are several stages in a resolution process: during the initial stage, the problem is identified and analysed in order to understand the issue and its causes. This is followed by a modelling stage, where the potential impact of the proposed solutions on the relationships, context and other variables is examined. Finally, a decision is made and the results are evaluated. It is important to study the alternative solutions carefully and choose the one that is most likely to be successful in getting both parties to cooperate so that mutual benefits and a long-term relationship can be achieved.

Prejudice

Prejudice is a way of forming opinions about others, judging how they act or behaving towards them based on preconceived ideas and **stereotypes** as opposed to what we actually know to be true about how they think, act and feel. Prejudice is harmful to ourselves as well as to others, since it prevents us from getting to know what people are really like and can cause conflict in our relationships with them. For example: “I won’t talk to Maria because she is pretty and she’s probably big-headed and stand-offish” or “I won’t help Louis because he is older and should be able to solve his own problems by himself”.

Protection

Protection is one of the rights of the child. It refers to the care that all children and adolescents require to grow up as happy, well-adjusted adults. The child’s protective

environment is the network of family, school, friends, institutions, and peers around them which prevents and acts on any threats to their safety and well-being.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process in which two people or groups on opposing sides of a **conflict** accept a solution, agree to live in peaceful coexistence and put an end to hostilities. Put simply, they “kiss and make up”. Not all conflicts require a process of reconciliation, only in situations where open hostility is present.

Respect

Respect is the way we value others, the consideration we show them, and how we honour their dignity. Respect for others is necessary for peaceful coexistence: it encourages empathy and inclusion and prevents discrimination.

Self-control

Self-control refers to our ability to refrain from letting our emotions lead us into extreme, inappropriate, or harmful behaviour (to ourselves or others). Self-control does not consist of denying or ignoring our feelings, but being able to manage them while respecting the feelings of others.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are facile generalizations used to explain the world around us. Although using stereotypes can be a practical means of describing a group, they aren’t always useful. For example if we say “birds can fly”, we’re forgetting that penguins and ostriches can’t, or if we say “deserts are sandy” we forget that salt, rock and snow deserts also exist. Using stereotypes to describe people lays the groundwork for **prejudice** and **discrimination**. Stereotypes, even when they refer to the positive qualities of individuals or social groups, are still harmful because they limit the value and personality of individuals to generalities about their origin, culture or appearance, and this prejudices their relationships with others. Examples of such stereotypes include: “All Brazilians are good footballers” or “All blondes are pretty”.

Tribalism

The term tribalism is used in anthropology to define the behaviour, attitudes and values that make certain people or groups feel a strong sense of identity that makes them see themselves as different and separate from other people or groups. Tribalism is at the root of certain forms of discrimination such as racism, sexism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, aporophobia, classism, or Islamophobia, among others. Tribalism is closely related to the **culture of violence**, since it fosters the idea that “others” do not deserve the same rights as “us”.

Trust/confidence

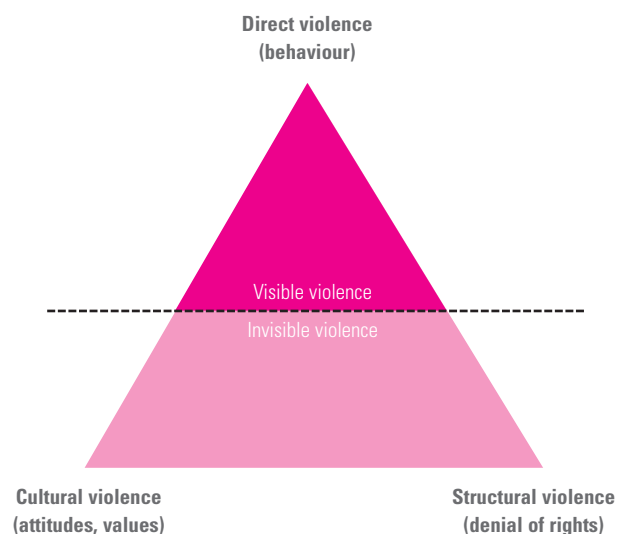
Trust or confidence refers to how secure we feel about ourselves and about our relationships with others. Trust enables us to forge networks of friends, family and close allies who we know we won't hurt and won't hurt us. Trust is an essential part of **coexistence**. When we trust ourselves and our own capacities, we are self-confident.

Violence

Violence is the use of force to achieve an end, express oneself or impose oneself on others against their will. Violence can be physical or psychological, can impact situations and relationships, can be driven by emotions, or can simply be a means to an end. Violence commonly refers to extreme forms of uncontrolled or unjustifiable **aggression**.

Violence triangle

Violence can be represented as a triangle with three vertices: direct violence, which is visible and manifested in easily recognisable everyday behaviour such as insulting, fighting, and committing crimes; cultural violence, which is less obvious as it is based on attitudes (such as indifference, passivity, discrimination, prejudice etc.) which lead people to consider it as something natural, inevitable and even necessary; and structural violence, which is also invisible and is considered the worst of the three as it refers to the set of structures (political, economic, legal, educational, social etc.) that permit social injustice and violations of human rights. This theory was developed by the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung.



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