

# HAEQS

## Nonviolent Communication

What? Why? How? When?

# What?

- Nonviolent Communication:
  - Communication process
  - Developed in early 1960s
  - By Marshall Rosenberg
- Focuses on:
  - Self-empathy
  - Empathy with others
  - Honest self-expression

# Why?

- Possible goals:
  - Reduce judgment
  - Mediate conflict
  - Make people understand each other
- But: Just another tool!
  - Has good sides and bad sides
  - Good in some situations, bad in others

# How?

- Focus on 4 Components:
  - Observations
  - Feelings
  - Needs
  - Requests

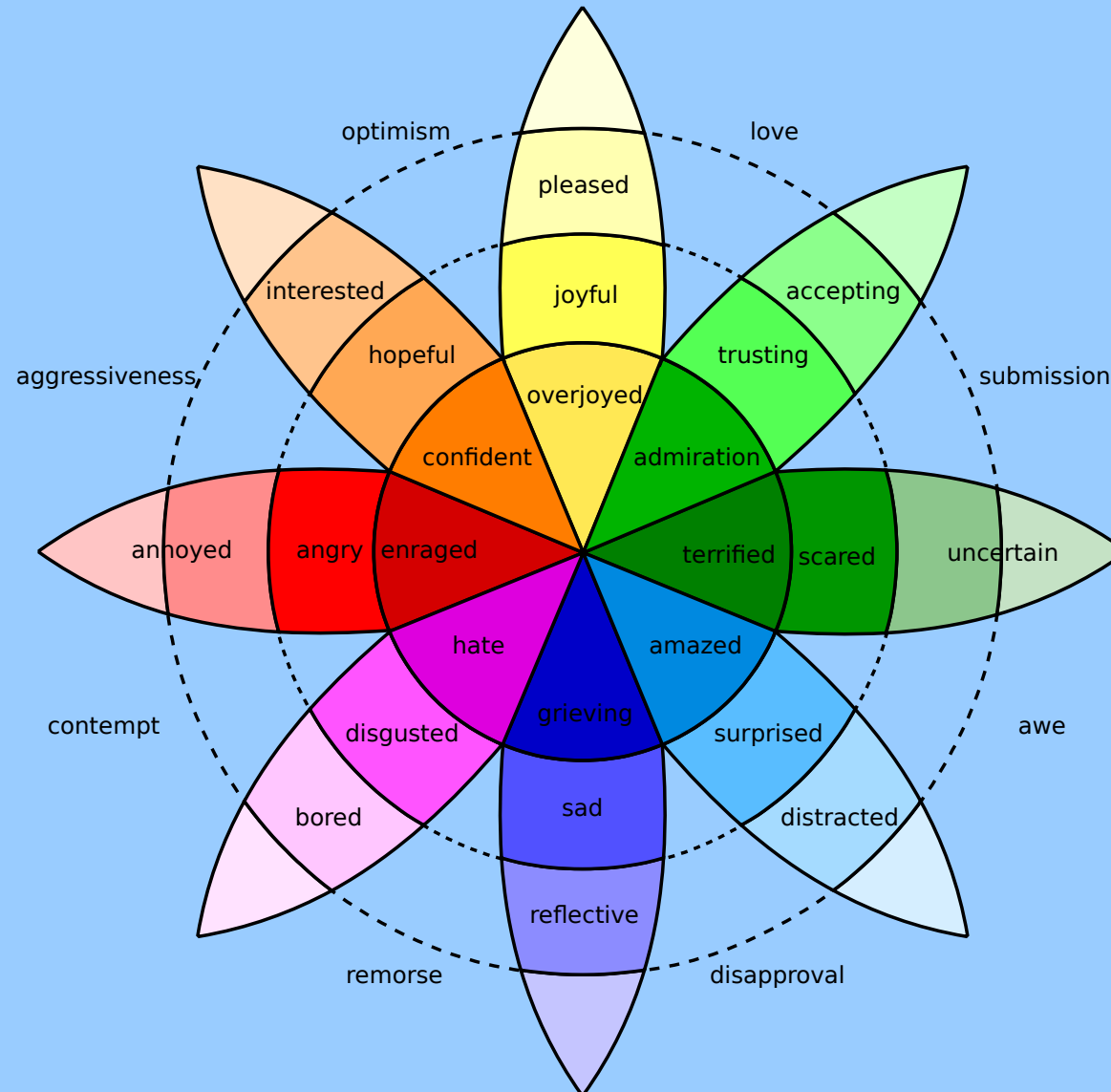
# 1. Observation

- What happened?
- Describe as you perceive it
- Be as specific is possible
- Do not judge or explain the behavior
  
- ~~“You always say X.”~~
- “Yesterday, when I said X, you replied like Y.”

## 2. Feelings

- How do you feel when the thing happens?
- Try feelings, not thoughts or judgements (that you think the other person has).
- ~~“I feel like that’s not fair.”~~
- ~~“I feel like you hate me.”~~
- “I feel sad and worried.”

# 2. Feelings



Based on Plutchik's wheel of emotions

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contrasting\\_and\\_categorization\\_of\\_emotions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contrasting_and_categorization_of_emotions)

# 3. Needs

- State your need that is (not) satisfied so you feel that way.
- Food, Rest/Sleep, Water, Safety
- Security, Stability, Support, Trust
- Connection, Acceptance, Affection, Belonging
- Choice, Freedom, Independence
  
- “I feel like this because my need for acceptance is not being met.”



# 4. Requests

- What do you wish the other person did?
- Just a suggestion, not a demand.
- Difference:
  - Request: Other person can say Yes or No!
  - Demand: “No” is not an acceptable answer.
- ~~“You have to do Z next time, or else...”~~
- “In the future, would you be willing to do Z instead?”

# 4. Requests

- “No”
  - Do not give up
  - Empathize with what is preventing the other person from saying yes
  - Ask for alternative suggestions
  - Use clear, positive, concrete action language
- “I don’t want to do that. But would it help you if I did *A* or *B*?”

# Example

- Situation:
  - It's 11 pm, there's loud music coming from your flatmate's room and you want to sleep.
- How to communicate here?
  - State an observation
  - Tell how you feel
  - Say your need
  - Make a request

# Variations

- You can also practice Nonviolent Communication with yourself
- Or try to empathize with another person
- Assumption:
  - Behind every action, there's a valid need
  - The action is a strategy to fulfill the need
  - There may be other (better) strategies

# Challenges

- Emotions and Needs:
  - Can be hard to figure out
  - Can be hard to communicate
  - Being honest makes you vulnerable
- Language barriers

# Limitations

- Useful when:
  - Everyone means well
  - Everyone wants to understand each other's needs
  - Everyone can talk about their needs and feelings without fear
- Otherwise: Can be harmful!
  - Situations with power dynamics, e.g. with your boss
  - In abusive situations
  - As marginalized people fighting oppression

# Criticism

- No framework to express boundaries
- Negotiation to communicate that way is not part of the process
- Focuses a lot on **how** things are said, not **what** is said
  - People who are hurt do not always communicate “perfectly”
  - Danger: Dismiss feelings because they are not clearly stated in NVC framework

# Where can it be useful?

- **Educating** (especially other privileged people)
- Understanding your own discomfort
- Mediating conflict