

# Nonviolent Communication Skills

Communication skills for  
connecting empathetically  
through conflict.

# Why?

Disagreement is a normal part of any healthy family, friendship or intimate relationship. Rainbow people often face additional challenges in conflict due to people in our families, workplaces, communities and society holding harmful beliefs and behaviours towards rainbow people and identities.

We also face unique challenges in our relationships, that are specific to Rainbow identities and experiences. Additionally, we tend to have fewer examples of relationships that look like ours to draw from.

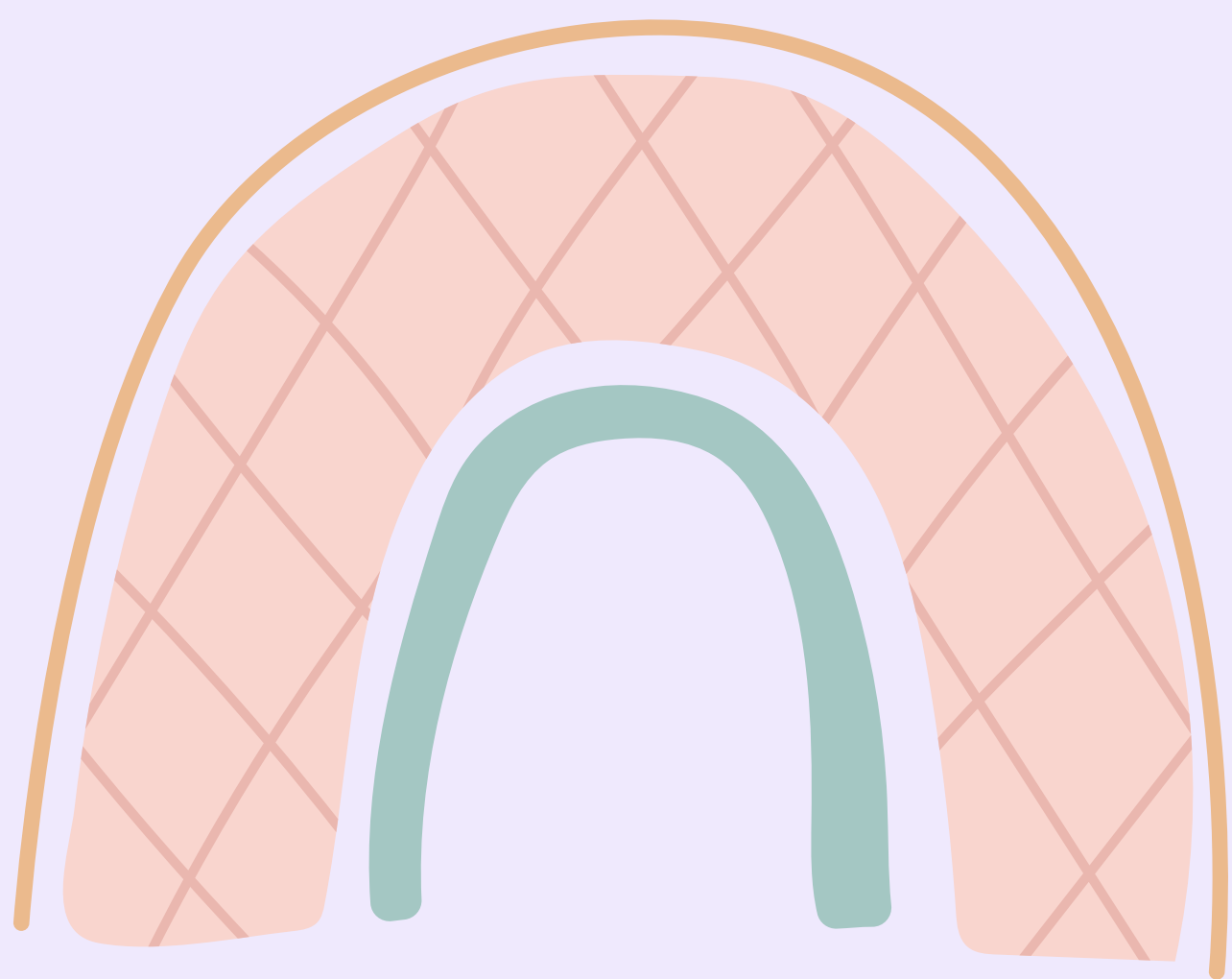
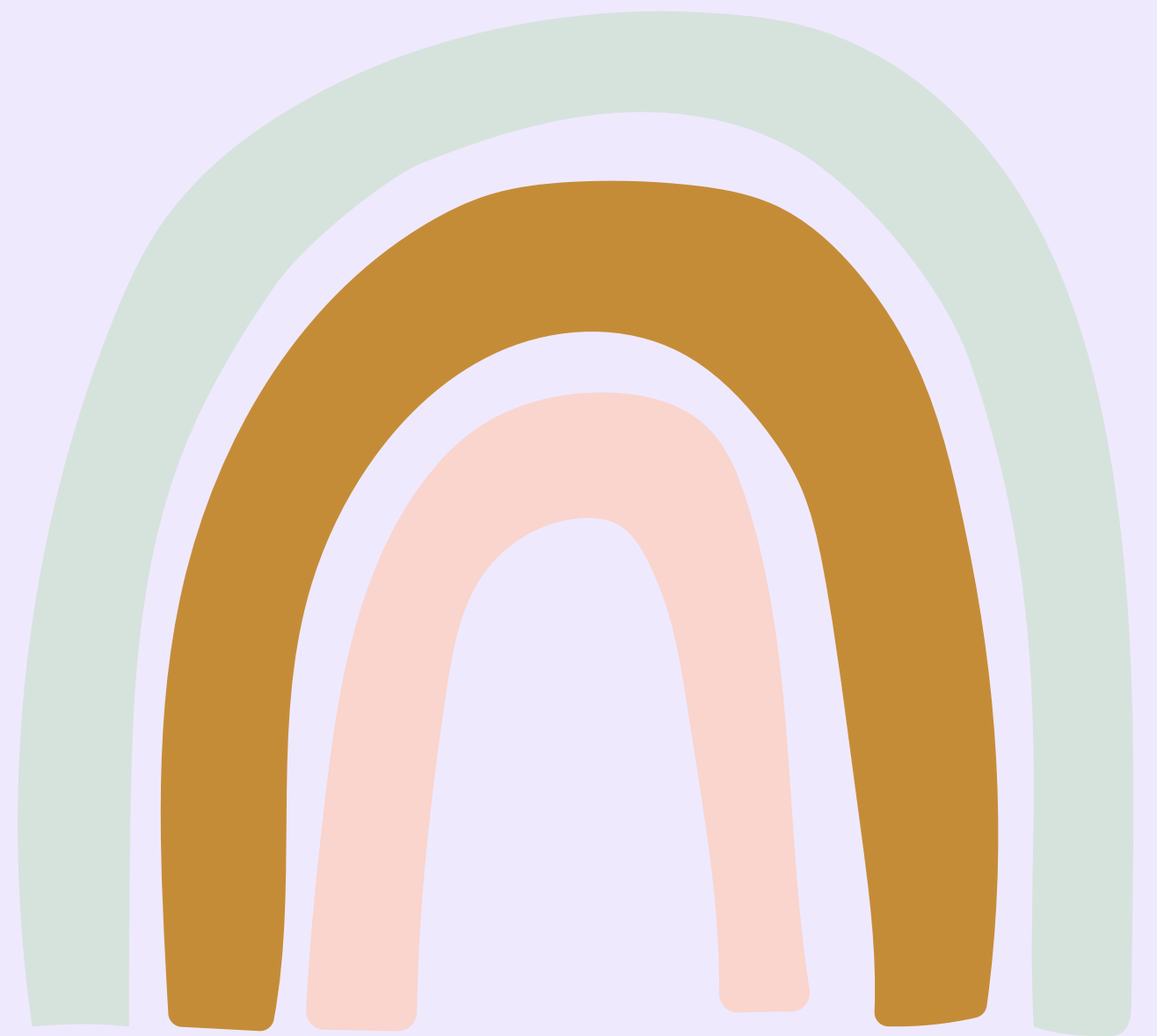
This can put us as individuals and our relationships under pressure. So having tools to navigate conflict in a healthy, respectful way is crucial.

This toolkit can be used with friends, family, coworkers and intimate partners to help us resolve conflict in an empathetic and healthy way.



# How to use this resource

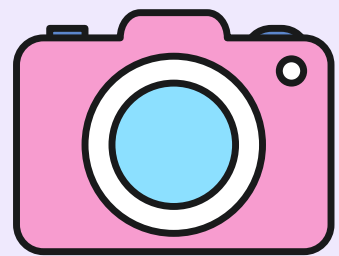
This resource begins with an overview of the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) process, then breaks down each step in more detail. There are questions to help guide you, and lists of feelings and needs. You can use this resource as a guide to navigate disagreements with others, or to help get better insight into your own feelings and needs.



Please remember to look after your safety first. If you are not safe to be in conversation, communication or physical proximity to someone, please prioritise your safety. Keep a physical distance where possible and seek outside support where needed. Find a list of support services at the end of this booklet.



# Process Overview



## Observation

IE: When you said...  
When you did...  
When I saw...

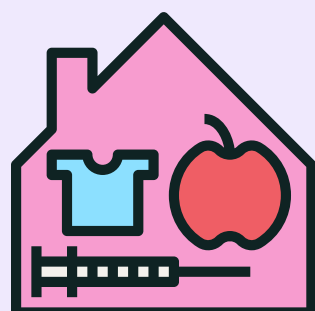
-What a camera can see and a microphone could hear.



## Feelings

IE: I felt...  
I'm feeling...  
Are you feeling...

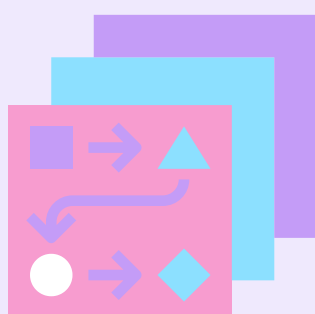
-Identify physical sensations and emotions.



## Needs

IE: Because I have a need for... Because I value...  
Are you needing...

-Identify which needs feel alive in you.



## Request

IE: Would you be willing to... Can we...  
Would you be willing to tell me what you heard me say?

-Identify the next step you'd like to take.

# Making an Observation

Observations should be what a camera would see and what a microphone would hear.

When communicating it is helpful to be specific and avoid making interpretations of people's intentions.

Different cultures express and communicate differently. Neurodiverse people also communicate and understand things differently, we are all unique. So, it's important to factor these in as well.

This helps you to stay focused on communicating about and solving the problem, instead of arguing about different interpretations.

This is about taking a step back and questioning any stories you are telling yourself.



# Identifying feelings

Look through the following list to help identify your feelings.

Keeping a list as you go might help.

Also, ask yourself; What physical sensations am I feeling?

When communicating feelings, avoid blaming others. Simply identify what you're feeling.

# Anger

If you're feeling angry ask yourself:  
What judgements are you making?



Feelings

**Agitated**

**Annoyed**

**Bitter**

**Enraged**

**Exasperated**

**Frustrated**

**Hostile**

**Irritated**

**Miffed**

# Sadness

Feelings

Despair

Hopeless

Despondent

Hurt

Distress

Lonely

Gloomy

Pessimistic

Grief

Troubled

Heavy

Vulnerable



# Tired



Feelings

Exhausted

Lethargic

Fatigued

Overwhelmed

Tetchy

Weary

Indifferent

# Confused

Feelings

Apathetic

Troubled

Embarrassed

Uncomfortable

Hesitant

Uneasy

Perplexed

Withdrawn

Torn

# Playful



Feelings

**Alive**

**Invigorated**

**Effervescent**

**Refreshed**

**Energetic**

**Stimulated**

# Scared



Feelings

**Afraid**

**Nervous**

**Anxious**

**Panicky**

**Fearful**

**Shocked**

**Horrificed**

**Startled**

**Jittery**

**Terrified**

**Worried**

# Glad



Feelings

**Confident**

**Happy**

**Delighted**

**Hopeful**

**Encouraged**

**Inspired**

**Excited**

**Joyful**

**Grateful**

**Relieved**

**Satisfied**

# Loving



Feelings

**Affectionate**

**Nurtured**

**Appreciative**

**/ nurturing**

**Compassionate**

**Sensitive**

**Friendly**

**Tender**

**Warm**

**Sweet**



# Peaceful

Feelings

Absorbed

Engrossed

Blissful

Expansive

Calm

Serene

Content

Spacious

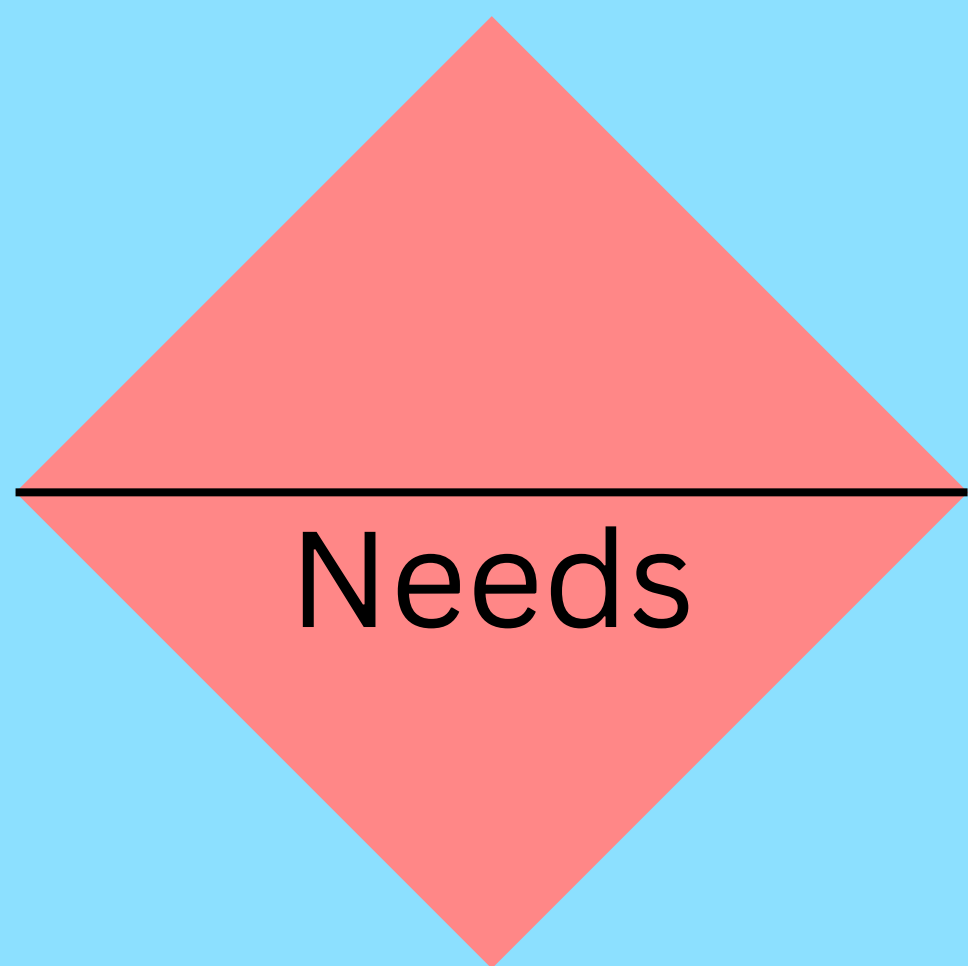
Tranquil

# Identifying needs

Look through the following list to help identify your needs. Some people prefer to use the word values instead of needs - do what works for you.

When we are in conflict, it usually means that a need is not being met. As you look through, notice how you feel - do any of these needs feel 'alive' for you right now?

If you kept a list of feelings, you might like to go through these one by one and identify the needs that are connected to each feeling, and write them down. This is normally easiest when we have narrowed our feelings list down to 3 or 4 feelings.



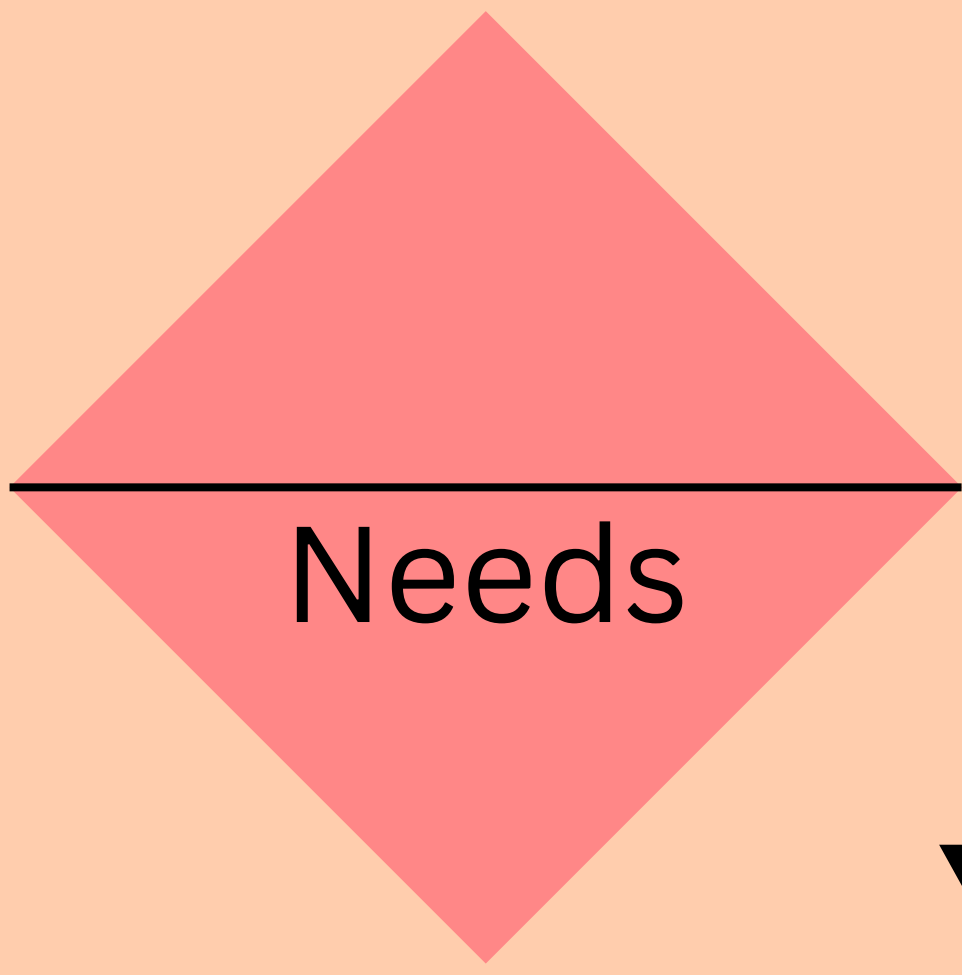
# Choice

**Autonomy**

**Freedom**

**Independence**

**Space**



# Being Yourself

**Aliveness**

**Openness**

**Creativity**

**Self Expression**

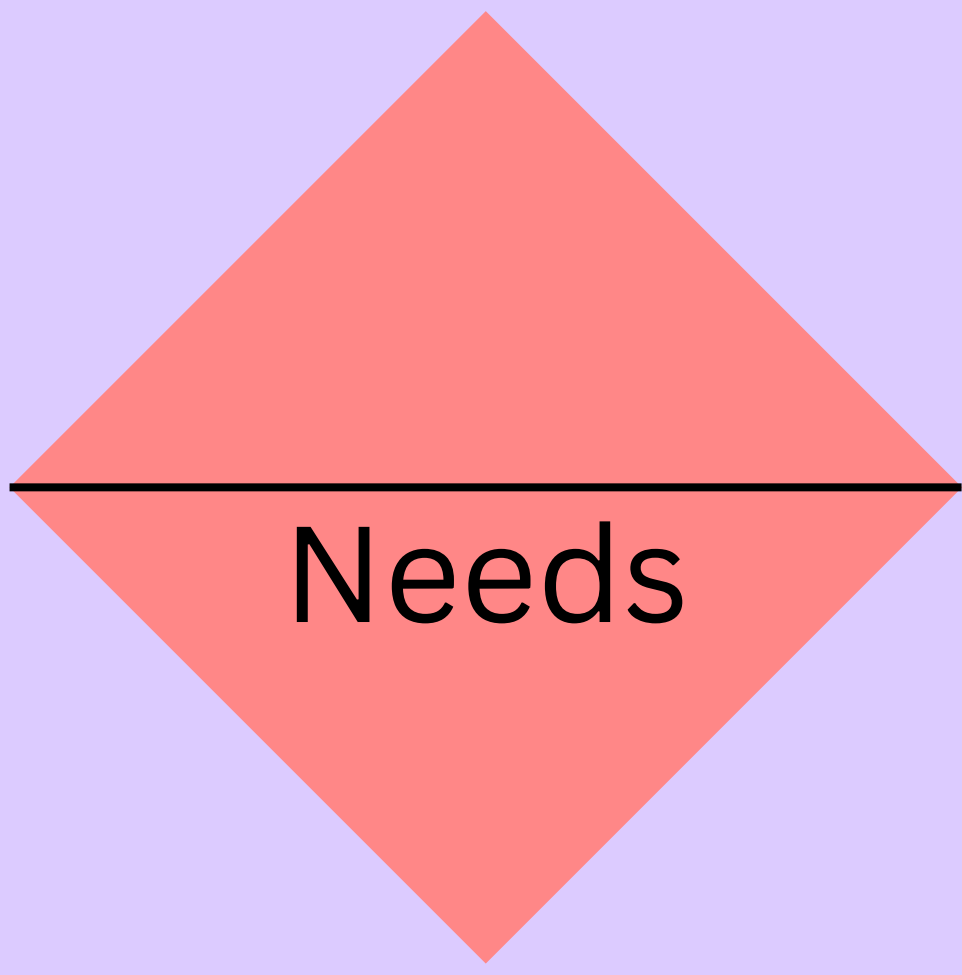
**Honesty**

**To be heard / seen**

**Integrity**

**Transparency**

**Trust**



# Meaning

**Awareness**

**Effectiveness**

**Beauty**

**Hope**

**Contribution**

**Inspiration**

**Effectiveness**

**Purpose**



# Growth

**Clarity**

**Mastery**

**Effectiveness**

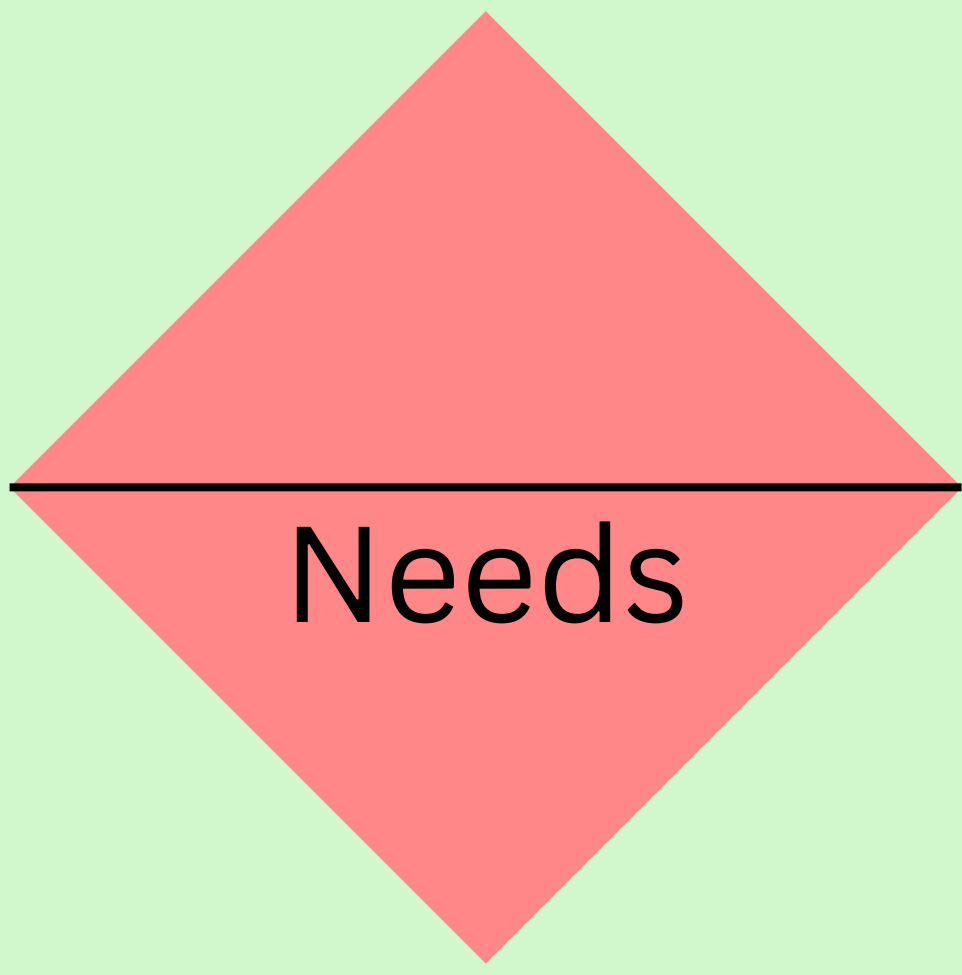
**Stimulation**

**Inspiration**

**Understanding**

**Learning**





# Grieving

**Mourning**

**Honouring Loss**

**Closure**

**Acceptance**



Needs

# Connection

**Acknowledgement**

**Belonging**

**Communication**

**Community**

**Consideration**

**Empathy**

**Interdependence**



Needs

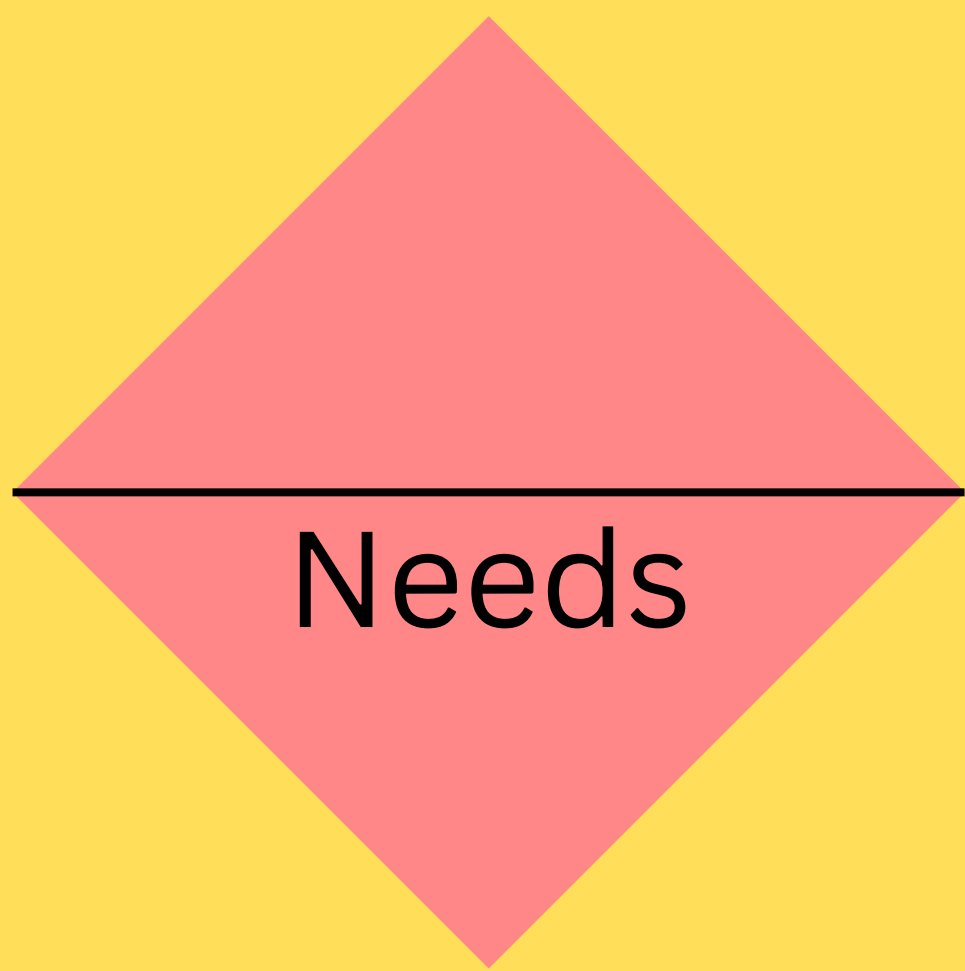
# Intimacy

Intimacy

Love

Sexual Expression

Closeness



# Play

**Excitement**

**Play**

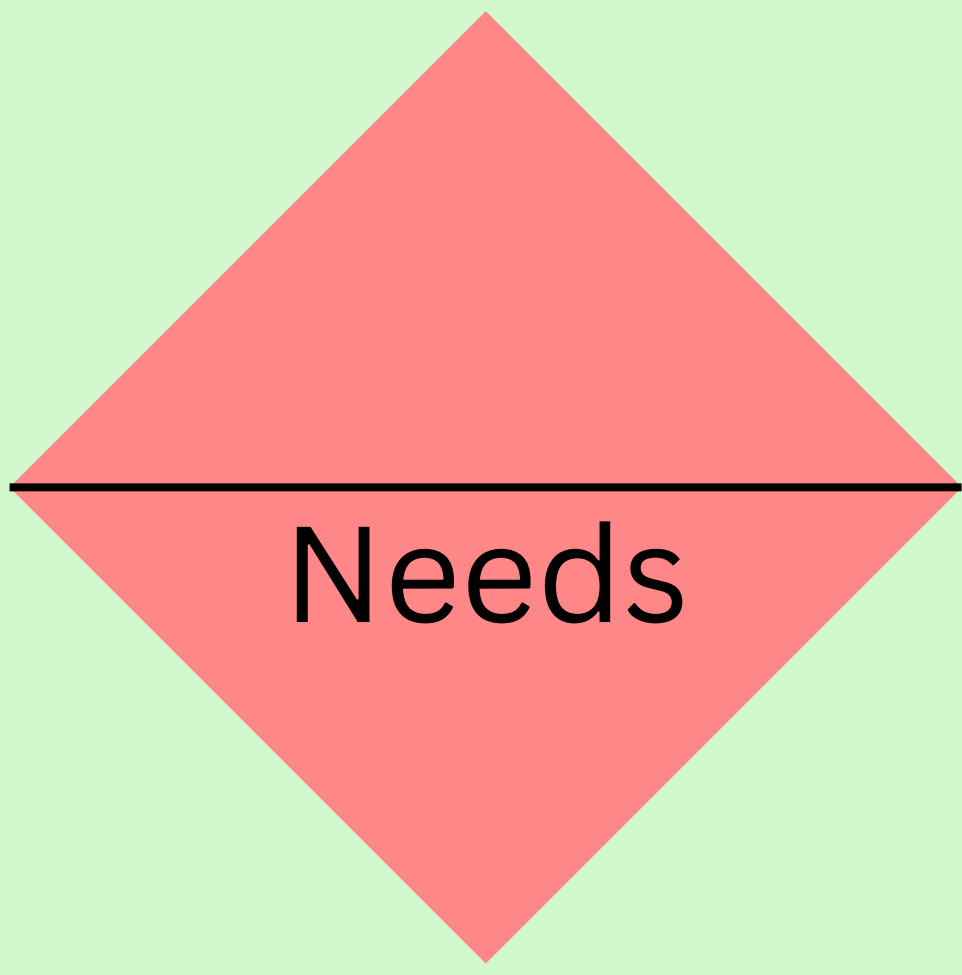
**Fun**

**Humor**

**Joy**

**Laughter**

**Silliness**



# Physical

**Air**

**Safety**

**Hydration**

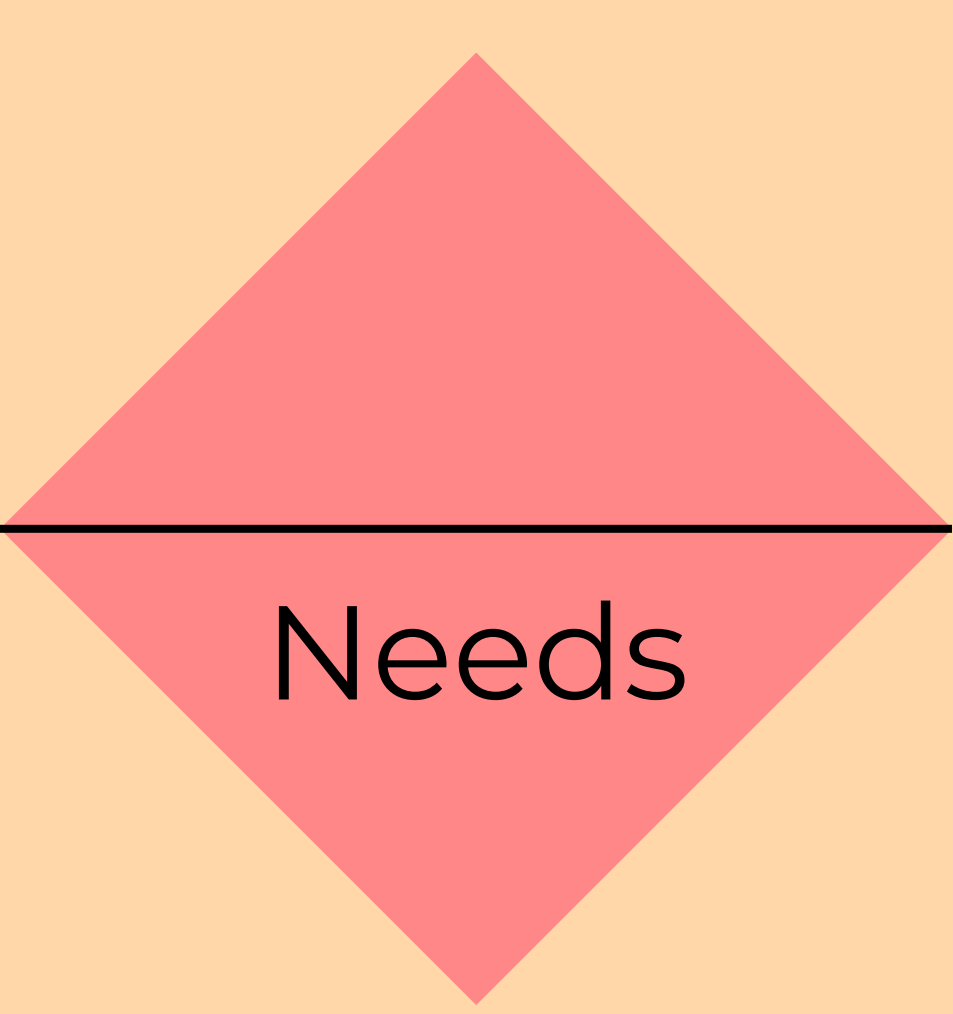
**Shelter**

**Movement**

**Sustenance**

**Rest**

**Touch**



# Community

**Collaboration**

**Cooperation**

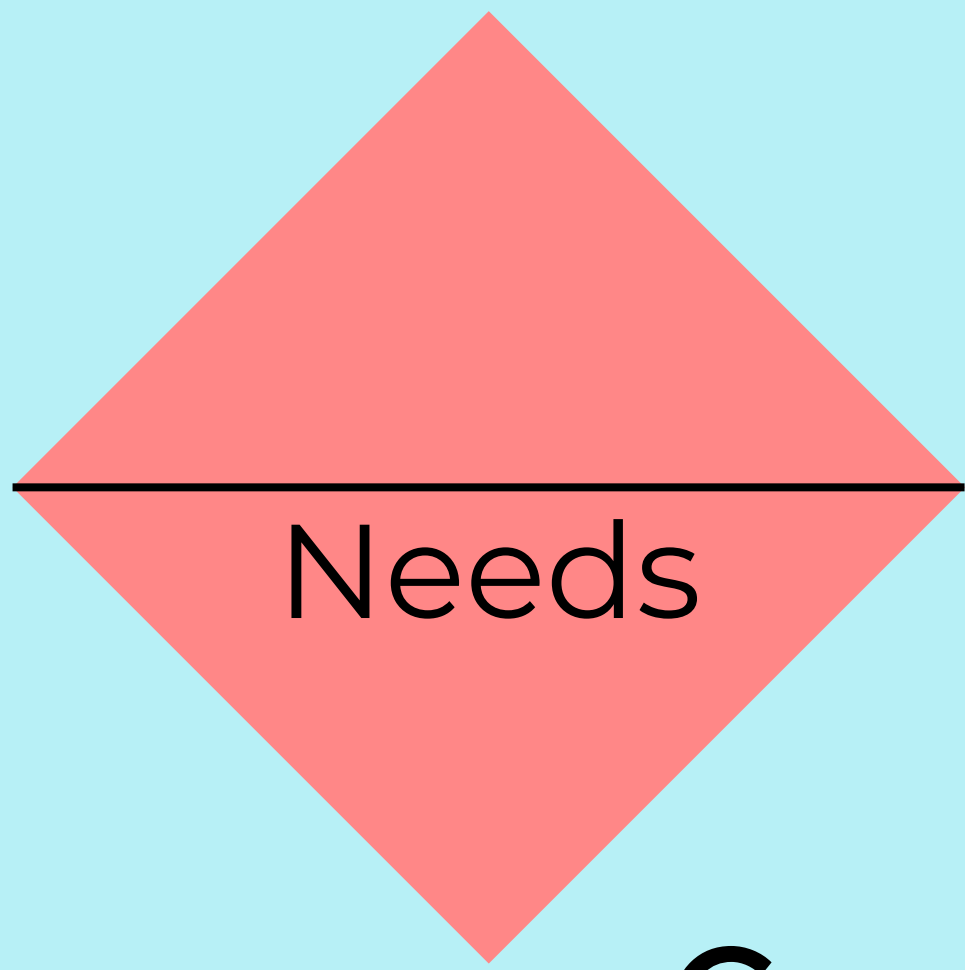
**Equality**

**Inclusion**

**Mutuality**

**Support**





# Peace

Conciseness

Ease

Flow

Harmony

Presence

Spaciousness

Spiritual Connection

Transformation

# Making requests

This step works best if you make sure the other person hears a request, not a demand.

Once you have identified your feelings and needs you might realise that it is possible for you to meet your needs by making a request to yourself.

If you are making a request to someone else you can follow the script on the next page, or

Think about how long you think you'll need for the conversation and make sure you plan it in a way that will work for you both. You might also like to make some agreements as to how to keep the conversation constructive and healthy.

If you have any concerns about your safety or the safety of the other person, make a safety plan including support people who can help you, support services and planning to have the conversation in a safe place - whatever that means for you.

# Examples

Basic request:

**Can you please do x?**

*X should be a do-able action, ie 'use my name' or 'tell me when this family member will be around'. This makes it easier for people to help meet our needs than asking for something more general ie to be treated with respect, as it helps people know exactly what we want. It's important to make sure that you are ok with hearing a no, and that the other person knows this - otherwise your request may be heard as a demand. Body language and tone may help with this, but if you're not sure what they've heard you can ask.*

Some requests for further communication:

**Can you tell me how you feel when you hear me say that?**

*This can help to keep the conversation focused on feelings and needs, and allow you the opportunity to empathise with the other person's experience.*

**Can you tell me what you heard me say?** Sometimes people will hear a judgement when you are expressing a need. You can check what they are hearing and clarify what you're saying.

Expressing boundaries:

**If you do x, I will remove myself from the situation / I will end the conversation.**

*X should be an observable action - ie 'raise your voice while we are speaking', 'misgender me' etc. Boundaries are different to requests in that you are expressing information about how you will behave, rather than asking the other person to alter their behaviour.*

# Script

When:

*Make your observation.*

I felt:

*Name your feelings.*

Because I have a need/s for:

*Name your needs.*

Can you / we:

*Make a request.*

# Further reading

The work in this manual is drawn from;  
**Nonviolent Communication, A Language for Life** by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

You can find it at:

[https://classroommanagementcem.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/2/5/4325801/nvc\\_language\\_of\\_life\\_chapters\\_1-5.pdf](https://classroommanagementcem.weebly.com/uploads/4/3/2/5/4325801/nvc_language_of_life_chapters_1-5.pdf)

**Gender Minorities Aotearoa 'How to fight without fighting'**

<https://genderminorities.com/2021/03/20/a-good-argument-how-to-fight-without-fighting/>



# Support Services

## OutLine Aotearoa

A confidential support line for people in the Rainbow Community, available every evening 6pm-9pm.

[www.outline.org.nz](http://www.outline.org.nz)

0800 OUTLINE

## Help Auckland

Preventing Sexual Abuse. Supporting Survivors.

[www.helpauckland.org.nz](http://www.helpauckland.org.nz)

24/7 Helpline 0800 623 1700

## Wellington Rape Crisis

Have a range of support services available to survivors of sexual harm and their friends, family and whānau. All services are free and confidential.

[www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz)

04 801 8973

[support@wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz](mailto:support@wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz)

*Open 9:30 am and 4:00 pm Monday to Friday*

## Rainbow Youth

Helping young queer and gender diverse people up to the ages of 27.

[www.ry.org.nz](http://www.ry.org.nz)

## Gender Minorities Aotearoa

A cross cultural, transgender led organisation which aims to facilitate health and well-being for takatāpui, transgender, and intersex populations.

[www.genderminorities.com](http://www.genderminorities.com)



The logo features a large, light blue heart shape centered on a light purple background. Inside the heart, there is a purple rectangle. The text "RAINBOW VIOLENCE" is written in a bold, dark brown, sans-serif font across the top of the purple rectangle. Below it, the words "PREVENTION NETWORK" are written in a smaller, dark brown, sans-serif font.

## RAINBOW VIOLENCE PREVENTION NETWORK

The Rainbow Violence Prevention Network is a Nationwide collective of organisations and individuals who work in various stages of Violence prevention. Our membership includes not for profit social services that work directly with and for the Rainbow community and mainstream organisations.

Our member agencies and individuals are located within local communities and provide a range of specialist services to Rainbow communities that are impacted by family and sexual violence.

**[www.rvpn.nz](http://www.rvpn.nz)**

