

TOOLBOX FOR ACCOMPANYING VOLUNTEERS

Alianza por la
Solidaridad

act:onaid

EU Aid Volunteers
We Care, We Act



UNION AID VOLUNTEERS INITIATIVE EUROPEAN - EU AID VOLUNTEERS INITIATIVE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This manual aims to be an additional support for the accompaniment that as tutors, will provide to the volunteers in the field. For this, the reference guide will be the volunteer manual itself, to understand and know what activities and tools the volunteers are working on individually. I recommend that you read it and get to know it in addition to the use of this guide, in order to better accompany the volunteers in the field.

This document is intended to be an additional support focused on three basic topics:

- Development of personal skills for the volunteer program.
- Teamwork and
- Stress management techniques.

These areas have been identified as necessary for accompaniment in the phases of deployment, field and closure or farewell. These needs were collected in a previous survey in order to prioritize the key aspects to be included in the guide.

Use this document as support to accompany the volunteers during their period in Alianza. It is important to take into account that the arrival is often a bit sensitive, as the reference point for the volunteer changes. Therefore, managing this transition well can be a great help in order to have a good accompaniment during the volunteer period.

In general, in the proposed activities and exercises you will find a logic of: proposed activity, objective, examples (in some cases) and a part of the text in italics that indicates proposals to guide or energize the proposed activities or exercises.

2. PREMISES

The tools and strategies for self-care support are not magic recipes. This toolbox is intended to be a support, which is nourished by previous experiences of tutors who supported volunteers in the field.

Always takes these premises as a reference for its use:

- Each volunteering process is different and unique, therefore, the accompaniment must adapt and be flexible.
- The tools of this box pretend to be a guide to accompany in the moments of the process that may arise greater needs in the field.
- Feelings are personal even in similar contexts. In the same context two different people can manifest different or even opposite feelings and emotions. Keep this in mind in your accompaniment.
- Not all tools work for everyone. That's why different tool options are presented for each potential problem.
- It is important to adapt, if necessary, the proposed tools to each volunteer to be accompanied.

3. TOOLS OF DESIRABLE VOLUNTEER COMPETENCIES

The chosen themes on which the tools that appear here have been built, have been selected considering that they are those basic themes that will give us the possibility of developing to the maximum the potential of the volunteers that we are going to accompany in their process.

For a good accompaniment of volunteers, it is essential to focus on them living in the present moment. This will not avoid frustrations and intolerances linked to expectations that were installed in the volunteer's imaginary, but we must accompany them trying to reconnect them to the here and now and to the analysis of the specific situations that occur in the field and in their daily lives, in order to define routes to follow for each situation.

3.1. Exercises to support and accompany in the deployment phase

These exercises have to do with self-knowledge and personal development. Usually during the volunteer in the field conflicts have been observed that has to do with personal situations on: lack of identification of needs, self-esteem, imbalances in the different areas of life or lack of presence in daily life. In order to accompany in these situations, the following tools are presented in the form of specific exercises.

a. **ACTIVITY: Exercise to be present**

Objective: To encourage volunteers to be focused and present in their daily lives, thus minimizing possible situations that generate anxiety or distress.

It is important to pose this exercise to our volunteers in charge in the first phase of the process. These questions are going to give us an initial snapshot of what self-care tools they can put into practice and what situations could be potentially conflictive in their volunteer period.

Conduct a talk with the volunteer by following this guide and asking these questions:

Supporting text to guide the activity:

ACTIVITIES THAT NOURISH YOU: Of all the things you do, which ones nourish you?, which ones increase your sense of being alive and present, rather than just existing? Which ones bring you peace and tranquility, joy and well-being?.

ACTIVITIES THAT CANCEL YOU: Of all the things you do, which ones take away the feeling of enjoying the present moment? which ones cause anxiety and distress (if any)?.

DIFFERENTIATING ONE FROM THE OTHER: Accepting that there are aspects of your life that you cannot change, are you consciously choosing activities that nourish you and consciously choosing to stop doing activities that cancel you out?.

Identifying these activities can allow you to better enjoy and take advantage of your volunteer period in the field, knowing which activities in your day-to-day life connect you more to the present moment and which ones cancel or disconnect you from that moment”.

BE ALERT

By being more present more often and making choices with attention to our needs we can choose activities that help us be more present and improve our mood. We can use our daily experiences to cultivate activities to use as tools in times of crisis. This is not to say that we won't have sad or distressing moments, but it will help us to become aware and be able to move through and walk through our emotions while being present.

For example, an easy way to take care of yourself is to do physical exercise every day, such as walking, stretching, yoga, dancing, meditation or a short breathing exercise, such as those in the Volunteer Toolbox. Remember: Once you have this practice as a part of your daily routine, you have a better handle on how to counteract a negative state.

AND HOW DO I DO IT?

Haz algo agradable: se amable con tu cuerpo, trátate con cariño: toma un baño relajante, Do something nice. Be kind to your body, treat yourself with affection: take a relaxing bath, take a nap, eat your favorite dish without feeling guilty, have a tea or your favorite drink, listen to a song you really like, dance, make a phone call with your family, create an informal meeting space with other volunteers, cook something special, read something that gives you pleasure, etc.

Do something that will give you satisfaction because you know you have the qualities to do it well. Clean the house, tidy up the closet, write that letter you have been wanting to write for a long time, do some work, do that thing you have been wanting to do for a long time and never do, do some exercise (it is very important after doing any activity to tell yourself “Well done!!!” and keep in mind that if the activity is big you should break the task into parts and do it little by little).

Act with mindfulness. Focus all your attention on what you are doing right now. Stay in the present moment. Fix your mind in the present (now I am coming down the stairs, now I can feel the handrail, now I am entering the kitchen, now I am turning on the light...) Be aware of your breath as you do things, be aware of the contact of your feet with the earth as you walk.

REMEMBER: Try to do the actions as an experiment, as a test, lightly. Try not to imagine how you are going to feel when you have finished the action. Keep a confident attitude, don't judge whether the activity will help you or not, just do it.

Consider a range of activities and don't restrict yourself to your favorites:

EXPLORE!

Do not expect miracles, try to finish what you have decided to do, do not have unrealistic expectations that could turn these actions into a new source of dissatisfaction.

b. ACTIVITY: body map, dialoguing with my body

Objective: That volunteers achieve the connection with their body signals and become aware of the needs to be addressed in a preventive way. Sometimes, they are not clear about what is happening to them and accompanying them with reconnection exercises can make us realize some deficiencies or situations that need to be addressed in the field and therefore we can better guide our accompaniment.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

“Our body is a box of surprises, it produces and stores the energy of life and if it receives what it needs: care, attention and good treatment we will have a sustained well-being. Our body gives us signals all the time, it guides us about what it requires to feel good and also when there are unmet needs. This exercise is an imaginary journey that allows a deep connection with yourself to “realize” the pains or discomforts, emotions, thoughts and strengths that are expressed in the different parts of your body, in your organs and in your mood. It is useful to make a self-diagnosis about how your body, emotions, thoughts and strengths are at this moment when you start volunteering and from there take actions and measures to promote greater well-being”.

Development

This exercise has three parts:

1. Connect with your body through an imaginary journey
2. Self-diagnosis based on body mapping
3. Self-reflection and opportunity to act towards your wellbeing

1. Imaginary journey:

“In this part you make a self-guided fantasy to explore aches, pains, discomforts and strengths of the body and the moods that are currently prevalent in your life.

To start you can place yourself in a quiet and comfortable place that allows you to lie on your back, it can be on a mat. Your feet and hands are loose and resting. Close your eyes and begin to breathe, to pay attention to the entrance and exit of air through your nose, remain conscious of your breathing and let it take its own rhythm. Notice how the breath brings you a sense of calm.

Being like this, in that calm, I invite you to slowly go through your whole body starting with your toes, your instep, heels, the soles of your feet. Perceive if they feel heavy, swollen, light, or sore. Recall all the sensations that arise, if you perceive pain, burning and also if you feel that your feet are strong and are well planted, what do you feel? Run through your feet with your imagination for as long as you need to finish.

Now go up to your calves and repeat the experience, then go to your knees and allow yourself to dialogue with them, do they feel stiff, do they hurt? Do they feel strong and flexible at the same time? are they swollen?... Remember, all the information that comes up is useful for you. Now focus your attention on your thighs... then go up to your belly and imagine your sexual organs, intestines, bladder... where does tension accumulate? What sensations are most frequent? Go through the whole area and allow your organs to dialogue with you. Check your hips, your buttocks, your waist. Explore your whole abdomen, how does it feel? swollen? light? Travel through your organs, liver, stomach, spleen. What feelings or emotions are most frequent in your life now? Is there anger, helplessness, sadness, well being/joy? What other things do you notice?

Visualize now your chest, how does it feel? Check your lungs, be aware if you can breathe deeply or if your breathing is short...Go to your heart and ask it: How are you? What feelings does it keep? Go up to your throat, your neck and notice if you have kept things in your throat, pains or anger not expressed, your neck is stiff, sore, how does it feel? Just notice....

Now go to your shoulders and check if they feel very high up towards your ears, if they are sore, strong...Go to your back, check your spine, travel up your spine from your waist to your neck...Is there pain?

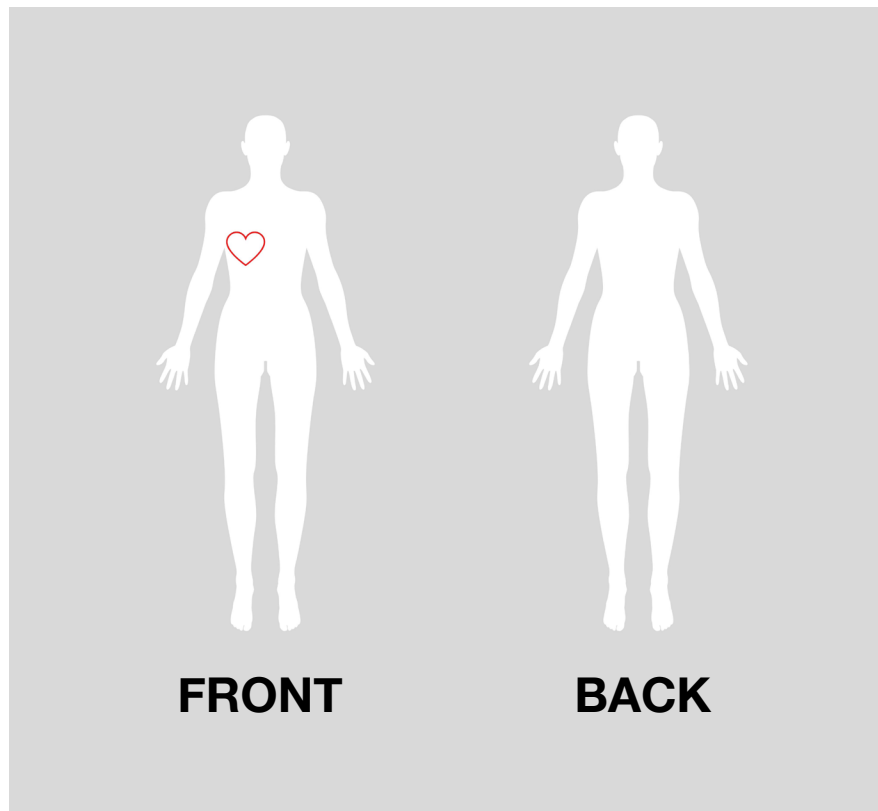
Finally visualize your head, your brain, at the back, at the top of your neck, check if you feel heavy, if you feel saturated, if there is pain or not. Check your scalp...now go to your face, go over your forehead, your eyes, your eyebrows, your ears, your nose, your mouth, how do you feel? Is your face calm? Rigid? How does your jaw feel? Check all the parts of your face...

When you have finished you can pay attention to your breathing for a few minutes, feel how the air goes in and out and trust that this breathing exercise brings a silent and deep well-being. When you are ready you can open your eyes.”

2. Self-diagnosis: your body map

We need a sheet of paper and at least two colored pencils.

In this part of the exercise you can put on paper what you visualized in your imaginary journey. To do this you can make a silhouette painted on a sheet of paper front and back and full body.



On this silhouette you can mark in blue the areas of well-being, those parts that you perceive as strong, vigorous, and in red draw those that indicate discomfort or ailments.

You can also add key words in different areas, for example, in the head you can write “phrases or ideas that torment me”, also words that name the moods e.g. “I am sad” “I am confident”, etc.

Try to express in the silhouette all the information that comes to you, try to do it in the most detailed way. It is important that you do not repress what comes out of you. When you have finished the silhouette, take a few minutes to look at it and perceive how you feel about your creation.

3. Self-reflection and opportunity to act towards your wellbeing

In this part, the idea is that you write down your experience with the exercise so we can extract learnings to make you a better accompaniment during your volunteering time.

“There are many ways to do this reflection, we can do it together, it can be a letter addressed to yourself, or to a close trusted person in which you share what things you realize, where you perceive your strengths, what are your vulnerable areas, those that require care and attention, what feelings arose. It is important that at the same time that you become aware of your vulnerable areas you can also recognize those parts that give you strength and well-being. In this reflective account you can identify some actions you can take to increase your well-being”.

Conclusion of the exercise

“The arrival to a new context, with new responsibilities and a lot of expectations and illusions on our shoulders, generates a high level of stress that many times is prolonged and prevents us from connecting with the signals and needs that our body expresses. We often get used to living with aches and pains, repressed feelings or moods (e.g. sadness, anger) that become chronic, diminishing our wellbeing during our time in the field.

To promote our care and well-being it is important to reconnect with our inner voice that knows exactly what we need to feel in balance and well-being. This voice manifests itself in many ways: when we feel like resting, dancing, laughing, when we feel hungry, sleepy, etc. However, when we do not listen to it, it can manifest with discomfort, pain or illness.

Finally, exercising your inner listening is a powerful tool to increase your well-being. Being aware of your needs and attending to them in a timely manner is a practice that will allow you greater well-being during your volunteer time”.

c. ACTIVITY: Reflecting on capabilities

Objective: To accompany each volunteer through questions to a deeper self-knowledge to support the early identification of needs or prevention of emotional impacts during the volunteer period.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

The idea is to reflect on 7 personal capacities, through specific questions related to each one of them. You can decide to work on each of the capacities in a different week, or in a single session to guide all the questions of each of these capacities.

1. Basic trust

- a. How do you perceive confidence in you? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships).
- b. For which situations do you consider that trust can support you?
- c. What resource can you use to connect more with nature in this new context?

Examples for the speech as a tutor: Trust will be key to your whole process. On the one hand, trust in the organization and in his analysis of the context you are in. On the other hand, confidence in your team and the skills of each person who is part of it. Finally, confidence in yourself, knowing what you are capable of in your period and what you need to feel confident in this process.

2. Capacity for joy

- a. How do you perceive joy or enjoyment in you? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships).
- b. For which situations do you consider that joy can support you in your voluntary period?
- c. What resource can you use to connect more with flow and joy in your day-to-day life?

Examples for the speech as a tutor: Volunteering is important to live it as a learning process, but also as a process of enjoyment. If we lose the ability to enjoy our time in the field, we are leaving out a lot of feelings and experiences, joy, energy and moments that we can contribute as volunteers.

**DON'T FORGET TO ENJOY
THE EXPERIENCE!**

3. Personal power capacity or personal strengths

- a. How do you perceive your personal power or personal strengths? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships)
- b. For which situations do you consider that personal power can support you?
- c. What resource can you use to incentivize yourself to achieve what you dream, plan and want to accomplish in your volunteer period?

Examples for the mentoring speech: Those of you who have made it this far are selected for many reasons. Trust that you have resources and skills to bring to this process. It is important to identify and activate them at this early stage so that they will be in place throughout our volunteer period.

4. Affective capacity

- a. How do you perceive your affective capacity? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships)
- b. For which situations do you consider that affectivity can support you during your volunteer period?
- c. What resource can you use to balance your ability to give and receive during your volunteer period?

Examples for the speech as a tutor: Sometimes our affections play a trick on us. Our expectations and our feelings may cause us to be disappointed at some point in the process. It is essential to find that balance between giving and receiving. Evaluate if that ability is in balance and if it is not, try to bring that balance to equilibrium. Maybe you need to dedicate some time to yourself, with some of the activities you identified in “Activity 1: Exercise to be present. The important thing is to maintain that balance and prevent possible imbalances that could generate emotional impacts that make it impossible to develop your volunteering.

5. Capacity for creativity

- a. How do you perceive your creativity? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships)
- b. For which situations do you consider that creativity can support you during your volunteer period?
- c. What resource can you use to further explore creativity in your day-to-day life?

Examples for the speech as a mentor: Creativity can be a key strategy to accompany your volunteer process. If you are good at drawing, writing or any kind of craft, use it to channel emotions or feelings of this process. For example: write a diary of emotions, learning and experiences of the volunteer period. Narrative can be a good tool to ground the experience you are living and a memory exercise for the future.

6. Intuition capacity

- a. How do you perceive your ability to explore the unknown? (in your: body, emotions, sensations and personal relationships)
- b. For which situations do you consider that intuition can support you?
- c. What resource can you use to further explore your intuition in your volunteer period?

Examples for the speech as a tutor: Intuition is sometimes like an inner voice that speaks to us and tells us how we should do certain things. If there is something that is on your mind or that worries you in that sense, share it. It can be in a mentoring session, or with your team, but it is important to share it collectively so that its basis in reality can be analyzed and actions can be taken if necessary.

d. **ACTIVITY: reflecting on your self-concept and self-esteem**

Objective: To work with the volunteer on his/her self-esteem in a preventive way before going to the field, so that afterwards he/she has clarity about which situations could affect his/her self-esteem and which questions should be asked to work on it.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

In general, we use these two concepts interchangeably, but it is important that we can clearly differentiate between them.

The self-concept, simply put, would be the way you describe yourself. If you had to describe yourself to someone else, what would you say about yourself? Those adjectives with which you define yourself, is your PERSONAL SELF CONCEPT. Self-esteem, however, is how comfortable you feel with that definition, that is, how much I like those adjectives that I identify in me.

Self-esteem is the set of subjective experiences and life practices that each person experiences and realizes about him/herself. It is directly related to empowerment and inevitably involves care. It is formed by thoughts, knowledge, intuitions, doubts, lucubrations and beliefs about yourself, but also by the interpretations we elaborate about what happens to us and what we make happen.

It is an awareness of the Self in the world and contains emotions, affections and the fundamental desires felt about yourself, about your own history, the events that mark you, the experiences lived and also those fantasized, imagined and dreamed.

Remember that personal work is complex and sometimes opening that pandora's box can be painful. However, without looking inward it is impossible for us to be calm in the place that corresponds to us in the present, in peace and to be able to project ourselves in the immediate and distant future. It is essential to have these clarities before moving to the field, as sometimes the change of context and the challenges this entails can affect our self-esteem, e.g.: feeling that we are not enough, that we are doing badly or similar things.

The following exercise is a proposal of self-diagnosis through questions in order to give shape to this self-concept and self-esteem and to understand and accompany them in a more conscious way.

The tutor can read each question slowly. "Close your eyes and let the answer flow into you. Don't force yourself, it may or may not come. If it comes, answer it. If it doesn't come, move on. You don't have to write them down, just reflect on them and walk with those feelings towards your self-knowledge. If you want, you can say it out loud or we can comment on it at the end:

Take your time. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply and go for it!

1. What helps to raise your self-esteem and what helps to lower it?
2. What things do others value about you and what things do they point out as flaws?
3. What things do you value about yourself and what things do you find fault with?
4. Have you identified what you do best?
5. What are your strengths?

Reflect on them:

1. What advantages do these strengths bring to your life?
2. How do others see you in relation to your strengths?
3. Is there congruence with the image you project?
4. What are the weaknesses of your strengths (e.g., modesty is a strength, but too much of it could cause others to take advantage of your successes)?
5. What are your weaknesses?

Questions are a good source of information for your personal knowledge, but not the only one. Artistic expression (theater, writing, painting, music...), guided imagination, sports in nature, journaling, yoga, meditation or even dancing can be as well. Find ALL those things that serve you as a means for self-knowledge and acceptance and put them into practice before you arrive at your destination, so that during your volunteering you will keep them in mind as a tool for self-care.

The chosen method may be a regular practice of spiritual or personal growth, or it may be unknown to you until now.

Just as you can strive to get to know another person better and improve or enhance a relationship with him or her, you can improve your relationship with yourself. Knowing and recognizing your inner messages is the prerequisite for later being able to self-assess your self-esteem and enhance your self-care during your volunteering.

3.2. Exercises to support and accompany in the field phase

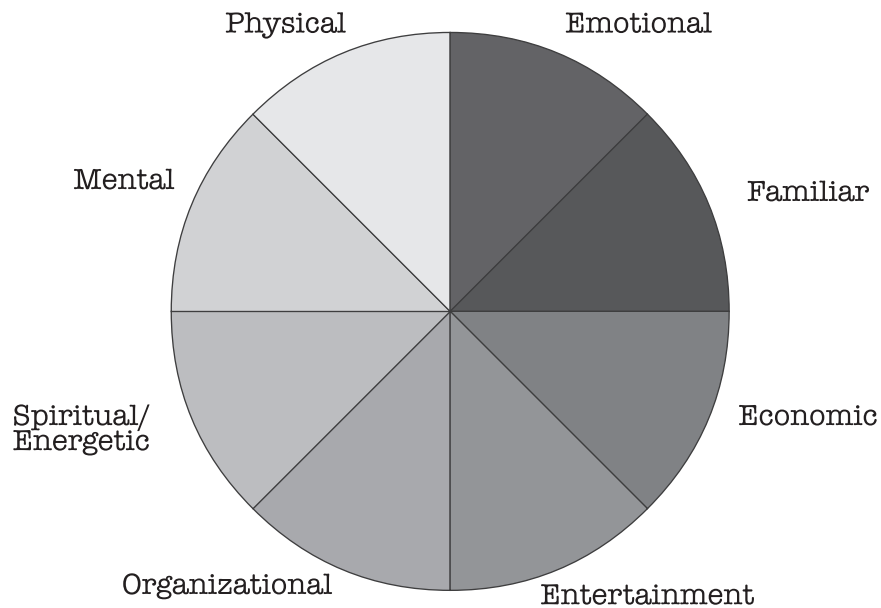
a. TEAM ACTIVITY: Self-care in the team, from the personal to the collective.

Objective: To promote collective construction based on the clear x-ray of how we are. For this, at the individual level we can guide this exercise of the Wheel of Life, to collectivize it in a next step and think of team tools for self-care.

This activity is designed to be conducted with the entire team in two parts: a first part in which each person in the team makes his or her individual wheel and a second part in which the team members work together and extract self-care tools based on the identified needs.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

PART 1 “In the following diagram each person will place a dot in each of the areas according to how we feel we are in each of these areas. The closer to the center means that it is bad, the more towards the edge of the circle means that we are better”.



PART 2: Once we have all the individual wheels, let’s review them to find the areas where the greatest needs are identified, which are those where you have scored closest to the circle.

Once each person on the team has identified the two areas in which they score the lowest, ask the team what they need in those two areas to be better off. (e.g., have some time or space to myself).

Then we will identify if there is a team pattern (e.g., there is an area in which almost everyone on the team has scored very poorly). When we identify that pattern we’re going to collectively think about what we could do to improve that area. Some questions to guide the reflection might be:

- What can the team do to make each person feel better emotionally?
- Are we allowing each team member to have time to be in contact with his or her family?
- Are there leisure activities that we can include in our team dynamics?
- We will jointly draft the ideas and proposals and try to establish a timeline with them

b. ACTIVITY: learning to set boundaries

Objective: To internalize the importance of setting boundaries and establishing personal circles in which to create safe spaces during our volunteering.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

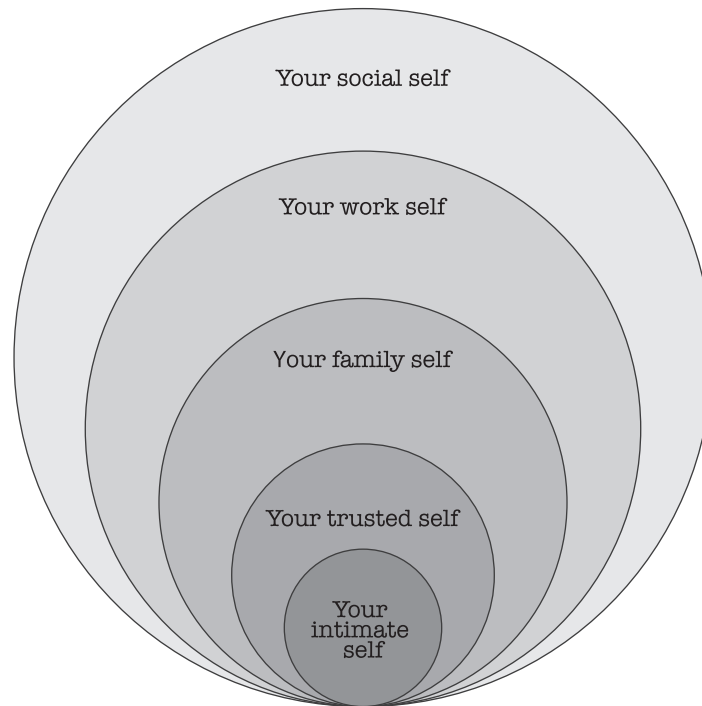
Sometimes when we face a new scenario, especially from the perspective of volunteering, we find ourselves unable to set limits. We want to do EVERYTHING, NOW and with everyone. This can lead to high wear and excessive exposure. That is why it is important to be able to set limits and to be able to determine in which space of our life each person close to us can participate.

We often find it difficult to set limits or to be clear about how far we allow people to go in our intimacy. If we let people from outside our inner circle into the center of our inner circle, we place ourselves at too high a level of exposure.

We do not know if these people are ready to be in this new intimate area, nor if they are willing to take care and respect the space we are giving them. That is why it is important to make our own map of circles and decide who we place in each one of them.

To do it in a more graphic way, let's do the exercise in concentric circles. The more inward the circle is, the higher your level of intimacy is and therefore you should place there the people you consider deserve that place. In any case, this is not a static exercise, it means that as time goes by and relationships grow, change, nurture or end, people can move in the different circles. The important thing is to be clear about who we let into each of them.

Sometimes, also the movement in the circles is much more fluid and at specific moments, someone can move into the circles very fast, but will not stay there (e.g. a very intense and fleeting love relationship or friendship).



• **Your intimate self;** here you are in your purest essence, without barriers, totally free, transparent and without fear of being harmed. In principle, in this space you are alone, since it is your own center, your anchorage and your rooting. Your whole being and your essence are visible in this circle, so it is important if you decide to place someone here, that you are clear about what you are showing.

• **Your trusted self;** here may be people in your closest circle. The people you would trust with almost anything. Generally with those people with whom we decide to share life and to whom we turn to in emotional needs that involve some vulnerability and that we would not face telling other people. This circle may include people from your family (family of origin or chosen family, but this is not necessarily always the case).

• **Your family self;** in this circle are the people of your family of origin, your chosen family, and all those whom you consider family to you.

• **Your work self;** these are the people in your work environment and in this case your volunteering environment. Maybe you see them every day, maybe not. But they are present in your daily life. Some of these people may be part of or pass through other of your circles. Others will probably disappear when the work relationship ends. They are in a close circle, as a matter of course, but they don't necessarily have to be part of your inner circles.

• **Your social self;** these are the people who are in our social environment and are part of our leisure and fun. The level of relationship is more superficial and based on similarities that do not affect your most deeply rooted values.

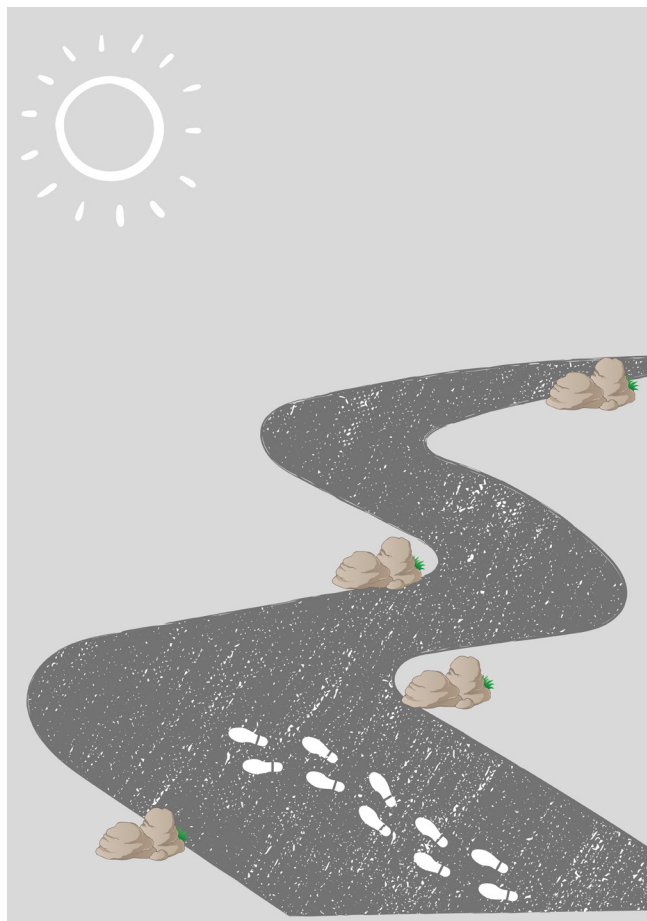
c. ACTIVITY: identifying my own tools or resources to face conflictive situations

Objective: to identify strategies or tools you previously used against conflict situations. If any volunteer is in a conflict situation of any kind, we can guide this exercise with them to reflect on past experiences and identify those things that helped them in the past and connect with their ability to cope and overcome.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

We are going to trace a life path. In it, you are going to place your steps and all those situations that you identify as important in your journey. Represent them as you want, you can paint, color, write them ... everything is valid. Now think about those STONES that have been happening also in your walk. What situations you have faced that have involved you to put at your disposal strategies to face them, avoid them, overcome them or any other coping action.

Decide if you want to draw it, write it or narrate it in an audio. The way that is easiest and most comfortable for you. All are valid. The important thing is to find those tools to put them in value.



Once you complete the path and have it in front of you, reflect on what is different about the current situation and the conflict you are facing and think about whether some of these strategies could be useful in this situation.

If that were not possible, what do you think are the strategies that should be used?

d. ACTIVITY: accompanying fear processes

Objective: to work on a latent fear or one that has come to light upon arrival in the field.

This exercise is complementary to the one that appears in the volunteer guide (activity III. Possible scenario design on page 21) and is also supported by the video attached in the toolbox.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

Think about the fear you have chosen to go through. That situation or circumstance that worries you the most:

Imagine a theater stage:

1. If your fear were to “go on stage” what would that play be like?

- a. Imagine the scene in detail: who is in the scene, what they do, what they say, how they dress, what gestures...and what emotions it generates in you.
- b. If it were a puppet theater where you were in control: is there anything you would change? What? Why?

2. Is there something behind the scenes that you don't see on stage, but you know is there?

- a. What emotions does watching that scene generate in you?

Conclusion of the exercise:

Fear is a basic emotion for all people. In different contexts it can be a challenge to face certain situations or fears that may arise. Remember that it is a normal and natural emotion, share and socialize your feelings with your team and with your tutor. Remember other situations in which you faced similar fears and with the analysis you have made of the fictitious situation of the theater, understand, accept and integrate this fear in you. Think of alternatives to be able to face this situation. What support do you need? What can we do from Alianza to accompany you in a better way?

e. TELEGRAM CHANNEL ACTIVITY: questions for self-care

Objective: To prevent possible imbalances in the field with close monitoring of how self-care is being carried out on a daily basis.

This exercise is proposed to disseminate on the telegram channel scheduled so that during a month once the volunteers have arrived in the field, each week they wonder about an area of self-care.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

Now that you are in the field, you can't forget about daily self-care. To this end, we will be launching reflection questions in the channel throughout this month.

WEEK 1

What does my body need to feel nourished, strong and healthy? Which activities work for me in these situations? Which do not?

Reflect on these questions individually and try to collectivize them in your field team as well.

WEEK 2

What responsibility should I pause or delegate? Where should I set limits? Have there been any situations where I was not able to set limits?

Reflect on these questions individually and try to collectivize them in your field team as well.

WEEK 3

With whom can I express my feelings? Who can I turn to for support?

Reflect on these questions individually and try to collectivize them in your field team as well.

WEEK 4

What physical or spiritual practice can I implement in my routine? What objects can I use as talismans or charms to help me come back to myself and be calm?

Reflect on these questions individually and try to collectivize them in your field team as well.

f. ACTIVITIES: team building, communication and conflict resolution

Objective: To reflect on teamwork and how important it is for the good development of volunteering.

Here you have activities to work on team building, internal communication and conflict resolution. Depending on the situations that arise in the field, focus on one or the other based on the need you detect.

1. ACTIVITY: TOOLS FOR EQUIPMENT CONSTRUCTION

Supporting text to guide the activity:

A team is a small group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common goal and a way of working that supports each other's responsibility.

Team members have skills and competencies that complement the team's purpose. Have you thought about what skills each person brings to the team?

Not all people have the same skills, but together they are better than the sum of their parts. In teams, roles and responsibilities are shared and new skills are constantly being developed to improve team performance. The team identifies and reaches consensus on their objectives and how they will carry them forward.

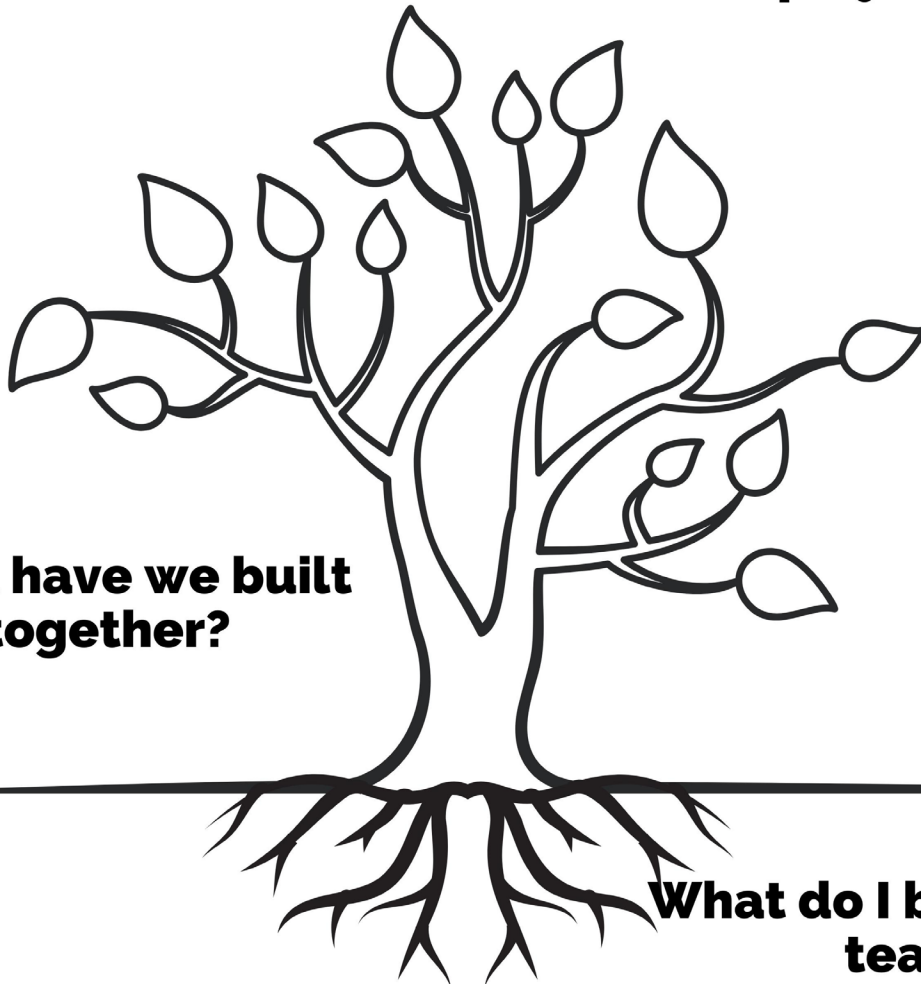
It is important to encourage this exercise at the end of 3 months of volunteering in the field.

WHAT IS THIS TEAM LIKE? AND HOW FAR IT HAS COME

Collectively, we made a tree showing three basic aspects:

1. What each brings to the team (roots)
2. What they have built together (trunk)
3. What they believe, expect or would like the fruits of this process to be. Where they are focused or projected (leaves).

**What do we want to
achieve as a
team/project?**



**What have we built
together?**

**What do I bring to the
team?**

Now that we have the overall picture, let's review the strengths and weaknesses reflected in the tree to get an idea of which aspects we should focus on as strengths and which ones we have to focus on.

2. ACTIVITY: COMMUNICATION IN THE TEAM

Objective: to promote fluid and non-violent communication within the team, in order to prevent possible conflicts during volunteering.

Supporting text to guide the activity:

On communication, you have here a summary of key and theoretical aspects that may occur in the team so that you have a backup to address them with the team or with some particular people. In addition to the theoretical part, some examples of specific activities are included.

What is communication?

The functioning of human societies is made possible by communication. This consists of the exchange of messages between different people.

Communication is understood as the fact that a given message originating at point A reaches another given point B, distant from the previous one in space or time. It can also be defined as the **transfer of information and understanding between people by means of symbols with meanings** (speech, writing or other types of signals).

Communication in any circumstance of our lives is of vital importance, to be able to express our objectives, needs, emotions, etc.

In a new context, with a different language and different cultures, it can become a great challenge. Therefore, it is one of the skills we must pay attention to during our time in the field. Fundamentally, we will have two distinct focuses: communication with the community and the host country, and communication with my team and myself.

How can communication be?

- 1. Intrapersonal communication:** conversing with oneself (how do I see myself, how much do I love myself, where am I going, what can I contribute in this context?)
- 2. Interpersonal communication:** two or more people talk or converse, share ideas, opinions, emotions, silences, interrupt each other, reinforce...
- 3. Mass communication:** when the message goes beyond a close communication and is intended to reach a broader and massive social sphere, a wide range of people. Normally, the use of technical and audiovisual media is used so that the content can be amplified, projected and gain strength. For example, the tools that we implement in the Facebook group, the videos and the telegram channel, go along this line of communication, it is less personalized, but has a greater reach.

Forms of Human Communication:

1. Verbal Communication, it has two forms:

- **Oral communication** is that which is established between two or more people, with air as the medium of transmission and a language as the code.
- **Written communication**, unlike oral communication, does not depend on the concepts of space and time. The interaction between the sender and the receiver of the message is not immediate and may even never take place, even if the written message lasts forever. It is essential to take this into account when communicating via whatsapp or email and to understand that the person receiving the message is in another space and time and does not have the additional benefits that non-verbal communication brings to communication. Therefore, it is important to pay special attention to written messages and their possible interpretations.

2. Nonverbal Communication: it shows us that, apart from language, there are many other signs that can be used to transmit messages effectively. Some non-verbal manifestations that we use on a daily basis are: gestures, looks, facial expressions, among others... When we arrive to a new cultural context, it is very important that we understand the minimum norms of non-verbal communication of the place, since it can generate misunderstandings (e.g.: in some places, looking very fixedly into the eyes, raising the tone when speaking, or making many gestures with the arms can be read as a violent communication).

Barriers or Obstacles in Communication

These are the conditions or factors that interfere with the effective transmission of a message, and among them are:

- **Semantic:** The sender may use words with certain meanings but the receiver may interpret them differently or not understand them, which leads to a deformation or deficiency of the message.

An example: a person who wants to talk to another person, but they do not speak the same language, let's say one speaks English and the other speaks Italian, then there will be a barrier and they will not be able to communicate and have a fluent conversation. They may use non-verbal communication to convey basic things or key needs to each other, but having a fluent conversation will be impossible.

- **Physical barriers:** these are the circumstances that are not present in people but in the environment and that prevent good communication such as noise, poor lighting, distance, lack or deficiency in the means used to transmit a message: telephone, microphone, recorder, television, etc.

Example... This barrier occurs when the means used to transport the message does not allow it to clearly reach the person receiving the message and causes miscommunication. The medium is the vehicle, instrument or device that transmits the information, the most used media

are: Letters. Telephone. Radio. Cinema. Television. Newspapers. Magazines. Conferences, panels, debates, meetings, etc. Posters. Books. Telegraph. Other cases that serve as examples of this type of barrier would be: Radio or telephone interference.

- **Physiological barriers:** these are the deficiencies found in people, either in the person who emits (weak voice, defective pronunciation) or in the person who receives (deafness, visual problems). An example of this barrier could be that of a volunteer who comes to a person in the community to ask for information and cannot give it well because he/she has a disability such as not hearing or not being able to see well. It is important to pay attention to these types of barriers in our daily lives.

- **Psychological barriers:** These represent the particular psychological situation of the person receiving or sending the message, sometimes caused by liking or disliking the other part. The deficiency or deformation may also be due to emotional states (fear, hate, sadness, joy) or prejudices to approve or disapprove what is said, to not read what is written, not understand or not read what he hears or reads.

For example... the tone of voice of someone with power, the use of vocabulary or cultural differences in the way of communicating can make a volunteer or someone in the community feel underestimated, attacked or rejected, without this being the intention. That is why it is key to pay attention to how we are when we communicate and to the signals we see in the person receiving our message, in case it is necessary to modify or adapt something.

Communication Styles

Each person has a preference about how to communicate and how to interpret what is communicated to them, a style that includes both verbal and nonverbal aspects.

Different models have been developed to classify these styles, but the best known and most practical seems to be the one that establishes that there are four main styles: passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive.

- **Passive**

People who use a passive style tend to accept orders and abide by the wishes of others. They avoid conflict at all costs, even if it means going against their own interests. They seem incapable of saying “NO”, so others often take advantage of them to achieve their purposes.

Passive people speak in a low voice, with a soft tone, tend to look down and their posture is bent, or with slumped shoulders.

The danger of this style is that passive people may eventually accumulate bitterness and resentment for not expressing their feelings and opinions. This style of communication can trigger feelings of anxiety, anger or sadness sustained over time.

• **Aggressive**

This style characterizes loud and bossy people. They stand up for their rights, but may violate the rights of others. They use power to get their own way and tend to accuse and threaten others because the wants and needs of others are not important. They use phrases such as “you always...” and “you never...” to express their discontent. They consider themselves superior to others and are always right and “you do what I say here”.

They tend to speak loudly and monopolize conversations and their gestures, such as pointing, indicate a desire to dominate.

Although aggressive people almost always achieve their goals because others do not dare to contradict them, they will eventually find themselves alone. People tend to distance themselves from aggressive people and often put up with them for a while, because there is no other choice, as may occur in a work setting or in an abusive relationship.

• **Passive-aggressive**

Those who communicate in a passive-aggressive manner may say “YES” when they really mean “No”. In other words, their actions do not reflect their feelings and they are somewhat passive on the outside and aggressive on the inside. People who have developed this style are incapable of speaking directly about their needs and feelings, so they resort to sarcasm and pranks and tend to be negative and pessimistic. Unfortunately, this style is sometimes very difficult to identify, as it pretends to be something it is not.

This style of communication and behavior harms interpersonal relationships and damages mutual respect. It can be very damaging if it occurs in the team.

• **Assertive (Affirmative)**

This is the “ideal” communication style. The assertive person speaks clearly and directly and can express their needs, opinions and ideas without offending others. This style is characterized by respect for the ideas of others, although they do not behave. This implies that you listen to what others say and that, at a given moment, you can accept that they are right, which prevents them from becoming defensive. In assertive communication, the problem-solving process is used and agreements are reached, making it the preferred style for conflict resolution.

The assertive person expresses him/herself in a slow and calm manner, looks directly into the eyes and his/her movements are smooth and relaxed, which projects self-confidence.

Assertive communication is characterized by the use of “I” statements. Instead of accusations of “you are always late” or “you never listen to me,” the assertive person would say, “I understand what you are saying, and you may be right, but I think that...” In this way we validate what the other person is saying, while communicating the message we want.

Which style is better? Very few people communicate exclusively with one pure communication style. Most use a combination of styles depending on the circumstances. A normally assertive person may assume a passive attitude to avoid a serious conflict, or may give an order in a violent manner in a dangerous situation. Each person develops his or her communication style based on life experiences, and that style is so rooted that we are not always aware of it. Although we tend to maintain that same style over time, we can learn to be more flexible in our communication with others, including new ways and means to do it in a more assertive way.

What is being an assertive person?

Assertiveness is that personal skill that allows us to express our emotions in an appropriate way in front of another person, and to do so without hostility or aggressiveness. An assertive person knows how to directly and adequately express his or her opinions and feelings (both positive and negative) in any social situation without underestimating the feelings and positions of the person in front of him or her.

- The assertive person is the one who cares about him/herself, his/her rights and the rights of others.
- He likes to meet others on an equal footing rather than wanting to be above them.
- Respect for others and being aware that they also have their rights and needs is what distinguishes an assertive person.
- Her goal is a win-win situation, so she is willing to negotiate and compromise in a positive way.
- He is in touch with his own feelings, can explain to others how he feels - even if his feelings are negative because of something that has been done or said to him - and do so without offending anyone.
- Inwardly, the assertive person feels at peace with him/herself and with those close to him/her.
- He faces each new challenge in a positive way, thanks to his confidence and awareness of his own limitations.
- Respect for oneself and others is a fundamental part of an assertive attitude. In turn, that respect is often reflected around you, encouraging your co-workers to cooperate to the fullest. Any success, big or small, encourages everyone to try even harder to perform any task well.

3. PROPOSAL OF EXERCISES FOR ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

This exercise is complemented by the proposals for working on Nonviolent Communication that appear in the Volunteer Toolbox (page xxx activity xxx)

Change message “YOU” to message “I”

Analyze how your messages are when communicating. If they tend to be of the type: “you do xxx thing” or “you are very demanding” ...you are using You messages. This implies that all the weight and responsibility for what happens is placed on the other person, but we don't give any information about what that communication implies for us. The change from You messages to I messages generates placing the emotional impacts of the communication and the needs in the center. In this way, the messages become:

“I feel xxxx, when you use xxx expressions” or “I feel overwhelmed when you are late to the office”. By using these messages, it is easier to be able to raise needs. Once we state what generates us, an attitude, a reaction or a way of communicating, we can state what we need: e.g. “I would need the whole team to be on time for field trips, so that we don't experience it with so much stress”.

This change in the way of communicating implies a non-violent form of communication, which can prevent many conflicts that occur on a daily basis during the volunteer period.

“The Yo message basically is to talk about me, not you.”

Steps to follow to structure an “I” message:

1. Describe the **behavior or situation** that is interfering or annoying: “When you are late for appointments and don't let me know...”
2. States **feelings regarding the consequences** that the behavior produces: “I feel very anxious and distressed...”
3. Indicates the **consequence**: “because I waste a lot of time” “this is why I would like to ask you...”

Comparative examples Messages You/Messages Me:

Message You	Message I
1. "My teammate is a freeloader."	1. "I don't feel comfortable with some of my teammate's attitudes."
2. "In xxx community they are behind."	2. "I feel confronted by some cultural practices of xxx community. I need to know a little more."
3. "You are inconsiderate."	3. "When you are late for field trips, I feel that my time is not respected".

TIPS ON COMMUNICATION STYLES

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION	PASSIVE COMMUNICATION	AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We say what we think and how we feel ✓ We do not humiliate, dislike, manipulate or annoy others. ✓ We take into account the rights of others ✓ We do not avoid conflicts, we understand that they are part of coexistence and communication. We approach them from a non-violent communication. ✓ We speak with fluency and control, with confidence, but in a relaxed manner, with straight posture and visible hands, we use firm gestures without hesitation, we look into the eyes. <p>Examples</p> <p>"I think that..." "I feel..." "I want to..."</p> <p>"Let's do..." "How can we solve this?"</p> <p>"What do you think?" "What do you think?"...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x We leave our rights as the last priority. The rights of others are more important than mine. x We avoid the look of the one who speaks to us. x We can hardly be heard when we speak x We do not respect our own needs x Our goal is to avoid conflicts at all costs. x We do not effectively express our feelings and thoughts. <p>Examples</p> <p>"Maybe you're right." "I guess it will be like this." "Well, it's really not important," "I wonder if we could..." "Would you mind very much..." "You don't think that..."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> x We offend verbally (humiliate, threaten, insult,). x We show contempt for the opinion of others. x We are rude, spiteful or malicious. x We make hostile or threatening gestures x We only care about achieving our goals at all costs. x Our motto is: the end justifies the means. <p>Examples</p> <p>"This is what I think, and this is the way it is, there are no other options." "You'd do better to..." "You've got to be kidding me..." "If you don't..." "You should..." "You would have to..."</p>

Keys to listening

Listening is an integral part of any relationship. Listening makes our loved ones feel appreciated and respected. Effective listening in the workplace or volunteering helps avoid misunderstandings. Listening involves more than simply hearing spoken words. It is an active process that requires understanding the meaning of the words and the intent of the speaker.

- **Looking into the Eyes - Eye Contact**

Maintaining eye contact helps the listener block out outside distractions and focus on the speaker. It shows that you are paying attention to him. Eye contact also allows the listener to see nonverbal language. Nonverbal language includes gestures and facial expressions that provide additional information, such as rolling your eyes to demonstrate sarcasm or waving your hands to demonstrate important statements.

- **Do not talk or interrupt- Avoid sharing information**

You cannot talk and listen at the same time. Don't give your opinion or share stories about your own experiences unless requested by the speaker or unless you finish speaking. Interrupting with your own stories makes the listener feel that you are not interested in their experience and prevents them from providing all the necessary information. Also, if you are talking about the other person you can't hear what they are saying.

- **Provide feedback**

Feedback is another way to demonstrate that you are listening. It communicates the listener's understanding of the information. Nodding your head and saying, "Mmm hmm," indicates that you understand, shaking your head slightly and responding, "Oohh".

Types of Blockages

Types of blockages that prevent us from hearing well:

- Advise
- Try to be liked
- Compare
- To be right

Check if you use any of these blocks in your communication. If so, try to activate a mental alert every time one of them occurs and try to replace them with one of these proposals:

Tricks to control blockages

- **Clarify information**

Verbal clarification is also key to effective listening. When you don't understand what your interlocutor is saying, you can wait until she has finished or politely interrupt to ask for clarification. You may also be distracted when someone is talking, for example, when a car passes by, a phone rings, or you drop your keys. These are also opportune times to ask for clarification or ask someone to repeat the information to make sure you understand and

don't miss the information. You can say, "I'm sorry, did you say you didn't talk to Maria?" or "When did you say you started feeling sick?" "So the departure is tomorrow finally?"

- **Summarize information - Paraphrase**

When the conversation is over or a great deal of information has been provided, summarize what was said. Repeat all the important points for the speaker to verify the accuracy of the information. To summarize the conversation, you can start by saying, "Just to be sure I understood everything well, the itinerary would be...", "Since this is important information, I want to be sure that I understood everything correctly. Due to xxxx's illness, tomorrow's visit is cancelled and placed on Friday's agenda" or "Just to make sure I understood everything correctly".

Sometimes we may be embarrassed to ask or try to clarify information, but it is ALWAYS better than making assumptions or filling in the gaps with your own ideas. When in doubt, it is better to ask, always putting at the center of the message, the importance for you, to have concise and clear information. In contexts where we are communicating in a language that is not our mother tongue, this is doubly important and can prevent possible misunderstandings or conflicts.

4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

What is a conflict?

- By conflict we understand any situation in which a DIFFERENCE OF INTERESTS/NEEDS is manifested.
- Conflict is inherent to every activity in which human beings relate to each other. Conflicts ALWAYS EXIST and will exist, so our obligation is to learn to live with them trying not to manifest and managing them efficiently when they occur.

In different situations we are faced with the need to use communication for the solution of conflicts, in many occasions we use a correct communication and in other occasions we use a bad communication.

Remember!

- ✓ Communication is fundamental to define our actions and to reach a consensus on personal and collective interests.
- ✓ Both verbal and nonverbal language allows us to convey messages and feelings to others.
- ✓ Conflicts always exist, it is in our hands how to handle them.
- ✓ Assertive communication allows us to solve conflicts in a proactive way and maintain good relationships with others

SOME TOOLS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

These two tools added to the construction of “I” messages, can generate a substantial change in communication and therefore in the prevention and confrontation of conflicts. In addition to this we have the video xxx on non-violent communication that can provide additional support to accompany in conflict situations:

“TOOL NOBODY LOSES”:

It is a method that involves seeking solutions through dialogue and negotiation. With this method everyone wins, since the solution must be accepted by both parts.

Conflicts are resolved without one part winning and the other losing.

The “No One Loses” method is effective because:

- It is not based on power and imposition, but on dialogue and negotiation.
- There is a better chance of finding appropriate solutions if it is done jointly.
- The solution is less hostile because it is based on acceptance.
- It produces more respect.
- Eliminates the need to use authoritarian power.
- It gets to the bottom of the real problems.

No One Loses” Method

Define the problem
Write down the solutions provided by each person
Write down the pros and cons of each solution
Choosing the best
Agrees to implement
Allow readjustment if necessary

NEGOTIATION

One of the skills we need to update is negotiation, a process through which we can build agreements in which all parties have the option of winning.

Any negotiation process requires

- **Ask:** when we desire something, we must begin by expressing a request, a concession. For example, there are people on the team who like to stay up late, but I need more sleep. The negotiation should start with a request for quiet sleep and then move on to what is offered and what is agreed upon.
- **Offer:** when I want something that does not depend directly on me, but has to be granted by another person or persons, as in the previous example. This is when we are already negotiating, and both parties can start a process of requests and offers, and see which schedule would be the maximum for me and which would be for the rest of the people who like to sleep later.
- **Agree:** this is the place where we go in the negotiation, after the exchange of requests and offers. In the previous example, if we have agreed on a time limit for silence in the house, we can establish some exceptions such as birthday celebrations or special days. This allows us to prevent possible conflict situations and gives us a framework of flexibility and trust on a day-to-day basis.

These are the “basic” steps that we can all recognize in any negotiation process, regardless of the context in which it takes place. It is important to understand that, although these are steps that we will always take, they are not the only ones to take into account, since there are two processes that we often “forget” and that make the difference in any negotiation:

- **Listening:** this process, although basic, is often forgotten by some people, who insist on imposing their criteria, their request, their offer, without first listening to what other people have to say. In order to reach agreements, it is essential to listen to the request and the offer of the other part, letting them express themselves, even when the approach initially seems to us (in content) to be wrong. Only by listening can we understand. Listening, moreover, means not only using our ears, but also using non-verbal language: the way we look, our body posture, etc.
- **Recognize:** this last step is perhaps the least known. For many people it is very complicated to recognize, in a broad sense, their children. It is not only a matter of knowing their name, or valuing their achievements, but it is also a process of validation of the person. Perhaps the people who make up our team are not as we imagined them, or do not meet our expectations, or have different points of view, or interests that may surprise us. Taking for granted that we already know him or her skews our perception and limits us from “realize” who is the person who is asking us to negotiate something.

3.3. ACTIVITIES: stress management tools

Objective: to guide volunteers if we see that they are going through very stressful situations, encouraging them to integrate this training into their daily routine.

If we observe stressful situations in the volunteers for which relaxation exercises or guided meditation could work, it is important to remind them that the toolbox includes some recorded audios to use at the moments they consider necessary.

It is important to mention that relaxation is a practice that is trained and therefore if you are going to practice it, it is important that you include it as a habit in your daily routine. In the proposed exercises you will find small meditations that allow you to lower your anxiety and return to your center in a few minutes.

TOOLBOX FOR ACCOMPANYING VOLUNTEERS

Alianza por la
Solidaridad

act:onaid

EU Aid Volunteers
We Care, We Act

