

About the Nonviolence Skillshare

The Nonviolence Training Project's **Skillshare for Trainers** will bring new and experienced nonviolence trainers from around Australia to workshop and develop nonviolence training skills, processes and resources.

The aims of the Nonviolence Skillshare are:

- i. To organise a unique professional development opportunity for new and experienced nonviolence trainers and educators;
- ii. To share, workshop and develop nonviolence training philosophies, processes and techniques for future use as training resources;
- iii. To support the development of a stronger network of nonviolence trainers in the lead-up to the Australian Nonviolence Gathering in 2005;
- iv. To substantially improve the quality and scope of nonviolence training within Australia.

At this time of war, expanding corporatisation and political violence, powerful people's movements are growing locally and globally. Both the Donald Groom Peace Fellowship and Pt'chang have noted an increase in requests for training in creative and empowering forms of nonviolent action.

Numerous observers¹ have noted the low level of awareness of nonviolence within current social change movements in Australia, along with a lack of accessible and quality nonviolence trainings for new activists and communities wanting to get involved in work for peace or social justice.²

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has also recognized a need within Australian Quaker communities for nonviolence training and Pt'chang, due to its role as a training organisation, receives numerous requests from activist groups and community campaigns for training in nonviolence.

Since the Australian Nonviolence Gathering in 2000 there has not been a professional development or networking opportunity for nonviolence trainers, nor substantial development of nonviolence training resources nor methodology. Most nonviolence trainings for activists are *ad hoc* workshops based existing, primarily US or Western derived material. Training bodies such as Pt'chang have long recognized the need for substantial development of grassroots practices for teaching nonviolence.

Notes for Skillshare participants

The Skillshare will focus on training for a deeper understanding of nonviolence and empowered, nonviolent tactics and strategies that can help support activists, organisations and communities struggling together on common issues.

Over four days, new and experienced nonviolence trainers will work together to discuss, plan and workshop nonviolence training philosophies, processes and tools. The Skillshare will be a unique opportunity to share and develop skills, build training agendas and training resources and materials. Through the Skillshare, we will also aim to build and strengthen a network of nonviolence trainers around Australia.

The Skillshare will be a participatory training event, with plenty of opportunities to share and develop nonviolence training skills and delivery processes for workshops that trainers can subsequently run in their own states. Content will cover the range of skills listed below and will allow space for participants to add sessions of particular interest or share specialized skills or ideas.

¹ This has been noted on the Nonviolencenet national egroup, evaluations of anti-war activity and observed by Pt'chang.

² Spratt, David, Where now for the Victorian Peace Movement? - article 2004

Training Materials and the Manual

From this Nonviolence Skillshare, we hope to improve and develop training material and a comprehensive nonviolence Trainer's Manual.

All participants will be asked to contribute to collating and developing the best resources we can find. The development of up to date, regionally relevant resources will involve intensive consultation and collaboration.

The Trainer's Manual may include selected nonviolence films on DVD's, CD -ROM material, overheads and assorted training tools, sample agendas and handout originals. We hope to make it an highly usable, timely resource which will be the first of its kind in Australia.

We ask that you bring case studies, handouts, material and your favourite resources and training ideas in any form to share and add to these resources. We will be workshopping and developing ideas at the Skillshare and then recording them. Some samples have been included in the Pre-reading Kit.

Drafts of the Trainer's Manual can be distributed via email after the Skillshare for further input and feedback and will be made available on line and in hard -copy as soon as practicable for a fee that will cover production costs.

Activist workshops – March - April

A series of short, 1 or 2 day nonviolence training's will be organised in a variety of locations and communities around Australia in the first four months of 2005 and beyond. It can be up to the trainer's involved what these trainings will focus on and how they are arranged. The Nonviolence Training Project hopes to form a national 'calendar' of trainings that will be promoted nationally via our database, email and on the www.nonviolence.org.au website.

Please consider whether you would be able to co -facilitate activist training workshops – or nonviolence workshops on any topic in March to April after the Skillshare.

Nonviolence Trainer's Network

The flow-on effects from these activities include the development of a strengthened network of nonviolence educators, increased awareness of nonviolence in Australian communities and social change movements and the greater use and effectiveness of nonviolent practise in Australia. This remains a proposal only and will be up to the people involved whether this network develops beyond the Nonviolence Training Project's completion in May 2005.

This project will be evaluated and 'handed over' to the wider network at the National Nonviolence Gathering at the end of April 2005.

Main Topic Areas of the Nonviolence Skillshare for Trainers:

It is envisaged that the agenda and content of the Skill -Share workshop will be a collaborative effort to develop content curriculum. A working group has developed the following topic framework and will encourage your input and contribution throughout. What ideas, skills and processes can you bring to the following areas?

1 What is Nonviolence Training?

People teach and learn about nonviolence in a variety of contexts, from brief workshops at blockade sites to long courses at university level. Similarly, people involved in nonviolence education are motivated by a diversity of needs or objectives; social change (whether

revolutionary or reformist), personal growth & development, conflict resolution and the development of alternatives to personal and institutional violence among them.

This section will explore a spectrum of overlapping approaches to nonviolence education and encourage participants to place their own experience of learning or teaching about nonviolence. We will explore how nonviolence training can help build and sustain radical movements, transmit skills and experience between movements, raise awareness, create culture shifts and help activists prepare for and build resilience to repression. We will also look at some exciting recent developments in nonviolent action and trainings around the world.

2 Defining Nonviolence

Facilitating agreement within groups on definitions of nonviolence and effective responses to violence and repression are key skills for nonviolence trainers.

Even outwardly cohesive groups usually contain an extraordinary divergence of opinion on nonviolence. Discussion of controversial issues such as self-defense, verbal abuse, property damage and secrecy can heighten emotions and produce strong reactions. Providing participants with the opportunity to explore ideas about violence and nonviolence in a safe, non-judgemental setting can aid development of trust and cohesion, thereby increasing the ability of a group to take powerful, nonviolent action.

This section will equip you with a variety of tools to help groups explore concepts of nonviolence, including *Nonviolence Photos*, *Nonviolence Barometers*, the *Three Spheres of Political Action*, *Burrowes' Nonviolence Matrix* and the *Two, Four, Eight Exercise*.

We will also explore how Gandhi's foundational ideas (both spiritual and practical) on nonviolence have impacted on contemporary thinking on civil society and its role in resolving conflict.

3 Empowered Learning: Principles and Practice

This session will introduce and explore aspects of Popular Education practice as developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (and many others since).

In contrast to conventional educational models, Popular Education works from the notion that the roles of learner and teacher are fluid and interchangeable, that learning begins with the experience of participants and that learning and social action are inextricably linked.

Training in nonviolence can and does make an important contribution to helping people take more control of their lives and struggle against injustice, linking consciousness-raising with action and utilising highly participatory, illicit and empowered learning methodologies.

In this session, principles such as the *participatory learning cycle*, working with *different learning styles*, *safety*, *justice* and *empowered learning* will be explored and put into practice. Popular Education practice will be modeled throughout the Skillshare.

4 Power & conflict

The overarching dynamic of nonviolence is, essentially, about how ordinary people build and wield power to resolve conflict without using violence. The simplicity of nonviolent conceptions of power belie their strength; social movements that adopt and teach these alternative views of power (the radical Serbian youth organisation, *Otpor!* and the Ukrainian *Pora!* movement are two examples) have achieved radical change against extraordinary odds.

This session will explore different ways trainers can teach power and conflict from a nonviolent perspective. *Power over / power with* and the Gene Sharp's *consent theory of power* will be covered here along with *Gandhian conceptions of conflict transformation*.

5 Nonviolent Communication

Communication styles or models which can be broadly described as 'nonviolent' or 'co-operative', such as those developed by Fran Peavey and Marshall Rosenberg, have application in a variety of human settings, from counselling and de-briefing to mediation, conflict resolution and nonviolent direct action.

Nonviolence training teaches skills including *assertive communication*, *active listening*, *strategic questioning* and *giving and receiving feedback* to create empathy, demonstrate compassion and de-escalate unsafe or tense situations. Similarly, nonviolence trainers draw on these skills to provide a safe and productive learning space for participants within the workshop itself.

This session will present a number of models and tools for nonviolent communication and demonstrate some practical methods for teaching and practise.

6 History of Nonviolence: Global & Local

Nonviolence has a long and rich history across an extraordinary diversity of cultural and political settings. But while mainstream history is littered with the dates of conquests and defeats on the battlefield and the exploits of the great military commanders, the methods of struggle available to and commonly used by ordinary people to challenge injustice have been less well documented.

Using tools including *Case Studies* and *Macro Analysis*, nonviolence trainers can help groups explore and share knowledge on nonviolence from different cultures and historical periods. In sharing these stories, we counter the marginalisation of nonviolent means of struggle within mainstream history and media.

This session will draw upon the experience and local knowledge of participants to develop a 'knowledge bank' of stories and case studies and explore a variety of tools for teaching and communicating the hidden history(s) of nonviolence, both global and local.

7 Nonviolent Strategic Frameworks

While social movements can and do achieve success through sheer passion and 'gut instinct', thinking about and developing strategy is a key factor in increasing the effectiveness of nonviolent action. As James Wheelan has noted, "[c]hange theories do not need to be complex or based on political theory. In fact, they are most likely to motivate and convince members and supporters if they are plain English and developed in an inclusive way."

Nonviolent activists have a number of strategic frameworks available to them, including Lakey's *Five Stages of a Living Revolution*, Moyer's *Movement Action Plan* (MAP) and Burrowes' *Nonviolent Strategic Framework*. Sharp's categories of *Nonviolent Action*, *Protest and Persuasion*, *Non-cooperation* and *Intervention* is another useful framework to help groups identify and choose appropriate tactics wisely.

This session will provide an introduction to nonviolent strategic theories and demonstrate practical exercises and tools for helping groups to explore and develop strategy.

8 Group Dynamics and Training Skills

Facilitating a nonviolence workshop can be challenging, rewarding, frustrating and exhausting by turns! Competent trainers must balance task with maintenance and presentation with participation, all the while maintaining a high degree of self-awareness and sensitivity to group dynamics. As trainers, we may also encounter challenging scenarios such as unequal participation and emergence of strong emotions or conflict. And then there's keeping to time

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This session will equip you with the practical tools to plan, facilitate and evaluate a workshop, covering practical skills such as *assessing training needs, structuring an agenda, forming group agreements, group facilitation, working with a co-facilitator, dealing with power, rank and diversity, handling literacy, numeracy and cross-cultural issues and workshop evaluation.*

9 Myths and Controversies within Nonviolence

Myths and misunderstandings about nonviolence abound in our society. This section will explore how as trainers we can approach common issues and controversies around class, pacifism and working with armed liberation movements. We will also look at some of the major critiques of nonviolence within contemporary movements and explore new trends in activist engagement.

10 Training for Empowered Direct Action

'Empowered Direct Action' is a term used by activist trainer Starhawk to describe a form of direct action that embraces diversity and choice: "Empowered direct action doesn't simply reject or restrict certain tactics: it actively and creatively searches for actions that prefigure and embody the world we want to create."

In this section we will demonstrate a range of processes and practical tools for direct action training from organisations including the Ruckus Society, Training for Change, Greenpeace and Starhawk's Rant Collective. We'll introduce you to new tools and old favourites such as body language and voice control, hassle lines and technical and non-technical blockading and provide tips on how to run role plays that provide a rich and realistic simulation of direct action.

Open Space sessions

Two 90 minute sessions and several workshop spaces will be set aside for participant-led workshops and discussions in the 'Open Space Technology' style.

In Open Space, anyone can nominate and announce a topic or skill they would like to discuss or share. Common interests and needs are identified, topics are merged, adapted, added or dropped according to co-operative whim of the group, and then the workshops begin. "The Law of Two Feet" engenders maximum freedom as to each person's participation - they may choose to stay with one workshop for the entire length of the session, flit from one to another - or, if they prefer, go for a walk outside instead!

While the majority of the Skillshare for Trainers' agenda follows a more traditional workshop format, the Open Space session will demonstrate an alternative, highly participatory model for working and learning in groups.

Training Resources that will be available at the Skillshare:

- Whiteboard
- Butchers paper and clip boards
- TV / video
- Overhead projector
- Data Projector
- Scrap A4 paper
- Masking tape, scotch tape, push pins, paper clips, binder clips
- Blu-tac
- Textas / Markers (various colours, many of each)
- Whiteboard Markers
- Crayons, several boxes

- Rope or string
- Candles
- Games material / balls etc
- Nonviolence and training reference books
- Assorted handouts and articles

Videos:

- A Force More Powerful – A Century of Nonviolent Struggle
- Matewan (Movie: Nonviolent struggle in the US Union movement 1900's)
- Gandhi - Richard Attenborough's film.
- The Long Walk Home (Movie: Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955)
- Bringing Down a Dictator (Overthrow of Milosovic in Serbia, 2000)
- Pacific Women Exploring Nonviolence (IFOR Womens Peace Program)
- The Ruckus Society Activist Training Camps in the US.
- Weather Underground (documentary)

Roleplay and exercise material :

- Police hats
- Variety of hats (workers, bystanders etc.)
- Banners
- Ropes
- Planks of wood
- Sheets of sticky labels for nametags

If there are materials that you may need for an exercise that is not listed please feel free to contact us or bring them along yourself.