



ECHOES AND BODIES

DEEP LISTENING THROUGH NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION AND EMBODIMENT

The best events that happened to me this summer, bringing me much inspiration and strengthening of professional skills

ERASMUR + TRAINING COURSE
2025 LATVIA



Daily activity report

Tools and methods used in the training days.



8-DAY TRAINING COURSE FOR 24 YOUTH WORKERS FROM 6 COUNTRIES (LATVIA, SPAIN, POLAND, GREECE, NETHERLANDS & SLOVENIA), WHICH TOOK TAKE PLACE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OF LATVIA FROM 24TH TILL 31ST OF JULY 2025.



For me, it was a necessary, powerful, physical experience.

No words can describe it - simply amazing

It was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. Essentially the experience felt expanding.



<https://echoes-and-bodies.carrd.co/>



Viesu nams Laumas, Latvia

Overall building blocks for this training experience

While NVC it self is more like a conflict resolution tool we shared the view that it can be also a daily quality to accompany human connection. In order to achieve this we used following methods that were acknowledged also from participants in their feedback:

- The initiation and closing rituals
- daily sharing circles at the beginning of the day
- the rules of the sharings,
- daily caring groups
- regular practicies
- integration day
- first working with the body than talking

Adaptability and Transferability

The methods described in this booklet are modular and can be:

- Used as short standalone activities
- Integrated into longer youth work programmes
- Adapted for intercultural, inclusive, or outdoor settings

Youth workers are encouraged to adjust exercises to their local realities while keeping the core principles of safety, consent, embodiment, and reflection.

The quality experienced by participant:

Trust and knowing/connecting to ourselves.



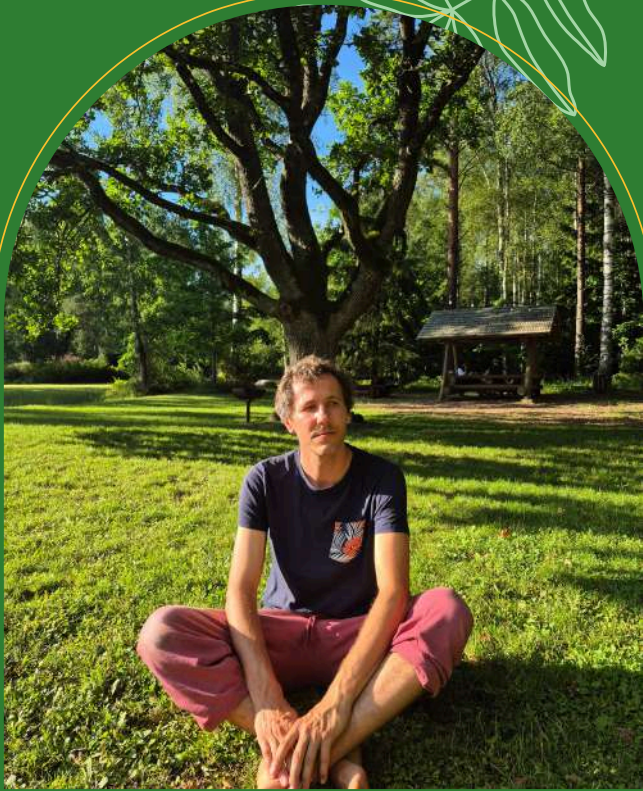
Morning

- Check-in with the talking stick
- Morning session
- Going for Lunch

Afternoon

- Afternoon session
- Care groups
- Going for Dinner





Introductory activities

- Landing in a space
- Human Forest
- Human train
- NVC performance
- Energizer + Name Game
- Reflection on performances
- (Re)presentation of qualities for the TC
- Opening ritual
- Sharing circle

Stages for Landing in a space:

- ✓ exploring a space by walking,
- ✓ seeing, touching, we started to notice people around,
- ✓ leaving our traces in space and following other people traces,
- ✓ saying our name in mind,
- ✓ leaving our name around space,
- ✓ whispering our names to others, whispering first letter of our name to others people part of body,
- ✓ saying our name with love,
- ✓ stretching our names

Human forest exercise

One person explores a forest (other group create forest just standing still and SUPPORTING) then the person touches somebody to change a role, last person we follow to find a place/position to finish the process.



Human train exercise

Go for a walk in pairs

One person ask a question and take turns (after every turn we change pairs)

Answer question in 5 words – 3 words – no answer question as a gift

Good to remember! Ask a question from the essence and answer from the essence

NVC performance (theatrical interpretation of our understanding of NVC using prompts):

- Only use hand and arms
- Be in a line
- Stick together
- Stay in a circle
- Hands on the ground

Three core qualities

Engagement - Tom and Jerry game:

In pairs one person (shorter) is Jerry the mouse trying to clap, while the other person is Tom, trying to stop him. Change roles. (It was fun because we were fully engaged)

Consent - May I hug you?

One person asks the other for consent via the statement May I hug you? The other person internally reflects and considers the question for 5 seconds, then answers clearly with a Yes or No. Following this, we walked around the room and asked each other for consent regarding hugs in the exact same way.

Sensitivity:

At first we walk around the space (outside in this case). Then we followed another person without bothering them. Afterwards, if someone is following you, you can turn around with your body.

Then we practice consent - we could turn around and say either yes or no to the people following us (we could engage the person that followed us, with various activities)

We all took sticks, felt their weight and impact on our hands and body. We gave sticks to each other, the stick representing our wholeness. Each person was supposed to consciously and presently give and receive the stick to the other person.

Opening ritual - walk in the forest:

At first we walked in the forest in complete silence.

Then we created a human mandala.

Afterwards we found something in the forest that called to us, connected to it and gave it the emotional and mental energy of that which we wish to give a rest from our subconscious.

We placed it somewhere in the forest

In the end we put our intention into an artifact of the forest (leaf, stick,...) and left it in the middle of the circle - creating an Intention Mandala. We each voiced our intention as we placed the artifact in the middle of the circle

We left in silence, keeping in our hearts and minds something we are grateful for (that helped bring us to this training program) until we reached the house.

Caring is **sharing circle** (opening, meditation, 5 minutes sharing, closing)



Three types of listening:

- Intellectual – I think I already have the answer, so the information doesn't reach me.
- "Emotional" – I take everything as the truth and the information just "goes through" – I just accept what is being said.
- Ideally there is a combination of the 2 above and this is what is needed for NVC

The Game:

Task presentation – shop owner, client & neighbour seller. The shop owner sells a bottle for 20eur. Client pays with a 100eur bill. As the shop owner does not have appropriate change, she goes to the neighbour to exchange 100eur into smaller bills. The shop owner gives the client 80eur change and the bottle. Later the neighbour comes back to the shop and informs the shop owner that the 100eur bill was fake. The shop owner refunds to the neighbor 100eur. Question: How much money the shop owner lost in the given scenario? Task: to discuss in groups of 3 ppl. When the answer seems to be clear, join another group to discuss further.

Things to practice: Communication, cooperation, argumentation.

A question was proposed to the group **"Who am I ?"**.

The model of The layers of existence was proposed. According to the model, joy only arises when all levels are aligned.

Based on this model there are the 4 basic sources of energy for the people: Food, sleep, breathing & positive/meditative state of mind.

Exercise: Standing still with eyes closed and some space around. Gradual individual movement Initiation – prompts: 1%, 2–3%, 5%, 10%, 30% and at least 50% up to (optional) 100% of the maximum movement capacity.

Breathing techniques:

Calming **Ujjayi** breath: In and out through the nose with a focus on the throat and allowing sound to come as if when we are sleeping.

Energizing breath: **Bhastrika**



Gradual moving towards embodiment

- Game of communication
- Three types of listening
- Layers of existence
- 4 sources of energy
- Connecting with the body through movement and meditation
- Breathing techniques
- intro to topic of consent
- WILL YOU AND MAY I process



Intro to topic of consent:

Exercises **in pairs**:

- By using predefined hand sign language one person gives invitation to other person to come closer, stop or go away, keeping constant eye-contact, after a while change roles and repeat.
- Trying to reach for the arm of the partner but he|she pushes it away before the hand reaches the arm, the hands are not touching, changing roles.
- Putting hand on the shoulder of ones partner and he|she finds a way to remove the hand with their own hand, this time touching directly (saying no without words), after a while change roles and repeat.

Exercise: **May I hug you?**

Without the question being said group is walking freely around the room, without talking they meet in couples for a short while in order to try to communicate if a person met wants to be hugged by the one approaching, if the answer is yes, hug happens, if one perceives the answer is no, the hug does not happen. The aim emphasis is on trying to be as clear as possible.

Exercise **in pairs**:

We create play zone with two yoga mats, 7 minutes there is a possibility to play in whatever way, one proposes a play by sitting in the lay zone area, the other responds, if the play no longer suits you, you can escape it by exiting the play zone

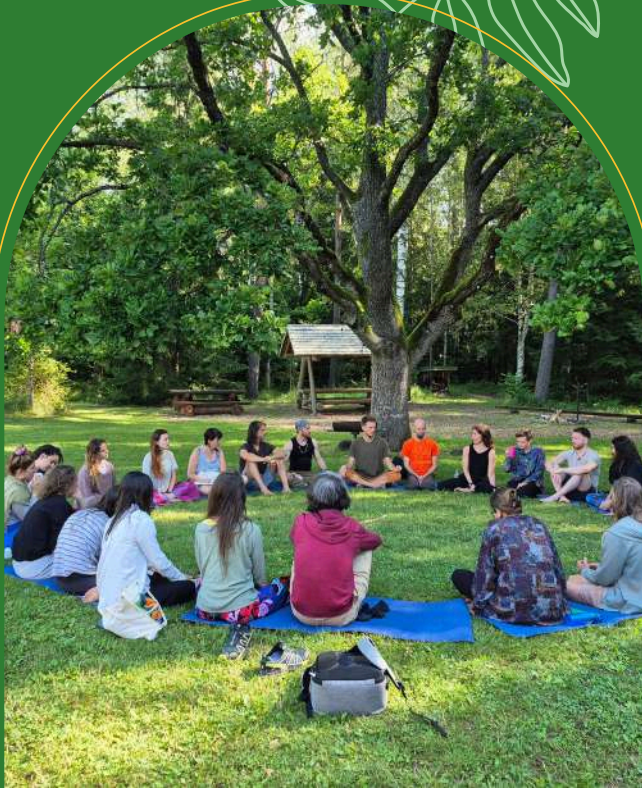


Theoretical introduction for **WILL YOU AND MAY I?** followed by exercise in couples:
With intention of touching a hand one from the couple forms a request:

- a.) will you touch....? (asking request)
- b.) may I touch your hand? (seeking my pleasure), in whatever way, if it is too much, person says STOP

Exercise continued playing the same in an open space, with anyone, walking around, formulating request to different participants, sticking with one person max 1 minute, one can ask both questions.





Embodiment and Contact Improvisation tools

- Different ways to move in space
- Tadpole exercise
- Angel exercise
- Responding body
- Elbow navigation
- Playing with gravity in trios
- CI Jam introduction

Flow Motion techniques

Different ways to move in the space

- Focus on softness and rigidity.
- Animal movements.
- Leading a blind person whose hand is on the other's shoulder.

Tadpole exercise

In couples:
One lays down and the other person takes care of the head in a soft way until gradually the follower has been guided to standing up position and goes with the flow of the echoes from the received movements invitations by the leader. (Follow my rivers)

Contact Improvisation techniques

Angel exercise:

Two people while supporting each other are playing with another being in the middle. The person in the middle has closed eyes and he/she is not initiating any movement or activity, only receiving the touch of the angels.

- In couples – one is touching a part of the other's body and the other is reaching in response by moving only this specific part of the body with the minimum movement.
- In couples – one person is carrying the other's hand and leading the other with closed eyes in the space around doing the best to build as clear as possible communication.
- In trios – two are supporting the one in the middle by holding the person's hands in order to offer possibilities to play with gravity so that the person can freely move and share his weight possibly feeling lighter and maybe even experience moments of flying.
- Introduction of contact improv, jam. Starting from exploring jam in couples and then collectively.



Authentic Movement

Introduction:

Landing in the space; orienting in the room.

See who and what is there. Connect. Move around, find a partner. Move together for a bit and change.

Come together in a circle. Connect your eyes with your partner (and stay for ~2 min)

Short theoretical explanation of 'witnessing exercise':

Everyone will move with eyes closed for 15 min

Your partner will witness you. If your dancing partner is not visible from your spot, that is ok. The intention is to be as present as possible.

After the movement both will write/ draw their experiences. The witness can write about what they saw and what that did to them. Writing will be in present tense.

The dancer shares for 5 minutes.

The witnesses take action and intervene only if a dancer is really about to hurt themselves (run to a wall).

The practice:

The group splits into two halves by dividing previous couples. Observer half shapes the circle for the dancer half to move in. The first group of dancers closes their eyes. The bell signal is given and their movement time starts. From each couple the witness observes his dancer. After 15 min a bell sound signals the conclusion of the movement. The movement comes to a stillness. Guidelines for the dancers: 'Open your eyes gently, like a baby, let the light come in slowly. Orient in the room. Find the eyes of your witness. Move to your witness. They are ready to receive you, also with their body. You can receive what you need.' Dancers lay or stay with their witness.

Then 5 min of writing & 5 min of sharing.

All the group shakes it off and change.

The witnesses do not share their experiences. Not in the sharing, not later, not ever.



Deeply embodied techniques

- Authentic Movement
- Play Fight



Play Fight

For starting one question to answer and share – in one sentence: what do you playfight with in your life at this moment?

Warming up:

- 3 min of jumping
- Warming up joints (making circles) ankles, knees, hips, elbows, wrists, head
- Touch as many ankles as you can
- In couples stand in a plank in front to each other. Try to touch the wrist of the other as much as possible. Don't let yours to be touched.
- In duo's: one is a train (on all fours) and puts all effort to move forwards while the other gives pressure to the shoulders and pushes in opposite direction, so it's harder to move forward.
- In duo's: one person is the monkey parent (on all fours) the other is the monkey baby. The monkey parent tries to get to the other side of the field, while the monkey baby tries to make it difficult for the parent to reach the other side by hanging on the 'mama' or pulling in different ways.
- In Duo's: put the weight chest to chest on another while laying on the ground. 3 times. Then swap.
- Change partner: put 50% pressure. The one beneath finds ways to get to a seated position.
- 5 min playfight in duo's



Explanation of Playfight

We sit in a circle. The circle does not intervene. Does not applaud, speak etc.

The one entering the circle makes a request to someone else in the circle: do you want to do a playfight with me : optionally give more detailed request for specific desire of experience. The approached one says yes/ no and can add/ do a counter request.

When the answer is yes both get in the circle and:

- Check for injuries
- Do the breath warm-up
- Give a confirmation signal when they are ready to playfight & the fight starts
- The facilitators says when 30 sec are left and the active participants find and ending.
- They sit in front of each other, cross the hands and share: how I feel now.. What I am grateful for.
- Normally after the circle ends, there is a sharing from the circle as well(and even after a Playfight) with the question: what did you learn?





Theoretical context given in training.

About structure - flow; three states of the resilience; SIBAM flower:

In physical movement, daily life and socium we move between two pillars: structure and flow, which could be interpreted also differently, e.g. masculine and feminine aspect of life. We need structure for support, direction and safe container, then consequently flow or moving life force can happen.

The extreme points of these pillars are:

Rigidness (for structure)

Collapse (for flow).

Both of these extreme points mean no action and no movement – immobility. Rigidness leads to freeze; and too much flow without structure leads to collapse.

For example, an exercise for children that would bring them into:

More flow state would be: inviting them to move like boiled spaghetti;

More structure would be inviting them to move like unboiled, dry spaghetti.

Resilience axis: I can't (freeze/collapse, immobility) ⇔ I can (Mobilisation, fight/flight: sympathetic nervous system active) ⇔ I am (relaxation, digestion: parasympathetic nervous system active)

SIBAM flower: "Felt sense" in the middle; The 5 petals around: Sense, Image, Behaviour, Affect, Meaning.

Theoretical backbone from Flow motion





Application in Youth Work Settings

Relevance for Youth Work

Facilitation Guidelines for Youth Workers

Examples of Application

The embodied and non-formal methods documented in this booklet are designed to be adapted for a wide range of youth work contexts, including youth centres, schools, community projects, outdoor education programmes, and international youth exchanges. While the practices originate from movement-based and somatic approaches, they are presented here as non-therapeutic, educational tools suitable for youth workers.

These methods support key youth work objectives by:

- Strengthening emotional awareness and self-regulation
- Supporting inclusion and group cohesion
- Developing communication, consent, and boundary-setting skills
- Encouraging participation, creativity, and agency
- Supporting mental and emotional well-being through embodied learning

They are particularly relevant for work with young people who benefit from experiential, non-verbal, and body-based learning approaches, including those with fewer opportunities.

When applying these practices in youth work settings, facilitators are encouraged to:

- Clearly frame activities as voluntary and adaptable, respecting individual limits
- Use inclusive language and offer alternatives to physical contact
- Emphasise consent, choice, and the right to stop or modify participation at any time
- Adapt intensity, duration, and complexity according to the age group and context
- Include verbal reflection and group sharing to support learning integration

No prior dance or movement experience is required for participants.

- **Contact Improvisation** tools can be used to explore trust, cooperation, and non-verbal communication in youth groups.
 - **NVC-inspired** exercises support conflict prevention, empathy, and respectful dialogue.
 - **Playfight** practices (with clear rules and facilitation) help young people explore power, boundaries, and emotional expression in a safe way.
 - **Nature-based** and ritual practices can support reflection, belonging, and connection during youth exchanges or residential activities.
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