

# Practicing Benefits-Based Conversations: Issue Framing

(1 hour 30 minutes)



Principles of Community Mobilization Series  
Staff Skill Building Library  
Raising Voices



This module is part of a *Staff Skill Building Library* developed by Raising Voices. The *Library* consists of competency based training modules designed to strengthen skills of staff implementing or supporting community-based violence against women (VAW) prevention programs. The *Library* is designed for organizations using *SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV* but can be used by anyone working to mobilize their community to prevent VAW. If you are not using *SASA!*, simply replace the word *SASA!* wherever you see it in the text with the name of your methodology.

This module is part of the *Principles of Community Mobilization* series in the *Staff Skill Building Library*.

All materials in the *Library* can be downloaded at [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php) or requested at [info@raisingvoices.org](mailto:info@raisingvoices.org). The *SASA! Activist Kit* can be downloaded at [www.raisingvoices.org](http://www.raisingvoices.org)



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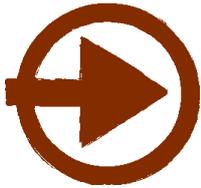
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# Practicing Benefits-Based Conversations: Issue Framing

## (1 hour 30 minutes)

Note: This session should be conducted, if possible, after *SASA! Stages of Change*.



### Objective

- Participants practice skills in articulating benefits of nonviolence to different groups in the community.

### Competencies

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- List a few of the benefits of nonviolence to the individual, relationship, community and society as a whole.
- Articulate a positive vision rather than talking only about what we do not want to see.
- Demonstrate how to frame an issue in a benefits-based way to the interests of a particular audience.



### Preparations

- 4 flip charts posted around the room, with the titles “Individual Benefits of Nonviolence”, “Family Benefits of Nonviolence”, “Community Benefits of Nonviolence”, and “Societal Benefits of Nonviolence”.
- Write flip chart list of groups to engage in the community, mentioned in *SASA! Circles of Influence* exercise, and other government and institutional entities, etc (e.g. market seller, neighbor, religious leader, Ministry of Gender representative, etc).



# Steps

## Don't Think of an Elephant! <sup>1</sup>

1. Explain: *We have learned about all the different sectors of society we might want to involve in this work, and talked a bit about the benefits of nonviolence to different sectors of the community.*

*This session is to practice the skill of talking about violence against women and the benefits of nonviolence in ways that help each sector of society see the benefit to them personally. Different arguments will work better to get different people thinking. First, we are going to do a visualization exercise.*

2. Explain: *Now please sit back and relax and close your eyes. Think about anything you want to think about, but--whatever you do--do NOT think of an elephant! Don't think about its grey skin, or its tusks, or its big ears, or its tail. Don't think about what it eats or where it lives or how it uses its trunk to bathe. Whatever you do, do NOT think of an elephant!*

3. Wait a few seconds and ask people what they thought about.

4. Was anyone successful at NOT thinking about an elephant?

5. If so, ask how they managed.

6. Explain:

- *Usually, if people managed to not think of an elephant, it was because they switched their focus to something else.*
- *At first, in violence against women work, we only ever talked about what we didn't want to see: violence! We spent all of our time talking about violence and the consequences of violence—this, for us, is the elephant that we kept asking people not to visualize, even though that is all we were talking about.*



<sup>1</sup> Concept adapted from Lakoff, G. (2004). *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing.



- *Over time, we have learned that people cannot just not-do something—they have to know what to do, positively. They have to actively think of something different and work toward that. This means talking about what we DO want to see.*
  - *For those who did not visualize an elephant, usually it is because we are able to visualize a giraffe or a hippo or anything else in its place—with violence against women (VAW) work, we need to be able to visualize nonviolence and its benefits.*
7. *Ask: When we only talk to people about the problems around us, how do people end up feeling? (e.g. Angry, frustrated, despairing, etc)*
  8. *Ask: Does anyone have a life example of this they can share? Have you ever seen someone raise awareness or talk to you, on and on, about a problem in the community?*
  9. *Invite 1-2 people to tell their stories and ask how they felt.*
  10. *Summarize: So, only talking about the problem does not help people get through the stages of change, does it?*
  11. *Ask: If we do not want violence against women in our communities, what do we want? What would that community look like?*
  12. *Write down responses on a flip chart. After about 5-10 minutes, stop the brainstorming.*
  13. *Explain: Good! We could do this all day, but we see we are working for [read responses]. In other words, we want healthy and safe families and communities!*

## Talking About the Benefits of Nonviolence

1. *Explain:*
  - *SASA! talks a lot about the benefits of nonviolence and the benefits-based approach to VAW prevention.*
  - *Let's spend just a few minutes discussing what some of the benefits are of living a life free from violence, to the individual, family, community and society.*
2. *Ask participants to brainstorm a few benefits of nonviolence to each group. Let them know, if they feel stuck, to think about the consequences of violence to this group and try to shift the concept into the positive benefit of nonviolence.*



3. Write responses on four different flip charts.
4. Explain:
  - *We could go on all day, because there are so many benefits to nonviolence.*
  - *We will use the rest of this session to practice talking about these benefits, and about our vision of healthy and safe families and communities, to different groups we have agreed it is important to engage.*
  - *This is called “issue framing”. It is kind of like framing a picture. The frame you put around a picture can make it look very different. In the same way, the way you talk about (frame) an issue can make the issue look engaging and relevant, boring, threatening and offensive to the people you are talking with.*
  - *This is related to understanding who you are talking with, and what their interests might be—so you can talk about the benefits of nonviolence to them!*

#### Option 1: For Small Groups:

5. Split participants into 2-4 groups (Individual, Relationship, Community and Society).
6. Give each group 1-2 of the 4 options, being sure each is covered.
7. Ask them to brainstorm a few benefits on each list. Let them know, if they feel stuck, to think about the consequences of violence to this group and try to shift the concept into the positive benefit of nonviolence.
8. Ask groups to meet for 5 minutes only. Call “stop!”
9. Have participants present briefly, role playing what they have discussed.
10. List the benefits that were covered in each group’s role play. Discuss any challenges as a group, and ask the group for other suggestions about how to frame the issue.
11. Thank the group for participating.



## Option 2: For Large Groups

5. Ask participants to split into pairs or groups of 3. Ask each pair to pick a different group from the pre-prepared flip chart list, and role play explaining the positive benefit to the person, as a representative of that group, of having a nonviolent, safe community. One of the pair will be her/himself and do the explaining. The other will try to think like the journalist, policymaker, community member, etc—and see whether the person is convincing.
6. After 10 minutes, call “*Stop!*”
7. Ask a couple of groups who felt they were successful to demonstrate in a role-play style how they talked about the benefits of nonviolence to that group. In other words, each of them will represent their program, and the rest of the participants become the group of religious leaders, elders, etc that the group wants to convince that the program benefits them.
8. Ask other participants to try to think like the group they are acting like (e.g. journalists, policy makers, etc), and be sure the arguments are tailored toward the interests of that person/ group.
9. List the benefits that were covered in each group’s role play. Discuss any challenges as a group, and ask the group for other suggestions about how talk about how to talk about the issue in a way that appeals to the group.
10. Thank the group for participating.

### Validation Option: Activity and Training

This activity allows for group validation of the competency:

- Articulate a positive vision rather than talking only about what we do not want to see
- Demonstrate how to frame an issue in a benefits-based way to the interests of a particular audience

During group role plays, do participants talk about the benefits of nonviolence to the group they are speaking with? Do they talk about the vision of a violence-free community? If so, then they as a group have demonstrated the competencies. If not, further training is recommended.



# Validation Options

Validation is another way to say “assessment” or “pre/post-test”. It is used to determine whether the participants in a training learned what the facilitator intended for them to learn. Instructions for how to use each validation method can be found in *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning* downloadable at [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php)

## Select validation methods for each competency using the table below:

1. Choose whether the competency (specific skill) needs to be validated at a group or individual level.
2. Looking at the validation methods listed in that category (group or individual), select only **one** of the validation methods marked with and ‘X’ for each competency.
3. Plan a time in the training agenda to use the validation method you’ve chosen to test each competency.

Competency (Specific skill)	Suggested Validation Methods									
	Group Validation <i>Use if it is sufficient for the group, as a whole, to demonstrate the competency</i>					Individual Validation <i>Use if essential for each participant to demonstrate the competency her/himself</i>				
	Activity in Training*	Game Show	Card Game	Answers Bingo	Pick and Play	Activity in Training*	Exit Interview/ Role Play	Game Show (All Play)	Written Quiz	
List a few of the benefits of nonviolence to the individual, relationship, community and society as a whole**		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Articulate a positive vision rather than talking only about what we do not want to see	X						X			
Demonstrate how to frame an issue in a benefits-based way to the interests of a particular audience	X						X			

\*Activity in Training includes many possibilities, depending on the module, including brainstorming, group practices, debates, agree/disagree/not sure exercise, and others. The *Teach Back* series can also be considered as an Activity in Training.

\*\*See Validation Questions for this competency, to be used in Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play methods, on next page.



# Validation Questions

What do you know? Name at least one benefit of nonviolence at each of the following circles of influence: individual, relationship/family, community and society.



Facilitator's Note: Find out what the participants really learned! This card can be cut out and used with Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play validation methods.

Full descriptions of how to use each of these validation methods are available in the *Staff Skill Building Library*. Download at: [www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php](http://www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php) and go to *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning*.



Game Show



Pick and Play

