

*Women's March
Peace Ambassador
Mini-Manual*

Nonviolence Practice

THE CLARA METHOD OF DE-ESCALATION

(Note: Most of us tend to start with step four, especially if the opponent is hostile.)

STEP ONE: CALM AND CENTER

Many of us--when we feel threatened, attacked, or "put on the spot"--need to internally calm and center ourselves before we can honestly be engaged in listening. Try the following:

- Focus on breathing in calm with in-breaths and releasing stress with out breaths.
- Be aware of what's supporting you (the ground, chair, your bones and muscles, love...)
- Put one hand over your heart and one over your stomach.
- Imagine carrying something you love: a plant, gift, baby, or pet.
- Meditate, pray, or affirm a mantra in silence.
- Call on the courage of your heroes.



STEP TWO: LISTEN

In a debate, you listen to your opponent until they get the facts wrong and you can use the real facts to make a fool of them. In CLARA, listen until you hear the moral



principle that they're speaking from or a feeling or experience that you share. Listen until you find a way in which you can open your heart and connect with them. Try to understand what lies at the core of what's being said: the fear, the uncertainty, the anger, the truth offered by the person talking. Seek common ground. Be mindful of body language, yours and the speaker's. *Research shows that communication is conveyed by 55%, or more, in body language; 38% by the voice: its accents, tone, emphases, pauses and inflections; and only 7% by actual words.*

STEP THREE: AFFIRM

This is the step we don't usually think of in a conscious way. Express the connection that you found when you listened, whether it's a feeling, an experience, or a principle that you have in common with the other person. Affirm whatever you can find in their questions or statements that represents a reasonable concern. If you can't find anything (and we'll help you get better at finding something), there are other ways to affirm. The exact words don't matter--the important part is to convey that you won't attack or hurt the other person and you know they have as much integrity as you do. For this to be effective one must be genuine. It's best to speak spontaneously from the heart rather than developing "go to" responses in advance. Share of yourself. Affirming can be challenging, but gets easier with practice.

You may need to repeat the Calm-Listen-Affirm steps several times before moving on. Don't respond until the speaker has calmed down and seems willing to listen.

STEP FOUR: RESPOND

Debaters, politicians, and sometimes the rest of us often avoid answering the question that was asked and answer a different question in order to stay in control of the situation. In CLARA, answer the question.

Respond to the issue the person raised. If you agree with them, say that too, even if it feels like you're losing ground. If you don't know the answer, say so, refer them to other sources. Sometimes it seems the person is only trying to fluster or attack you. Reacting with respect rather than defensiveness and anger is important. It conveys that you are powerful enough to withstand aggression and respond honestly.

STEP FIVE: ADD INFORMATION

This step allows you to share additional information that you want to give the other person. It may help the other person or audience to consider the issue in a new light or redirect the discussion in a more positive direction. This may involve correcting any mistaken facts they mentioned; you can do this now because you've made a heart connection.



Peace Ambassador Roles and Responsibilities:

- Keep participants safe from traffic (cars, buses, cyclists, etc.) and potentially people.
- Move people safely from one location to another.
- De-escalate potentially tense situations (between marchers, with the public, and onlookers/opponents).
- Help march participants with any issues they have.
- Communicate any major issues (medical conditions, problems with police, and situations that you cannot resolve) to the Security Coordinator.
- Follow the chain of command.
- Act as an information source between planners and demonstrators.
- Help demonstrators be safe while and feel good about demonstrating.
- Act as a buffer between police, hecklers, and bystanders.

Peace Ambassadors DO NOT:

- Touch anyone at all, ever, especially *police!* (this is considered assault)
- Do the police's job, ever.
- Negotiate with police/invite police to resolve conflicts.
- Make decisions about march routes.
- Deal with major emergencies or issues.
- Provide medical assistance.
- Speak to the press/media.

While volunteering as a Peace Ambassador:

- Remember, you are the representative of the march/action that participants see and can identify – your actions will create the mood/atmosphere of the march.
- In most situations, you will be the first person that someone will talk to if there is a question or a problem to address – so be open and welcoming to people.
- ALWAYS follow the chain of command – safety first, question decisions later. If/when the tactical team makes a call, all P.A.s must carry out the decision.
- Know all assembly points and route of the rallies and march.
- Be respectful at all times and remember this march represents a variety of communities and constituencies. Respect diversity of cultures and backgrounds.
- De-escalate potential minor problems by maintaining eye contact, using a calm steady voice, and keeping your hands where people can see them.
- Immediately inform your lead/superior of potential bigger issues, e.g.. Individual(s) getting aggressive/drunk person/police causing disruption
- Keep spirits high — encourage chanting and singing.
- Have fun and enjoy the march!

STICKY SITUATIONS CHEAT SHEET:

- Hecklers and Agents Provocateurs: Face trouble; Isolate; Converse if possible, while march goes past. Shower them with friendliness to disarm.
- Counter-protesters and Black Bloc/Antifa: Best to deal with them by ignoring them. try to route the action away from them. Leave a substantial space between to make it clear to media and law enforcement that they are not part of the action. Our attention shouldn't be on them, but on keeping OUR people safe.
- In case of violence: isolate, separate, call in help through chain of command.
- In case of a medical emergency: one marshal remains with injured person, another gets police.
- Try to be calm during a confrontation with a cop. If the entire crowd is in danger or panicking, tell everyone to SIT DOWN. This keeps people safer and more non-threatening; it takes control of the street space and allows you to regroup and regain composure. While it's counter-intuitive, horses will not step on a person sitting down.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME:

Dress the Part!

- Good walking shoes are critical – you will be on your feet for a long time.
- Wear comfortable clothes that you can move in freely, but not so loose that they can get in the way of your work. Stay away from scarves etc. if possible.
- All P.A.s will be provided a t-shirt. Please make sure to wear the t-shirt where it can be seen. If it is cold, please wear over your jacket or sweater.
- Keep hair pulled back or under a cap.
- Refrain from wearing jewelry and/or anything that can be pulled by another person or by mistake.

Make sure to bring the following:

- It is recommended that you have your ID with you.
- Your cell phone. But keep it either off or in airplane mode/do not disturb mode, to keep from getting distracted!
- Bring any meds you may need in clearly labeled prescription containers.
- Have an emergency contact and a legal number written somewhere on your person or an item of clothing you won't easily be separated from.
- A bottle of water.
- Leave anything home that the police consider contraband.
- Let your emergency contact know what you are doing/that they're # is on you.

DE-ESCALATION SKILLS

What to do with your body:

- Minimize body movements such as excessive gesturing, pacing, fidgeting, or weight shifting. These are all indications of anxiety and will tend to increase agitation.
- Appear calm, centered, and self-assured even if you don't feel it. Your anxiety can make the client feel anxious and unsafe which can escalate aggression.
- Keep a relaxed and alert posture. Stand up straight with feet about shoulder width apart
- Angle your body about 45 degrees in relation to the individual—and when approaching. This stance not only reduces your target size in the event of an attack, but also prepares you to escape when necessary. Avoid the "cowboy standoff".
- *** Never run anywhere. ***

Hands:

- Place your hands in front of your body in an open and relaxed position. This gesture appears non-threatening and positions your hands for blocking if the need arises.
- Avoid crossed arms, hands in the pockets, or arms behind the back since it can be interpreted as negative body language as well as putting you at tactical disadvantage if an attack occurs.
- Do not point or shake your finger.
- Do not touch even if some touching is generally culturally appropriate and usual in your setting. Cognitive disorders in agitated people allow for easy misinterpretation of physical contact as hostile and threatening. In the march context, touching is considered assault.

Face:

- Maintain limited eye contact. Loss of eye contact may be interpreted as an expression of fear, lack of interest or regard, or rejection. Excessive eye contact may be interpreted as a threat or challenge.
- Maintain a neutral facial expression. A calm, attentive expression reduces hostility.

Voice:

- Calm, nonchalant, assertive and respectful.
- Maintain an even normal vocal volume (unless practicing "The Match" below).
- No swearing. Speak slowly.

Specific De-escalation tactics:

- Route onlookers away from situations, because onlookers escalate. If appropriate, inform participants that they are being filmed.
- *The Walk Away* - Goal is to neutralize the person by removing them from the situation. Calmly tell the person that you can not hear them and ask them to follow you and walk with them to a new location.
- *The Match* - If someone is screaming, start screaming with them and then slowly lower the volume of your voice - they will naturally lower the volume of their voice.
- *The Yessum* - Sometimes people can't be reasoned with and the only thing you can do is just keep saying yes to them. Eventually, they will get bored and walk away.

(adapted from "Peace Ambassador Training Tips" by Jay Carmona 2017)

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE 101 for the Women's Marches

1. LANGUAGE

- Use direct language: person with a disability or disabled person
- NOT handicapped, not crippled
- Avoid cutesy alternatives: NOT differently abled, not physically challenged
- NOT special needs
- NOT wheelchair bound. We're wheelchair users
- NOT crazy, psycho, lunatic, stupid, retarded
- Our use of in-group language doesn't give you permission to use it

2. DON'T TOUCH US WITHOUT ASKING

- That includes touching our wheelchairs, walkers or other equipment
- Don't pat us on the head or shoulder or hand or anywhere else
- Don't take our photos without our permission

3. ASK BEFORE YOU "HELP"

- Don't assume we're struggling or need help
- Check your assumptions about what constitutes "struggling"
- Don't infantilize us
- Don't assume that the reason we approach you as a peacekeeper is because of our disability

4. IF WE ACCEPT AN OFFER OF HELP. DON'T ASSUME THAT YOU KNOW WHAT WE NEED

- Don't substitute your judgment for ours
- Wait to be told what we need
- Again, don't grab us or our equipment without permission
- How could I be most helpful right now?

5. WE ARE NOT OUR DISABILITIES

- Don't try to connect with us around the disability
- Don't ask me questions about my equipment unless you have an actual need to know
- Don't ask intrusive or personal questions

6. BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED MARCHERS

- Identify yourself and your role
- Describe what's going on
- Don't grab our arm to guide us, let us take yours
- All the same rules about not touching or helping without permission apply

7. DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING MARCHERS

- Don't shout
- Talk to the us, not the interpreter
- Make eye contact before you start
- Don't assume lip-reading, but also don't cover your mouth when speaking
- Always have a paper and pen handy so that you can communicate in writing
- Know where the Deaf seating area is at the rally, where the interpreters will be, in case you're asked

8. INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

- Don't assume that someone using a service doesn't need it because she doesn't "look disabled"
- Hidden disabilities can range from heart disease to MS to bi-polar disorder to chronic fatigue to environmental illness

9. SENSORY PROCESSING/ANXIETY/AUTISM AND SIMILAR CONDITIONS

A march or rally can be overwhelming for anyone; it can be almost impossible for women with sensory processing issues. We may seem rude, detached or unresponsive when we may just be trying to make sense of all that incoming data. Imagine standing in the middle of a crowded circus midway with flashing lights, loud noises and lots of people and trying to understand what someone is instructing you to do.

- Don't yell at us; it will just make us feel more overwhelmed
- If possible, step aside out of the crowd to quieter space.
- Be calm and ask if you need to repeat what you said.
- Don't touch or grab us to "help" us to understand.

10. MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES/ENVIRONMENTAL ILLNESS

- Don't wear perfume or cologne,
- Don't use scented soaps or hair products
- Wash your clothes with fragrance-free detergent, fabric softener
- Don't touch us without permission, since you may transfer substances to us or our clothes that make us sick.

11. SERVICE DOGS

- Don't pet them
- Don't ask to pet them. They're working and it's exhausting for us to field constant requests
- Don't try to bond with us around them (unless you're considering getting one yourself)

12. PET PEEVES

- Touching me or my stuff without permission
- Talking to the person with me instead of to me
- Assuming that my girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse is my caregiver
- Complimenting me on how well I wheel/walk/get around
- Complimenting me on being able to do mundane tasks

RESOURCES:

On how to be fragrance-free/environmentally safe:

<https://eastbaymeditation.org/resources/fragrance-free-at-ebmc/>

Disability-related blogs and websites:

twothirdsoftheplanet.com
disabilityvisibilityproject.com
nicolagriffith.com
wordsiwheelby.com
badcripple.blogspot.com

A wonderful essay on disability: Nancy Mairs, "On Being a Cripple"

thelamedame.tumblr.com/post/30938417648/on-being-a-cripple

ASSESSING A BYSTANDER INTERVENTION OPPORTUNITY

FIRST:

1. Witness an occurrence out of the ordinary.
2. Decide “in your gut” if what you just witnessed was unacceptable or if something was amiss.
3. Ask yourself: "Could I play a role here?"

If no one intervenes, what will likely happen?

Is someone else better placed to respond?

What would be my purpose in responding?

NEXT:

1. Assess your options for giving help
2. Determine the potential risks of taking action.

Is there a low risk option?

Are there risks to myself?

Are there risks to others (e.g. potential retaliation against person being "helped")?

How could I reduce risks?

Is there more information I can get to better assess the situation?

FINALLY:

1. Decide whether to act, at the time or later.
2. Get help when:

Potential for physical harm exists.

Professional medical help is called for.

You don't feel safe taking action yourself.

(adapted and expanded from Darley & Latane's Bystander Intervention Model)

<http://really.ubc.ca/learn-more/>