

# Our Tools Reference Sheet

Instructions: Use this reference sheet to learn about the use and misuse of your four tools.

*“Our presence must evoke peace like a single glimpse of the sun does in the midst of the storm. Our hands, words, and eyes have to be like a gentle breeze that calms the storm of fear and meaninglessness that is always lingering on the horizon.”*

**PRESENCE:** “to convey a message of peace, protection, and caring”

- \* Communicate “I just want to be with you.”
- \* Evoke peace (in the face of violence), by being relaxed, unafraid, calming, soothing, welcoming, generous, uplifting, and attuned to the person’s needs.
- \* Do not expect the person to come into your space. Enter gently into the person’s space.
- \* When the other is agitated, be calm. When the other is fast, be slow. When the other is loud, be soft.

## MISUSE OF OUR PRESENCE

- \* Our presence can be seen as a sledgehammer. We need to be deeply aware of the person’s fear of us.
- \* Don’t provoke violence (even in the face of violence).

**HANDS:** “to convey a message of being safe and loved”

- \* Communicate “You are good” with your gentle touch.
- \* Use your hands as though “touching the wings of an angel.” Start slow: lightly and quietly.
- \* Touch means that “We are friends.”

## MISUSE OF OUR HANDS

- \* Meet the person where he is. A hug can be torture, as it might remind of a painful past.
- \* Even well-meaning touch can be misinterpreted, causing fear or sexual misinterpretation. In such cases, immediately back off. Focus on the use of your other tools until the person learns that you are a friend.

**WORDS:** “to convey a message of encouragement and nurturing”

- \* Start by story-telling. If the person doesn’t seem to respond to your words, tell simple here-and-now stories of anything appropriate, just to start a dialogue. (For example, if taking a walk, talk about the trees and squirrels; talk about how good it is to be walking together.) You must first communicate with her, if you hope that she might communicate with you.
- \* It’s more than just the actual words -- it’s the warmth, tone and rhythm as well.

## MISUSE OF OUR WORDS

- \* Don’t use your words harshly.
- \* Try not to reprimand. Don’t say “You know better than that!” Use your words to tell the person how good he is regardless of what he might be doing.

**EYES:** “to warm the person’s heart with tenderness and love”

- \* The eyes “are the windows to the soul.”
- \* Pierce through any fear or meaninglessness.
- \* Place your gaze as near to the person’s empty fearful eyes as possible.
- \* Make eye contact even if the person doesn’t look back at first.

## MISUSE OF OUR EYES

- \* Be aware of all your eyes communicate. A simple roll of the eyes can tear someone down in an instant.
- \* Too much eye contact can heighten one’s sense of fear.