

Office of the Dean – Global and Community Engagement
Community Conversations

**These are some suggestions on how to organize a Community Conversation.*

Generic

The Conversation is centered on a particular theme or an interesting question, in most instances, relating to the host's research area or expertise.

Conversation begins with the moderator who will open with a 10-15 minute introduction to the topic. The moderator then invites the audience to share their thoughts and gently encourage participation throughout. The moderator is also responsible for timekeeping and ensuring that everyone gets an opportunity to participate. Conversations may also feature guest speaker(s) to share their expertise on a specific topic.

The Talking Circle

Stemming from aboriginal cultures, talking circles work to create a safe space for discussion in order to improve relationships and build community. (*Pranis, The Circle Keeper's Handbook*).

Participants typically sit in a circle on chairs or on the ground with no table or other obstructions. Individuals take turns speaking on the topic with no interruption. The conversation goes around the circle at least once, but more is certainly permitted if there is time and interest. The goal is to ensure that every voice is heard. This style provides a natural way for people to listen to each other and to nurture a collective flow of community wisdom, action and healing. This format is ideal for smaller groups.

The Conversation Café

Simple and easy to plan, the Conversation Café is also one of the more natural ways for people to talk together deeply, with opportunity to listen and respond in a free-flowing way to each other's experiences, ideas and questions. (*World Café*).

You can be as creative in organizing your community conversation. Other resources to initiate a conversation may include; film, videos, song, news article, etc.

Please feel free to contact the GCE Office (gce@yorku.ca) for further information.