

Community Conversations
Exchanging experiences and ideas...

Instructions for Hosting/Moderating



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Steps to Hosting a Conversation

Hosting a conversation is fairly easy: all you need is an interesting topic, people and a place to meet!

Helpful Tips:

- **Topic and Rationale** – Identify a topic of interest and the rationale for topic, why this topic, what are your goals? This will help to determine the target audience, the most suitable location and the themes and/or questions that will steer the conversation.
- **Locate your community of interest** – Identify the community group/s that you wish to represent or address. A community can be any group of people that shares common interest and/or concerns.
- **Location** – Choose an ideal space to host the conversation, e.g. local cafes, libraries, community centers, museums, etc. Aim to create an environment that is inviting, welcoming and feels safe.
- **Participants** – Everyone is invited to participate in community conversations.

Planning the Conversation

Hosting a community conversation is fairly simple – but requires some planning. Here are a few points to consider:

1. Identify the objective(s) of the conversation, topics and content you wish to introduce to participants.
2. Determine the best day and time to host your conversation – early afternoons, lunch hour, early evenings and weekends.
3. Ideally, find the location to host your conversation and inform the GCE office. You may contact the GCE office if you have difficulties securing a location.
4. Plan conversation within the proposed timeframe – a typical conversation is maximum two hours in length.
5. Promote and advertise your conversation – assistance is available from the GCE office. Upcoming conversations will be posted on the GCE website.



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Your Role as the Moderator

- Engage the audience and steer the conversation in a fruitful and positive direction.
- Encourage everyone to participate by listening and sharing ideas. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak.
- Use questions and themes to spark discussion.
- Focus on what matters and ensure that the conversation remains on topic.
- Clarify confusion or intervene when needed. Switch topics or suspend dialogue if conversation(s) hold potential for dispute or tension.
- Acknowledge everyone as equals; respect others' contributions, perspectives, point of views, etc.
- Encourage participants to be genuine in their contribution to the conversation and allow time for thinking and reflection.
- Don't criticize, impose or judge; embrace differences and let go of assumptions.
- Keep track of time.

Source: conversationcafe.org

Moderating the Conversation

- Welcome everyone and share the rules and guidelines of the conversation;
- Introduce the topic – the moderator opens with an overview of the topic. Use the first 10-15 minutes to present some thoughts, ideas or questions on the topic to be discussed;
- Aim to gently encourage everyone to participate throughout the conversation and ask thought-provoking questions;
- Wrap up – the moderator gives a summary of the key insights and themes of the discussion and/or with closing remark.



Source: World Cafe

Remember: *Community Conversations are fun! They provide great opportunities for exchanging experiences and ideas and a space for people to discover what they have in common as well as their differences.*