

Conversation guidelines, instructions and tips for implementation

How it works:

- There are seven steps, each containing 1-2 exercises.
- The exercises take between 10–120 minutes. Make time for reflection between each step.
- Reading material and an instructions on how to run a successful practice are included in each document.

Conversation guidelines:

Agreeing on common guidelines for how to act during a meeting paves the ground for a more open and generous atmosphere, allowing everyone in the group to participate on the same terms. A respectful and honest atmosphere is key to successful exercises that lead to insight both on a personal and group level.

1. Assume that "everyone" is in the room ("those of us as ...").

Instead of talking in terms of "us and them" we create a more inclusive and open-minded climate by thinking that everyone is in the room. All types of sexual orientation, religions, gender identities, ethnicities, functional conditions and so on.

What do you think of the differences in the following examples:

"For those who can't take the stairs, there are elevators to the right" vs.

"For those of us who take the lift, it's off to the right"

"Those who have to pray during working hours can use our resting place." vs.

"Those of us who pray during working hours can use our resting place."

2. Remember that we have different prior knowledge and experiences of the themes that are addressed, so please show each other respect.

Your past experience affect your subjective perception and interpretation of your surroundings. Think about what you bring into the situation. Be careful not to assume that others share your experiences. We don't know what others have been through in the past.

3. Think freely and interpret each other kindly.

To talk about respect and equality can often be difficult and uncomfortable, even sensitive. To reach learning and understanding, we need to show each other both patience and respect. Allow each other to try out new thoughts and be curious about what others try to express. It can be difficult to find the right words. Please ask: "When you say that, I interpret it as ... is that what you mean?" "What do you mean?" "Can you please elaborate?"

Tips to consider before facilitating an exercise:

- Choosing an exercise: The respect staircase is structured so that, the first time you do it, you should take the various steps in order. Once you have climbed the whole staircase, it is no longer as important to do the steps in a certain order. Therefore, think about where everyone in the team is and start from the one who has reach "shortest".
- The person facilitating an exercise does not have to have a certain role or prior knowledge. The respect ladder is designed so that everyone can facilitate an exercise. Do not feel that you have to be an expert within the field.
- Read up on the exercise by 'going through' all the steps, see and read all the material. Feel free to take time for any bonus material as well.
- Prepare the participants by talking about upcoming exercises and sending out materials / assignments / preparations in advance. NOTE! Some exercises can have a strong effect and it is impossible to know what affects whom. For example, by letting the participants look at strong film clips themselves before and in later on with the group, is a respectful and effective way to create rewarding and inclusive discussions.
- Plan for the size of the group and how you will sit (together, distance, in the office / externally etc). Should the team be divided? Merged with another team?
- Set aside enough time. Some exercises can be strong and then it is difficult to rush straight to another meeting.
- Think about how you can build trust in the group at the beginning of the exercise. Going through the conversation rules, having a common check-in etc. are good tips.
- Some exercises can be strong and create both feelings and thoughts, for yourself or others. It's okay, but make sure you (or the relevant person) know who to turn to in your organization for any support and inform participants about it.