

Guidelines for Conversations

Remember what you have learnt in the workshop (summarised in the Charter of Respect and Equality) and aim to create a safe and positive atmosphere that you both feel comfortable with. Decide together how to start your conversation and allow it to unfold naturally between you.

Charter of Respect and Equality

I have a responsibility to:

1. put aside personal judgements and differences during dialogue;
2. be respectful and treat others as I would wish to be treated;
3. remember that everyone is equal and has a right to speak and a responsibility to listen;
4. be clear, honest and fair as a speaker;
5. make sure I understand and respond fairly and honestly as a listener.

Other useful points to reflect on

Be mindful:

- Concentrate on the conversation, work at avoiding distractions
- As a listener use cognitive time to analyse and interpret words and non-verbal parts of the message. Use paraphrasing (repeating back what you think was said to the speaker) and questions to check your understanding.

Be curious:

- Use questions to encourage, not only to clarify the message but to encourage and learn more, or to introduce alternative perspectives.
- If you are genuinely interested in the conversation it is easier to stay focussed, and becomes a more enjoyable conversation for you and the person you are talking to.

Be patient:

- Think before making responses.
- Allow pauses (speakers need time to think), don't interrupt the speaker in mid-flow.
- Empathy - work on putting yourself in the other person's shoes to help understand their point of view.

Be honest but keep emotions under control:

Appreciate there are other views, which may change or challenge your own.

Do not pretend to agree when you don't BUT remain respectful and non-judgmental when you express a different point of view.

Remember that your aim is understand different perspectives to expand your knowledge and your awareness of the bigger picture concerning the issues you explore through open dialogue.

