

Focused Conversation Practice

Your small group will be facilitating a 15-minute Focused Conversation. You have until lunchtime to prepare that conversation. Each practice conversation will be followed by a short debrief and feedback, led by the trainer.

Each person should plan to act as a *participant* in the conversation during the moments that they are not acting as the *facilitator*.

Preparation

- Select your topic or stimulus (don't spend too long choosing – the point is to understand the method)
- Decide the Rational Aim and Experiential Aim.
- Brainstorm lots of questions, writing each question on a post-it.
- Choose the best questions to meet the Rational and Experiential Aims and put them in order
- Aim for 8 to 12 questions all together, with some that you can leave out if necessary.
- Plan the opening and closing.
- Decide who will facilitate which parts of the conversation this afternoon.

Your manual can help!

- Page 19 for overview
- Page 20 for Rational Aim and Experiential Aim
- Pages 21-24 for coverage of each level
- Page 25 for extra useful preparation tips
- Pages 28-31 for sample questions
- Page 32-33 blank planning worksheet

Tips for making your conversation run smoothly

- Questions should be open; avoid "Yes or No" answers.
- Asking for more input from participants is great, but avoid just asking "why?", because it can make people feel defensive.
- Questions should be clear, inviting answers at the appropriate level.
- Make sure you can answer the questions – if you can't then the participants probably won't be able to!
- If you want to help get everyone comfortable with speaking up, you can try going around the room to get answers from everyone for an easy-to-answer Objective level question.
- Have fun exploring the method & remember this is a learning environment!