

KIT



Community conversation kit: everyday conversations to protect community health against infectious diseases



World Health
Organization

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How we developed this kit

Community conversation kits were first developed during COVID-19 and have since been updated after speaking with many people around the world about how to make them most helpful and useful. The development of the kits was structured and systematic and followed several rounds of testing, feedback and updating (1). We used behavioural science to help develop them (2, 3). We also included some information from similar guidance documents and tools like this to make sure this kit was well aligned (4). Once we had a first version of this kit, we shared them with people working in a community setting so they could use them and give us feedback on what they would like to see changed. We updated the kits based on the responses we received (1). The WHO Research Ethics Committee confirmed we did not need to get a full ethics review before doing this project because all the information collected during the project was to help improve the tool. All information about conflicts of interest was collected, including from people reviewing the tool.



Introduction

What is the Community Conversation Kit and why use it?

This Community Conversation Kit (CCK) is designed to help you speak with people in your community about how to protect themselves and those they care about from becoming ill with an infectious disease.

This kit will help you lead conversations that get people talking with each other and thinking differently about their health so they can take action. Using some simple tips and suggestions, the information in this kit will allow communities to exchange practical information that will help them know how to confidently protect their health.

*** By taking this approach you are helping your community take care of themselves and their loved ones.*

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ARE A GREAT WAY OF:



Identifying **priority health concerns** and preparing to address them.



Addressing **rumors, false beliefs** and **misinformation** that may be circulating among community members.



Bringing **community members** together during challenging times.



Increasing **trust** within communities and **recognizing the value** of their collective knowledge.

BUILDING A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY: ONE CONVERSATION AT A TIME



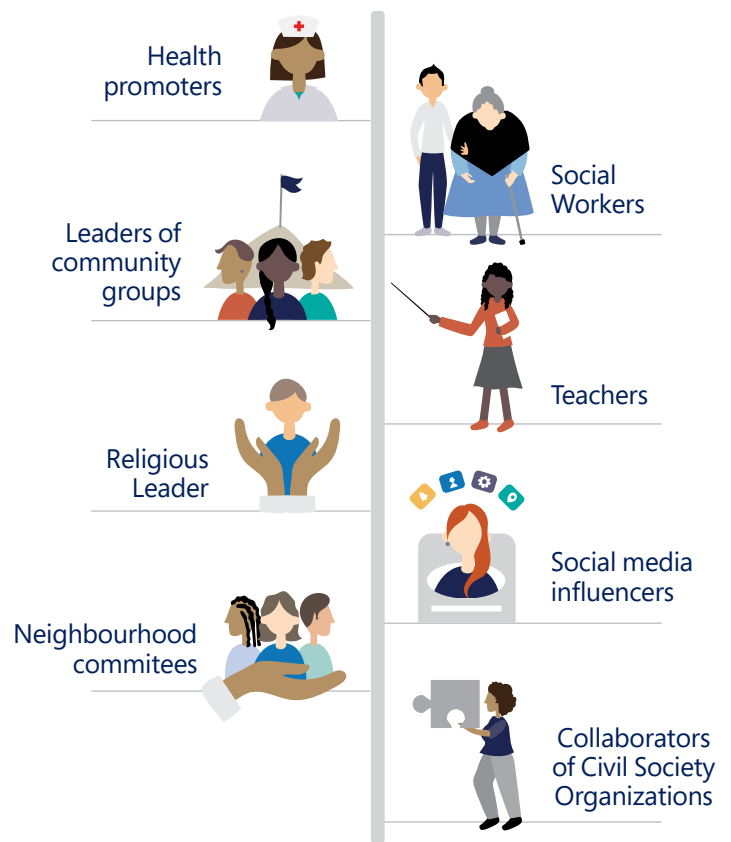
Who knows the community better than its members? You can make a difference for the health of your community! Start by having conversations about health issues that can help prevent diseases and promote a healthier community.

Who can use the Community Conversation Kit?

If you have a **leadership role** within your community, or you feel that **your voice is listened to** and **respected** -

→ This tool is for you!

Here are some examples of who can and should use this guide:



Any other person that can promote healthy behaviours within their community

You can use the kit with people from your community



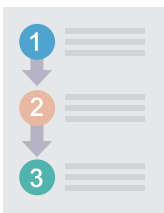
- They could be:**
- Your neighbours
 - Colleagues
 - Patients
 - Congregations
 - Employees
 - Customers
 - Students
 - Online followers, ... and more.

If you have a wider platform such as a TV or radio show, website, or social media channel, **this kit is great for you too!**

What is included in this guide?

The Community Conversation Kit is composed of:

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO LEAD EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



This guide is about **HOW** you plan and lead community conversations. It takes you through the stages of planning and lead a community conversation, with **tips** on:

1 The practical aspects of organizing and running community conversations.

2 How to make an impact, give people clear information, and motivate them to take action to prevent and respond to disease: pre, during and post emergency.

→ Please use this guide for all the community conversations you have.

“LET’S TALK ABOUT” CONVERSATION SHEETS:

PART 1



These conversation sheets have information about a specific topic or health concern. They give you information on **WHAT** to talk about.

You can use these conversation sheets during your conversations with community members and you can also give these sheets to community members for them to take away with them.



You can access **“Let’s Talk About” Conversation sheets** [here](#).

JUST A STARTING POINT



Remember that you can adapt the information and format of the community conversations to your local context: you know best what works in your community, so you can decide when, where and how to have organize a community conversation.

B

Steps to plan and lead a successful community conversation

There are six simple steps to plan and lead an effective community conversation.

The steps are divided in three stages: **before the conversation, on the day of the conversation, and after the conversation.**

FIGURE 1




BEFORE the conversation

STEP 1

GETTING READY
Logistics & practical details

You can use the following table to plan the practical aspects of setting up a community conversation:

CHECKLIST	WRITE YOUR ANSWER
WHAT is my objective?	
What is the purpose and topic of my conversation?	
WHO is my audience?	
Who will I speak with?	
WHEN to hold the conversation?	
Date and time	
WHERE to hold the conversation?	
Location or venue	
HOW to invite participants?	
How will you reach out to your participants	

**We recommend copying this table in a piece of paper and filling the answers for your community conversation*

TIP: WHEN THINKING ABOUT THE 'WHERE':*



- Choose a venue or location which is familiar, comfortable, safe, and easy to access: this will help participants to feel relaxed, and confident about contributing to the conversation.
- Identify already existing community meetings or events where you could hold the conversation such as a class, work meeting, religious meeting, or cultural/leisure event.
- Think about what will encourage community members to attend for example, availability of transport, access to toilets, and provision of refreshments.



BEFORE the conversation

STEP 2

PLANNING THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE CONVERSATION

To lead a conversation that is easy and attractive for the other community members, take a storytelling structure and make sure your content is communicated in three main parts:

1 Introduction (the beginning of the story)

2 Discussion (the development of the story)

3 Conclusion (the end of the story)



→ This structure will help you **connect, inform, and inspire**, making your conversation more appealing and relatable.

The table below can **help you plan what you will talk about** and **how you will run the session**. Write the headlines on a piece of paper and fill in the content that you are planning to deliver in each of those sections.

1. INTRODUCTION

<p>INTRODUCTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself, the conversation topic, and how it will run. • Ask participants to introduce themselves – give everyone a chance to speak.
<p>GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set 'guidelines for participation', for example: do not interrupt others; respect different opinions; give everyone a chance to speak; feel free to ask questions; and do not look at mobile phones or emails.
<p>EXPLAIN HOW THE SESSION WILL GO</p>	<p>GET THE COMMUNITIES INPUTS AND OPINIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your main goal is to ensure a two-way conversation that aims to get participants' input and opinions, rather than just provide information. At the start of the conversation, ask participants for their ideas on how the meeting should be run, and suggest the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will focus on finding answers and solutions, rather than just describing the problem. - Think of or write down three questions you have on the topic. - Share the questions with the group: identify the most commonly asked and include those as part of the conversation. - Tell participants that if you can't answer the question now, you will try to find out and get back to you after the conversation.
<p>WARM UP OR ICEBREAKER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make people feel safe in participating and excited to learn about what is to come: start with an activity to ensure that the conversation engages participants and addresses the needs of the community, or a game or 'Icebreaker' (See Box 1).

2. DISCUSSION

<p>WHAT IS THE ISSUE/DISEASE?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the disease or the health emergency – remember to source this information from official information channels. Your Let’s Talk About Conversation Sheet will be useful here.
<p>KEY MESSAGES ABOUT THE ISSUE/DISEASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the key messages related to the disease from the Let’s Talk About Conversation Sheet, such as taking preventative and protective measures, or healthy behaviours like handwashing. The conversation aims to offer and exchange information on the health issue. This can be done through an ‘Ask-Offer-Ask’ technique (See Box 2). <p>ASK AND RESPOND TO QUESTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions to encourage people to talk. Ensure everyone has a chance to speak and ask questions. Pause after you have asked a question to give people time to think and respond. <p>REINFORCE THE MESSAGES THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS OR ACTIVITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use examples or anecdotes to explain messages. Provide information or tangible examples on preventative, protective and/or healthy practice and measures. Use engaging and inspiring images, pictures, and popular references that participants know and enjoy highlighting the messages.
<p>3. CONCLUSION</p>	
<p>CLOSING: REFLECTIONS AND COMMITMENTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the conversation in your own words, and ask participants if they agree, and/or if they have anything else to add. End the conversation in a way which makes participants feel satisfied. For example, ask them what they have learned today, and whether it was useful. Give participants the opportunity to ask further questions or make final comments before closing. Set up a simple method for collecting feedback at the end of the conversation, such as a feedback form or survey. This shows that you value participants’ input and that you are dedicated to taking their feedback on board for future sessions.
<p>THE NEXT STEPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finish by thanking participants and provide details of any further/follow-up actions. You can also use this opportunity to help plan follow-up actions that you, participants, and other community members can take forward.

TIP
ADAPT YOUR
CONTENT TO THE
LOCAL CONTEXT:



Adapt and update the content of your conversation to your local context and ask community members for suggestion. Think about literacy, education, language, and culture. You may want to create posters, social media posts, infographics, artwork, written content, pamphlets, or other materials suited to your context using the content in this kit. Here are some tips:

- 1. USE YOUR UNIQUE VOICE.** People listen to you because they respect, admire, and trust you. Be yourself and use your normal, local channels to communicate.
- 2. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.** You already know your community well but do a little research on what they already know, think, and feel about the topic.
- 3. CHECK THE FACTS.** Use the information the “Let’s Talk About...Conversation Sheets” provide as a basis. If you need more information, use a trusted source, such as your Ministry of Health’s or WHO’s website.
- 4. BE CLEAR, CONCISE, AND COMPELLING.** Ensure your materials are clear, concise, and visually appealing by using infographics or pictures rather than just text.

BOX 1.

ICEBREAKERS AND GAMES

To make sure participants are relaxed and ready for the conversation it may be helpful to **start with an icebreaker or a simple game**. This will also bring the participants together!

For example:

1 Sound ball. Stand in a circle. Pretend to hold a ball. 'Show' the imaginary ball to participants and tell them that they will be throwing this around. Before you throw the ball, make a noise. Tell players to get ready to catch. Before catching the ball, the player should make the same noise. That player then makes a new sound when throwing the ball, and on it goes, with new balls being introduced.

2 Double letter. Participants think of an adjective that begins with the first letter of their name – for example, "Marvelous Mary" or "Funny Frank" – introduce themselves with the double letter, and then asks the next person to introduce themselves.

3 Mime an interest. Participants think of a personal interest that they can mime, they then perform that mime; other participants should remember the mime, and when asked should perform the mime of another participant.

4 Colors. The facilitator asks, "what color would you use to describe the person on your left?" Each participant in turn, chooses a color with an explanation for the person on their left, for example, "yellow, because you are sunny and cheerful" or "blue, because you are calming".

Make sure your icebreaker or game appropriate to the context and the community: some people like games and others don't!



BOX 2.

ASK-OFFER-ASK TECHNIQUE

The conversation you are leading aims to offer and exchange information on a health issue.

This can be done through the ask-offer-ask technique:



1 Introduce the topic, for example, "Today we are going to be talking about tuberculosis".

2 ASK: "What do you know about tuberculosis? What would you like to know about it?" Take 3-4 of questions from participants

3 OFFER: Provide answers to the questions and offer advice on what to do (based on the information provided in the Let's Talk About Conversation Sheet).

4 BUT if you don't know the answer to a question, say "That is a great question. I don't know the answer, but I will find out and come back to you".

5 ASK: "What do you think of this information? Is it useful? What other questions do you have?"

6 OFFER: Repeat as in #3 above



On the day of the conversation

STEP 3

SETTING UP



Remember, a well-prepared setup creates a positive environment for great conversations and active community involvement.

BEFORE ARRIVING

1 ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS



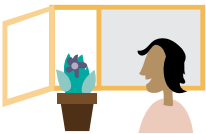
Choose a place that is easy for everyone to get to and access, including people with disabilities. Ramp access, clear pathways, and comfortable seating can make a big difference.

3 USE VISUAL AIDS



If you are using visual aid such as pictures, slides, or posters, have them ready in advance. Make sure they are clear and can be seen by people sitting in different parts of the room.

2 PARTICIPANT COMFORT



Pay attention to little things that can make a big difference to people feeling comfortable and at ease. For example, think about room temperature and access to natural light.

4 MATERIALS PRINTED



Have all necessary handouts, notes, ready to be distributed. To get everyone involved, have pens and paper for notetaking, especially if you want people to use the "Let's Talk About... Conversation Sheets"

5 ARRIVE EARLY



Get to the venue in advance to get everything ready so you can mitigate any unexpected surprises before participants arrive.

MAKE SURE TO DO THE **4** CHECKS

- Room arrangement
- Tech check
- Name tags
- Refreshments

Room arrangement
Arrange the chairs in a way that encourages talking to each other. Circles or half-circles work well so everyone can see each other and join in the conversation.

Tech check
If you are using technology like projectors, microphones, or speakers, make sure you test them first to avoid problems during the conversations.

Name tags
If people don't know each other, name tags can help and make everyone feel part of the group. This makes it easier for people to talk with each other with a more personalized feel.

Refreshments
If you can, offer some simple snacks and light refreshments. Participants will feel more relaxed and have the opportunity to connect informally over a cup of tea or coffee!



On the day of the conversation

STEP 4

TIPS TO LEAD A GREAT COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Here are some tips for leading a great community conversation:

PROVIDE INFORMATION: CLEAR, SIMPLE, FACTUAL

- Present information with clear, simple language that people can understand.
- Avoid jargon, complicated technical language, and unnecessary information.
- Use practical examples, exercises, or ask people to give you examples if they are happy to do so.
- Be curious about what people already know and what they think about the topic you are discussing as well as the information you are providing.
- Make sure your suggested actions are both possible and culturally appropriate:

→ **if you don't know – ask!**

ACTIVE LISTENING

- When people are speaking give your full attention!
- Be curious and open to hearing what people really mean by the things they say.
- Check participants' understanding by rephrasing what you have heard. This will make the participant feel respected and listened to and enable you to clarify your own understanding.
- Remember to listen and understand rather than planning your response.

YOUR ATTITUDE MATTERS

- Be honest, open, curious, and non-judgemental.
- If appropriate and you feel comfortable doing so, share personal stories. For example, why does the topic or the conversation matter to you?
- Encourage participants to share their own personal stories and experiences.

BODY LANGUAGE

- Your body language and tone are also important in conversations.

Pay attention to the participants and your:

- Gestures and movements
- Tone of voice
- Facial expression
- Appearance and posture
- Eye contact



AFTER the conversation

STEP 5

GETTING FEEDBACK



These are **5 reasons** why getting feedback is essential when you are leading community conversations:

1 Improving

Feedback tells you what went well and what you can do better in the future. It helps you lead more meaningful and engaging conversations,

B Steps to plan and lead a successful community conversation

make the content interesting, and plan the best possible community conversation the next time.

2 Engagement

When people see you care about what they think and actively ask for their feedback, they feel more interested in and connected to the conversation.

3 Tailoring

Feedback helps you to shape your conversations to what your community needs and wants. This way, the topics and discussions are on target and really capture what is important to everyone.

4 Trust

When you show you value what people say and that you are open to their ideas, it builds trust and makes your relationship with the community stronger.

5 Adaptability

Communities change and their needs shift. Feedback helps you stay flexible and able to adjust to these changes. This means your conversations remain relevant, important, and useful as time goes on.

In short, getting feedback isn't just about supporting your improvement –

→ it's about making sure that your community conversations are **interesting, matter to people, and have a real impact on everyone involved.**

AFTER the conversation

STEP 6

PLANNING NEXT STEPS

Congratulations on successfully facilitating a meaningful community conversation!

As you wrap up the dialogue, it's essential to keep the momentum going and channel the energy and insights gained into actionable next steps. Here are three simple ideas to consider:



1 Keep the conversation going through familiar channels: Use familiar communication channels that your community already engages with to reinforce key messages.

For example: *social media platforms, local newsletters, community websites, or even word-of-mouth to reinforce the key messages and outcomes of the conversation.*

2 Create actionable takeaways: Summarize the main points, action items, and commitments that emerged during the conversation. Develop easy-to-follow action plans that participants can take back to their networks, encouraging them to implement healthy behaviours and spread the word.

3 Engage local influencers: Work with respected local figures, influencers, or community leaders to promote and advocate for the outcomes of the conversation. They can give great support and can extend the reach and credibility of the messages.



Improving your talking and listening skills

This section gives practical advice for managing tricky situations during community conversations. Read this section and before leading a community conversation to be well-prepared for the situations described below and have more conversations that make a difference.

When there are rumours and misinformation in the community



Community conversations provide an opportunity to recognize and address false information or rumours regarding health issues. These misunderstandings and misconceptions can mean individuals take actions that endanger themselves and others. Here are some tips to address false information:

KEEP IT FACTUAL

- Address the rumours and misinformation by: you address rumours by presenting the information in a specific order:
 - 1 Acknowledge the rumour or misinformation, without giving it credit or power. **Outline why it can be harmful.**
 - 2 Present the **accurate** and **right information.**
 - 3 **Highlight why** the rumour or misinformation is **not true.**

- Remind participants of the health information about the disease.
For example: "Washing hands properly is important to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, which is still a risk to our health. You may have heard that the pandemic is over, but people can get sick with COVID-19 and some people who get COVID-19 stay sick for a long time. So, we need to stay alert."

Ask participants: **"What do you think about that?"**

IDENTIFY TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES

- Let participants know there are platforms where they can fact-check information rather than rely on rumour, which may be harmful, such as WHO website, or the health authorities in your country.

LOOK BEYOND THE HEADLINES

Headlines are often written to grab attention and don't tell the whole story.

New technology such as social media means that misinformation and fake news is hard to identify.

Remember to:

- **Identify the source:** who has published it (or said it) and who has shared it.
- **Check if the language** is sensational or exaggerated.
- If it is attributed to someone, **check the quote:** did the person really say it?
- **Check with other sources.** If it's verbal, check with other people in the community.



When someone disagrees – handling conflict and push back

It's normal for people to have different opinions and beliefs about health. When a participant disagrees or pushes back on the information you are sharing, **here are two ways to address it:**

1 Do not directly tell participants that they are wrong. This can make people feel criticized, embarrassed, and defensive, and cling to beliefs, risky behaviours, and misinformation.

2 Try to understand what they know, why they believe it, and ask if they would be happy for you to share some factual information with them.

3 Find your common ground: what do you both value and want?



Dealing with complex emotions

During a disease outbreak or pandemic, participants may express a range of emotions based on their experiences. These emotions can include **complex psychological and mental health aspects** that you may not have the ability to resolve yourself. However, **you can offer a responsive and empathetic approach** by actively engaging with participants by showing compassion and understanding toward their feelings of grief, anger, despair, and hopes.

Respecting different cultures – promoting inclusivity

Communities can have representatives from multiple backgrounds such as different cultural beliefs, religions, and belief systems.



To make everyone feel included, here are 3 simple tips:

1 Cultivate respectful curiosity
Encourage open-mindedness by fostering a genuine interest in learning about others' cultural beliefs, religions, and values. Ask questions respectfully and actively listen to gain insights and promote understanding.

2 Celebrate common ground
Emphasize shared values and aspirations that transcend cultural and religious differences. Focus on universal principles like kindness, empathy, and community well-being to create a sense of unity and inclusivity.

3 Use culturally informed messages
When proposing solutions, ensure they are culturally sensitive and inclusive, avoiding any potential exclusion, marginalization, or stigmatization of vulnerable groups or members.

→ You can **support participants to manage their emotions with positive and healthy practices, such as:**

- **Connecting with others**
Encourage talking to friends and family.
- **Prioritizing health**
Suggest healthy eating, enough sleep, and exercise.
- **Enjoyable activities**
Recommend doing things that bring joy.
- **Healthy habits**
Advise against harmful habits like too much alcohol or tobacco.
- **Daily routine**
Emphasize sticking to a regular schedule.
- **Professional help**
Mention seeking support from a mentor, therapist or psychologist.

REMEMBER



While you may not be able to resolve all negative emotions, your attentive approach and informed suggestions can contribute significantly to participants' overall well-being and resilience.

Taking care of yourself and others

In times of crisis, it's natural to feel drained and stressed, experiencing physical, behavioural, or emotional systems such as headaches, low motivation, or fear respectively



To care for yourself and others, along with the guidance in the previous section, consider these tips:

1 Embrace kindness

Treat others and yourself with kindness, create an environment of compassion and understanding.

2 Navigate stressful conversations

Understand that discussions might bring out personal stressors. This is normal and you don't need to address all stressors for the people you are speaking with. Seek assistance if needed.

3 Stay realistic

Be aware of your limits and acknowledge what you can and cannot achieve.

4 Embrace relaxation

Take part in calming activities like slow breathing, stretching, prayer, dance, song, or exercise. Seeking with. Seek assistance if needed.

5 Acknowledge your impact

Recognize the value of your actions in the community. Keep track of how you have helped others and be proud!

→ By taking care of yourself, you contribute to a healthier and more resilient community.

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Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



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