

TIMEOUT DIALOGUE FACILITATION CARD

Congratulations — you're about to facilitate a Timeout Dialogue! This card helps you ensure that the dialogue is as equal and inclusive as possible, and that every participant feels heard. You can use this as it is or adapt it to your needs. The dialogue can last anywhere from one to three hours.

Welcome and Introductions

Explain the topic of today's dialogue and let participants know that you will be facilitating. Tell everyone the purpose of the dialogue (you can read the opening words on the other side of the card). Remind participants that Timeout is something you create together. Have everyone introduce themselves by first name. In addition to names, you can ask about how people are feeling today or their favourite ice cream flavour — anything light to help break the ice.

Ground Rules for a Constructive Dialogue

Go through the Ground Rules for Constructive Dialogue and make sure everyone feels comfortable committing to them. Maintaining a constructive atmosphere is everyone's shared responsibility.

Tuning In with an Opening Activity

An opening activity can be almost anything related to the dialogue's theme — for example, a short text, an expert introduction, a film clip, research finding, or a song. A good opening activity inspires reflection but doesn't steer the conversation too much.

Individual Reflection and Pair Dialogue

Invite participants to take a moment to reflect on the topic on their own. Then, have them discuss with the person next to them. Assign pairs and ask, for example: *"What thoughts, feelings, or memories came up for you during the opening activity?"*

Group Dialogue

Ask what participants talked about in pairs. Distribute speaking turns and encourage quieter voices to share, while reminding more active speakers to listen. You can ask: "What thoughts have come up for you while listening to others?" Deepen the dialogue with open, reflective questions — prepare a couple of them in advance.

Writing Down Insights

Thank everyone for a constructive and thoughtful dialogue. Invite participants to write down or draw what insights, emotions, or thoughts emerged for them. They can also write about what they learned during the dialogue. Let participants know if you plan to collect the insight notes for your summary or follow-up.

Sharing Insights

Ask each participant to share, for example in one sentence, an insight, emotion, or key thought that stayed with them from the dialogue. Emphasize that thoughts can be unfinished — that's completely fine.

Moving Forward

Explain that Timeout aims to promote constructive dialogue and to encourage participants to reflect on their own experiences about the topic. If your dialogue is part of a larger decision-making process that will lead to next steps, share this information openly. Encourage participants to organize their own dialogues on different topics and with people from diverse backgrounds.

Closing and Thanks

Thank everyone for being part of the dialogue. Ask how they are feeling at the end of the session or what kind of atmosphere remains after the shared experience. Let them know if you plan to share anything about the dialogue on social media.

Add topic-related questions to support your discussion here:

TIMEOUT

Opening Words

Welcome to the Timeout Dialogue — it's great that you're here. My name is [name], and I'll be facilitating our dialogue today.

The purpose of this dialogue is to learn from one another and hear each participant's perspectives and experiences. The goal isn't to persuade, debate, or convince others, but to make space for different viewpoints and build understanding together. There are no right or wrong answers — everyone speaks from their own experience.

In Timeout, it's important that everyone has the opportunity to take part. I encourage as many of you as possible to join in, but let's also give space for others. At times, I might ask some of you directly about your thoughts or experiences — this helps make the dialogue as balanced as possible. If you don't have anything to say at a given moment, that's completely okay too.

This dialogue is confidential. You may share that you took part in the dialogue, but please don't share what someone else said without their permission. It's important that everyone feels free to participate safely and openly. We also show respect to everyone here — and to those who are not present today. Respectful dialogue doesn't mean accepting discriminatory language or behaviour.

It would be lovely to know who's here today. Let's go around and introduce ourselves by first name. You can also share how you're feeling as you join the dialogue.

We would love to hear about the dialogue you facilitated! We continuously collect data and feedback about how the method is used — every contribution is valuable.

You can write the participants' names in the box below and keep simple tally marks of speaking turns. This helps you notice who's been quieter and might like to speak.

Address participants by their first names; it helps create a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Finally, please tell us about your Timeout discussion! We continuously collect data and feedback about how the method is being used, and all information is valuable to us:



TIMEOUT