



How to succeed as a Timeout dialogue facilitator

Before the dialogue

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Practice the dialogue in advance

It's great that you are planning to organise a Timeout dialogue! The very first thing you should do is to reflect on the need and the topic of the conversation, drawing on your own experiences. Prepare yourself by writing a script to support the facilitation. If you feel it is necessary, use activities with the group to practise dialogue skills before the actual dialogue.

Done:

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Inviting the participants

Think about whether you are organising a dialogue for an existing group or whether you want to invite young people from different backgrounds. Tell participants well in advance that you are going to have a Timeout dialogue and what it means. Also let them know what you want to achieve with the dialogue.

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The space and the atmosphere

If possible, arrange the dialogue in a room where chairs can be set in a circle. You can also sit on the floor. The dialogue can take place indoors, outdoors or remotely. Print out the Ground Rules in a visible place, for example in the middle of the circle, so that everyone can read them. Make name tags. Stock up on the materials you need for this in advance. It is a good idea to write your first name in CAPITAL LETTERS so that others can see it from a distance. You can offer snacks and drinks at the beginning of the dialogue, which is usually appreciated by the participants.

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4**If necessary, take into account**

Take into account different participants and different linguistic realities. Utilize your own expertise and experience with your group. The Timeout method is flexible - the most important thing is that it supports the group's dialogue skills, collective thinking, and participation.

☐**During the dialogue****5****Introductions**

Tell them why you are here today and what the topic and aim of the dialogue is. Introduce yourselves by first names. It's a good idea to start with a question that breaks the ice a little. You could ask about their favourite ice cream, their favourite season or their favourite colour at this very moment.

☐**6****Tell that the Timeout dialogue is created together**

Tell the participants that their contributions do not have to be perfect and that they do not have to have strong opinions to express their ideas. Dialogue is about thinking, reflecting and understanding together. It is not a knowledge race or a debate.

☐**7****Use a "speech object" if necessary. The person who has that object also has the turn to speak**

Explain the purpose of the speech object at the beginning. If necessary, remind the participants that you are listening to the person who is holding the speech object and that the speech object is supposed to pass from one participant to another. This can be particularly helpful for very talkative and active groups and helps with practising listening skills. The object can be a soft toy or something that can be found in the environment.

☐**8****Support constructive dialogue**

The ground rules are there to help. At the beginning of each dialogue, go through the Ground Rules for a Constructive Dialogue and commit to them together. In a Timeout dialogue, respect the other participants and also those who are not present. Respectful dialogue does not mean accepting discriminatory words or actions.

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9**Support an equal discussion**

Address the participants by their first names, it creates a nice atmosphere. Let them know from the start that, to make the dialogue as successful as possible, you would like everyone to participate., and that you, as the facilitator, may sometimes present questions directly to some participants. Write down the names of the participants in the handout and keep notes of who has spoken during the dialogue. This will help, among other things, to find quieter participants.

☐**10****Encourage participants to join in on each other's comments and ideas**

To deepen the conversation, we can pick up where the previous one left off. You can ask the participants what ideas or experiences the contributions of others evoke in them. There is no need to prepare for the Timeout dialogue by preparing comments in advance.

☐**11****Make sure that the mutually agreed on Ground Rules are respected**

Remind participants of the agreed Ground Rules if one of the participants does not act as agreed. Shared issues and ideas should not be used against anyone during or after the dialogue.

☐**12****Ensure that the group stays on topic**

The conversation can sometimes get a bit rambling, but the more you stay on topic and share your own experiences and thoughts, the more you have the opportunity to deepen your understanding of yourself, others and the world.

☐**13****Support the confidentiality of the dialogue**

Participants can say that they have been involved in the dialogue and share their own thoughts on the topic, but if they want to share another participant's thoughts, they must ask for permission to do so.

☐**14****Praise and encourage**

Be kind. During the dialogue, thank participants as they share their thoughts and experiences. Praise when participants act as agreed. Encourage quieter participants. Finally, thank all the participants. Ask for feedback on the dialogue from the participants.

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15**Limit the active participants if necessary**

In a Timeout dialogue, it is important that all participants have the opportunity to participate. This should be stated at the beginning of the dialogue. Try to distribute the turns to speak evenly and ask the more active ones to wait before speaking again, if necessary.

☐**16****Make room for quieter participants**

In a Timeout dialogue, it is important that all participants have the opportunity to participate. This should be stated at the beginning of the dialogue. Feel free to ask those who have not yet said anything. Of course, you don't have to force anyone to say anything. You can also guide participants to discuss in pairs or small groups before starting the dialogue with the whole group. Sometimes it takes several dialogues before everyone is encouraged to join in. This is perfectly OK.

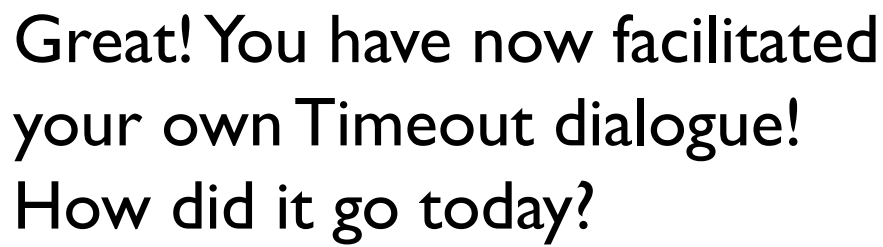
☐**At the end****17****Tell the participants what happens after the discussion**

Did the dialogue meet the needs? Was the objective of a constructive and equal dialogue achieved? When to continue? What is the potential outcome of the dialogue and what will it lead to? How will it be communicated? Tell the participants whether the objective was achieved or how to proceed.

☐**18****The best way to learn the Timeout method is through repetition. If at all possible, use Timeout several times in a short period of time.**

In our experience, the Timeout method is easy to learn. Sometimes there may be too little time or too many participants in relation to the time available, or it may be realised that more dialogue is needed. Sometimes it can take time to participate in a joint dialogue. The more Timeout dialogues you have with a group, the better you learn dialogue and conversation skills. Be sure to reserve time for Timeout dialogues.

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but dialogue!

Today?

A faint, light gray background illustration of two stylized human figures in profile, facing each other as if in conversation. The figures are composed of simple, rounded outlines. The figure on the left is slightly larger and has a more pronounced head. The figure on the right is smaller and has a more elongated head. Both figures have simple, curved lines for their bodies and limbs. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

You can share your experience either via email or by filling out the form accessed through the QR code:
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