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HOW to prepare the practical dialogue session/meeting on the chosen “topic”?

This practice scenario helps you prepare your own dialogue session.

Some tips for a person who organises a stationary dialogue meeting.

Step 1. BEFORE the meeting:

- Find people interested in the subject (topic you have chosen e.g.), agree on the date and place with them. The recommended quantity of participants is: 5-20.
- Invite people and get their confirmations.
- Book the place. Make sure that the place allows you to sit in a circle or similar configuration to make people feel equal.
- Think about whether you would need any materials like a flipchart, a blackboard and how to get them.
- Be prepared to serve people something to drink (water).
- If people are to come with their own beverages, inform them.
- Think about how long this meeting will take (often about 60-90 min).
- Prepare yourself to facilitate the meeting (e.g. write down the possible questions you would ask to start/continue/close the meeting).

Step 2. The day of the meeting:

- Be earlier to check all details.
- Start the meeting with the proposed scenario:

  A. Welcome.

  B. Explain the reason for the meeting: To learn/explore more about “the topic” together

  C. Determine all together “Dialogue Rules” for meeting (for example):

- speaking with my voice but caring about others,
- active listening,
- caring for a good atmosphere
- respecting each other,
- suspending judgements,
- noticing emotions and not transferring them to others.

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D. State the timing and eventual break(s).

E. “Check-in”: ask everybody to introduce themselves shortly and say some words about expectations.

F. Start the meeting with some knowledge or thoughts like: What is “the topic” for you? Is it important to you? Why?

G. Ask people about experiences. Free flow. Let the dialogue last.

H. Conclusions.

I. “Check out”: everybody takes a voice - the closing circle

Step 3. After the meeting:

- Stay in contact with people.
- Encourage them to come or organise their next meetings.

This is one of the possible scenarios. Maybe you would like to create yours? You can also adjust these tips to organize on-line dialogue sessions.

***REMEMBER**: Dialogue is for shared understanding, and every voice is important. This is not to be right but to be better in conversation, understanding different views.*

Example topics for dialogue meeting:

- Intergenerational dialogue. How to communicate better with people of different ages?
- Small things that make our day better. What simple things help you feel good during the day?
- Social media - what are the positive and negative sides of using social media?

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