



HAVE CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS



The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it. We all have someone in our lives who lowkey disagrees with or is outright against the fact that we are facing a climate crisis.



In her Ted Talk, climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe shows that the key to having positive conversations with folks like these is to connect over shared values like family, community and religion -- and to prompt people to realize that they already care about a changing climate. "We can't give in to despair," she says. "We have to go out and look for the hope we need to inspire us to act -- and that hope begins with a conversation, today."



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing, or MI, is a communication technique that makes it more likely for folks to change. We've laid out a few tips from our friend Vince Schutt to help get you started as well as links where you can learn more.



- Persuade
- Confront
- Persuade with permission
- Give Information

In talking about climate change, we tend to use techniques on the left side - persuading, confronting, and giving information. For an example, check out the movie trailer to Al Gore's Inconvenient Truth.

If you watched the trailer, how did it make you feel? For us, some of what we noticed was how the dramatic music felt very aggressive and horror movie-esque, like we were under attack and being threatened.

- Question
- Simple Reflection
- Emphasize autonomy
- Seek collaboration
- Complex reflection
- Affirmation

MI looks to the right side of the spectrum - focusing on collaboration, complex reflection, affirmation of skillfulness, and emphasizing a person's freedom of choice in this process. To communicate like this you need to tap into your **CURIOSITY** - when talking with someone, ask them questions and integrate your personal reflections to create connections. Your focus needs to be on **THEM**.

The goal here is for the other person to feel heard, respected, and open to discovering their personal desires, abilities, reasons, and needs in support of change.

The Importance of Curiosity

When you are using curiosity in conversation, you are:

- Signaling to the other person that you are interested in what they are saying.
- You want to hear their perspective - you're bonding!
- When you're bonding with someone, this actually releases the oxytocin hormone in your brain, stimulating feelings like trust, positivity, and empathy - and you create memories around the experiences that gave you those feelings.

Other resources:

- CliMate - climate conversation coach, David Suzuki Foundation
- Facilitation Tips below!



1 Clarify your Role

- Facilitators are here to engage everyone in conversation and make sure everyone has an opportunity to be heard and take notes.
- Be respectful and open to other perspectives.
- Feel free to make note of your thoughts or engage in other ways if you aren't comfortable discussing aloud.
- Share the space and let everyone participate!

2 Set some guideline rules out for yourself and your team.

- Before your event, make some guidelines for the participants who attend. For example when and if they participate in a question session, conversations, breakout rooms, activities, etc... This can differ depending on the event. Some overall guideline sections that can be helpful are:
 - Language use...
 - Navigating conflict...
 - Difficult conversations..
 - Encouraging discussion...
 - Adhering to ground rules...

3 Be OKAY with differences.

Understand that negative situations can arise, and difficult and challenging scenarios can come up, take time to think these through and find the best mode of action whether it is asking a participant to leave or bring them aside to have a conversation of why they acted that way. Having the support of your team at the event or a trusted individual ready to help you, can make you feel better prepared or comfortable handling hard situations.