

Fields Of Conversation Tool

Purpose of this tool

This tool highlights four fields (conditions) for conversation and provides reflective prompts to allow participants to reflect on which field of conversation they tend to sit within and feel comfortable within when they are navigating through conversations. This tool can be used as part of an individual or group reflective practice.

Why use this tool?

This tool guides the reflection on what conditions are needed for different types of conversation. Reflecting on perceived or habitual conversational methods can help identify how these might not be serving everyone in the conversation. This tool aims to generate and enable meaningful discussions towards challenging conventions and generating nourishing, transformational change within personal and professional spaces.

How to use this tool?

This tool can be used as part of an individual or group reflective practice.

As an individual reflection:

Explore and engage with the Four Fields of Conversation on pages 3 to 4, then proceed with the reflective questions on page 5.

You will need:

- The Four Fields of Conversation and set of reflective questions (on pages 2 to 3).
- Paper, pen or something suitable to take notes of reflections.
- A space that you feel comfortable reflecting in.
- A total of 15-30 minutes (suggested).

As a group in a physical space:

Step 1: On four, separate pieces of large paper add the details of one the four fields of conversations described below and place them in a space in this positioning

<p>Flow/Dialogue</p> <p>What does it look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Intelligence. • Generative dialogue, creating new insights and wisdom. • Collective centre. • Silence is profound. <p>What energy does it have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection, collective, new, together creation. • Feminine. 	<p>Inquiry/Reflection</p> <p>What does it look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals become thoughtful, curious about their part in the whole. • Skilled conversation. • Centred individuals, reflecting, inquiring. • Silence, respectful, contemplative. <p>What energy does it have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting go of positions/views vital and alert ease-centre-okay with our own fallibility, open to others. • Feminine.
<p>Politeness/Routines</p> <p>What does it look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging to collective more than individual expression. • Tendency to be on autopilot/stable. • Serial monologues, advocacy. • Silence can feel awkward and quickly filled. <p>What energy does it have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autopilot, thinking, speaking and acting in. • familiar, habitual ways. • Masculine. 	<p>Breaking Open/Debate</p> <p>What does it look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual expression predominates. • Differences are heightened. • Tendency to be unstable/unsettled. • Tendency to defend positions, advocacy. • Silence can feel tense. <p>What energy does it have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend or attack in reaction to difference and uncertainty in the pattern of conversation. • Masculine.

Step 2: Read the details out. Acknowledge conversations will move from one field to another usually starting with politeness/routines. Invite participants to have a felt sense of each.

Step 3: Invite individuals to privately reflect on which field of conversation they tend to be within and feel comfortable within when navigating through conversations.

Step 4: Invite participants to then stand on/next to the field, or share with the group which field they tend to be within. Invite participants to reflect on and then move to the field of conversation they would like to navigate to for a particular conversation.

Step 5: Discuss as a group any noticings and reflect on what conditions individuals and as a group need to help create to have conversations in the most apt field of conversation.

You will need:

- The Four Fields of Conversation grid and set of reflective questions (on pages 3 to 4).
- A group of participants.
- Four large pieces of paper and four coloured pens.
- A space that you feel comfortable reflecting in as a group.
- A total of 30 to 45 minutes (suggested).

Reflective Questions

With the tool present reflect on:

1. Which field of conversation do you tend to sit within and feel comfortable within when navigating through conversations?
2. Why do you tend to sit in that field?
3. Which field of conversation would you like to navigate to? What do you notice if you sit in that field of conversation?

4. What steps are needed to help to migrate conversations to the preferred field of conversation?

This tool was created by [Social Action Inquiry Scotland](#), based on work by Amanda Ridings, *Pause for Breadth: Bringing the Practice of Mindfulness and Dialogue to Leadership Conversations* (Troubadour Publishing Ltd) adapted from C. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading From the Future as it Emerges* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers), Society for Organisational Learning, and combined influences from Adrienne Maree Brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* (AK Press).