



EMPATHY TALKS

systemic
design
group

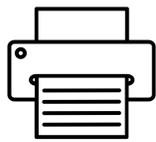


January 2021 (v1)

How to make your own Empathy Talk cards



1. Download this PDF and take it to your local print shop.



2. Have the shop print out the cards on heavy white cardstock (180gsm or higher). Black and white, or colour, it's up to you.



3. Cut the cards to size using a large paper cutter. Card size 59 x 91mm.

Guide to Empathy Talks

What is the goal of Empathy Talks?

Empathy Talks are a pathway to creating micro-moments of connection and reflection on sticky issues of community concern. They offer ways to feel heard and seen each other, be more reflective, and change perspectives on issues impacting our livelihoods and futures.

By bringing together diverse voices in the field Empathy Talks also aim to build capability and practices leading to system transformation.

Who and what are they for?

They are for anyone addressing topics impacting their communities at scale, on matters of social, environmental and cultural importance.

Empathy Talks have been used for topics such as:

- Relationships and influence in education in Michigan, USA
 - Polluting habits and heating systems in Silesia, Poland
 - Pandemic and politics in Berlin, Germany
-

Top 3 things to know

#1. We recommend at least two weeks' lead time for planning a Talk. This gives you time to invite participants, work out where and when the Talk will be held, do a practice run or two, and get the Activity Board ready.

#2. Who plays the Facilitator role is an important decision. Read the Preparation board for more information on Facilitator tasks and responsibilities.

#3. Empathy Talks are about finding common ground, not finding solutions. They are an invitation to listen, feel and sense what others share.

Getting started

You'll find all the information, preparation checklists and activity materials you need at:

empathytalks.com

Timing and location

An Empathy Talk takes 1.5-2 hours, depending on the number of participants.

It can be done in-person using cards, or online. See empathytalks.com **Downloads** for materials.

Wherever you choose to hold an Empathy Talk, it's important the space feels inviting and trustworthy and is neutral for all participants. Keep comfort in mind.

Roles and numbers

An Empathy Talk is made up of 5-6 people. There are 3 different roles, which should be agreed in advance during Talk preparation:

Facilitator (1): Invites and facilitates the process of an Empathy Talk. Hands out cards. Holds space, keeps things on track.

Speaker (1): Someone from the community who wishes to express their feelings and needs around a topic, potentially where they feel unheard.

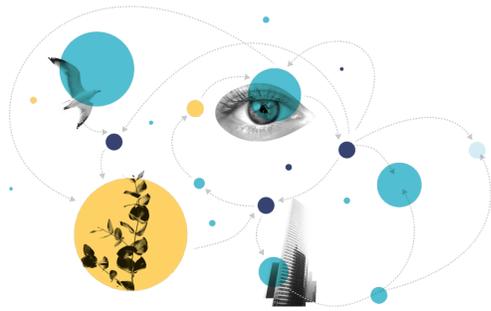
Listeners (3-4): Others from the community who listen to the Speaker with respect, build upon what has been said, and contribute in a way that moves the conversation forward.

Role cards with further descriptions are provided in this kit, and on the Preparation Template. We recommend handing them out at the start of the Talk, to remind everyone about their role and expectations.

Credits and acknowledgements

Empathy Talks were developed by the Systemic Design Group as educational experiments for EIT Climate-KIC. We thank EIT Climate-KIC, friends and industry peers for their valuable ideas and contributions.





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systemic design group



v1

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EMPATHY TALKS

Hello and welcome to Empathy Talks. Thanks for being here.

Before getting started please make sure you have everything needed for the Talk:

- Role cards (6)
- Code of care cards (6)
- Facilitator cards (14)
- Speaker + Listener cards (6) x 5 sets
- Animal Cards for check-in/out (optional)
- Talk topic written for easy visibility e.g. on a sheet of paper or whiteboard
- Pencils and scrap paper for everyone

Further preparation and activity information: empathytalks.com

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EMPATHY TALKS

Talk flow

- Start (10 mins)
- A1. Check-in (12-14 mins)
 - A2. Speaker speaks (16-18 mins)
 - A3. Listeners share (18-24 mins)
 - A4. Speaker shares (8 mins) + quick break
 - A5. Needs, Wishes, Intentions (18 mins)
 - A6. Check-out (15 mins)
- Close (5 mins)

An Empathy Talk takes 1.5-2 hours, depending on the number of participants.

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ROLES

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FACILITATOR

- Invites and facilitates the Talk process
- Organises the host location
- Hands out cards
- Holds space for the group
- Keeps activities and timing on track
- Refers to Code of Care as necessary
- Follows up with participants
- See also <https://bit.ly/3c3J1cV>



ROLES

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SPEAKER

- Chooses the Talk topic
- Expresses their feelings and needs around the topic
- Listens attentively in an observing position to the reflections by the Listeners, and receives their feedback
- Expresses a need, wish and intention to Listeners, when invited



ROLES

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LISTENER

- Listens to the Speaker passively and with respect
- Builds upon what has been said in ways that moves the conversation forward
- Shares reflections to the Speaker, when invited by the Facilitator
- Expresses a clear need, wish and intention at the end of the reflection, towards the Speaker



ROLES

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 <p>CODE OF CARE empathytalks.com</p>	 <p>CODE OF CARE empathytalks.com</p>	 <p>CODE OF CARE empathytalks.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use our first names, if everyone is comfortable to • We come together in trust • Everyone has time allocated • Give space • Respect for each other • Listen generously, to understand • Non-violent communication • Embrace the transformative power of words • Honour silence • Recognise and respect vulnerability • Stay out of judgement • Avoid comparisons • No outcome expectations • Respect privacy after a Talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use our first names, if everyone is comfortable to • We come together in trust • Everyone has time allocated • Give space • Respect for each other • Listen generously, to understand • Non-violent communication • Embrace the transformative power of words • Honour silence • Recognise and respect vulnerability • Stay out of judgement • Avoid comparisons • No outcome expectations • Respect privacy after a Talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We use our first names, if everyone is comfortable to • We come together in trust • Everyone has time allocated • Give space • Respect for each other • Listen generously, to understand • Non-violent communication • Embrace the transformative power of words • Honour silence • Recognise and respect vulnerability • Stay out of judgement • Avoid comparisons • No outcome expectations • Respect privacy after a Talk
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Feedback on Empathy Talks?

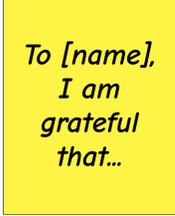
Or can we assist with future Talks?

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<p>START</p> <p>Once everyone is assembled, get them ready for the Talk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome everyone • Hand out Talk flow cards, one each • Introduce the Talk topic • Hand out Role cards. Read them aloud and check for correct first names • Hand out Code of care cards, one each, and read aloud • Check if anything needs clarifying: <i>"Is everything clear? Any last questions before we start?"</i> <p>1/14</p>	<p>A1. CHECK-IN (12-14 mins)</p> <p>There are three check-in options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal Cards* (see card 3) 2. First Name (see card 4) 3. Mindfulness Exercise (see card 5) <p>Pick an option that feels culturally and ethically appropriate.</p> <p>Read the chosen check-in card aloud e.g. Animal Cards (card 3) so everyone understands what's involved.</p> <p>Whatever is chosen will be used again at the end of the Talk.</p> <p><small>* see the Preparation Template for where to purchase these cards</small></p> <p>2/14</p>	<p>CHECK-IN 1 (12-14 mins)</p> <p>Animal Cards</p> <p>Use the Animal Cards to reflect on your journey here today.</p>  <p>Choose a picture and word card that reflects how you feel.</p> <p>3/14</p>
 <p>FACILITATOR empathytalks.com</p>	 <p>FACILITATOR empathytalks.com</p>	 <p>FACILITATOR empathytalks.com</p>
<p>CHECK-IN 1 (12-14 mins)</p>  <p>First Name</p> <p>Share the story of your first name.</p> <p>Introduce yourself and share a brief personal story that describes the origin or meaning behind your name.</p> <p>Facilitator starts (2-4 mins) Speaker and Listeners practice listening</p> <p>Speaker and Listeners repeat and share in turn (2 mins each)</p> <p>4/14</p>	<p>CHECK-IN 1 (12-14 mins)</p> <p>Mindfulness Exercise</p> <p>A shared mindfulness exercise, bringing the body, breath, and mind to the present moment.</p> <p>This exercise can be used throughout the session if a break is needed, also.</p> <p>Facilitator: run a 5-10 min mindfulness exercise, for example:</p> <p>Three breaths in and out, to settle and reset.</p> <p>5/14</p>	<p>A2. SPEAKER SPEAKS (16-18 mins)</p> <p>1. Speaker speaks on the topic (6 mins):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I am experiencing from where I stand in this situation • What my hope are • What my fears are • What I don't understand <p>2. Listeners ask questions (2 min each):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like to know more about ... • What else can you say about ... ? • What kind of x is that x ...? <p>3. Speaker speaks further (4 min):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker says more on the topic • Chooses to answer questions, or not <p>6/14</p> <p>Facilitator: spend some time here setting the scene and explaining how things work.</p> <p>Goal: everyone feels settled, clear on roles, understand how roles relate, and feel they have enough 'space' to think and prepare.</p>
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<p>A3. LISTENERS SHARE (18-24 mins)</p> <p>1. Each Listener in turn shares what they saw, heard, felt and sensed (3 mins each)</p> <p>Listeners can express themselves anyway they want – speak, sketch sing...</p> <p>2. Listeners share observations of patterns, connections, conclusions (3 mins each)</p> <p>Facilitator: ask who wants to go first.</p> <p>Goal: Listeners feel they have space to reflect and share back.</p> <p>7/14</p>	<p>A4. SPEAKER SHARES (8 mins)</p> <p>Speaker shares what they saw, heard, felt and sensed (8 mins)</p> <p><i>"This is what I experienced when the Listeners shared..."</i></p> <p>** Give everyone a quick 5 minute break after this activity **</p> <p>Facilitator: remind everyone that there is no specific goal in this Talk. It's an invitation to share around this topic.</p> <p>Goal: Speaker feels safe to be vulnerable without worrying about being 'right' or providing an answer or solution.</p> <p>8/14</p>	<p>A5. NEEDS, WISHES, INTENTIONS (18 mins)</p> <p>1. Speaker and Listeners take three strips of paper and label them:</p> <p>I NEED I WISH MY INTENTION IS</p> <p>2. Each silently writes down their answers to each (4 mins)</p> <p>3. Each person shares their Needs, Wishes, Intentions with the group (10 mins)</p> <p>9/14</p> <p>Facilitator: clarify these are things for participants to personally take away from today's Talk.</p> <p>Goal: participants have an opportunity to reflect and share their responses, as part of moving to session closure.</p>

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<p>A6. CHECK-OUT (15 mins)</p> <p>Did you check-in with Animal Cards? Check-out with Animal Cards (see card 11)</p> <p>Did you check-in with First Name? Check-out with Post-cards (see card 12)</p> <p>Did you check-in with Mindfulness Exercise? Check-out with a Mindfulness Exercise (see card 13)</p> <p>Facilitator: prepare the Check-out in advance where possible. Tie it back to the Check-in exercise also.</p> <p>Goal: close the space for all participants, including yourself as the Facilitator.</p> <p>10/14</p>	<p>CHECK-OUT 1 (15 mins)</p> <p>Animal Cards</p>  <p>Use the Animal Cards to reflect on your journey here today.</p> <p>Choose a picture and word card that reflects how you feel.</p> <p>Facilitator starts</p> <p>Speaker and Listeners repeat and share in turn</p> <p>11/14</p>	<p>CHECK-OUT 2 (15 mins)</p> <p>Post-cards</p>  <p>Use a piece of paper to write down something you are grateful for that someone in this group did today.</p> <p>Facilitator starts</p> <p>Speaker and Listeners repeat and share in turn</p> <p>12/14</p>
 <p>FACILITATOR empathytalks.com</p>	 <p>FACILITATOR empathytalks.com</p>	
<p>CHECK-OUT 3 (15 mins)</p> <p>Mindfulness Exercise</p> <p>A shared mindfulness exercise, bringing the body, breath, and mind to the present moment.</p> <p>This exercise can be used throughout the session if a break is needed, also.</p> <p>Facilitator: run a 5-10 min mindfulness exercise, for example:</p> <p>Three breaths in and out, to settle and reset.</p> <p>13/14</p>	<p>CLOSE (5 mins)</p> <p>Thank everyone for coming.</p> <p>STEP 1. Discuss Talk sharing</p> <p>1. Are you happy to share anything that you wrote today? e.g. Needs, Wishes, Intentions, Post-cards. This will help us observe how things change over time.</p> <p>2. Is a Talk series planned or likely? If so, is everyone happy to write down common themes/topics touched on, leverage points and actions, for reference in the Talk series?</p> <p>Note: It's important any shared information comes from participants themselves, not a third-party taking notes. This helps maintain trust in the group.</p> <p>14/14</p> <p>STEP 2. Agree with participants if, how and when follow-up contact will occur, for example:</p> <p><i>"I (the Facilitator) will check in with everyone by email in one month to see what has changed in their lives or actions, since being part of this Empathy Talk."</i></p> <p>STEP 3. Collect Code of care and Activity cards from Participants before they leave.</p> <p>Facilitator: if a Talk series is planned, it's a good idea to capture information to build a picture of what changes over time. This information can also turn into artefacts to gift to participants at the end of the series.</p>	

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<p>A4. SPEAKER SHARES (8 mins)</p> <p>Speaker shares what they saw, heard, felt and sensed (8 mins)</p> <p><i>"This is what I experienced when the Listeners shared..."</i></p> <p>4/6</p>	<p>A5. NEEDS, WISHES, INTENTIONS (18 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speaker and Listeners take three strips of paper and label them: <p>I NEED I WISH MY INTENTION IS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Each silently writes down their answers to each (4 mins) 3. Each person shares their Needs, Wishes, Intentions with the group (10 mins) <p>5/6</p>	<p>A6. CHECK-OUT (15 mins)</p> <p>The Facilitator will guide the check-out activity, using 1 of 3 options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal Cards 2. Post-cards 3. Mindfulness Exercise <p>Follow the Facilitator's instructions.</p> <p>6/6</p>

SPEAKER + LISTENER CARDS: set 1 of 5

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SPEAKER + LISTENER CARDS: set 2 of 5

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 LISTENER <small>empathytalks.com</small>	 LISTENER <small>empathytalks.com</small>	 LISTENER <small>empathytalks.com</small>
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SPEAKER + LISTENER CARDS: set 3 of 5

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SPEAKER + LISTENER CARDS: set 4 of 5

 SPEAKER	 SPEAKER	 SPEAKER
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<p>A1. CHECK-IN (12-14 mins)</p> <p>The Facilitator will guide the check-in activity, using 1 of 3 options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal Cards 2. First Name 3. Mindfulness Exercise <p>Follow the Facilitator's instructions.</p> <p>1/6</p>	<p>A2. SPEAKER SPEAKS (16-18 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speaker speaks on the topic (6 mins): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What I am experiencing from where I stand in this situation • What my hope are • What my fears are • What I don't understand 2. Listeners ask questions (2 min each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like to know more about ... • What else can you say about ... ? • What kind of x is that x ...? 3. Speaker speaks further (4 min): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker says more on the topic • Chooses to answer questions, or not <p>2/6</p>	<p>A3. LISTENERS SHARE (18-24 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each Listener in turn shares what they saw, heard, felt and sensed (3 mins each) <p>Express yourself anyway you want – say it, sketch it, sing it...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Listeners share observations of patterns, connections, conclusions (3 mins each) <p>3/6</p>
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<p>A4. SPEAKER SHARES (8 mins)</p> <p>Speaker shares what they saw, heard, felt and sensed (8 mins)</p> <p><i>"This is what I experienced when the Listeners shared..."</i></p> <p>4/6</p>	<p>A5. NEEDS, WISHES, INTENTIONS (18 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speaker and Listeners take three strips of paper and label them: <p>I NEED I WISH MY INTENTION IS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Each silently writes down their answers to each (4 mins) 3. Each person shares their Needs, Wishes, Intentions with the group (10 mins) <p>5/6</p>	<p>A6. CHECK-OUT (15 mins)</p> <p>The Facilitator will guide the check-out activity, using 1 of 3 options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Animal Cards 2. Post-cards 3. Mindfulness Exercise <p>Follow the Facilitator's instructions.</p> <p>6/6</p>

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