

#TalkingClimate workshop

THE TRAINERS' GUIDE



This trainers' guide was commissioned by EIT Climate-KIC as part of a citizen science #TalkingClimate project, a collaboration between Climate Outreach and EIT Climate-KIC.

Climate Outreach

Climate Outreach is a team of social scientists and communication specialists working to widen and deepen public engagement with climate change. Through our research, practical guides and consultancy services, our charity helps organisations communicate about climate change in ways that resonate with the values of their audiences and builds the social mandate for climate action. We have more than 15 years' experience working with a wide range of international partners including central, regional and local governments, international bodies, academic institutions, charities, businesses, faith organisations and youth groups.

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EIT Climate-KIC

EIT Climate-KIC is a European knowledge and innovation community that is working towards a prosperous, inclusive, climate-resilient society that is founded on a circular, zero-carbon economy. Supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology, we identify and support innovation that helps society mitigate and adapt to climate change. We believe that a decarbonised, sustainable economy is not only necessary to prevent catastrophic climate change, but also presents a wealth of opportunities for business and society.

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Terms of usage

This guide and accompanying resources are freely available for anyone interested in running their own #TalkingClimate workshop. Permission to use these resources to deliver workshops is for non-profit use only.

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Introducing this guide

It was very fulfilling to see how the workshop really empowered and motivated people in having climate conversations.

Participant, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020

Are you...

...Interested in taking action on climate change, but not sure how to take the next step?

...Inspired by the guidance in the **#TalkingClimate handbook**, on how to have interesting, constructive conversations about climate change in day-to-day life?

....Excited by the idea of running a workshop, with work colleagues, friends or community members, and learning more?

The **2019 #TalkingClimate handbook** provides pragmatic and evidence-based principles for how to talk about climate change in daily life – on the bus, at work, at a sports event or at home over dinner.

This **companion training guide** takes the process a step further – enabling you to run a **workshop training participants in how to have easier and more meaningful conversations about climate change in daily life**. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the **#TalkingClimate handbook, workshop script and slidedeck**, also available at climateoutreach.org/reports/talking-climate-workshop.

Introducing #TalkingClimate

The #TalkingClimate training materials are based on the following foundational ideas:

- **Day-to-day conversations about climate change matter.** Social science shows that people are profoundly affected by the behaviour and views of those around them, particularly those they respect and trust. Politicians also need evidence of social consent before they will take radical policy action. That means public discussion, and breaking the 'climate silence', is an important part of responding to the climate crisis.
- **Every community matters.** We cannot meet ambitious climate targets without universal engagement. Climate change conversations therefore need to be taking place across different parts of society, or climate policies will be rejected.
- **Facts and figures are not enough.** Providing more information about the causes and impacts of climate change is an important part of the puzzle in motivating people to take action¹ – but it is not the whole story. Research shows that people are also strongly influenced by the stories they hear around them, their values, and the connections they form.² #TalkingClimate is about providing the tools to build skills in this area.

Since the 1990s, psychologists, sociologists and other social scientists have been investigating how to get people thinking about, and acting in response to, the climate crisis. The #TalkingClimate Handbook synthesises this considerable evidence base with data from a wide range of sectors on how to have constructive conversations, combined with a 2019 citizen science experiment exploring how to have good climate conversations.



Day-to-day conversations about climate change matter. Photo by [Adrian Snood](#) (CC BY-NC 2.0)

This data was used to develop the **REAL TALK** principles:

Respect your conversational partner and find common ground

Enjoy the conversation

Ask questions

Listen, and show you've heard

Tell your story

Action makes it easier (but doesn't fix it)

Learn from the conversation

Keepp going and keep connected

In the next few pages, the handbook explains more about what these principles mean and how they relate specifically to having constructive climate conversations.

I have really much appreciated giving the workshop. The principles are relevant and the 'REAL TALK' gimmick is dynamic and stays in the mind. Besides, I enjoyed watching people slowly discovering that their voices matter too in the debate, starting with their very own relatives.

Trainer, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020

I like the Real Talk acronym, it's a good reminder. I like the explanation of why it's important to 'break the spiral of silence'. I think the active listening exercise surprised me in a good way. I understood afterwards the value of having to talk without interruption, it requires introspection.

Participant, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020

The #TalkingClimate workshop

They learnt just as much from interacting with each other as they learnt from the content of the workshop itself.

Trainer, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020

Structure

The workshop is based around a series of exercises. The aim of the exercises is to encourage participants to explore the elements of good climate conversations, with the facilitator then providing the supporting evidence as needed. In this way, participants discover the principles for themselves, rather than just being told them.

Location

The workshop is designed to be delivered online, indoors or outdoors, depending on your context and preference. The Covid-19 pandemic meant that the majority – though not all – of the workshops in the test phase were successfully delivered online.

Length

Timings are given, creating a 2-hour workshop, excluding arrival and settling in time. However, options for additional exercises or a shorter version of the workshop, are also given, to allow for different circumstances.

Audience

The workshop is aimed at an audience with some knowledge of climate change. It is unlikely to be suitable for those (for example young children) who have only just encountered the topic. Alternative exercises and ideas are provided so you can adapt your approach according to different audiences. The pilot phase suggests, for example, that audiences with more experience of engaging with people on climate change may already feel comfortable talking about climate change. These audiences may therefore be more interested in the theories and principles behind climate silence and why climate conversations matter. Newer audiences, in contrast, may need more time to explore the ideas behind 'climate silence' and why talking about climate change is difficult.

Different languages

Although the workshop script is written in English, it can be delivered in whichever language is appropriate to your context. The 'REAL TALK' mnemonic is unlikely to work in a different language, so you may need to find a different mnemonic that does, or you can deliver the workshop without using any mnemonic. If you create a non-English language version of the mnemonic, we would love to hear from you!

Process of development

A pilot version of the #TalkingClimate workshop was developed in 2020. A group of 20 trainers from the EIT Climate-KIC alumni network then delivered the 33 test workshops in 22 countries, mainly in Europe, before the methodology was refined.

The outcome of the webinar was just great, everybody felt empowered and motivated to talk climate. Each of us had their 'aha' moments, when it clicked and we understood the importance of connection and emotions during conversations.

Trainer, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020

Because it exceeded my expectations, it made me re-think and realise some things I have not done in the best way during some conversations I had that were not so successful. And I am more motivated to talk more often about difficult topics.

Participant, #TalkingClimate workshop, 2020



The workshop is based around a series of exercises. Photo by [You X Ventures](#)

Logistics of running the workshop

Recruitment

You might already have a group of people in mind to deliver the workshop to, in which case you won't need promotional materials, but if you're aiming to recruit people to your workshop here is some sample text you could use:

Everyone's Talking Climate: How to have effective and compelling conversations about climate change in your daily life

This workshop is designed to equip you with the tools, techniques and understanding to bring conversations about climate change into your daily life, in ways that resonate with people's values and inspire transformation.

In smaller text at the bottom you could include some brief information about the project:

The workshop was created using materials from Climate Outreach and EIT Climate-KIC, as part of the #TalkingClimate project. #TalkingClimate workshops train people to have effective and compelling conversations about climate change, wherever they are in the world.

Getting ready and getting started

You'll need to decide on a date, time and location for your workshop(s), allowing enough time for recruitment and preparation beforehand.

Equipment you will need may include:

- the workshop script
- a flipchart and pens and/or the slide-deck presentation
- an evaluation form (online version or paper)
- a computer and projector
- refreshments

In advance of the workshop:

- **Read the #TalkingClimate handbook**, as it will help you to gain a deeper understanding of the workshop content.
- **Learn the exercises** – concentrate on making them work as well as possible, and on building the conversation in your workshop from there.
- **Prepare what you are going to say** – using the #Talkingclimate workshop script can be helpful to create some bullet points or prompts for yourself, so that you can easily come back to where you were if you lose your way or forget the next point during the workshop.
- **Practise saying what you want to say** for each section out loud and adapt it to your own style of speaking or expressing yourself, until it feels natural.

Welcoming people to the workshop:

- It can be nerve-wracking for participants to arrive at a workshop and so try to make the space as welcoming and as comfortable as you can. Be on hand to welcome people, or ask someone else to.
- One useful technique is to get participants involved in some way as they arrive. This could simply be helping you set up. Alternatively, it could be an activity people do as they arrive, such as responding to a question on the wall or chalked onto the floor, so they start to engage and learn a little about each other.

Facilitation tips

As the workshop starts, introduce the following concepts:

- **Sharing airtime:** Ask people to pay attention to how much they are speaking and to try to balance speaking and listening, and to hold back if they have spoken a lot, so they can hear from people who have not spoken.
- **Communication signals:** In some cultures, ‘jazz hands’, where people shake their hands like a jazz dancer when something someone says resonates with them, are helpful. This is a great way of building a sense of connection between participants without interfering with the flow of the workshop.
- **Timing:** Explain that you’re going to be strict on time and keep things moving as there’s lots to cover. At the beginning of each exercise, be clear about how long it is going to last.

Running the exercises:

- Make sure that the prompt questions guiding the exercises are written down somewhere participants can see them while they are doing the exercise – an online chat box, or a flipchart, for example. This is particularly important when delivering the workshop online, because many forms of meeting software will not allow participants in ‘break-out rooms’, to ask the host questions if they get stuck or can’t remember what the questions were.
- At the end of each exercise there is the opportunity to take a few observations from the room. When feeding back on their reflections:
 - » summarise and repeat back what you hear
 - » make it dynamic by asking questions like *“Does anyone else find that?”*
 - » aim to draw out the key points from what people say and, in particular, the key ideas in the script, as this will back up what you say when you then deliver the script
- The script occasionally refers to ‘popcorn-style feedback’: this means inviting people to feed back in no particular order, according to who wants to speak.

Keeping to time:

- **Don’t lose track of time:** Timings may vary depending on the number of participants in your workshop. If you run over time with one exercise, you may need to shorten another. Be prepared to be flexible. Try to finish on time (this may be more important in some cultures than others!) and to finish cleanly, rather than allowing a conversation to drag on.
- **Don’t be afraid to move things on even if it feels like an exercise could go on longer.** You could say something like *“I see there’s lots more to discuss on this but we need to move on because we’ll run out of time and there’s a lot more to cover.”* If people are asking a lot of questions, or have more points to make, and you need to round it up, you can say *“One last question / point”* or *“Any more really burning questions / points before we move on?”*

Suggested overall approach:

- **If there's a question you don't know how to answer, it is okay to say so.** You could ask other participants what they think or refer people to the Climate Outreach #TalkingClimate Handbook or website for more information and resources. You are not a teacher – you are a facilitator, encouraging an open and constructive conversation amongst a group of people.
- **It's okay to feel nervous!** Be yourself, be humble, and be kind to yourself if you feel like you could have done bits of it better. This workshop is, in the end, about good conversation. So try to relax and enjoy it.

Tips for hosting a workshop online

Basic tips for hosting a meeting or workshop online:

- Practise and familiarise yourself with the meeting software technology you are using in advance.
- Start 15 minutes early to ensure everything is working okay before you allow people into the workshop.
- Recruit a tech support person who can help you during the workshop: for example, by getting people into break-out groups and keeping an eye on the chat etc.
- Welcome people as they arrive. It can be useful to have a few lines to say on repeat whilst people are arriving so that there isn't 'dead air', such as *"Welcome, we're just waiting for everyone to arrive, we'll be starting in a few minutes..."* or *"It's great to see so many people here, we're just waiting for a few more people to arrive..."* or *"It's great to see people from so many different places joining us"* etc.



The #TalkingClimate workshop is designed to be delivered online or offline. Photo by [Chris Montgomery](#)

- Familiarise participants with the technology and how you will use it at the beginning of the meeting, so that everyone knows how it will work. This may include:
 - » mute / unmute (in many software packages, the host is able to mute everyone if needed)
 - » camera off / on
 - » chat box and how you'll use it: for example, *"If you have any questions, please write them in the chat box"*
 - » how to make a point or ask a question: for example how to use 'virtual' hand signals
 - » break-out groups
- Invite participants to introduce themselves one by one or in the chat box.
- Sometimes you end up with a parallel conversation in chat. This is fine – just remember to store it before you end the meeting, as it's often valuable!
- Maximum concentration span on video calls is generally around 45 minutes, so make sure you fit in small breaks at regular intervals if going over an hour.

There is now extensive information available online on how to host virtual meetings, training and workshops. We particularly recommend:

- **Blueprints for Change**, an 'open library of advocacy how-to's put together by campaign innovators in order to help progressive organisers and groups', have produced a detailed guide with lots of useful information about facilitating meetings online (far more than you'll need for this workshop!), including links to further sites and resources.
- This **brief guide** on 'Making Online Meetings & Trainings Interactive' from the Sierra Club offers useful tips and information.

Delivering offline workshops during the Covid-19 pandemic

Local health guidance or regulations may fluctuate as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic – meaning that if you are delivering a workshop in person, you may need to limit the number of people attending, or deliver it outside. The health and wellbeing of participants should always take priority, and no-one should feel pressured to run or participate in a gathering that may put them at risk.

During the pandemic, we recommend that you follow [World Health Organisation guidelines](#) for running meetings.

It may also be a good idea to get participants to sign a simple **disclaimer** accepting that they face a level of risk in participating in the group; that they accept you are doing what is possible to minimise the risks; and that they won't hold you responsible for that risk.

Further reading

Priority reading and watching

#TalkingClimate Handbook – co-published by Climate Outreach and EIT Climate-KIC

#TalkingClimate workshop script – co-published by Climate Outreach and EIT Climate-KIC

Further reading and watching

How to have a climate change conversation, [Webinar 1](#) and [Webinar 2](#) on #TalkingClimate

Talking Climate, by Adam Corner and Jamie Clarke

Don't Even Think About It, by George Marshall

Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

Nonviolent communication, by Marshall Rosenberg

The power of vulnerability, TED Talk by Brene Brown

The Common Cause Handbook, by the Common Cause Foundation

References

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2. Clarke, J., Webster, R., Corner, A. (2020) Theory of Change: Creating a social mandate for climate action. Oxford: Climate Outreach. <https://climateoutreach.org/reports/theory-of-change/>

