



## HOSTING BEST PRACTICES RUBRIC

Hosting a Living Room Conversation is a practice you grow into. This rubric is a tool for self evaluation you can visit periodically as you develop your hosting practice. Living Room Conversations happens in a number of settings, some of these practices may not be directly applicable to the conversations you are organizing.

| BEFORE THE CONVERSATION          | Developing Host  | Accomplished Host  | Exemplary Host   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Inviting & Preparing Your Guests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You think about who you want in the room and send a group email, text, or social media post and ask for a response.</li> <li>You tell them a little bit about Living Room Conversations and what to expect.</li> </ul>  | You send personalized invitations, telling people why they came to mind and share the conversation agreements or a piece of the conversation guide.  | You have made yourself available to guests and thought through anything extra you can do to connect to guests, or connect them with each other, before the conversation.   |
| Preparing for Your Conversation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have read through the conversation guide and have it ready to refer to during the conversation.</li> <li>You are familiar with the Conversation Agreements and what they should look like in practice.</li> <li>You have a plan for keeping track of timing.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have also read "Unpacking the Conversation Agreements" and understand what they look like in practice.</li> <li>You know how you will intervene if needed.</li> <li>You have thought about your answers to the Round 2 questions.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You have decided if you will use a speaking order, how you will structure Round 2 (answering the same question vs. different questions, how much time you allow to explore what people say, etc.).</li> <li>You are able to refer to the Conversation Agreements easily and are comfortable reminding guests about them during the conversation.</li> </ul>                               |
| Logistics                        | You show up early in the virtual or physical space to make sure the area is set up and any technology is working.  | You have sent out a final reminder and encourage guests to have something to write with along with a copy of the conversation guide.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If meeting online, you are prepared to put the questions and agreements in the chat.</li> <li>You are comfortable with the technology you are using.</li> </ul>   |
| DURING THE CONVERSATION          | Developing Host  | Accomplished Host  | Exemplary Host   |
| Setting Expectations             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You stick to and use the conversation guide and clarify your role as a host (to help people maintain the conversation agreements and feel welcome in the conversation).</li> <li>You are clear on the difference between a Living Room Conversation and other conversations/debates.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are clear on the expectations around sharing airtime and how you will intervene if the Conversation Agreements are forgotten.</li> <li>You help your participants understand this is a practice and you are all building skills.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You explain that your opinion carries no more weight than others and are careful to make sure that rings true throughout the conversation.</li> <li>You are prepared to lead out in vulnerability.</li> </ul>   |
| Conversation Agreements          | You have guests take turns reading the Conversation Agreements and explain how the agreements are designed to encourage authenticity and understanding in the conversation.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You follow through on your planned intervention by referring back to the Conversation Agreements.</li> <li>You are authentic and don't try to "play a role" or represent a point of view that isn't yours.</li> <li>You balance sharing your thoughts and opening it up for differences.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You exemplify and model all the agreements including sharing airtime and being purposeful and to the point.</li> <li>You give time after reading the agreements to let guests think about what they would look and feel like in practice.</li> <li>You avoid sweeping statements and speaking for a group.</li> </ul>   |
| Time awareness                   | You keep track of the time between rounds and end on time.   | You keep track of the time guests are taking (i.e. 2 minutes for Round 2 questions) and give the agreed upon hand signal if they go over.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are consistent in signalling guests when they go over.</li> <li>You are conscious of how much time you are taking up in the conversation.</li> </ul>  |
| Reading the room                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You recognize when the conversation shifts, goes off topic, or tension arises.</li> <li>You are sometimes able to bring the conversation back on track in a timely manner. Other times you may struggle to interrupt a participant who dominates the conversation, or you may struggle to confidently ease tension that may arise.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You are typically able to bring the conversation back on track in a timely manner.</li> <li>You can diffuse any tension by relying on the Conversation Agreements.</li> <li>You are comfortable encouraging participants who have been more quiet to speak up as well as helping dominant participants step back when necessary.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You're aware of your impact and contribution to the conversation and avoid making sweeping statements or taking up too much space.</li> <li>You are aware of and actively avoid making assumptions about the beliefs of your guests.</li> <li>You are creating space for <i>all</i> views and experiences whether they are in line with your own or the majority of the group.</li> </ul> |
| Navigating Round 2               | You feel timid about how to handle Round 2 – whether to answer the same question, how to move between uninterrupted speaking time and a free flowing conversation, or find yourself running out of time.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You acknowledge common threads among those that have shared their points of view and experiences.</li> <li>You encourage participants to make connections with each others' stories and to feel comfortable sharing differing experiences.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may point out common threads, but you make sure to invite different perspectives.</li> <li>You are comfortable shifting back and forth between timed, structured questions and natural conversation.</li> </ul>   |
| Remembering the Closing          | You often end your conversation after the Reflection round and forget to go over the Closing.  | You mention the feedback form to participants and may put the link in the chat if you're online.   | You encourage people to fill out the feedback form and feel comfortable inviting participants to donate and join or host another conversation.   |
| AFTER THE CONVERSATION           | Developing Host  | Accomplished Host  | Exemplary Host   |
| Thank you                        | You don't always think to follow up with your participants after a conversation.   | You send a thank you to the group within 3 days after the conversation   | You send individual thank you notes within 3 days after the conversation   |
| Reflection                       | After a conversation, you move on and rarely reflect on your own skill development as a host.  | You use the rubric to reflect on your host development   | You spend time self-reflecting on hosting skills using the rubric and make an active effort in correcting and/or improving skills.   |
| Communicating with us            | You find it difficult to remember to fill out the "Tell us about your conversation" form.  | You fill out the "Tell us about your conversation" form with basic information as well as some personal anecdotes from the conversation.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You fill out the "Tell us about your conversation" form with detailed information and let the organization know about impactful stories and experiences.</li> <li>You may also reach out to other participants and request permission or encourage them to share their stories.</li> </ul>  |