

Checklist: Intentional Conversations

Why we have intentional conversations with people:

1. To find out what people are experiencing (i.e. social isolation, loneliness, lack of purpose, etc.), what motivates them and what they would like to see differently in their lives and in the neighbourhood.
2. To motivate people to do something (i.e. ask for help, join or host an activity, become a volunteer, etc.).
3. To build a relationship with them as individuals and to connect them with other people.
4. To identify potential volunteers and community leaders.

Main rules for intentional conversations:

1. Each person has their own experiences and history. Respect those.
2. In a natural conversation the phases will merge and overlap. Given the nature of our contact with people, most of the time the different phases will happen over the course of multiple conversations. This makes it even more important to remember what you have discussed with people, so you can come back to the different phases and make sure you cover all the elements.
3. Use the **70/30 principle**: 70% listening, 30% speaking.
4. Ask open **questions**, **listen** carefully and **summarise** when it is appropriate.
5. “Listen” to both **verbal and non-verbal** cues someone is giving you.
6. **Listen actively**: make eyecontact, nod, hmhm, mirror someone’s posture, etc.
7. A **silence** every now and then is ok.
8. Talk about what we do at The Pear based on: what people have expressed is important to them, our values and personal experiences.
9. Don’t take on individual problems that you can’t solve for people. Stick with what we *can* do.
10. The **main question** is dependent on who you are talking to, how the conversation is going and where we are at with our Village Hubs plan. Try to make a judgement call as to what question you can ask someone.
11. If someone has doubts about joining or has objections: try to refer back to their personal story and what they have told you they would like to see differently.
12. Don’t continue endlessly. If someone is not interested, respect that.

13. Always end the conversation on a positive note.

1 Introduction

In this phase you:



- Open with small talk
- Share something about yourself you might have in common with this person
- You make an assessment about whether you want to get to know someone better & if they are interested in having a conversation with you at that particular time

2 Personal story

In this phase you:



- Ask open questions and listen well
- Get to know factual information about the person, their life and their living arrangements
- Want to know what someone is experiencing living in our neighbourhood, their sense of connection to other people and what they struggle with
- Want to find out what is important for this individual

3 Perspective

In this phase you want to find out:



- If this person wants something to change about their situation or the neighbourhood, and if so, what it would look like if things were better
- What would be the first thing that would need to change to make their life better
- What barriers people might experience to changing their situation or the neighbourhood by themselves, and what they would need from us to take those barriers away
- What people have already tried to do about their situation and whether they were successful (and why or why not)

When you have worked out these things, you make the connection to the next phase:

What do you know about what we do here at The Pear? (Did you know that...?)

4 Engagement

In this phase you want to provide information about what we (can) do, to explore:



- If people know what and why we do what we do at The Pear
- If people are interested in joining existing activities or coming to/hosting a new activity
- How they would feel about receiving or providing support
- What role they could play in placemaking projects or community events
- If they want to be a volunteer

You end this phase with your main 'ask': *Do you want to be involved? (i.e. will we see you at Knitting Club next week?)*

5 Commitment and follow-up

This is the moment you:



- Ask them the main question again: *Do you want to be involved?*
- If they are agreeing to be a volunteer, get their contact details
- Discuss what you and this person are going to do next: connect them to another neighbour, come to join an activity, send them more information about volunteering, etc.
- Agree on a next contact moment (i.e. *will we see you at Knitting Club next week? Shall I give you a call when I know more about...?*)