



# Guide for Designing Conversations

## Section A

The following questions aim to assist you in clarifying objectives, questions, and planning a conversation on a topic of interest. If the conversation intends to follow up on a conflict we recommend starting with Section B first and then returning to Section A.

Print out this guide and answer the following questions:

**Step 1:** Where would be the best physical location to have this conversation?  
*Physically, where would be the most suitable place to have it? At work, in a café, office?*

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**Step 2:** What emotions does having this conversation generate in me?  
*At this moment, you can use free writing exercises to identify and make conscious the feelings surrounding having this conversation.*

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**Step 3:** What goal or result(s) motivate me to have this conversation?  
*Write down what you expect from the conversation. In this step, do not focus on specific actions; think about how you would like to modify the "spirit" of the relationship. "Feel on the same page," "work better together" "feel understood and understand"*

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**Step 4:**

What facts or circumstances have led me to motivate this conversation?

*Describe precisely the circumstances or facts that led you to seek the conversation. They can be specific actions on which you want to express positive feedback or it can be a conflict situation.*

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**Step 5:**

What conclusion or action plan could this conversation generate?

*Here, you can note the options or strategies you would like to propose. Be very careful to keep the conversation alive, allowing the other person to share their ideas or proposals first, then share your own, and always ask for their opinion if they have questions or concerns.*

*Seek to ensure that action items or plans adhere to the SMART guideline: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant (aligned with your values), and Timely.*

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**Step 6:**

Follow-up

*Set a follow-up date if applicable.*



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## Section B

Section B of this guide should be reviewed after reviewing Section A. It is developed according to the PAIR\* process by Annie O'Shaughnessy, describes the process of taking a pause for mindfulness. This pause interrupts reactions based on patterns of judgment or assumptions, cultivating compassionate curiosity instead, from which a more empathetic and restorative response can emerge. PAIR stands for Pause, Assess, Acknowledge, Inquire and, Restore / Repair.

### Pause

When addressing a behavior or a situation, take a deep breath—inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. *Intentionally set aside any assumptions you may have at that moment. Allow at least 3 seconds to pass.*

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### Assess

Bring awareness to your own experience. For example, am I agitated? Observe the reality and the facts that are occurring. Focus on your intention. *For example, do I want to attack the person?*



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**Acknowledge.** Begin the interaction with the person by acknowledging what you notice and what is observable and real.

*"I notice that... It seems that... I observe that..."*

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## Inquire

Ask restorative questions to learn more, intentionally dismantle assumptions, and encourage self-reflection. *"What is happening? What need are you trying to fulfill?" (Remember, if emotions are heightened, they may not identify this information.)*

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## Restore / Repair

Collaborate with the student to find ways to restore their situation about the rest of the group, their relationship with you, or to self-regulate. *O'Shaughnessy emphasizes to recognize whether you and the other person are in a mental space to hold a meaningful restorative dialogue at that moment or if it's necessary to postpone the conversation to a time when everyone is regulated.*

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\*The P.A.I.R. process is derived from "The Little Book of Restorative Teaching Tools" by Lindsay Pointer, Kathleen McGoey, and Haley Farrar (2020).