

Conversation Guide: Our Relationship with Water

Living Room Conversations offers a simple, sociable and structured way to practice communicating across differences while building understanding and relationships. Typically, 4-6 people meet in person or by video call for about 90 minutes to listen to and be heard by others on one of our nearly 100 [topics](#). Rather than debating or convincing others, we take turns talking to share, learn, and be curious. No preparation is required, though background links with balanced views are available on some topic pages online. Anyone can host using these italicized instructions. [Hosts also participate](#).

I. Introductions: Why We're Here (~10 minutes)

Each participant has 1 minute to introduce themselves.

- Share your name, where you live, what drew you here, and if this is your first conversation.

II. Conversation Agreements: How We'll Engage (~5 minutes)

These will set the tone of our conversation; participants may volunteer to take turns reading them aloud.

- **Be curious and listen to understand.** Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. You might enjoy exploring how others' experiences have shaped their values and perspectives.
- **Show respect and suspend judgment.** People tend to judge one another. Setting judgment aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.
- **Note any common ground as well as any differences.** Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- **Be authentic and welcome that from others.** Share what's important to you. Speak from your experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.
- **Be purposeful and to the point.** Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
- **Own and guide the conversation.** Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed. Use an agreed upon signal like the "time out" sign if you feel the agreements are not being honored.

III. Question Rounds: What We'll Talk About

Optional: a participant can keep track of time and gently let people know when their time has elapsed.

Round One: Getting to Know Each Other (~10 min)

Each participant can take 1-2 minutes to answer the following question:

- What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community, and/or country?
- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What sense of purpose/mission/duty guides you in your family?

Round Two: Exploring the Topic -- Our Relationship with Water (~40 min)

One participant can volunteer to read this paragraph.

The Four Corners is home to deserts, forests, and grasslands. It is also home to our communities. From desert, to forest, to our communities, all life here depends on water.

In years with enough rain and snow, we're grateful to have water to sustain us. In years of low rainfall, we worry about the lack of water and ongoing drought.

We all have stories of the scarcity of water. Will we have enough to drink? To raise our crops? Will there be enough water in rivers and reservoirs for recreation? What about the environment?

In this conversation, participants will explore their shared watershed and local ecosystems, and connect with neighbors through their common and unique experiences with water in the region. We hope individuals, families, and communities will share their memories and stories about water and come together to imagine a future they want for their communities.

Take ~2 minutes each to answer a question below without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, the group may take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions/responses. Continue exploring additional questions as time allows.

- Think about your life and experiences. What is your favorite memory or personal story with water or bodies of water?
- How have you experienced any differences regarding the amount of water in local lakes or rivers?
- Think of all the communities you are a part of. How does water connect you to your community? What do you think the future of water use will look like both for your community and for others?
- What would you like to talk about *or what is currently missing in our current conversations* related to water?
- What are your hopes and concerns around the future of water use both for your community and for others?

Round Three: Reflecting on the Conversation (~15 min)

Take 2 minutes to answer one of the following questions:

- What was most meaningful / valuable to you in this Living Room Conversation?
- What learning, new understanding or common ground was found on the topic?
- Is there one change you will make in your life because of our discussion?

Closing (~5 min)

- *Give us feedback!* Use livingroomconversations.org/feedback-form/ or QR code
- *Donate!* Make more of these possible: livingroomconversations.org/donate/
- *Join or host more conversations!* With a) this group by exchanging your emails; b) others in person and/or by video call online. Get more involved or learn how to host at livingroomconversations.org/get-involved/



Thank you!

