

An Observation Framework for Creating Conversations

Documenting an evidence base to support social interaction and facilitation in groups.

Step 1 - Preparation

Select one or two observers to play a neutral role in the observation, explaining their purpose to the participants and placing themselves with the group but unobtrusively. Get permission to record the sessions either with consent forms or verbal consent. It may be helpful to anonymise the process and record each actor (person involved) with a reference number and role title: e.g. Leader, Volunteer 1 and 2 and Participant 1,2,3 and 4.

Step 2 - Mapping the Environment

Draw a diagram or plan of the setting if helpful and place your actors in position. This way you can compare notes with anyone else. Note anything important about the environment including if the space is shared, and any noticeable factors such as light, noise and set-up. If this changes during the session, you may wish to record this and note the impact of any changes and interruptions, planned or otherwise.

Step 3 - Document Interactions

During the session note down any noticeable communication and interactions. You may see communication that is not returned or non-verbal. It may be through activity or depicted visually or through written word, rather than directly. You can either use the table overleaf or a separate piece of notepaper before recording important information onto the table latter as you interpret the data you have collected and make sense of any evidence of communication or interaction that is helpful to measuring impact or influencing practice and experience for facilitators.

Step 4 - Other Documentation

You may find alternative ways to record your sessions such as through photographs or video, which the team can review later to support discussion or to share with relatives and the individual concerned. Again the artwork or activities that are created are also very useful documentation and can prompt further conversation, as can ensuring that the previous session is revisited at the start of the next one.

Step 5 - Evidence, Recognise and Share your Learning

Creating Conversations have launched open badges via the [Scottish Social Services Council open badge hub](#), where you can submit evidence to recognise professional development. We are keen to share case studies wider.



Observing Interactions

Use this framework to detail the interactions between everyone in the room. Keep in mind elements of:

SPACE - layout of the physical setting; rooms, outdoor spaces, etc.

ACTORS - the names and relevant details of the people involved

ACTIVITIES - the various activities of the actors

OBJECTS - physical elements: furniture etc.

ACTS - specific individual actions

EVENTS - particular occasions, e.g. meetings

TIME - the sequence of events

GOALS - what actors are attempting to accomplish

FEELINGS - emotions in particular contexts

IMPAIRMENTS - impact of sensory impairments, mobility problems or other access requirements

(based on Spradley, J. P. (1980)

Remember you can use another notepad and fill this in later, if it is easier. Practical examples might include evidence of humor evidencing enjoyment, observing signs of reducing anxiety during a session. There are key findings made through an evaluation by the University of Stirling that outline can help focus the observation notes under key themes. This is available online at:

<http://www.creating-conversations.org/evidence-based/>

Find out more at www.creating-conversations.org

Evaluator:

Venue:

Date

Time:

Set-up	Interaction	Activities	Verbal	Non-Verbal	Visual	Other (note)
Environment: Sketch or describe	Individual					
	Participants and Participants					
	Participants and Staff					
People involved: Participants Staff Volunteers Other	Participants, Staff and Volunteers					
	General Interaction					
	Impact of Observer	How have you changed the dynamics of the group just by being here?				