



NYU

Work  
Life

## Guide to Creating Community Conversations

Fostering community within your unit or department is a wonderful way to encourage connection, support, and camaraderie among colleagues. It can be a moment to share in a fun activity, pleasant conversation, or a time to care for one another.

**Note: Community Conversations should never replace the need for mental health care from a licensed mental health professional. Please visit [NYU's Employee Assistance Program page](#) for more information.**

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### How to structure a Community Conversation for your department:

Consider structuring conversations that last up to 45 minutes and have a regular schedule, whether that's every other week, once a month etc.

- Establishing Facilitators:
  - Consider having two facilitators that coordinate group activity and can support one another
  - Facilitators will plan activities for a specified time frame and then a new set of facilitators can volunteer
- The facilitators will establish conversation ground rules for the time together, which may include:
  - Establishing a respectful and supportive tone
  - Emphasizing confidentiality - whatever is said within the Community Conversation will not be disclosed or reference outside of the group
  - Encouraging and recognizing diversity, inclusivity, and equity of the group members and their experiences
  - Being clear that a Community Conversation activity is meant to be a supportive/productive environment. This will help steer the conversation into a positive space and avoid having complaint sessions

## Community Conversation Topics

- Success stories and tips for time management
- Sharing new discoveries or hobbies that you've turned to during quarantine
- Meet to knit, draw, or reflect on an interesting or entertaining topic
- Watch a Ted Talk together and share thoughts
- Get to know one another: use each session for people to share the brief story of their life. (15 minutes of sharing with everyone prepared to ask a question).
- Rant! A funny session with clearly defined boundaries - everyone who comes **must** share a **brief** rant (terrible day, feeling icky, my chaotic home, spilled the coffee this morning etc.) Everyone should offer support and the session should end with a gratitude statement.
- Gratitude session - everyone shares one thing that they are grateful for that day. Studies show gratitude is empowering and important for resilience.

## Community Conversations for Managers

- Discuss how to redefine productivity during COVID-19 and recalibrate ways to measure performance
- Acknowledge managers' needs and the challenges of integrating your own work-life: - what are the challenges you face being a manager? Learn from one another on what works. (Work Life can provide an exercise the group can use to help people identify challenges and possible next steps)
- Manager's lunch - let's just have a social moment to connect with one another