Challenging Conversations Resource Pack

Background

This resource pack has been put together to complement a variety of training courses designed to equip a range of community-based practitioners to engage positively with 'challenging conversations'. These courses were a response to research that showed many of those working with young people and the wider community feel uncomfortable or lack confidence in tackling such conversations.

Typically, 'challenging conversations' are ones where the topic being talked about is sensitive, controversial, or likely to cause conflict. They may include issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, politics, religion, violence, radicalisation, extremism and hate crime.

We know that where those working with young people and wider communities lack knowledge, skills and confidence, or where their own values and attitudes may conflict with those of others, they tend to avoid such conversations. The concern then is that those we aim to work with might turn to others to discuss these issues – others who may not have their best interests at heart. These include those who might wish to encourage belief in particular ideologies, and advocate behaving in ways that may cause harm and upset to others.

Rationale

There are no hard-and-fast rules here; lots of things can be controversial, and almost all beliefs have ideological underpinnings. This is why those skilled in working with 'challenging conversations' almost always adopt a '**Socratic**' approach; they try to focus on asking questions – rather than giving answers. Their aim is to encourage people to explore the questions *they* have (as distinct from respond to questions generated by someone else), and seek evidence and reasons that can help generate answers.

Furthermore, the aim is also to encourage people, especially those who may hold different views, to enter into dialogue with one another. '**Dialogue**' here is a term used to distinguish what's happening from conversation and discussion – which are just as important –but may not be learning-oriented, which is what defines dialogue: it is a process we enter into with the specific aim of learning. It is not about merely convincing others they're wrong and cajoling them to believe in one's point of view. Rather it demands a commitment to mutuality, especially in learning.

It's important also to recognise that whoever you are, and whatever work you do – whether as a community worker, youth work or sports coach – you will be having conversations with young people on a regular and perhaps frequent basis. Each and every one of these conversations is precious time in helping people, especially young people, think critically about the often complex world in which they live.

It is likely these conversations are the product of relationships, relationships that have a peculiar value, as they exist in '**civil society**'. Civil society is constituted by the widest range of informal spaces and places, as distinct from those in formal and institutional settings – like school. Therein their importance; the latter (typically designed around the delivery of pre-determined curricula) are characterised by having little or no time or scope to support young people in exploring questions unrelated to the curriculum. Civil society exists as a democratic space; potentially then, young people should be able to ask *their* questions – whatever they may be and be supported in seeking answers to those questions: it is essential that those working in civil society recognise their responsibility to field and engage with these questions and manage the environments they work in a way that leads young people to believe these environments are safe spaces for exploring sensitive issues.

In this sense, the practitioner is a 'privileged witness of social reality' and there is much they can do to help young people learn, to explore their questions, and find positive responses to the challenges they face. Therein, it becomes crucial that the practitioner sees themselves as an 'educator', and that this is integral to their professional identity. It is recognised that for many of those who are in contact with young people these expectations may generate anxieties, but the case here is that engaging with challenging conversations shouldn't be seen as a choice. It is hoped this resource pack will go some way to alleviating these anxieties by supporting the widest range of practitioners in their continued professional development, particularly in relation to this most important of areas of work.

A bit more about Socrates

The philosopher Socrates lived in Ancient Greece, from 470 – 399 BC. He is famous for his Socratic Method, a form of dialogue between individuals. It is important to understand what is meant by 'dialogue': as much as individuals are involved, dialogue is social; it involves people working together. Dialogue implies, and values, cooperative endeavour, in the sense of: "we think better together". And yet, for Socrates, dialogue was also a form of argument. Whilst for

many 'argument' may be regarded negatively, as if something to avoid, for Socrates it was a revered concept, and essential in helping people to learn. Argument, in this sense, is no shouting match. It is about asking questions and trying to answer those questions through examination of reasons; first and foremost it relies on **critical thinking**.

What is critical thinking, and why is it important?

Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally, to analyse and evaluate issues in order to form a judgement. Through reasoning and understanding the logical connection between ideas critical thinkers become active learners rather than passive recipients of information.

Using the Socratic Method to facilitate critical thinking: developing a Community of Enquiry

There are several things to bear in mind in using Socratic Method to encourage critical thinking. First, you are trying to draw out ideas from those involved. In fact, Socrates used the analogy of a **midwife**[1] as it conjured up the notion of drawing out the thinking behind the arguments people make (think of a midwife delivering a baby). Initially the focus is on definitions, the meaning of the words used.

In essence, the words we use, and our understanding of them, say something about what we believe. And, if we are to make any progress in promoting critical thinking, people have to be encouraged to question their beliefs. Doing this with others, using dialogue to promote critical thinking, as Socrates advocated, implies also questioning the beliefs of others.

Identifying the reasons we have for believing the things we do is central to this methodology. This sounds like the kind of thing we do all the time, but it isn't. Often, we use **cultural theories**. These are the ideas we developed through our upbringing and cultures, which we rarely question, so much so we often don't even know we have them – we just assume these are the ways of the world.

[1] Plato's Theaetetus as midwifery (*maieutics*)

This is why dialogue is challenging; participants are *challenged* not only to identify – 'put a finger on' – their beliefs and opinions, but also consider any assumptions and underlying presuppositions these ideas might be based on.

Practically, those involved are encouraged to articulate their beliefs, but not in isolation from others. Rather the intention is that they discuss these beliefs, argue for them, and try to defend their point of view, but in a social context: ideas are made subject to enquiry: questions come from the group – the community. The aim is to create a **Community of Enquiry.**

As much as some ideas stand up to scrutiny others will struggle, contradictions will be revealed, ultimately some ideas will prove weaker than others. It's easy to imagine how this can be a challenging, perhaps even painful, experience, and one that some might prefer to avoid. To avoid this, care needs to be taken to help people deal with any anxieties they might have. Concern for this, helps inform the '**4Cs**' of Community of Enquiry.

Critical thinking sits then in a context of **Caring thinking**, taking the time to discuss also how people feel about the conversations they are involved in. This helps people take a more positive attitude to learning, in which they recognise opportunities to further their understanding, to think anew and consider the future through **Creative thinking**. Maintaining a focus on the question being considered is essential, as is establishing a sense of shared endeavour. These social and cooperative dimensions of dialogue then constitute **Collaborative thinking**. Hence:

The 4Cs of Community of Enquiry

- **Critical thinking**
- **Caring thinking**
- **Creative thinking**
- **Collaborative thinking**

The detail of the moves made when using Community of Enquiry methodology can be found in the **Community Philosophy Facilitator Handbook**: http://www.graemetiffany.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Community-Philosophy-Facilitator-Handbook.pdf

The key elements of the process are:

1. Prepare
2. Stimulate thinking
3. Set a Philosophical Agenda
4. Facilitate the dialogue
5. Reflect

Let us consider now some of the elements of this process:

Materials

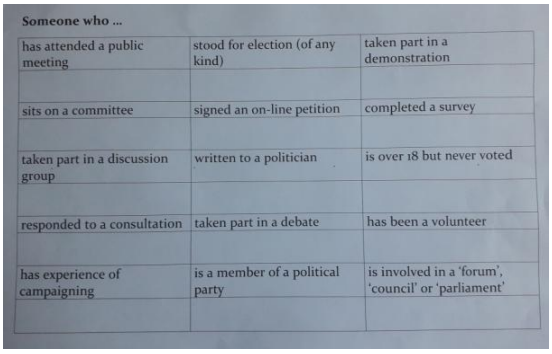
What follows are materials from the Challenging Conversations and Critical Thinking skills training courses. Some of these materials you'll recognise, others have been used in the training of other groups. All can be used in work you might do to encourage young people and wider communities to think critically about the world in which they live. The materials are only some of the many resources that could be used, and you should certainly not think of them as exhaustive or the ones you must use. Rather, think of them as examples. Even better, think about creating your own materials; you will know the groups you hope to work, so think about what will work with and for them. It will help if you listen carefully to what is being discussed on a day-to-day basis, what is happening in the community, what issues and problems exist, and what is in the media - whether on the news or on social media. All will give you ideas about the kind of things that you can use both to respond to – and initiate – 'challenging conversations'.

Establishing a thinking community

In your training you will have heard a lot about the importance of preparatory work; so often conversations turn to conflict if the ground hasn't been prepared for productive conversations and dialogue. To do this, it is important to try to establish a **thinking community**. A good way to do this is to play **warm-up games** that have been specifically designed to help people get to know one another and help them feel comfortable in asking, and answering, questions.

Here are some ideas and examples, some of which you will recognise from the work we have done:

- **Human Bingo:** participants are asked to find someone in the group who fulfils the criteria [note: just one person per category]. It's fun, get people moving around, supports engagement and helps participants become comfortable with asking, and answering, questions.



Someone who ...		
has attended a public meeting	stood for election (of any kind)	taken part in a demonstration
sits on a committee	signed an on-line petition	completed a survey
taken part in a discussion group	written to a politician	is over 18 but never voted
responded to a consultation	taken part in a debate	has been a volunteer
has experience of campaigning	is a member of a political party	is involved in a 'forum', 'council' or 'parliament'

This game was used with a group of young people as part of a citizenship education project.

- **Quizzes:** include questions that are both factual and opinion based – don't mention this initially (when it comes to participants providing answers the penny will drop). Thereafter, participants complete the final column with their judgement as to whether the question was factual (F) or opinion-based (O). Arguably, some questions are both, which makes for an interesting and thought-provoking question. By the end, the group should be much more able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

	Question	Answer	Leave blank
1	The football World Cup has recently been held in which country?		
2	Where do Yorkshire Cricket Club play in Leeds?		
3	What is the nickname of Leeds Rugby League club?		
4	Is darts a 'sport' or a 'game'?		
5	If Yorkshire was a country, it would have come 12th in the 2012 Olympics; in 2016 did it do better or worse?		
6	Will the marathon ever be run in under two hours?		
7	Should young rugby players compete on the basis of age or size?		
8	Alistair and Jonny Brownlee compete in which sport?		
9	Are there prohibitions on Muslim women playing sport?		
10	Is sport good for developing friendships?		
11	Which world famous cycle race started in Leeds in July 2013?		
12	Leeds' Nicola Adams has won two Olympic gold medals in which sport?		
13	The John Charles Centre for Sports was previously called what?		
14	Should children be banned from boxing?		
15	Should PE be given a higher priority in schools?		

This quiz was used with a diverse group of young people involved in a programme that included both dialogue groups and sporting activities.

This sets the scene for clarification of the kind of questions being asked. Fact questions can be 'fact checked'; opinion questions are better discussed and argued about, in pursuit of good reasons. These are the kind of questions you will have been taught to watch-out for, and 'catch'. In essence, they are 'philosophical' questions, as distinct from those 'scientific'. See here:

- **Easy and Hard Questions:** participants write their own 'easy' and 'hard' questions on either side of a card. Thereafter, they circulate within the group, trying to find someone they don't know, or don't know well. Having introduced themselves, one person asks the other which question (easy or hard) they would like to answer, then listens to the response. Participants then swap positions and reciprocate, then move on to someone else, and so on. At the end, ask for feedback, and re-iterate key points:

    - Having the freedom to ask any question can put people in a quandary; 'what should I ask, if I can ask anything?' There is an inevitable risk of a question upsetting someone. So, encourage participants to think about how their questions will be received – to be mindful of the importance of 'caring thinking'.
    - Questions start conversations, and this creates a positive buzz in the room.
    - By moving around, you get to know lots of people.
    - It will become apparent that different people give different answers to the same questions, that responses are often diverse. This is important learning, particularly for those with strong opinions, who may find this realisation disconcerting.
    - In sum, the intention here is to create a microcosm of a **democratic community**, where people with different viewpoints can come together to discuss those differences – in a positive, non-combative way.

Moving on

Playing games – 'thinking games' – is a great way of continuing to build a thinking community. There are a vast number to choose from, but, again, try and come up with your own.

We have already noted the '4Cs' of Critical, Creative, Collaborative, and Caring thinking. The games you choose should try to connect with as many of these as possible. Here are a few suggestions:

- **10-word sentence**

Pair up and try and create a sentence that makes sense. One person starts with the first word, their partner provides the second, the first follows on, and so on. The game is designed to encourage listening and creative thinking – without which it is difficult to continue the sentence. It relies on responsiveness – being prepared to forget what you had in mind earlier in the sentence. All these are '**dialogical virtues**'.

Swap over (let the other person start) and repeat. If it goes well, try and get the whole group involved in the creation of an even longer sentence – which encourages even greater collaboration.

- **Rhythmic clapping**

Clap a beat; after a while, ask the next person in the circle to join in, to mimic the beat. And so on, with the next person joining the clapping when they are confident to do so. Carry on until all are participating. Again, this encourages listening, responsiveness and collaboration. And it's a lot of fun.

- **Ask an object a question**

A provocative experience, but one that encourages people to think creatively, voice (and value) their thoughts, however random. Again, this can seem a little odd, but creates a license to ask questions that individuals wouldn't typically ask one another. In this sense, as is common in Community Philosophy, we are trying to create a neutral space in which people can explore ideas, rather than in face-to-face (potentially confrontational) situations.

- **Kim's thinking game**

Kim's thinking game is a variation on the well-known memory game. Select a series of objects for their obscurity, and ambiguity: their function is to stimulate thinking and conversation.

Invite individuals to look, touch, and consider the objects, and then choose one. Ask them to select a question at random from a bag; here are some suggestions for questions:

- What thoughts come to mind when you look at this?
- What words best describe how this makes you feel?
- Where do you think this started its life?
- Why do you think this was made / created?
- Who might use this?
- What sort of person might have made this?
- Can you describe this to someone who can't see (without telling them what it is)?
- Can you think of alternative uses for this?
- What if this hadn't been invented; what might people be doing differently now?
- If this had spiritual significance what would it be?
- How might this cause conflict between people?

Participants 'show' what object and what question they have selected and 'tell' their answers. Invite others to respond, in order to generate a conversation. Ask for feedback.

- **It would be wrong to …**

Participants pair up; one selects a word from a bag of verbs written on cards, the other from a bag of nouns. The words chosen are used to construct a question:

"Would it be wrong to [insert verb] a/the [insert noun]?"

Here are some suggestions:

spit on	a spider
lie to	the Queen
kill	a child
marry	a tree
steal from	a relative
tickle	yourself
criticise	a cow
eat	a dog
ignore	a teacher
hurt	a politician
bully	a police officer
insult	a baby
imprison	a criminal

There are literally thousands of games and activities, many of which you can find on the internet. *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) resources are ideally suited. Popular websites include:

https://p4c.com/ and http://www.thinkingchild.org.uk/

Further steps in the use of Community of Enquiry methodology: stimulating thinking and setting a Philosophical Agenda

Having done your preparatory work, the group will be well on its way to becoming a 'thinking community', and ready to engage in a 'Community of Enquiry'. We have noted how the presentation of a stimulus or provocation can get people thinking, generate questions, and initiate conversations. In choosing your stimulus, think about the context on which you are working: who is going to be involved? If they are community groups, what is happening in those communities? What issues have you picked up on in earlier conversations? Or is the idea just to have some fun, to encourage people to believe that exploring questions – with others – can be both interesting and pleasurable?

Here are some examples of materials that have been used as stimuli for Communities of Enquiry, and a little about the context in which they took place:

- **Articles** from newspapers and other print journalism can also be good stimuli.
- A programme that used sport and critical thinking workshops to promote community cohesion used: *How football is reframing the way we think about race* (Johnny Pitts, Guardian Journal, 16th April 2019: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/16/black-footballers-publicly-reacting-racist-abuse).
- There is also material about the similar experiences of footballers Danny Rose: "there is so much politics in football, I just can't wait to see the back of it"; and Moise Kean, who reacted to racist abuse but was subsequently told by a team mate (Leonardo Bonucci) that he was partly responsible.

The revival began with the 2018 World Cup and the way it brought a divided nation together, even if only for the summer. But it has continued, as this generation of black players has tackled racism head on. And it's necessary. They have to defend their presence in a toxic political climate.

The conversations that have emerged around Danny Rose and Raheem Sterling's comments on racism both on and off the pitch mirror the impact of the NFL player Colin Kaepernick's protests in the US, where he has been blackballed for taking a knee during the national anthem, and, more recently, Moise Kean's reaction to racism aimed at him from fans in Italy. The players' responses have been honest and raw.

These successful millionaire sports stars are speaking out against a backdrop of societal and institutional racism, and doing so with integrity. Their fame and economic power could have made them comfortable enough to turn a blind eye, but they are taking risks in speaking these uncomfortable truths. Sometimes – as with Rose and Kaepernick – it is in the form of a mere physical gesture, yet it is refreshing to see a glimpse of somebody reacting so honestly in the public sphere.

However, they can and should go further. When black players step on to a football pitch they are occupying a rare piece of sacred ground on a fault line in our societies. The sport is at the intersection of huge corporate interest and working-class communities, both black and white, that have been torn apart by neoliberal capitalism and much of the media. Footballers have unique access to these same communities via social media. When column inches are devoted to the subject of racism in football, footballers could use such platforms to draw people into discussing bigger issues, such as the Windrush scandal and the Grenfell Tower tragedy. They can highlight the connection between the hostile environment in football stadiums and the hostile environment imposed by the government towards black communities.

The notion of somebody being, say, black and Italian is no longer surprising, thanks to those players who blazed a trail for black Europeans in the 80s and 90s. This next generation of stars has the opportunity to reframe how we think about race, and leave a legacy that transcends flashy cars and lucrative endorsement contracts. Speaking out is not only now possible, it is a moral obligation.

- Similarly, a newspaper article about fears for the safety of ethnic minority and LGBT+ fans attending the 2018 football World Cup proved very successful with a mixed group of young people associated with an amateur football club.

- Community Philosophy methodologies, including Community of Enquiry, were used in a participatory research project into youth violence. Various images suggesting violence were used as a stimulus for the enquiries. See here:

- Here's the link: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/29/self-immolation-freedom-tibetan-exile-jamphel-yeshi. As in any Community of Enquiry, the facilitator can never know what question the group will settle on. In this case, the group became fascinated with the apparent lack of intervention from people in the crowd, who they judged were not assisting the young man. Indeed, they were amazed that someone could take a photograph rather than try to help. They asked how this might happen.
- Note the caption in the corner of the image. Words tend to have a seductive and powerful effect on interpreting an image, so it's interesting to present the image without the caption to see if that stimulates a different kind of conversation.

- Another group involved in the research on youth violence were presented with this **image**. Again, the substance of the question could not have been anticipated. Their interest was no such much in the two young people boxing but on the other person in the image, whom they constructed as a 'complicit observer'. This led to an enquiry into the thinking of those who appear to play this role:

- An increasingly popular topic of discussion is the impact of social media on our thinking and behaviour. This article (https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/web-giants-drive-children-to-violent-action-hwh7xzdhd) was also used in the project designed to bring different groups together to support community cohesion:

Web giants 'drive violence'

Children committing instant crimes because of social media, says top police officer

Fiona Hamilton Crime Editor
Rachel Sylvester

Social media sites are driving children to commit violence and murders "within minutes", Britain's most senior police officer has warned.

Cressida Dick, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, said that often-trivial disputes between young people were escalating into murder and stabbings at unprecedented rates. The goading of rivals on online message boards and video sites "revs people up" and normalised violence, she said.

The speed at which disputes gathered pace echoed the way in which some Islamists, including the perpetrator of the lorry attack in Nice in 2016, were radicalised within days or weeks.

A febrile online atmosphere was among factors responsible for rising knife crime. Also to blame were drug-dealing, absent fathers and socio-economics, Ms Dick said.

Violence is on the increase across the country and yesterday a 36-year-old woman became the tenth person to be stabbed to death in London in 17 days.

Ms Dick, 57, who started work as the Met's first female leader nearly a year ago, has made the tackling of violent crime a central part of her agenda. A key plan is to increase use of stop and search, which was reduced by Theresa May during her time as home secretary.

In a wide-ranging interview with *The Times*, Ms Dick:

- Promised not to be cowed by political correctness in her efforts to reduce violence, particularly knife crime, after 13 murders in just over two weeks in the capital this month.
- Announced a new task force with about 100 officers focused on violent crime. There are 600 officers raising awareness in schools as the police treat violence as a public health issue.
- Called on recreational users of drugs to acknowledge the "fear and misery" they were causing, with much of knife crime linked to street dealing.

Fatal stabbings in England and Wales are at their highest level since 2010-11. There were 285 homicides involving a knife or other sharp instrument in the year to March, data from the Office for National Statistics shows.

Ms Dick said that social media companies, which have been criticised for their response to prolific terrorist propaganda and online paedophile material, needed to take down content that stoked

Continued on page 2, col 3

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Knife crime

violence. "There's definitely something about the impact of social media in terms of people being able to go from slightly angry with each other to 'fight' very quickly," she said.

She said that gangs who "posture on social media", including rap videos in which they goaded rivals, glamorised violence. "It makes [violence] faster, it makes it harder for people to cool down. I'm sure it does rev people up."

This month the family of Miriam Moustafa, 18, who died after she was attacked in Nottingham by ten girls, said that the attack might have taken place because she was mistaken for an Instagram user who had been goading the gang.

Detectives in London have warned that online disputes on sites such as YouTube have resulted in real-world violence. Google, the owner of YouTube, and Facebook have been criticised for failing to take down extremist material. The European Commission warned internet companies this month to remove such material within an hour of being notified — or face legislation forcing them to do so.

Ms Dick said it was shocking that young black men were ten times more likely to be killed but "it is absolutely as much about socioeconomic factors as anything else". Perpetrators and victims of knife crime were often excluded from school and had "something pretty ghastly happen" to them earlier in life.

Ms Dick said it was beyond her remit to comment on social policy but acknowledged that the phenomenon of absent fathers was a "challenge" as male role models were important. Many young men involved in crime were "looking to be loved".

Stop-and-search peaked in England and Wales in 2008-09 when more than 1.5 million were carried out, but use of the tactic fell by up to two thirds after Theresa May, as home secretary, ordered a reduction. It stemmed from concerns that the tactic was discriminating against ethnic minorities. Ms Dick said that it was an important strategy if it was intelligence-led. "We will be out on the streets more; stop and search is likely to go on going up," she said.

Ms Dick's first year has included four terrorist attacks, a string of thwarted plots, the Grenfell Tower fire disaster and the recent nerve agent poisoning in Salisbury. She said that it was worth considering whether Prevent, the government's deradicalisation programme, should be made compulsory in some cases. She also expressed concern about segregation, which leads to problems including radicalisation.

Knife crime, pages 14-15
Saturday Interview, pages 36-37
Leading article, page 29

The Times, 31st March 2018

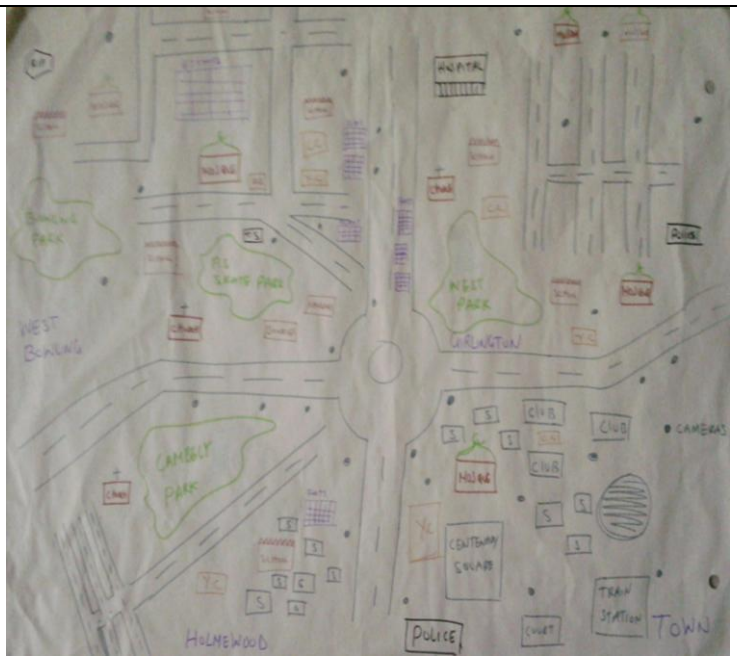
- Even a **tweet** can be used as a stimulus. It's also possible to use the image on a stand-alone basis. Here, young people decided to explore the question: "Is migration a problem?"

- Watching a **film** with a group can be a great stimulus for discussion.
- The award-winning film *The Class* is about school life in multi-ethnic Paris, and is referred to in a letter to the press in response to a series of articles about radicalisation:

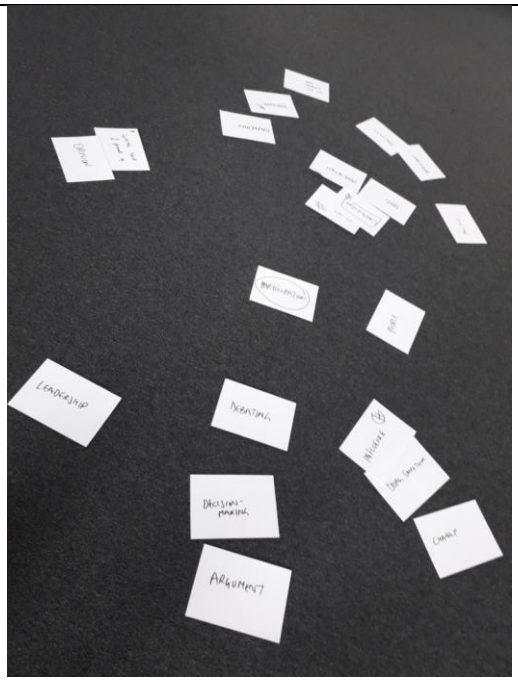
> *The Class gives clues about how a terrorist can be formed. In the film a Malian boy, Souleymane, gets into a fight with his teacher. Souleymane has to attend a disciplinary hearing with his mother. His mother is very apologetic. However, the school expels him and he returns to Mali. We don't learn what happens to Souleymane. Whether young men turn to violence or not, depends a lot on how they are treated by schools and other institutions.*
>
> Shouvik Datta, Bromley, Kent. Letters, The Independent on Sunday, 22 November 2015. https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/ios-letters-emails-and-online-postings-22-november-2015-a6743481.html

- **Venn diagrams** are great for provoking thinking about similarities and differences, as here with three images of 'crowds'. Prompted questions can also be used: "what might these three groups have in common; what questions would you ask the people in the pictures (and how might they respond)? If these pictures were on social media how might they be interpreted?"

- **Community mapping** encourages reflection on the areas in which people live and work. Social mapping as part of this can help capture social phenomena like safety and crime, and helps people map the geography of their feelings. The maps can then be used generate questions which can be used for discussion and enquiry.



- **Concept maps** also help explore meanings. The word the group is interested in is written on a card and placed on the floor. Participants are asked to come up with other words they think are useful in understanding the central concept. These are written on further cards and placed in proximity to the central concept: closer or further away depending on how significant they are. Cards can be grouped, as appropriate. The cards are moved, or even eliminated, as conclusions are drawn from the conversation. Here the central concept is 'participation':



- A preparatory exercise may be necessary, for example **matching words with definitions** e.g. cohesion, extremism, democracy, liberty, tolerance, faith, diversity, radical. Write the words and the definitions on cards and ask the group to pair them up. Many words will have multiple meanings (sometimes referred to as 'floating concepts') and this provides a further stimulus for conversation.

- You can be as creative as you like; here, young people involved in a football club were asked: "What does a shoe say about a person?" They selected from a range of football boots and used art materials to illustrate their answers to the question, and the reasoning behind these answers. Simpler questions, such as 'Who might wear this?', can act as prompts.

- You might want to encourage thinking about specific issues. Exploring 'Fake News' is topical and interesting, especially for young people. An 'April Fool' in a newspaper about a polar bear spotted on a Scottish island proved fun: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/03/31/polar-bears-spotted-scotland-animals-flee-melting-arctic-ice/. The date was removed so it wasn't obvious it was an April Fool. The young people were actively encouraged to use their smart phones for research. A second article about a polar bear drifting 400 miles on an ice sheet was added to the activity: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/23/air-bear-flight-russian-arctic-returns-polar-bear-drifted-400/. This was true. In combination, the thorny issue of the nature of truth, and how it might be assessed (evidence, reason etc.) can be addressed.

- Keeping a **focus on language** supports critical thinking, and can generate questions for a Community of Enquiry. Here, an article: *The meaning of environmental words matters in the age of 'fake news'* (Jessica Blythe, Christine Daigle, Julia Baird, The Conversation, January 10, 2019: http://theconversation.com/the-meaning-of-environmental-words-matters-in-the-age-of-fake-news-106050) contains a reference to "a recent report

commissioned by the United Kingdom for policy-makers [that] presents climate migration as a positive 'transformational' strategy that will be an extremely effective way to build long-term resilience." Set in contrast with the view that "forced migration can be devastating for climate refugees" groups examining these reports as part of a critical thinking activity recognised the need to consider the meaning and values associated with words.

Facilitating the dialogue

- Having prepared and stimulated the thinking of the group, and set a Philosophical Agenda, it is time to facilitate the dialogue. Again, the key resource is the **Community Philosophy Facilitator Handbook**. The handbook sets out the role of the facilitator, provides questions useful for facilitation, and reiterates the value of philosophical concepts, questions and moves.

Reflection, reviewing and evaluation

- All work designed to encourage, support and advance critical thinking (including the use of Community of Enquiry methodologies) benefits from time spent reflecting on that work.
- A wide variety of reviewing techniques and evaluation processes can be used. In fact, many of the thinking-based methods used in critical thinking and Community Philosophy can also be used to review the work done. Here are a couple of staples:
- **H-diagrams** are a simple means to evaluate:

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">What was good about it?

1.

2.

3.</td><td>Please tell us about your experience of …</td><td rowspan="2">What was bad about it?

1.

2.

3.</td></tr>
<tr><td>What recommendations would you make for improvement?
1.
2.
3.</td></tr>
</table>

- The rationale here is that people think better about their experiences and future-oriented questions (such, as 'how can things be improved?') when they do so sequentially, i.e. they think first about what was good and bad *before* speculating on suggestions for improvements. Working this way generates material that helps inform this speculation (which is hampered if it sits in isolation).
- The H-diagram can also be used as a small group activity. Working on it together exposes participants to one another's opinions, which helps nourish thinking, particularly about the reasons that lie behind these judgements. Grouping similar comments can also help.
- Writing up the responses can create a useful resource for future thinking and provide tangible evidence that people's participation is acknowledged.

- '**PMI**' is perhaps even simpler, where PMI stands for Plus, Minus and Interesting. The latter provides an opportunity for participants to articulate what interested them without having to necessarily value it.

Community Philosophy: References

Early project work

- Tiffany, G. *Youthwork as an Educational Process: Freire for Young Adults*, Adults Learning (England), v6, n2, pp 64-66, October 1994: Download at: http://www.graemetiffany.co.uk/?page_id=1289
- Graeme Tiffany, *Community Philosophy: a project report*, published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 13 November 2009: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/community-philosophy-project-report
- Sue Porter and Chris Seeley, *Promoting Intergenerational Understanding through Community Philosophy*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 30 October 2008: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/promoting-intergenerational-understanding-through-community-philosophy

Reflections on this work

- Graeme Tiffany, *Community Philosophy: a Transformational Youth Work Practice?* https://journals.openedition.org/sejed/6650
- Community Philosophy: Interview with Graeme Tiffany, *The Public Life of the Mind*: https://www.thepubliclifeofthemind.co.uk/graeme-tiffany

Background and Resources

- Community Philosophy: https://www.graemetiffany.co.uk/?page_id=1289

Wider work in Community Philosophy

- Connected Communities: Philosophical Communities: https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/project-reports-and-reviews/connected-communities/philosophical-communities/

Video

- Connected Communities: Philosophical Communities playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLx1iI_bKDuXFZdUygMZRkAZQFLUmYcSrs
- Graeme Tiffany on Community Philosophy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1NpI2MLq58
- Community Philosophy, by Paul Doran: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuX5CjMNaCs

Broadly, just search for 'Community Philosophy'.

Books

- *Philosophy and Community: Theories, Practices and Possibilities*, Editor(s): Amanda Fulford, Grace Lockrobin, Richard Smith, Bloomsbury, 9th January 2020: https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/philosophy-education-and-community-9781350073425/
- You'll find other book references in the **Community Philosophy Facilitator Handbook**

Social Media

- Facebook: UK Community Philosophy Network: https://www.facebook.com/groups/communityphilosophynetwork
- Twitter: #communityphilosophy

Community Philosophy as a research methodology

- Presentation to LARIA (Community Philosophy as a research methodology: https://laria.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/92-LARIA-News-Summer-20101.pdf
- Touch Project on street violence: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsNR6zQU-Vk&t=22s

Other

- Philosophy Walks: https://www.graemetiffany.co.uk/?page_id=1485

Related resources

- Challenging Conversations: Understanding the drivers that may lead young people to commit hate crime, Voluntary Action Leeds, June 2017: file:///C:/Users/graem/Documents/Street%20Games/Leeds%20VAL%20Challenging%20conversations%20report%20[1].pdf
- Useful material on 'Democratic and Cultural Competencies': *Competences for Democratic Culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies*: https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07

A suggestion: keep these resources in a file and add to them as you practice and progress in using them.

Good luck!