

# National Dialogues

## **Living in uncertainty (or a more specific title)**

Script for a Timeout-dialogue  
Duration 120 min, remotely

**TIMEOUT**

**KANSALLISET  
DIALOGIT**

## Guidelines for using the script

- Use the script to plan your discussion in advance.
- You can use the cards for facilitating a discussion for support: <https://www.timeoutdialogue.fi/tool/cards-for-facilitating-a-discussion/>
- The script is intended to support the facilitation of the discussion and it does not need to be distributed to the participants. You can print a copy of the script for yourself after adapting it to your needs.
- The expressions used in the script are intended as examples. We hope that you will adapt them to your discussion topic and your individual way of speaking.
- The times indicated in the script are approximate, intended to give you an idea of how much time you should roughly spend on each step. Except for the start time and end time, the times shown in the script are not intended to be followed exactly as indicated.
- You can utilize your own possible group facilitation skills, or other practices to support the discussion and its participants.
- Before beginning your discussion, go through how you will be assigning turns to speak, how to use the microphone and camera during the discussion, other possible technical details and when to have breaks. It is usually helpful for the participants if you both ask you questions out loud and write them in the chat.

# Living in uncertainty

## HOW TO READ THE SCRIPT:

On the right there are guidelines for the facilitator:

Normal font – example script you can follow

*Cursive – instructions for the facilitator*

**Bold – edit as necessary**

Min	Part	Time
15	<b>Start, ground rules, introductions, introducing the topic</b>	
85	The discussion (including a break)	
5	Summarizing the discussion individually	
10	Quick recap, sharing insights	
5	Thanking the participants, the end	

In total 120 min

## Start

Welcome to a Timeout-dialogue. Our topic for today is **“What does living in uncertainty mean to us?”**

My name is xxx and I will facilitate the discussion today. *Tell the participants how you will be assigning turns to speak.*

We are here today to have a dialogue. The key is to build a deeper understanding of the topic at hand, and the perspectives we all have on that topic.

Let’s try to share our own thoughts and experiences confidentially. We don’t have to agree. But let’s try to understand the matter at hand and each other better. In the discussion, we don’t have to make decisions or resolve anything. We can talk in peace.

The idea is not to win the debate, decide on the best perspective, or to solve anything. At the end we will take a few minutes to reflect on insights we may have gained during the discussion.

XX will serve as the record-keeper, writing down your comments in as much detail as possible, but without mentioning anyone’s name. The records will be used to prepare a summary of the discussions.

We will start by introducing ourselves. You can introduce yourself with your first name and tell us how it feels to participate in this dialogue?

5 min

## Ground rules for a constructive discussion

1. Listen to the others, do not interrupt or start additional discussions.
2. Relate what you say to what the others have said and use everyday language.
3. Tell about your own experience.
4. Talk to the others directly and ask them about their views.
5. Be present and respect the others and the confidentiality of the discussion.
6. Find the hidden and bring together. Give space for incompleteness and boldly deal with emerging conflicts and find issues that have gone unnoticed

We use the Rules of constructive dialogue in the discussion, now let's briefly go through them...

*The facilitator explains the six rules that can be found on the left.*

1. Try to listen to the other participants so that you'll understand what they're trying to say, not just to find an opening for you to interject.
2. Also try to relate to the thoughts expressed by the other participants.
3. When you listen to each other, you will have various experiences in that moment (thoughts, emotions, observations, memories, ideas about the future). If you express these out loud, we will probably reach a deeper level in our discussion and find angles that have not been previously explored.
4. You can request a turn to speak or ask a question by raising your hand (or remotely by typing PVP in the chat window). I will assign turns to speak.
5. Do not react to disruptions during the discussion (such as notifications or social media during a remote discussion). Let's focus fully on each other.
6. Let's give space for incompleteness and find hidden issues that may not be usually talked about.

Do we all commit to these rules together?

Great, let's continue!

**5 min**

# Living in uncertainty

Min Part

Time

## 15 Start, ground rules, introductions, introducing the topic

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In total 120 min

*You can edit the questions to better suit your organization or group.*

*You can also use a current article, the news, research, song or other material related to the topic and use it to stimulate the conversation: "What thoughts arose from this text / song?" After this, it may be easier to share your own experiences.*

## Introducing the topic

The theme for our dialogue today is what living in uncertainty means to us.

We are currently living in a time when crises follow each other. Coronavirus, Russia's attack on Ukraine, the energy crisis, inflation, climate change, biodiversity loss, the health and social services reform, concern over young people and older people. In the midst of all of this, we go to work, we live our everyday lives, children are born and life goes on. However, uncertainty has become a prevailing factor in our lives that affects us all in one way or another.

**Now I ask you, what or what kind of things, situations or phenomena produce uncertainty in your life?**

Take a moment to think about this, you can write down thoughts and reflections for yourself. Let's spend a few minutes on this and then start a joint discussion based on this. You can share what you want, you don't have to tell everything if you don't want to.

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→ Write down the names of the participants in your group and every time they take a turn to speak, draw a line by their name. This way, you can keep score easily on who is speaking and how much.

→ Tell the participants when the discussion will be vocal and when using the chat function. It is wise to separate these two so that you do not have two ongoing discussions at the same time.

## The discussion

Now it would be great to hear what you wrote down. Who would like to go first?

...And what did the rest of you write down, something similar or completely different?

→ You can approach someone directly and ask them if it's hard to get the conversation started.

→ At this point, ask everyone for their thoughts, even if they don't ask to speak.

→ Guide the participants to talk about their own experience, but also remind them that you don't have to share everything if you don't want to

→ If necessary, you can ask the participants to keep their speeches concise so that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the discussion.

Thank you. We have now raised at least a few of the main themes in the discussion, such as: summarize the themes raised in the discussion so far

15 min

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→ You can address difficult situations by saying it out loud. You do not need to resolve any possible problems in this discussion, but it might be good that they are made visible. If you encounter a tough situation you can say it out loud and have a short break and then continue forwards.

→ If necessary, remind the participants of the rules of constructive dialogue to which everyone has committed. Respect also those, who are not present.

→ Guide the participants to join the previous speaker and talk more about themselves than others.

→ Ask especially those who haven't talked much yet

→ If necessary, you can have a pair discussion after the question so that the participants have the opportunity to structure their thoughts.

## The discussion continues

Thank you for sharing. Let's continue the discussion with the help of these experiences and reflections. I have a few questions for you to help us continue the conversation.

*Choose from these questions the most suitable for your discussion. You can also modify the questions to better suit your target group or organization.*

- How does it feel to discuss this topic together?
- What helps to tolerate uncertainty? What helps you cope in the midst of uncertainty?
- What or who support you in the midst of uncertainty?
- How have you supported others who live in the midst of uncertainty?
- When talking about this topic, what is a point of view that is not often talked about, but which would be important and essential to mention?
- What brings you hope? What helps to build your own and the shared future?

Questions for the facilitator to deepen the discussion:

- Why do you think these things came to your mind?
- What kind of experiences or situations have influenced what you think about these things?

**50 min**

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## Summarizing the discussion individually

Thank you for the good and constructive discussion! You have shared your experiences regarding, for example...

→ *Summarize shortly for the participants which themes have been discussed*

Next, we write what insights, feelings or thoughts emerged from our conversation.

In the chat, please write down a few insights, feelings or thoughts that you remembered from the discussion.

You have a few minutes to do this. Choose **one** of them that you want to share here together.

5 min

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## Sharing insights

Now I ask that, in one sentence, each of you share one insight, feeling, or thought that you got from this conversation or topic.

Let's start with you, for example...

→ *Choose a person who is likely to be ready to share their own insight to start.*

→ *You don't have to share everything if you don't want to.*

Thank you. I want to ask you where and who should continue this discussion?

10 min

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## Thanking the participants

How did this discussion and topic feel?

What kind of atmosphere did you get from the joint conversation?

**I would like to briefly ask you to fill out the feedback form, it only takes a moment.** I'll collect the feedback forms. They help us to develop the National Dialogues.

Now it's time to end our conversation. Thank you!

If you wish, you can communicate your participation in this discussion, for example, on social media. For example, you can use the hashtags #NationalDialogues #LivingInUncertainty.

The conversation was confidential, so don't pass on what others said without permission. You can share your own thoughts as well as general themes that came up in the conversation.

Thanks for the interesting discussion! I hope you will continue the conversation that has now started.

## What happens next?

The operative core group receives the notes of the dialogues, ensuring that all dialogue organisers have provided summaries/notes of their dialogues.

Submission of the entries for the joint compilation increases the impact of the dialogues, as they thus affect the content of the national summary of that year and, through this, all those development projects and actors that intend to utilise the summary to support their work.

The team that compiles the notes operating in connection with the operative core group analyses the notes and finalise the summary.

## To the organiser:

### Thank you for organising a dialogue!

Thank you for organizing this Timeout-discussion as part of the National Dialogues. I hope it was a good experience for you as well as for the participants. As a result of the National Dialogues, society's dialogue competence increases with the organizers and participants of the discussions.

Dialogue is an opportunity to deepen understanding, learn the skills of a more constructive conversation, stop to listen to the experiences of others and get to share your own, even unprepared, thoughts with others.

However, a dialogue is not a miracle. Even if one dialogue may be very successful, sometimes you notice that more discussion is needed. That is also an important realization. Sometimes it takes time to build trust. So if you felt that more discussion was needed or about some other topic, it's good to set aside time for that.

You can get help with the planning and execution of the discussion, for example, from the Timeout Foundations website <https://www.timeoutdialogue.fi/>