Connective conversations

A quick guide for conversations about things that matter

Conversations are one way we connect with people in our communities, share what matters to us and understand what matters to others. These tips can help make those conversations more open and constructive.

1. Connect

- Connect as people first. Share a little about who you are and why you care.
- Feelings before facts. People may forget the details, but they often remember how you made them feel.
- Look for common ground – something you both care about or value.

2. Listen to understand

- Ask open questions: *"Can you tell me more?"*
- Show that you've heard them: *"It sounds like you feel ___ because ___."*
- You can understand someone's point of view without agreeing with it.

3. Know yourself

- Think about what you believe, why you care and what might trigger a strong reaction for you.
- Speak from your own experience using "I" statements.
- Try: *"I've noticed…" "I feel…" "What matters to me is…"*

4. Be safe and know when to walk away

- When you disagree, try to *"stay curious, not furious".*
- If someone becomes uncomfortable, aggressive or disrespectful, it's okay to end it.
- You might say: *"Let's agree to disagree"* or *"I'm happy to talk about this another time."*

5. Focus on hope and action

- Pair problems with hope and action. What could make things better?
- Remind people that others care too.
- Share examples of things that have changed for the better.