

Participating in Open Space

What is Open Space?

A conversation that you, the participants, design, run and report on, with a little help from us, the facilitators.

Your own experience and knowledge will inform the agenda. We'll set up the space, but you will decide what you talk about and when.



Open space event in Bristol Photo: Ed Mitchell

How it works

You'll be asked if you want to propose a topic of conversation relevant to the theme of the Open Space.

Proposing a conversation commits you to hosting that group. More than one conversation will run in parallel.

People will sign up to your topic. You'll come together to have the conversation and take notes that will **make up a report** on the discussion. If no-one signs up, use the time for some thinking and share your thoughts in a report. Alternatively join in another conversation that appeals to you.

When your session is over you'll **choose another conversation** to go to and repeat the steps above.

During the process and afterwards, you'll be able to **read the reports** from other discussions. And you'll have the **time to talk about it** with the people involved.

If you find yourself in a discussion that's not useful, you could address this or move on to another discussion.

There's no obligation to go to any of the formal conversations – relax and have a cuppa and a chat around the refreshments table.

The Law of Two Feet: If you're not learning or contributing, move on

The conversations

The proposer of a conversation isn't obliged to run it. Anyone in the group can. The proposer just acts as a **host**.

Someone needs to fill in a **report form** while the discussion is happening and put it up on the **News Wall** afterwards. You will get a copy of all the reports by the end of the Open Space (or soon after).

It would also help if someone kept an eye on the **finishing time**. If your conversation is still going at the finishing time, feel free to continue it but please make way for any other conversation scheduled to start in that space.

Rhizome is a co-operative of experienced facilitators, trainers and mediators. We work with co-ops, and campaigning and community groups across the UK, and with those national organisations that support activism and participation in all its forms.

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