

CHALK TALK

The purpose of a chalk talk is a way to promote discussion and awareness of issues and perspectives – silently. A chalk talk is also an excellent way to promote awareness of patterns and problems and to ensure that all voices are heard.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Formulate an important, open-ended question that will provoke comments and responses.
2. Provide plenty of chart paper and colored pencils and arrange a good space for participants to write and respond. Write the question or topic in the middle of the paper in bold marker.
3. Explain the chalk talk protocol and answer any participant questions.
 - Participants respond in writing to the topic or question.
 - They write down what they are wondering or thinking about the topic/question.
 - They can write a question or add a comment to other participant's comments.
 - Encourage them to draw a line connecting their comment or question to a similar one.
4. Set-up norms for the chalk talk: This technique only works if everyone is writing and responding throughout the designated time period. Make it clear that everyone is responsible for writing, reading other people's comments, and responding. There should be no talking and no one should sit down until the time period is over. Opinions must be freely expressed and honored, and no personal attacks are allowed.
5. Allow 10–20 minutes for the chalk talk. As facilitator, it's helpful to walk around and read, and gently point participants to interesting comments. All writing and responding is done in silence.
6. Search for patterns. In pairs, participants should read through all the postings and search for patterns and themes (or "notice and wonder"). This part takes about 5 minutes.
7. Whole-group share: Pairs should report out patterns and themes, round-robin style, until all perceptions are shared.
8. Process debrief: What was the experience like of "talking" silently?

