

Boderland Dialogues

(Add your conversation topic)

Draft script for the conversation
Duration 120 min

Instructions for using the script

- Plan the dialogue in advance based on the script.
- You can also use discussion cards to support the script and guidance: <https://www.sitra.fi/en/cases/note-cards-leading-discussion/>
- The script is intended to support the dialogue; it does not need to be shared with the participants. It is a good idea to print out the script for yourself after editing it.
- The wording in the script is just an example. Edit it to suit the topic of the dialogue, the target group and your own style.
- The times are approximate. They are intended to give an idea of how much time should be spent on each stage. There is no need to follow the times exactly, except for the start and end times.
- You can draw on your own group facilitation skills and use proven methods to support the conversation and the participants as needed.
- Agree in advance who will take notes during the dialogue. It is important to record the entire conversation as accurately as possible. The note-taker does not need to summarise the notes, but should record as accurately as possible what was said during the conversation. The script can also help the note-taker to prepare.

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READING INSTRUCTIONS:

On the right, lyrics and guidance tips for the instructor:

Basic font - say, for example, like this

Italic font - help for the instructor in conversation

Bold: Change as necessary

Minutes	Section
15	Start, introductions, rules of the game, getting in the mood
85	Group discussion (incl. break)
5	Discussion outcome: writing
10	Discussion outcome: sharing
5	Thank you, closing

Total 120 min

Introduction (1/2)

Welcome to the Borderland Dialogue on the topic of “Solidarity and a sense of security in Imatra / Vuoksenniska / Our knitting club / Our library.”

The Borderland Dialogues are part of the autumn National Dialogues on Sisu and Borderland Dialogues series. Similar Borderland Dialogues are being held in different parts of Finland and in other countries bordering Russia, such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.

The aim of the Borderland Dialogues is to find new ways to strengthen societal resilience and societal cohesion.

I am XX and I am **acting as a facilitator/instructor/leader** in this dialogue and will ensure that we have as equal a conversation as possible, so that everyone has the opportunity to participate. In practice, this means, for example, that if you talk over each other or give monologues, I will interrupt you. Is this ok to everyone?

Dialogue is a special way of talking that focuses on deepening our understanding of the topic, each other and ourselves. The aim is not to win or decide on the best point of view, but to focus on understanding.

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Introduction (2/2)

During the dialogue, there may be different views on the topic. This is fine, as we are not seeking unanimity. The conversation does not need to result in decisions or solutions, but these may emerge.

XX will act as the note-taker. The conversation will be recorded in such a way that it does not reveal who participated in the dialogue. The recording will be used as material for a summary, as part of the National Dialogues on Sisu, and will be published on the National Dialogues website. Individual participants cannot be identified from the summary.

We have **two** hours. Let's start with an introduction and a conversation in pairs. Most of the time will be spent on a joint conversation, followed by a brief summary. We will finish at xx.xx.

5 min

Rules for constructive discussion

1. **Listen** to others, do not interrupt or start side conversations.
2. **Join** in with what others are saying and use everyday language.
3. **Share** your own experiences.
4. **Address** others directly and ask for their views.
5. **Be present and respect** others and the atmosphere of trust.
6. **Seek and gather.** Work boldly to resolve conflicts that arise and seek out hidden issues.

Rules and trust (1/2)

The rules of constructive conversation will be used in the dialogue, so let's go through them now. *You can print out a few copies and place them in the middle of the circle.*

1. Try to listen in such a way that you understand what the other person is trying to say, rather than looking for an opportunity to interject with your own comment.
2. Try to connect with what others are saying and thinking.
3. As you listen to each other, you will have different experiences (thoughts, feelings, observations, memories, imagining the future). Share these aloud so that we can probably get deeper and have a conversation that has not already been had.
4. You can ask to speak or address others directly and ask questions. I will start by giving you the floor.
5. Let's focus on the present moment. Please do not look at your phones or laptops during the dialogue. Let's speak respectfully about other people, even if we disagree with them.
6. The purpose of dialogue is to create a situation where we can also explore emerging conflicts. We do not have to agree on everything. Different perspectives enrich the discussion and help us to better understand the topic of dialogue.

Rules for constructive discussion

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6. **Seek and gather.** Be bold in addressing conflicts that arise and seek out hidden issues.

Rules and trust (1/2)

Let us now agree on the confidentiality of the conversation. It is my hope that you will continue the dialogue that is now beginning after this event, and I hope that you will continue it in such a way that no individual participant can be identified from the comments or quotations. Is this acceptable to everyone?

Please acknowledge this.

5 min

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Introductions

Let's start with a brief round of introductions. You can introduce yourself by your first name and explain why you want to participate in this dialogue.

(*You can say:* This will only take a moment, so we can have a proper discussion on the actual topic.)

Let's start here, please.

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Getting into the discussion

Let's get started by getting into the mood with the following video/music/text.

You can use this text, for example, to get into the mood:
Finnish society is being tested in new ways. Russia's military actions are undermining many people's sense of security, conflicts between different groups and individuals are intensifying, and misinformation about events and issues is spreading. We need different actors to keep our society crisis-resistant and at the same time compassionate.

The aim of the Borderland Dialogues is to find new ways to strengthen societal resilience and societal cohesion.

You can also use a topical article, news item, research paper, song or other material related to the topic that is suitable for your group of participants to stimulate conversation. Or you can edit the text to suit your group of participants.

2 min

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Getting into the dialogue - pair conversation

Divide the group into pairs/threes. Clearly state who is paired with whom. If there are only three people in the group, you can discuss the initial ideas with the whole group. You can start the warm-up without any materials, directly with pair work.

Start the dialogue with pair/triplet conversations.

Starting question: Tell your partner about a personal experience – a thought, feeling or image – that was aroused by the introduction and relates to the cohesion or sense of security in your organisation or area.

Alternative starting question: Tell your partner about a recent personal experience or situation that is in some way related to the cohesion or sense of security in your organisation or area.

Make sure that both of you get a chance to speak.

You have three minutes for this. You may begin... Now it's time to finish.

5 min

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Joint conversation (1/2)

Now I want to hear what you talked about with your partner and what thoughts came up.

Tell us what you talked about and what thoughts came to mind. What other experiences came up? The couple who is ready can start.

At this point, it is a good idea to ask each participant a question to show that everyone's participation in the dialogue is important.

After the pairs have finished, continue the conversation together: Now that you have listened to each other, what thoughts/feelings and possible questions have come up?

Try to pick up on the topics that come up in the conversation and formulate possible additional questions based on the issues raised.

You can also summarise some of the themes that have emerged: You raised at least the following issues: xx, xx and xx

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Joint conversation (2/2)

Try to pick up on topics that come up in the conversation. Use them to formulate additional questions. It is good to let the dialogue proceed at its own pace and avoid turning it into an interview.

At an appropriate stage, move on to discussing the organisation and your own role, as well as what kind of support is needed to strengthen the activities.

Additional questions:

- **What role do you see for your organisation or yourself in this situation?**
- **What kind of support do you need to strengthen your own activities?**

After asking the question, use individual reflection or pair work if necessary.

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Outcome of the conversation: writing

The dialogue is coming to an end. I would like to hear what issues, feelings or thoughts our dialogue has raised.

Ask everyone to write on the piece of paper that you placed under their chair with a pen before the conversation began.

Working individually, write down 1-3 thoughts or issues from the dialogue that are somehow significant or central to you in complete sentences. We will collect these to support the notes so that no individual can be identified. You have three minutes, starting now.

The three minutes are up.

5 min

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Outcome of the conversationon: sharing

Ask each person to take turns reading a sentence they have written.

Let's start with you. What has been significant in this dialogue?

If there is time, ask a few participants to describe the conversation in their own words.

Finally, let's go over what this dialogue has been like for you. Your experiences may vary greatly. Anyone who is ready can start.

10 min

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Thank you and closing remarks

If you wish, you can share your participation in this dialogue on social media, for example. You can use the hashtags #BoderlandDialogues and #NationalDialogues

The dialogue was confidential, so please do not share what others said without their permission. You can share your own thoughts and feelings, as well as general themes that came up in the conversation.

Thank you for participating in the dialogue

5 min

Thank you to the organiser and for sending the notes

Thank you for organising Boderland Dialogues! We hope you found the experience rewarding!

Please submit your notes as soon as possible using the reporting form on the event page.
[You can also find the form here.](#)

We will read and analyse all the notes as one large dialogue and use them to compile a summary as part of the Sisu summary of the National Dialogues. The summary will be published in early 2026.