

Places to talk

**Practical help in running a
Places to talk session**

April 2022



About Places to Talk

The Places to Talk project is helping to bring people together to talk about their experiences of living through the Covid-19 pandemic and to share their hopes for the future. We want to help people across Cumbria to come together and have a “place to talk”.

Who's it for?

If you're part of a club or a group in Cumbria and you think that your group might be interested in sharing and listening to each other's stories of the pandemic, then this project is for you.

You might be a member of youth club, sports group, or a social club like a knit and natter project, or a Book Club. Or you might be a café that has a weekly pensioners' lunch, or a business that would like to bring your employees together to talk.

What's involved?

We've made a short 20-minute video and some clips that tell different people from Cumbria's stories about the pandemic.

This booklet is to help you think about how to hold the session and to point you to other sources of support if people need it.

If you need a bit of financial help to hold your session to do things like to cover room hire for your group, or for tea and cake then we can help with that too.

After the session we will ask you to give us some feedback to let us know how things went.

When are the sessions running?

We want you to hold your session during 2022.

Useful contacts

General information

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria is our delivery partner for this project and you can contact Dani on info@cumbriaaction.org.uk or telephone 01768 425666

The videos

You can play the videos from the project online from here

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/placestotalk/>

If you have internet connectivity issues and would like a DVD or USB pen drive to use with your group, please contact Dani at info@cumbriaaction.org.uk or telephone 01768 425666.

All the videos will have text captions included.



Getting financial help

If you need some financial help to run a session you can apply for a financial award using this application form: <https://forms.office.com/r/YWAn1KAMuC>

After you have run your session you can claim for your award using this claim form: <https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/places-to-talk-claim-form>

Please note: All claims to be submitted within 4 weeks of running a session and by 1st March 2023 latest. Financial awards must be used for the purposes of running a 'Places to talk' session.

If you have any problems filling out the forms contact Dani at ACTion with Communities in Cumbria by email Info@cumbriaaction.org.uk or phone 01768 425666.

Supporting you to run a session

The rest of this booklet gives you some tips to help your session run well and some sources of further information to support any issues that might be raised by the Places to Talk session.

An option that you could take is to suggest people from your group watch the videos at home, with friends and family. You then you run a discussion at your next group session. This will work if you do not have the technology to show the film. We can still offer you support to run the discussion this way too.

Top tips if you are running a session

It's great that you will be running a Places to Talk session; thanks so much for being involved. We've put together a list of tips that can help you when you run your session.

You've got all the skills you need to do this!

Remember that listening to people's stories doesn't require any special skills. It's just about listening and giving everyone the opportunity to speak (if they want to).

How to make people feel comfortable

People usually respond best to things when they feel comfortable, safe and amongst friends.

If you're meeting inside making sure that the room is at the right temperature and is well ventilated. If your group works best when you go for a walk or meet outside, then you might want to keep to your usual routine. If you are meeting inside, make sure there are enough chairs for everyone; that the group know where the toilets are; and remember to make a fire safety announcement at the start of your session.



Think about how you sit together. Depending on how many people are coming to the session, all sitting in a big group might be a bit overwhelming for some people. If you have the space and furniture, they might prefer to sit in smaller groups around tables, or to sit in small rows or circles.

Think about the size and dynamics of the group

Groups are of different sizes and work in different ways. Some groups might be noisy and lively, and others might be smaller and quieter. The same thing applies to the people in your group.

If you're a big group, you might want to split down into smaller groups to watch the film – this would help people who are quieter to engage and chat. Some people also don't feel comfortable sharing their thoughts with a roomful of people so smaller groups may be best. You know your group, so choose what you know works for you.

Testing the technology

It's a good idea to test any technology that you are using before the session starts.

If you're using the internet to stream the film, make sure you can access and play the film online. It can be a good idea to check that you've got the Wi-Fi password, that you have the right leads and power cables and that your laptop or DVD player works. If you're playing the film on a DVD player, you might want to try the DVD before the session starts.

Be creative

If talking is not your group's thing, then you could maybe think of other ways of sharing the experience of living through the pandemic. Could your group draw, paint or use another way of expressing themselves? All ways of expressing people's stories, thoughts, feelings, and emotions are valid.

A lot of walking groups have discussions, as they walk, and this can be another way to put people at ease and have valuable chats about the issues raised in the videos.

Provide refreshments

You can make your group feel at home by providing refreshments for the session - your group might love tea and cake, or you might have a regular pizza or a curry night.

It's possible to get some financial support from the Places to Talk project to provide some food for the session. You can apply for a financial award using this application form: <https://forms.office.com/r/YWAn1KAMuC>

If you have any problems filling out the form contact Dani at ACTION with Communities in Cumbria by email Info@cumbriaaction.org.uk or phone 01768 425666.



Pick a time that works for the group

You'll need to find a time when people aren't busy getting on with other things. This session will work best if it's the focus of your meeting and if people have time and space to talk and listen.

Remember to give people enough notice before the session takes place – whether that's if it's going to be a one-off meeting or is part of a routine group meeting.

Issues and ideas

As they are talking together, your group may raise particular issues, problems or concerns. Try to make sure that these are captured in some way – for example, people could put them on a post it note and these could be shared at the end of the session.

There's a list of further support and information that might help at the end of this booklet – please feel free to share these with your group.

Of course, your group may also come up with some great ideas for the future! Don't lose those – you may want to discuss them at another meeting or raise them with someone else.

Remember to agree any next steps with the group before you finish the session.

ACTion with communities in Cumbria can help you follow up with a Neighbourliness project, if that's something participants in the group could be interested in. Look at the ACT website: <https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/what-we-do/neighbourliness-works> for some information, or contact ACT directly.



Ideas for running the session

To help you plan your session, we've put together a couple of different agendas as examples and some suggestions for questions you could use to help the discussion.

Agenda for a 1 hour session

- 10 mins: Arrival & settle in with tea & coffee
- 10 mins: Show the film
- 30 mins: Chat about the film: talk about the experiences of the group and their responses to the film
- 10mins: Share information and agree any next steps (if needed) then tea, cake & informal chatting

Agenda for a 1.5 hours session

- 10 mins: Arrival & settle in, group check in to find out how everyone is doing
- 10 mins: Show the film
- 30 mins: Chat about the film: talk about the experiences of the group and their responses to the film
- 35 mins: Informal chatting in small groups with refreshments
- 5 mins: Share information and agree any next steps (if needed)



Asking open-ended questions

Asking an open-ended question can be a good way get people to open up and share their experiences. Open-ended questions can't be answered with a yes or no answer.

Open ended questions start with:

- What
- How
- Where
- When
- Why
- Who

If people in the group seem stuck on a question, you could give an example from your own experience or ask them to give an example to help prompt discussion. Or simply prompt them by saying “Can you tell us more about that?”

Question ideas for the discussion session that your group might want to use

What did you think of the film?

What were the main themes in the film?

What experiences in the film were like your experience of living through Covid-19?

What surprised you in the film?

What experiences were missed out by the film?

Whose story did you relate to and why?



Other sources of support

If you think people might need a bit more support with something the following organisations can help –

Mental Health Support:

Mindline Cumbria

0300 561 0000

<http://www.mindlinecumbria.org/>

Childline (24 hrs)

0800 1111

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

NHS crisis line North Cumbria

0800 652 2865

NHS crisis line South Cumbria (24hrs)

0800 953 0110

Samaritans (24hrs)

116123

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

SHOUT (24hrs)

Text SHOUT to 85258

<https://giveusashout.org/>

Papyrus (Young People)

0800 068 4141

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

Silverline (older people)

0800 4708090

<https://www.thesilverline.org.uk/>

Every Life matters

(Suicide safer Communities & bereavement support)

This website also has a useful booklet on Wellbeing and mental health in Cumbria and how you can look after yourself and others.

<https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/>

Alcohol & Drugs:

Frank (24hrs)

0300 123 6600

<https://www.talktofrank.com/>

CADAS

0800 254 5658

<https://cadas.co.uk/>

Money/Benefits advice:

National Debtline

0808 808 4000

<https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>

Citizens Advice

0800 144 8848

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Cumbria Law Centre

01228 515129

<https://www.cumbrialawcentre.org.uk/>

Ways to Welfare Community Support

0800 783 1966

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/welfare/>



Domestic abuse:

Refuge (24hrs)
0808 2000 247

Safeguarding children hub
0333 240 1727
<https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/>

Support for carers:

Carer Support Cumbria
08443 843 230
<https://www.carerssupportcumbria.co.uk/>

Neighbour and Community Projects:

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria
01768 425666
<https://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/>

Bereavement:

Cruse Bereavement Support
0808 808 1677
<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

The Good Grief Trust
<https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/>

There is some more information about bereavement on the next page and some links to sources of bereavement support in Cumbria.



Let's talk about Bereavement



one day
someone is gone
and your world changes forever...

...and it can feel hard to move forwards.

However, somehow you keep going.

You can talk to others and remember...

It's OK to find moments of joy or to feel lost.

...the painful BUT treasured reminders of them.

INITIAL OFFERS OF SUPPORT
Thought of you
EAT
OFFERING
KINDNESS AND COUNSELING
THE BAD DAYS

All these things are normal reactions for everyone who experiences loss.

Everyone's route is different, you don't have to take yours alone.

Sharing these moments to help move forwards

Find the support at www.cumbria.gov.uk/publichealth/bereavement.asp
Call the Cruse Bereavement helpline 0808 808 1677



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