

Name of Protocol: Chalk Talk

Purpose: A silent, written protocol to reflect, generate ideas, check learning, develop projects or solve problems.

Time: Time varies, from 5 minutes-1 hour

Roles: Facilitator, participants

Materials: chart paper, markers, colored writing utensils, sticky notes (optional)

Procedure:

1. The facilitator explains that it is a silent activity. Participants can add to the chalk talk as they please by writing their ideas/comments, reading others' comments and responding to at least one to three comments on every chart paper. Comments should be thoughtful and further the discussion. Encourage opinions to be freely expressed and honored without personal attacks.
2. The facilitator begins by writing an open-ended question that will provoke comments and responses written in a circle on the board or chart paper.
Sample questions:
 - What did you learn today?
 - So what? Or now what?
 - What do you think about family engagement?
3. Using colored writing utensils or sticky notes, participants write as they feel moved. Allow for 10 to 20 minutes for the Chalk Talk.
4. The facilitator can interact in different ways during the Chalk Talk. One way is to stand back and let it unfold. Other ways include to read and circle ideas, write questions to comments, add own ideas/reflections, or connect ideas with a line and a question mark. When the facilitator actively interacts, it invites the participants to do the same kind of expansion.
5. When participants are finished with their comments, search for patterns/themes and conduct a whole-group share.

Variations:

1. Have participants use sticky notes instead of responding directly on the chart paper. Chart paper can then be reused for multiple sessions or common sticky notes can be moved and compiled to help facilitate discussion around patterns and themes.
2. Have participants respond to the questions in collaborative groups, with each group using a different color marker. In this variation, participants do not work silently, discussion is key.

Ideas for Debrief:

1. Process check: how did the protocol go in our group? Could anything have gone better?
2. Emotions check: Did any emotions come up for you today?
3. Purpose check: Did you notice any patterns and themes (or "notice and wonder") as you read through all the postings?

Credits:

Originally developed by Hilton Smith, Foxfire Fund; adapted for the NSRF by Marylyn Wentworth.

https://www.nsrffharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/chalk_talk_0.pdf