

CARBON CONVERSATIONS

THE IDEA

Carbon Conversations were created in the UK by Rosemary Randall, a psychotherapist, and Andy Brown, an engineer, in 2006. It is a unique psycho-social project that addresses the practicalities of carbon reduction while taking account the complex emotions and social pressures that make it difficult.

Carbon Conversations have also been used in Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland, France, Finland and Spain. The idea is to run a group of individuals who are already familiar with carbon footprint reduction. The conversations have 6 to 8 participants who attend all meetings (which should occur from 6 to 12 times) and open up discussions about carbon distress, anxiety, fears of climate change. There needs to be someone with professional experience in psychology/mental health to manage the group and guide the discussion.

Target

Individuals who are willing to reduce their carbon footprint.

Objectives

Educating people and providing a framework to talk about climate change and the feelings that come with it.

Tools

Workbooks, guidelines, games, psychological expertise.

STAGES

1. Begin with 4 key topics in the subject of personal carbon footprint: home energy, travel, food and other consumption.
2. Then discuss their feelings about climate change, carbon reduction and the impact of taking climate change seriously on their relationships with family, friends and colleagues.
3. Provide answers and solutions to questions/ anxiety/ guilt from citizens about climate change and their own carbon footprint.

Note: 6 to 8 participants have to attend all meetings (6-12 meetings) for the conversations to have a real impact.

WHY?

To learn more about carbon reduction and how individuals can have a positive impact on their daily life, while understanding one's role and limits. The psychological approach also validates one's feelings and how to move on from guilt, anxiety, etc. The Carbon Conversations allow participants to process change and accept the difficulty of having to adapt one's lifestyle to climate change, by accepting and acknowledging the implications of change. It also enables better ways on how to communicate these feelings with family, friends, colleagues, facilitating a better and easier dialogue around a topic that can often be difficult or awkward.